

Froome extends Vuelta lead

Lutsenko

takes stage

Alcocéber, Spain

Chris Froome extended his lead in the Vuelta a Espana as Kazakh Alexey Lutsenko won yesterday's rolling fifth stage.

Froome crossed the line in 14th place in the wheel of long-time rival Alberto Contador some four and half minutes after Astana's Lutsenko.

Three riders had started the day just two seconds behind Froome but all lost time.

Tejay van Garderen moved up to second at 10 seconds after coming in just eight seconds behind Froome while Colombian Esteban Chaves is third at 11sec after crossing the line alongside the British leader.

But Italian former winners Vincenzo Nibali and Fabio Aru both lost time to now sit sixth and seventh respectively at 36sec and 49sec.

Spain's David De La Cruz started the day second but dropped to fifth at 23sec.

British twins Adam and Simon Yates -- winners of the young rider competition at the Tour de France these last two years -- are eighth and ninth respectively at 50sec and 1min 09sec.

But despite winning a fourth Tour just over a month ago, Froome showed



Chris Froome poses on the podium with the leader's red jersey

no signs of tiredness as his Sky team set the pace on the steep run-in to the finish, allowing him to gain time on many overall rivals.

"I think if you had said at the beginning of the stage this would be the situation at the finish, I would have definitely have signed to agree to that," admitted Froome.

"Looking at the time gaps now, the general classification is definitely taking a bit more shape.

"I'm really glad to have come through from the Tour in the shape that I hoped to be in for the start of the Vuelta."

Eritrean Merhawi Kudus was second on the lumpy 175.7km stage from

Benicassim to Ermita Santa Lucia, finishing 42sec behind Lutsenko with Spain's Marc Soler third at 56sec.

Lutsenko, 24, had broken clear of a large 17-man breakaway group, that had built up a seven-minute lead at one stage, on the tough final ascent to Ermita Santa Lucia. (AFP)

Vuelta a Espana results

1. Alexey Lutsenko (KAZ/AST) 4hr 24min 58sec
 2. Merhawi Kudus (ERI/DDT) at 42sec
 3. Marc Soler (ESP/MOV) 56
 4. Matej Mohoric (SLO/EAU) 1:11
 5. Alexis Gougeard (FRA/ALM) 1:24,
 6. Marco Haller (AUT/KAT) 1:37
- Selected others
13. Alberto Contador (ESP/TRE) 4:31
 14. Chris Froome (GBR/SKY) same time
 16. Esteban Chaves (COL/ORI) s.t.
 17. Tejay Van Garderen (USA/BMC) 4:39
 18. Adam Yates (GBR/ORI) 4:42

Overall standings

1. Chris Froome (GBR/Sky) 18hr 07min 10sec
2. Tejay Van Garderen (USA/BMC) at 10sec
3. Esteban Chaves (COL/ORI) 11
4. Nicolas Roche (IRL/BMC) 13
5. David De la Cruz (ESP/QST) 23
6. Vincenzo Nibali (ITA/BAH) 36



Kazakhstan's Alexey Lutsenko of team Astana celebrates as he crosses the finish line

De Villiers quits as South Africa ODI skipper

Johannesburg

Star batsman AB de Villiers quit as South Africa one-day international (ODI) skipper yesterday, but committed to representing his country in all three cricket formats.

"Faf du Plessis has proved to be an outstanding captain of the Twenty20 (T20) and Test teams," he said in a statement.

"Bearing this in mind, I have informed Cricket South Africa that I would like to step down as ODI captain.

"It has been an honour to lead the team for the past six years, but it is now time for someone else to take the ODI side forward.

"Whoever is chosen as the new ODI captain will have my complete support."

De Villiers last skippered the ODI team two months ago in the Champions

Trophy in England, where South Africa failed to reach the semi-finals after defeats by Pakistan and India.

He has averaged 53.56 runs in 221 appearances in the one-day format since debuting against England 12 years ago.

De Villiers rejected media claims that he was cherry-picking when to play for South Africa and putting himself before the team.

"That is simply not true. That has never been true. Playing for South Africa is, and will always be, the greatest privilege of my life," he said.

He missed the recent 3-1 Test series defeat in England, last playing for South Africa in the longest format at the beginning of 2016.

De Villiers said mental and physical tiredness and raising a young family had forced him to take a temporary

international break.

"I really do feel refreshed and revived," said the 33-year-old.

"I want to get back on the field and today assured the national selectors that I will be available for selection in all three formats of the game during the coming season.

"There is plenty of hard work ahead in the nets and I must prepare properly, but I will be ready to play, if required, from the middle of October.

"If I am lucky enough to be selected, I cannot guarantee runs and catches. Nobody can do that.

"But what I can absolutely guarantee is 100 percent commitment to the Proteas in every format of the game, as and when required.

"That was my promise when I made my debut in 2004, and that is my promise today." (AFP)



AB de Villiers (file pic)