

## A brutal day on the Galibier for us, but not as bad as Pogacar on the Col du Granon!



Not that unlike a photo I took on the Tourmalet during the Lance years, with Lance leading out Ulrich and several other contenders. Here we have Pogacar following by Vingegaard, who would soon be spoiling his party.

Things went according to plan today on our Galibier ride; no issues with picking up the rental car, finding a place almost right at the bottom of the climb to start, and having just the right amount of time to get to the top. Yeah, that last one...



You have to wonder what Pogacar was telling his team director over the radio; this is shortly before the top of the Galibier, the last time Pogacar seemed completely in control of his destiny. He completely fell apart on the final climb half an hour later.

Kevin started out pretty strong at the bottom; thank goodness I was feeling a lot better than yesterday, but he still had to wait up for me quite a few times. At least until we got past Valloire, on the "real" Galibier (past the Telegraph), when Kevin's legs and back just

weren't in the game anymore. I thought lunch would revive him; it helped, and his spirits were buoyed a bit when the Caravan came through (proof that you're really at the Tour de France). But there was no water sponsor handing out bottles this year!!! What's with that?

When the Gendarmes came through and announced we'd have to walk, it was almost a sense of relief for Kevin. I couldn't go fast, but I could still turn the pedals. Eventually we found a good spot, about 1.5km from the top. Afterwards I asked Kevin if he wanted to finish the climb, but no, not today. It's not unfinished business though; Kevin did the full Glandon/Galabier loop back in 2011 I think? That's going to be a tough act to follow.

On the way down, we came across a huge crowd off to the side in Valloire; there was a huge TV screen showing the end of the race. That was really cool; normally we don't know how things finished until we get back and see the reports on-line or, if cell coverage is good enough, on our phones. But this time we got to see the last 3km of the race live, the part where Pogacar gets dropped by Vingegaard and likely lost his Tour bid this year.

Kevin feared the return section between Valloire and The Telegraph, and nothing I could tell him could make him think it's actually the fun climb/diversion from the descent that it is. It's a power climb; between 3-5% and, following a ton of other cyclists, you really get into it. I've done it twice, and I remember feeling the same way Kevin did as you descended into Valloire on the way up. You're thinking, I don't want to have to climb this on the way back! Today, I was seeing power numbers that made me think it's possible I'm going to ride myself back into shape while here.

Tomorrow it's Alpe d'Huez, which involves a shorter drive, less than an hour, and hopefully it will be just a bit cooler.