

2016 TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST August 10 – 14



July 13, 2016

BRETT'S TEAM HUNTS AN ELUSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOUR VICTORY

Olympic gold medallist Brett Aitken is banking on speed to help steer his South Australian Sports Institute team to a coveted victory in the upcoming Lakes Oil-Fulton Hogan Tour of the Great South Coast road cycling classic.

Since the tour's inception in 2012, overall victory in the five-day event has eluded South Australian riders.

The West Australian Anthony Giacoppo won the opening event, the New Zealanders Samuel Horgan and Patrick Bevin triumphed in 2013 and 2015 respectively, and the Victorian Brenton Jones sprinted to an amazing win in 2014.

Adelaide-based Aitken, SASI's head cycling coach, is one of Australia's most decorated bike riders of all time.

His international track medal haul included Olympic gold, silver and bronze, two gold and a silver at the Commonwealth Games, and gold in Australia's four-man teams pursuit line-up at the world championships in Norway in 1993.

Aitken's Olympic gold came with partner Scott McGrory in the spine-tingling Madison at the 2000 Sydney Games. McGrory, now a prominent cycling television commentator, will be covering the Tour of the Great South Coast.

Aitken will manage a youthful seven-man squad in the tour, which will be raced over a spectacular 511-kilometre course in South Australia and Victoria from August 10-14.

He is hoping the seven-stage tour's unique format, with 55 intermediate sprints offering a total of five minutes and 30 seconds in bonus time, will assist in propelling his riders into leadership calculations.

"We don't have the strong men of some of the other teams, but we have some really fast guys and some outstanding up-and-coming riders," Aitken said.

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- 2 -

"It's a good rounded solid team that could do a bit of everything and, who knows, if the breaks go our way, we could have our first South Australian winner?"

Heading the SASI squad is the teams pursuit specialist Alex Porter who was extremely unlucky to miss selection in the Australian line-up for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Porter was a member of Australia's gold medal-winning teams pursuit squad at the world championships in London this year. He was overlooked for the Games in favour of some season campaigners like Jack Bobridge, Michael Hepburn, Glenn O'Shea and Adelaide's Alex Edmondson.

The other SASI members are Rohan Wight, gold medallist in the madison and teams pursuit at the world junior championships last year, Harry Carpenter, Russell Gill, Tommy Kaesler, cyclocross specialist Tom Chapman and youngster Cooper Sayers, a likely candidate for the CFMEU Rising Star award.

If Aitken's boys do not succeed in securing overall victory, they seem certain to be strong contenders for the Campolina sprint championship and criterium title.

The fifth Tour of the Great South Coast will kick-off with a traditional 30-lap criterium around Mount Gambier's Vansittart Park at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, August 10.

The race will take in Port MacDonnell, Penola, Casterton and Cape Bridgewater before ending with a criterium on Portland's scenic waterfront at 12.30 p.m. on Sunday, August 14.

The tour is backed by the municipalities of Mount Gambier, Grant and Wattle Range in South Australia, and Glenelg in Victoria.

It forms part of Cycling Australia's Subaru National Road Series.

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