



Roulston riding Le Race with eyes still on Rio

17 March 2016

Double Olympic medallist Hayden Roulston will ride PlaceMakers Le Race for the first time with his focus still firmly fixed on forcing his way into the national track team for the Rio Olympics.

Roulston left his professional contract with Trek Factory Racing at the end of last year to focus on riding on the track at this year's Olympics, something he says he is still "one hundred and ten percent focused on" after missing selection for this month's UCI track world championships in London.

"I haven't been in New Zealand at this time of the year since I turned pro so I've have never had the chance to do Le Race," he said. "But I need some intensive road work to go alongside the track training I'm doing and I know Le Race is a really hard course, so it's just what I need at the moment."

Although disappointed to miss out on the world champs the 36 year old says his focus is still firmly focused on Rio, and is doing all he can to give himself every chance to make the endurance track squad.

"Everything has always been about Rio," he said. "That hasn't changed. I might not make the team but I don't want to hang up the bike without having given it everything to try; I am giving myself the best chance to do it as I know with the right team we have a very good chance of doing very well in Rio."

Roulston isn't worried about a winning result in Le Race, saying he will 'see what happens on the road on the day' being more conscious of his need for a good, hard intensive training ride.

"I know the course well from training and it's a bloody hard. It's never ending and there's several times you think the climbing's over but there's another one. I really just want a hard day out; the result will be whatever it will be."

Recent winners of the men's race Dan Barry, Keagan Gildlestone, Michael Vink and Sam Horgan are all missing opening the way for last year's second placed Richard Lawson, local rider Tom Hubbard, who is currently lying second in the elite classification of the Calder Stewart Series and young guns Jake Marryatt, Max Jones and Campbell Pithie to have an impact.

A late entry who is sure to make his presence felt is last year's Ross Bush Memorial Trophy winner, awarded to the first under 17 rider home, 17 year old Kees Duyvesteyn.

Hubbard is another rider looking for a tough race as he heads to Asia and then Europe to race next month through to June with Australian Continental team Data#3 Cisco Racing. Hubbard raced in last month's Australia's Herald Sun Tour that was won by current Tour de France Champion Chris Froome and the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race that featured a number of WorldTour pro teams.



Experienced riders Paul Odlin, Anthony Chapman, Reon Nolan and Scott McDonnell could also feature in the 100 kilometre race that starts in Cathedral Square in Christchurch and finishes in Akaroa on Saturday.

Charlotte Lucas leads the women's entries with an impressive track record of two wins and a second in the last three years. Her main competition will come from Hannah Gumbley, Julia Grant and Jeannie Blakemore.

Lucas says she trains specifically hard for Le Race as its 'such a hard and technical course.' "I'm pretty happy to be going for my third win and I'm confident as I know the course suits me with the long climbs and descents but I'm also aware that lots can go wrong too."

The event this year features a new 53 kilometre 'petite' distance for those not wanting to tackle the whole 100 kilometres. It has attracted more than 150 entries. Riders doing Le Race Petite will be briefed at the same time as the main event but will start just after the main field has left Cathedral Square in Christchurch.

The event provided a real boost to Christchurch's rebuild when it was the first major sports event to return to the central city for its start in March this year, four years after the regions devastating earthquakes saw its start line relocated.

Le Race has a mixture of challenging hill climbs, fast flats and exhilarating downhill that travels from Christchurch, across an extinct volcano, to the French surrounds of Akaroa.

Riders also tackle the event on tandems, mountain bikes and in teams of two or three with prizes for also up for grabs for the King and Queen of the Mountains, the Ross Bush Memorial Trophy for the best under 16 rider and the Envormation Vintage Cup, where the winner is determined based on a combination of bike frame age and race time.

Ends

Image: Hayden Roulston trains on part of the route Le Race will take on Saturday, the Summit Road, high above Lyttelton Harbour Credit: SKINS

Editors Notes

Saturday 21st March 2016

- 7:00 am Le Race riders village opens
- 7:45 am Compulsory Race Briefing Race on the Start Line.
- 8:00 am Start for Le Race at Cathedral Square
- 8.05 am Start for Le Race Petite
- 9.30am First riders in Le Race Petite arrive in Little River
- 10:39am First Riders descend into Akaroa
- 2:00 pm Last of the Riders arrive (the 6 hour club)
- 2:00 pm Prize Giving Starts at Le Domain
- 3:00 pm Prize Draw



Sunday

8:00-11:00 am Various Brunch rides leave Akaroa for Christchurch

Human interest stories

- A group of Manawatu cyclists are making their participation in Le race even tougher. Nineteen cyclists are riding from Palmerston North to Christchurch arriving the day before the event. The ride is a charity fund raiser as well for the SPCA so the ride is called the SPCA640 bike. 640 is the total kilometres they will ride from Palmerston North to Akaroa, including the Le Race course as well. They are well on their way to their target of raising \$5000. Key contact: Rob Ryan 027 436 3800
- Delwyn Jope a recovering cancer patient. Eight months ago she underwent major reconstructive surgery. Six weeks ago she won entry for PlaceMakers Le Race so has been 'hard out training ever since. She says that although she will not finish anywhere near the front finishing Le Race will be her greatest achievement to date. Contact 027 472 3056 jope.delwyn@gmail.com

Entry numbers and seeding

- The men's seeded riders numbers allocated 1 (Hayden Roulston) to 30 are white numbers on a black background.
- The women's seeded riders are allocated 51 (Sharlotte Lucas to 58) are white numbers on a red background.
- Competitors having done more than 10 Le Race events are gold numbers - black on a white background - these are numbered 101 to 116
- General classification numbers start at 200. These are black on a white background.
- Le Race Petite are black numbers on a yellow background

Historical notes

The course used for Le Race has some historic roots that date back to before the Second World War. The road was mostly shingle in 1935 and was finally fully sealed in 1959. Until after 1958 the race was from Christchurch to Akaroa on a Saturday, then Akaroa back to Christchurch on Labour Day Monday. It later changed from Christchurch to Akaroa return on the same day with an hour and a half break for lunch.

Le Race was first held in 1999.

For more information see www.lerace.co.nz

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For more information please contact:

Sheree Stevens
Not Just Events
021 440 488

John McKenzie
enthuse media & events
021 384 730
