

5 July 2006

By: Ovidiu Panzariu, Sports Editor



## **Tom Boonen Is the New Tour de France Leader**

*The World Champion managed to squeeze the "yellow jersey" out of Thor Hushovd*

The new "Yellow Jersey" in The Tour de France is Belgian Tom Boonen. After managing to keep the pace with the peloton following the final climb of the day - Cauberg - Boonen finished 4th in the race, taking the decisive bonus points to clinch the leading position. The performance is more than welcomed for the Belgian, since the Tour will pass through his native country tomorrow. He will then have a chance of making his fans proud, especially since he's more than likely to hold on to the "yellow jersey" until the mountain stages. "It is amazing that I will be crossing Belgium tomorrow with this jersey on my shoulders. That's crazy! Such a thing can only arrive once in every ten years. So, yes, I could say I was pretty satisfied", said Boonen at the end of the race. The winner of the stage was T-Mobile's rider Matthias Kessler, who managed to attack just one kilometer to the finish line. More, it was a revenge-like victory for the German, who tried to do the same in stage 2 of the competition, but was swept off by the peloton just hundreds of meters to the finish. Still, back to Boonen. The Belgian cyclist wanted to make it very clear that he's in the Tour to win and expected to clinch the yellow jersey that quick: "I'm going to look at the stage booklet to see what is possible to do over the next few stages in relation to Hushovd and McEwen. But, if I try and defend the yellow jersey it will harm my chances in the green jersey competition and that it my overall objective". Today's stage will see the cyclists start off from Huy, passing through Belgium, entering France and finishing it off at Saint Quentin. Whether this will be another stage with a new yellow jersey at the finish line, we'll find out in about 8 hours.