

= 2016 Milan ? San Remo =

The 107th edition of the Milan ? San Remo cycling classic took place on Saturday , 19 March 2016 . It was the fourth of 28 races of the 2016 UCI World Tour ; the first one @-@ day race . It was also the first cycling monument of the season .

It was won by Arnaud Démare in a sprint finish , ahead of Ben Swift (Team Sky) and Jürgen Roelandts (Lotto ? Soudal) . The finish was disrupted by a crash involving Fernando Gaviria (Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step) , causing several riders to take avoiding action , ruling them out of contention . A landslide on the road caused the race to be diverted for a length of 9 km (5 @.@ 6 mi) .

= = Route = =

As one of the sports monuments , Milan ? San Remo is among the highest @-@ rated races in professional cycling . The 2016 route was set to be 291 km (181 mi) long . Generally considered a sprinters ' classic , the race ran from the Via della Chiesa Rossa in Milan to the traditional finish on San Remo 's Via Roma . The final part of the race included the climbs of the Cipressa and the Poggio , which usually proved decisive for the race outcome . Across the road , the riders also had to tackle the 35 km (22 mi) climb of the Passo dello Turchino , although it was not considered to be a key point in the race . After the Turchino , the route followed the Aurelia road along the coast from Genoa all the way to the finish in San Remo . With a little over 50 km (31 mi) left to go , the first of the coastal climbs started with the Capo Mele , the Capo Cervo and the Capo Berta , before meeting the final two climbs leading to the finish .

A landslide on the morning of the race at a point 130 km (81 mi) into the race caused the route to be slightly changed , with the riders taking a 9 km (5 @.@ 6 mi) detour along the A10 highway , entering in Genova Voltri and exiting in Arenzano , rejoining the original course at that point . As a consequence , the race ran over a distance of 295 km (183 mi) .

= = Participating teams = =

25 teams were announced to take part in the race : all 18 World Tour teams were automatically invited ; seven continental teams were given wildcards ? totalling 200 riders . As Moreno Hofland (LottoNL ? Jumbo) was unable to start due to illness , 199 riders took part in the race .

= = Pre @-@ race favourites = =

The outgoing champion , John Degenkolb , missed Milan ? San Remo after injuries sustained in an early @-@ season training camp in Spain . In his absence , 2014 winner Alexander Kristoff (Team Katusha) was tipped as the main favourite for the victory . Fabian Cancellara (Trek ? Segafredo) was also rated highly in what would be his final appearance in the race , as he was a former winner and had shown strong form , winning Strade Bianche earlier in the season . World Champion Peter Sagan (Tinkoff) was also named as a race favourite , as he had shown good form , albeit still lacking a win in 2016 . He rode with bib number one in the absence of Degenkolb .

Two riders came into Milan ? San Remo with particular successes in hand , namely Michael Matthews (Orica ? BikeExchange) , who had won two stages at Paris ? Nice just a week earlier , while Greg van Avermaet (BMC Racing Team) had won the overall classification at Tirreno ? Adriatico . Other favourites included Alejandro Valverde (Movistar Team) , Niccolo Bonifazio (Trek ? Segafredo) , Ben Swift , Geraint Thomas and Micha? Kwiatkowski (all Team Sky) , Nacer Bouhanni (Cofidis) , Zden?k ?tybar (Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step) , Sacha Modolo (Lampre ? Merida) , Tony Gallopin (Lotto ? Soudal) , Arnaud Démare (FDJ) , Edvald Boasson Hagen (Team Dimension Data) and Simon Clarke (Cannondale ? Drapac) . 2009 winner Mark Cavendish (Team Dimension Data) was also named as a favourite . Meanwhile , Astana named Vincenzo Nibali as their captain for the race , riding the race for the tenth time in his career . Another rider deemed a possible contender , Tom Dumoulin (Giant ? Alpecin) , was ruled out of the race due to a flu .

German sprinter André Greipel (Lotto ? Soudal) missed the race as well after breaking three ribs at the Volta ao Algarve .

= = Race report = =

After the race started in Milan , a breakaway got clear after 14 km (8 @. @ 7 mi) of racing , including Gediminas Bagdonas (AG2R La Mondiale) , Serghei ?vetcov (Androni Giocattoli ? Sidermec) , Mirco Maestri (Bardiani ? CSF) , Jan Barta (Bora ? Argon 18) , Adrian Kurek (CCC ? Sprandi ? Polkowice) , Roger Kluge (IAM Cycling) , Matteo Bono (Lampre ? Merida) , Samuele Conti (Wilier Triestina ? Southeast) , Maarten Tjallingii (LottoNL ? Jumbo) , Andrea Peron (Team Novo Nordisk) and Marco Coledan (Trek ? Segafredo) . The group had a maximum lead over the peloton of 10 : 35 minutes at the 50 km (31 mi) mark . After that , Tinkoff and Orica ? BikeExchange began to set a higher tempo in the pack and the lead was reduced to five minutes at the peak of the Turchino .

As the leading group arrived at the first seaside climb of the Capo Mele , the gap had come down to 2 : 18 minutes . Meanwhile , the first crashes occurred in the field , with Julien Vermote (Etixx ? Quick @- @ Step) and Federico Zurlo (Lampre ? Merida) being the first victims . At the Capo Berta , the lead of the front group was around a minute , while Marco Haller (Team Katusha) crashed on the following descent , dropping out of the main field . Another accident occurred a little later . Michael Matthews and Peter Kennaugh (Team Sky) were the most prominent riders to go down , but both managed to get back into the field even with a growing pace set at the front .

The breakaway group was caught with 25 km (16 mi) to go . At the climb of the Cipressa , Giovanni Visconti (Movistar Team) and Ian Stannard (Team Sky) attacked and were joined by Daniel Oss (BMC Racing Team) , Matteo Montaguti (AG2R La Mondiale) , and Fabio Sabatini (Etixx ? Quick @- @ Step) on the descent . Arnaud Démare crashed on the climb , but was able to reach the field again as it got back to the attacking group at the bottom of the Poggio . Team Katusha set the pace up the final climb , but Micha? Kwiatkowski broke clear 6 km (3 @. @ 7 mi) from the finish . Vincenzo Nibali chased after him on the descent and the group of favourites came back together at the run @- @ in to the finish , after Fabian Cancellara had put in an attack , marked by Matteo Trentin (Etixx ? Quick @- @ Step) . At the 1 km (0 @. @ 62 mi) mark , Edvald Boasson Hagen started one last attack , but to no avail as the group approached the finish together . Shortly before the line , a touch of wheels led to a crash by Fernando Gaviria (Etixx ? Quick @- @ Step) , which caused several riders to lose momentum , including Peter Sagan . In the following mass sprint , Arnaud Démare came out on top and won his first ever cycling monument , ahead of Ben Swift and Jürgen Roelandts (Lotto ? Soudal) . Démare was the first Frenchman to win Milan ? San Remo since Laurent Jalabert in 1995 , and the first Frenchman to win a monument race since Jalabert 's victory in the 1997 Giro di Lombardia .

= = Post @- @ race = =

Following the race , Démare expressed delight at his victory , saying : " There are days like this one in which everything works despite the occasional hiccup , like crashing at the bottom of the Cipressa . I made it across at the bottom of the Poggio and the entire way I felt fantastic . [...] This is a big one and has been running for over a century . It 's extraordinary . I 'm extremely happy . " Second placed Swift on the other hand , was disappointed by missing out on a possible win : " Obviously , it 's quite disappointing to get second ? so close to the win ? but you have got to be happy to be back on the podium in a Monument . " Fernando Gaviria shed tears after his late fall , which he felt cost him a possible victory : " I am very sad about what happened . It was my fault , I was in a perfect position but then I lost my focus for two seconds , because I began thinking on how to sprint . I touched the wheel of the guy in front of me . That was enough to throw away all the hard work of the team . " Nacer Bouhanni in turn was furious after the finish . Some hundred metres before the finish line , he had been in a good position before his chain slipped off , taking away his chances . After crossing the line , he threw away his bike in anger .

Two riders very disappointed with their results were Michael Matthews and Fabian Cancellara . Matthews crashed at high speed shortly before the Cipressa and arrived at the finish with a bandaged right elbow . He said : " Obviously I 'm devastated . [...] This was everything , this was my world championships for the start of the season . [...] I was really looking forward to making a good finale , it 's really unfortunate that a crash stopped me from doing that . " Cancellara , who was riding the event for the last time before retirement at the end of the 2016 season , was held up in Gaviria 's crash after having stayed in the leading group . He described his final kilometres as difficult , as he had been isolated from his teammates , saying that the other riders mainly attacked him and did not work with him . Another rider who was almost involved when Gaviria fell was Peter Sagan , who confirmed that the peloton had covered Cancellara in particular . He went on to describe the moment of Gaviria 's crash : " Then I got away with Boasson Hagen , Gaviria and someone else . Then with about 500 metres to go , Gaviria looked around because the group was coming up . He went down and I only just managed to avoid him . I stayed up but I lost a lot speed and never managed to get going again in the final metres . "

One day after the race , both Matteo Tosatto (Tinkoff) and Eros Capecchi (Astana) accused Démare of having used the tow of his teamcar to rejoin the pack after his crash before the Cipressa climb . Démare rebuffed these allegations , saying that the race commissioners were right behind him and would have disqualified him , had he done something illegal . On 8 May 2016 , it became public that the Italian Cycling Federation was making inquiries into the accusations about Démare , with Tosatto saying that he had given written testimony to officials about the incident .

= = Results = =

^ 1 ? Top ten riders out of 180 finishers shown