

Pogacar looking to enjoy ‘small things’ after 5th Tour de France win

Van der Poel wins dramatic Paris finale as Pogacar reflects on historic achievement

● Pogacar joins elite group of five-time winners

● Van der Poel narrowly edges Jasper Philipsen to wins Paris final stage

● Evenepoel finishes second overall in race

AFP | Paris

Tadej Pogacar said he was looking forward to taking some time off and enjoying the “small things” in life after making Tour de France history.

Pogacar joined an elite club of riders to have won the sport’s greatest race five times: Jacques Anquetil, Eddy Merckx, Bernard Hinault and Miguel Indurain.

But he was not interested in thinking about joining such lofty company.

“Right now I just want to enjoy the moment of winning the Tour,” he said.

“If it’s the fifth or the first, it doesn’t matter -- it’s unbelievable to wear the yellow jersey and to cross the line in Paris winning it.

“I will just enjoy this moment, not thinking about any history, not thinking about (joining any club).



UAE Team Emirates - XRG's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey and Alpecin - Premier Tech team's Dutch rider Mathieu van der Poel cycle on the Butte de Montmartre

“I just want to live this moment, come back home, relax, enjoy the small things of life.

“I’m really happy and proud to win a fifth Tour. Every single one has a different story, a different meaning, different emotions.

“Each one of them feels incredible and unbelievable for me.”

Mathieu van der Poel achieved a career dream by winning the final stage on the famous Champs Elysees avenue in Paris.

The cobbled classics specialist escaped with world champion Pogacar on the Montmartre climb that was heaving with ecstatic fans.

Both committed fully to the charge to the line for 10km as a group of sprinters just seconds behind inched closer to them.

In the final 700 metres, Van der Poel surged out alone as Slovenian Pogacar wilted and he narrowly held off the pack in a photo-finish.

“It was no words, no communication, we just both rode to the death, to the final and I ran out of gas,” said Pogacar.

“I knew that we had to go all out, he knew we had to go all out, we both committed and he took a beautiful victory.”

‘Not from my toes’

The 31-year-old Dutchman admitted that he thought the chasers would catch him before the line.



Pogacar and Van der Poel attacked together without speaking, instinctively committing to an all-out chase before the Dutchman surged clear for victory

In the end, it was his Alpecin Premier Tech team-mate Jasper Philipsen who came closest to pipping him to the line.

“I thought we were going to get caught back, but then I was just thinking about this moment, and I just put my head down in the last 500 metres,” he said.

“I just went as hard as I could, and I was just waiting until a wheel was coming past, and it didn’t happen, it didn’t happen. “In the very end, I see a Pirelli tyre next to me, and it’s the one from Jasper.

“It just shows that we never give up. Maybe the start of our Tour was not good, but I won the Tour des Champs Elysees. I think it’s pretty good.”

Van der Poel said he did not know how he had found the

strength to hold on.

“If there was one race I still wanted to win in my career, I have a few, of course, but this was one of them,” he said.

“We have a saying in Dutch that it has to come from your toes.

“I don’t know where this came from, but not from my toes!”

Olympic champion Remco Evenepoel secured his best ever Tour result with second place behind Pogacar and two stage victories.

He even won a mountain stage and proved to the doubters who had said that he would crack in the high mountains, that he is a worthy contender for overall Tour victory.

He said that he felt vindicated in his desire to try to win the Tour when critics have said that the time-trial specialist is not suited to Grand Tours -- despite him having won the Vuelta a Espana in 2022.

“Second plac, for me was more like the fact to prove towards myself that I did well to not let go my dream of stepping on the podium of Grand Tours as much as possible and aiming to try to win them,” he said.

“Because that’s my career goal.

“After this result, I think I’ve shown towards myself, my team and also to the outside world that I deserve to dream and aim for that.”

Norris victory exposes Ferrari errors and revives title race

● McLaren upgrades deliver gains

● Ferrari wastes strong pace

● Mercedes seeks improvements

AFP | Budapest

McLaren’s first success of 2026 owed as much to poor weekends, by their own high standards, for Ferrari and Mercedes as Lando Norris demonstrated that this year’s title race is anything but a foregone conclusion.

The champion’s victory showcased his talent and a new sense of maturity that, coupled with McLaren’s excellent upgrades package, left the rest floundering in pursuit in the Hungaroring heat.

As the 2026 season evolves into a “development war” to follow the summer break, we look at three things we learned from the Hungarian Grand Prix:

Ferrari in danger of wasting title chance

Despite having arguably the fastest car at a circuit that suited them, a wasteful weekend of errors left Ferrari ruining poor decision-making and sloppy execution as Charles Leclerc and



Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur admitted the team lost positions at almost every pit stop, a collapse that turned a front-row promise into frustration

seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton finished fourth and fifth.

With Mercedes having a rare off day, form suggested the scarlet Scuderia had the pace to finish 1-2, but a sense of complacency gave the initiative to McLaren and Norris with Red Bull also exploiting their opportunity.

“It’s not a good Sunday when you were 1-2 on Friday (in practice),” said team boss Fred Vasseur. “You expect much more. On top of that, we made too many mistakes starting with the penalty, and that Max (Verstappen) overtook us and that at each pit stop we were losing a position for 0.2 or 0.3 seconds.

“Then we spent our lives behind those guys! Everything went wrong. For sure, we have to do a much better job on Sundays.”

Vasseur was referring to Le-



McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri competes ahead of McLaren's British driver Lando Norris and Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen

clerc’s poor start from second on the grid, Hamilton’s five-second penalties for impeding Oscar Piastri’s McLaren in qualifying and then speeding in the pit lane and his failure to prevent Verstappen swooping past him after an undercut had worked.

He could also have questioned several strategy calls including the choice of soft tyres to start the race, pit-stop timing and the late stop under a virtual safety car that proved so costly for Hamilton.

Hamilton has now received four penalties in three outings,

the last gifting championship leader Kimi Antonelli a podium finish that increased his tally to 219 points. He is 50 ahead of Hamilton after 11 of the 23 races while Mercedes lead Ferrari by 72 points in the teams’ title race.

“You can’t make these kinds of mistakes if you want to challenge for a title,” Hamilton admitted.

Maturing Norris shows championship fight is on

McLaren team chief Andrea Stella articulated clearly why Norris and McLaren cannot be discounted from the champi-

onship scrap by noting how his title triumph last year had added confidence and maturity to the 26-year-old Briton.

“Lando is much more confident,” he said. “He’s much more aware of the tools that he has in his driving and how to deploy these tools. And I think he’s also... more in control of his emotions.”

He added that he had seen “a great trajectory of development in Lando” during the last 18 months since he regrouped ahead of winning last year’s drivers’ title. He is now 91 points

adrift of Antonelli, who was third behind Verstappen, ahead of what promises to be a fiercely-fought second half of the season.

As McLaren exploited the first of two major upgrades, Mercedes’ early-season advantage was reduced to create a three-team tussle with Red Bull in close pursuit.

“I’m really not happy with too many mistakes from us,” said team boss Toto Wolff, acknowledging that his rivals have closed the gap.

Antonelli hoping upgrades restore Mercedes edge

As Aston Martin celebrated the success of an extensive upgrades package, that lifted them into midfield, Antonelli called for a major Mercedes boost.

While luckless team-mate George Russell lamented another technical failure, the 19-year-old Italian admitted he faced a battle to protect his 50-point lead.

McLaren’s Piastri led by 34 points last year, but failed to take the title.

“Lando had the upper hand this weekend, even on us,” Antonelli said. “On pure pace, I couldn’t challenge him... I didn’t expect to find myself in this position, but the car has been extremely good -- and now there’s still a lot of work to do.

“We must keep pushing -- and we need some upgrades too.”