

British cyclist Zoe Bäckstedt made history on Monday by winning the first-ever U23 Women's Time Trial gold medal at the 2025 UCI Road World Championships. The 20-year-old dominated the 22.6km course in Kigali, finishing in 30:56.16 and taking the rainbow jersey by nearly two minutes.

This was not only her first world title in the U23 category but also a landmark moment as it's the first time the championships are being held in Africa and the first time U23 women have their own standalone events.

The race attracted 50 riders from 30 nations, a larger field than the elite women's time trial on Sunday, which was won by Switzerland's Marlen Reusser.

Bäckstedt, who rides for the Women's WorldTeam Canyon-SRAM, said it was "super cool" to win in Kigali during the first separate U23 time trial. She explained her decision not to enter the elite race came down to the course profile.

"The 22km time trial suited me really well. The climb wasn't too steep — more of a power climb — and the cobbled section felt like racing in Belgium, where it's all about surviving to the top."

In her first year in the U23 category, Viktória Chladoňová of Slovakia, 18, racing for Visma-Lease a Bike, took the silver medal, finishing +1:50.85 behind Bäckstedt. Last year, as a junior in Zürich, she placed second in the time trial and third in the road race.

Italy's Federica Venturelli, 20, riding for the UAE Development Team, claimed bronze. She had competed as a junior at the 2023 Worlds but missed last year's race due to injury.

The next U23 women's event, the road race, will take place on Thursday.