

## **TDU BLOG #6:**

### **STAGE 5: SNAPPER POINT TO WILLUNGA, 14.8KM, JANUARY 23, 2009.**

"Please Mick don't make it any harder."

Stuart O'Grady's words to me just after the end of the Tour's 'Queen' stage in Willunga.

It may have been another bunch sprint there weren't many pure sprinters among the 36 that dragged back Matthew Lloyd (Silence) and David Moncoutie (Cofidis), the first two riders over the second and final Willunga Hill summit.

The decision to add an extra climb of Willunga Hill 'paid cash' today. Not only did it bring an unexpected element to the race, it (and of course Lance) lured thousands more to the climb.

Watching people make their way to the summit, an hour before the first bikes came through was like taking part in a pilgrimage.

An estimated 105,000 fans---surely it was way more than that----packed Willunga and the climb in what can only be described as L'Alpe d'Huez-esque scenes, and it was here that the 2009 TDU was decided in this week's second 'stage for the vault!'

Alan Davis' message to his team before today's 14.8 km loop around Aldinga and Willunga was to keep claim amidst the flurry of attacks, to keep him protected and to ensure that the stage leaders were in sight at the top of the second climb.

Close to that final Willunga summit, Davis trailed Lloyd, Moncoutie and Rogers by more than 200 metres, and between him and that lead trio was a group of 30 led by Lance Armstrong.

As fans parted like the red sea to allow the riders safe passage, Davis was within 26 seconds of the leaders when he 'summited' and it took only 12 more kilometres for the race to come together.

The final eight km just a matter of waiting for the Quickstep train, who dropped off their team leader 100 metres from the line, and Davis was unstoppable from there.

His third stage win this week and a 25 second lead over O'Grady (Saxo Bank) means he'll have to fall off tomorrow to lose the race.

As the only man to have ridden all 11 Tours Down Under, finished second to Andre Greipel last year, and faced some serious professional problems in the past two years, there can hardly be a more popular or deserving race winner.

And those fans saw the real Lance Armstrong today, who led his group over the climbs in pursuit of Lloyd and Moncoutie, riders at opposite ends of their careers.

With his mind now focussing on the Tour of California, Armstrong declared he had “no complaints” about this week.

He’d had a better day today after his suffering through stage four with “screaming legs.”

The only thing he was missing was the ability to make a difference.

But Allan Davis has made a difference and is currently enjoying the “best feeling he’s ever had as a cyclist” after a tactically perfect day.

He’ll sleep well tonight, as will the rest of the peloton, in preparation for tomorrow’s final stage, and the expected bunch finish in the heart of this beautiful cycling mad city.

Race Director Mike Turtur will also sleep well tonight, after designing the perfect race route.

He should heed O’Grady’s words though.

No one needs to suffer any more than they have this week.

As Davis said after Stage 3, it’s been hard but this is road cycling at it best.