

Dyball wins LTdL for Australia after 23 years

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LANGKAWI, April 13 (Bernama) -- Benjamin Dyball ended Australia's 23-year wait to win the Le Tour de Langkawi's (LTdL) yellow jersey (overall winner) by conquering the eight stage tour with a total distance of 1,225.8 km.

The 29-year-old from the Malaysian outfit, Team Sapura Cycling (TSC), topped the General Classification with 29 hours, 15 minutes and 53 seconds, 50 seconds faster than second placed Keegan Swirbul of Floyd's Pro Cycling (29:16:43s) after the last stage from Dataran Lang to Kuah, flagged off by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The LTdL honour is Dyball's third career victory after having won the International Tour de Banyuwangi Ijen (Indonesia) and the Princess Maha Siridhorn Cup Tour of Thailand, last year.

Dyball, who finished third overall in 2018 LTdL, is only the second Australian to win the most coveted jersey after Damian McDonald's success during the inaugural edition in 1996, while two others - Jai Crawford in 2009 and Cameron Bayly in 2017 came close in second places.

In today's 103.8 km Stage Eight, with sprint zones at Nyior Chabang, Ulu Melaka and Pekan Kuah; three Category 3 climbs at Lebuhraya Langkawi and three loops in Kuah, Dyball secured 24th place with 2:17:42s in the same bunch as race winner Marco Benfatto from Androni Giocattoli-Sidermec.

Italian's sprinting power seemed to be unstoppable as it was the fourth straight stage win in 2019 LTdL for Italians through the victories of Matteo Pelucchi from Androni Giocattoli-Sidermec (Stage 5 and 6) and Simone Bevilacqua from Neri Sottoli Selle Italia

KTM (Stage 7).

Dr Mahathir presented the prizes to the winners.

Meanwhile, Australian, Blake Quick from St George Continental Cycling Team finished second, while Matteo Pelucchi came in third in today's stage.

"I crashed down after some 70 km into the race, not sure I hit something or another rider, it was not too bad, I got back on the bike, the main group was not far, I managed to get back into the group. Nothing is better than winning the yellow jersey, I am really happy and at the moment, just trying to enjoy this...Hard to describe the feelings," Dyball told reporters after the race.

Dyball wrested the most coveted jersey from American rider, Travis McCabe of Floyd's Pro Cycling Team after winning the 114.2 km Queen's Stage (Stage Four) from Shah Alam to Genting Highlands on Tuesday by conquering the gruelling Hors Class climb to the Genting Highlands' summit in 3:22:02s on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, defending champion Artem Ovechkin from Terengganu Inc TSG Cycling Team (TSG), failed to shine when he only managed to secure 18th place overall, while Mr Langkawi Andrea Guardini faced almost a similar fate.

The Italian Guardini from Bardiani-CSF, who is the record stage winner of LTdL, with 24 victories in total, failed to increase his record when he only managed to secure two podium finishes this year, second place in Stage Two from Senawang to Melaka and third place in Stage Three from Muar to Putrajaya.

Meanwhile, as expected, Dyball's compatriot, Angus Lyons Oliver from Real Good Racing won the red jersey (King of Mountain) with 59 points,

American McCabe won the green jersey (King of Sprint) with 91 points, while Kazakhstan's

Vadim Pronskiy of Vino-Astana Motors claimed the white jersey (Best Asian Rider) after finishing third overall with 29:16:58s.

In the Team General Classification, TSC (87:55:28s) finished second, 1:08s behind Floyd's Pro Cycling which has an overall time of 87:54:20.

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