

Philipsen wins Vuelta stage 19 for treble

Belgian sprinter claims third stage victory while Vingegaard gains crucial bonus seconds

● Otruba leads solo break before caught

● Pedersen second, Aular takes third

● Final mountain stage today

AFP | Gujuelo

Jasper Philipsen edged a bunch sprint to claim Vuelta a Espana stage 19 victory yesterday racking up his third stage win of the race. General classification leader Jonas Vingegaard extended his lead on Joao Almeida by four seconds to 44 seconds overall as he claimed a bonus on the intermediate sprint. After an individual time trial on Thursday that was shortened for security reasons, riders travelled a flat 162 kilometres from Rueda to Gujuelo, past vineyards and quiet countryside.



Team Alpecin's Belgian rider Jasper Philipsen (L) competes before crossing first the finish line



Vingegaard gained his 4-second advantage by beating Mads Pedersen in an intermediate sprint - a rare bonus seconds grab by a GC contender on a flat stage

Cycling's third-biggest grand tour has been heavily affected by pro-Palestinian protests, mainly targeting the Israel-Premier Tech team, but this was a calm day's racing. Jakub Otruba and Victor Guernalec formed the day's two-man break, with the peloton letting them go during a relaxed start.

Otruba dropped Guernalec and pushed on alone, into a headwind, around four minutes ahead of the peloton. Vingegaard grabbed four bonus seconds in the intermediate sprint as he edged Mads Pedersen, with UAE Team Emirates and Almeida caught on their heels. With around 50km remaining Otruba was swallowed by the peloton, who travelled in unison towards Gujuelo, jostling for position ahead of the expected bunch sprint finale. Pedersen went early but Belgian Philipsen held him off comfortably to complete a Vuelta hat-trick, following the Alpecin-Deceuninck rider's triumphs on stages one and eight. Orluis Aular came in third behind Pedersen. On Saturday riders face the daunting final mountain stage, running 166km from Robledo de Chavela to Bola del Mundo, where the general classification battle between Vingegaard and Almeida will be resolved.

Newcastle's Howe says Isak relationship was 'difficult' before Liverpool move

AFP | London

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe has revealed his relationship with Alexander Isak deteriorated after the Sweden star went on strike in a bid to force through his British record transfer to Liverpool. The 25-year-old missed Newcastle's pre-season tour to Singapore and South Korea due to what Newcastle said at the time was a minor injury. Isak trained at his former club Real Sociedad while Howe's team were in Asia and then worked on his own as Newcastle prepared for the new season. Howe was instrumental in Isak's rise to prominence after signing him from Sociedad, with the Swede's goals helping to end the club's 56-year trophy drought and secure Champions League qualification last season. But Howe said their relationship soured once Isak refused to take part in the pre-season, which effectively ruled him out of Newcastle's first three Premier League games. "Alex and I always enjoyed a great relationship. I loved working with him and I hope he loved working with us," Howe told reporters. "It was mutually beneficial. We helped him become the player that he in part is today, and he helped us as a team achieve some unbelievable milestones. He was part of a very successful team. "But to give you a bit more on that, the moment he went on strike, our relationship did change. "I think that was probably



Eddie Howe

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EDDIE HOWE

a turning point in our relationship. Communication became difficult from that point onwards. I won't go into any more detail than that." Isak's departure prompted Howe to sign Stuttgart's Nick Woltemade and Brentford's Yoane Wissa as replacements.

Chelsea's Delap out for up to three months: Maresca

AFP | London

Chelsea striker Liam Delap could be sidelined until December after injuring his hamstring before the international break, manager Enzo Maresca said yesterday. Delap signed from Ipswich for £30 million (\$40 million) in June and has featured in all of Chelsea's three Premier League matches so far.

But he was forced off early in the 2-0 win against Fulham on August 30. "Liam, I think it's around 10 to 12 weeks, so a long way to go," Maresca told reporters yesterday. Chelsea recalled forward Marc Guiu from a loan spell at Sunderland to cover for Delap after Senegal striker Nicolas Jackson left the Blues for Bayern Munich on transfer deadline

day. Maresca also has another forward option in Joao Pedro, who arrived at Stamford Bridge from Brighton in July. But the Chelsea boss admitted Delap's injury left him short of forward options ahead of Saturday's west London derby at Brentford. "We have the injury for sure now in this moment as a number nine," he said.



Liam Delap

Liverpool's Slot urges patience with 'best striker' Isak after record move

AFP | London

Arne Slot yesterday described a new signing Alexander Isak as "maybe the best striker in the world" but warned he would be eased into action gradually after a disrupted pre-season. The Premier League champions signed the Sweden forward from Newcastle on transfer deadline day for a British-record fee of £125 million (\$169 million), adding further firepower to their impressive squad. Isak's arrival after a protracted chase was part of an eye-catching splurge of more than £400 million in the summer transfer window, though a deadline-day move to sign Crystal Palace and England defender Marc Guehi collapsed. "A lot of things happened on the last day (of the transfer window), which is not always the situation, because last season we hardly did anything during the whole window," Slot said yesterday. "But the thing that pleases me most, of course, is us getting the deal for Alex over the line."



Alexander Isak

The Dutchman praised Sweden manager Jon Dahl Tomasson for the way he handled Isak's workload during the international break. The 25-year-old, who has not played any club football this season, was on the bench for Sweden's 2-2 World Cup qualifying draw against Slovenia and was brought on as a late substitute in the 2-0 defeat against Kosovo. "He gets one of the best, maybe the best striker in the world, and needs to play two very important games for his country, but understands that if he would play him twice for 90 minutes, then probably the player would have been injured," Slot said. "And that's not always easy for a manager, that he takes care of the interest of a player, so he deserves a big compliment for that. And we will treat Alex the same as they did, so don't expect him to be every single game 90 minutes on the pitch. "That's definitely not going to happen in the upcoming weeks. He missed a proper pre-season, I think he missed three or four months of team sessions, so now we have to build him up gradually, with us playing so many games, hardly any training time."

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ARNE SLOT



Arne Slot
Isak criticism

Slot, speaking ahead of Sunday's match against Burnley, brushed off criticism that Isak received after he agitated to leave Newcastle, where he still had three more years to run on his contract. "Sometimes people cheer for you, so I think after he won the League Cup (trophy last season), everyone was really happy with him," he said. "And in other moments you get criticised -- this is part of his life, my life, our jobs. Now he's a player for us and I'm really happy with that." Slot, whose team have won all three of their Premier League matches so far this season, admitted he had been keen to sign Guehi but would not be drawn about any future bid.