

The 16th edition of the Tour du Rwanda roared to life on Sunday, with Belgian rider Jonathan Vervenne and his Soudal Quick-Step team dominating the opening stage Team Time Trial (TTT).

The 20-year-old Vervenne donned the coveted yellow jersey after leading his team through the newly-designed 18.3km circuit in an impressive 20 minutes and 32 seconds.

Chris Froome's Israel-Premier Tech team finished a close second with a time of 21 minutes and eight seconds, while Lotto-Dstny claimed the third podium spot just 16 seconds later.

Despite Team Rwanda finishing ninth out of 19 teams, Rwandan cycling dreams remain alive. Debutant May Star, representing one of three Rwandan teams, had the honor of being the first rider to hit the road, marking a symbolic start for the home nation.

This year's Tour du Rwanda boasts a total distance of 718.9 kilometers, making it the shortest ever since 2009.

With 94 riders from 19 teams battling it out across eight stages, the 2.1-rated race promises an exciting week of competition.

Unfortunately, Team DSM - firmenich PostNL was forced to withdraw at the last minute due to illness.

While no Rwandan rider has yet claimed the overall victory since the prestigious tour received its 2.1 rating on the UCI Africa Tour in 2019, Moise Mugisha etched his name in history by winning a stage in 2022. All eyes will be on Rwandan cyclists to continue striving for success as the journey progresses.

Four-time Tour de France champion Chris Froome, looking to break his Tour du Rwanda duck after an unsuccessful attempt last year, expressed his determination. "I had a good race last year but no victories," he said. "This year I'll be searching again to try and set the record straight. I'm looking forward to giving one hundred percent, I'm here to do my best."

The excitement continues today, Monday, February 19, 2024, as riders tackle a challenging 129.4-kilometer Stage two route from Muhanga to Kibeho, starting at 11 a.m. Stay tuned for further updates on the thrilling competition unfolding at the

Tour du Rwanda 2024!