

Beat: Sports

## The Vuelta begins as I end the past: with another American leader

### The Vuelta a España took its first steps

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**USPA NEWS** - The Vuelta begins as the last one ended: with another American as the leader

The Vuelta Ciclista a España took its first steps in Portuguese lands with a time trial of 7,456 miles between Lisbon and Oeiras

The American Brandon McNulty (UAE Team Emirates) takes on the leader's jersey of the Spanish round on his first day - of three - through Portuguese lands, beating Vacek (Lidl-Trek) by two seconds and one of the candidates to win this 79th edition of the Vuelta Ciclista a España, Van Aert (Visma-Lease a Bike).

The American time trial champion, who came out last, broke all records in the history of this race, spending 12 minutes and 35 seconds to cover the 7,456 miles of this time trial at a supersonic average of 35,540 miles per hour. A historic day with the world's great specialists flying on the Portuguese coast where the Jerónimos Monastery of Lisbon -departure- and Oeiras -end- were witnesses of this erotic feat.

The 176 cyclists participating in La Vuelta 24 have started the competition this Saturday, August 17, with a dizzying individual time trial starting from Lisbon and finishing in Praia da Torre de Oeiras. A route that was supposed to be fast, without major difficulties parallel to the Tagus River, and that has ended up leaving a day full of surprises both for its speed and for the script changes experienced on this opening day of the second Grand Departure of La Vuelta since the capital Portugal.

Edoardo Affini (Visma-Lease a Bike), a rider who already knows what it is to wear La Roja as the leader of La Vuelta – he did so in the 2022 edition – has been the main protagonist of the first half of the time trial, after set a time of 12'43" at the finish line that remained the provisional best time for about an hour. An exhibition that also made it the fastest time trial in the history of La Vuelta, surpassing stage 20 of the 2007 edition, won by Samuel Sánchez in Villalba at an average of just over 54km/h.

The European time trial champion Joshua Tarling (Ineos Grenadiers) seemed like the great candidate to surpass the Italian by setting the provisional best time at the halfway point, but the young British prodigy was only 28 hundredths behind at the finish line. The big surprise would be the time of the Czech Mathias Vacek (Lidl-Trek), the Czech champion of the specialty, who flew to stop the clock in Oeiras with 12'37" and be the first to surpass Affini.

The last rider to start in the competition, a Wout van Aert (Visma-Lease a Bike) hungry for victory, focused all eyes as he passed through the first intermediate point, located at mile 4,536, where he was the only cyclist to overcome the Vacek's time by only one second. However, in the second half of the time trial, the American champion of the specialty Brandon McNulty (UAE Team Emirates) turned the clock around and crossed the finish line with a time of 12'35" after flying at an average speed of 35,542 miles per hour which not only makes him the first leader of La Vuelta 24, but also the winner of the fastest time trial in the history of the Spanish Grand Tour.

### **Brandon McNulty (UAE Team Emirates), first leader of La Vuelta 24:**

"I knew that if something crazy happened, I could win... I imagine something crazy happened! I was hopeful, but this is hard to believe. Simply put, I have had super good legs. I've been feeling really good in training, especially since the Olympics. In a 12-minute effort there is not much room to regulate, I simply went as hard as I could. I imagine that I have proven that I am capable of finishing on a good day. It's nice to be in the lead and I will enjoy it, but it's no secret that we have two very strong leaders in Joao (Almeida) and Adam (Yates), so I will do everything I can to help them".

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