



TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST 2017

JULY 26 - 30

WEEK OF BIKES, BOOKS AND BIRTHDAYS FOR YOUNG CYCLIST

CARTER Turnbull will celebrate his 17th birthday on Friday on a two-and-a-half hour gut-busting journey. And loving every minute of it!

And immediately following the demanding fourth leg of the 500km Port of Portland-Fulton Hogan Tour of the Great South Coast, Turnbull will forsake birthday celebrations to complete assignments from his Year 11 studies at Templestowe College.

The combination of cycling and study is all-consuming for Turnbull, who will embark on his first five-day tour in this Cycling Australia Subaru National Road series event.

He returned only on Sunday morning from eight races in Belgium and Holland where he finished in the top 20 in every event.

"I finished second in a 50km race in Holland and third in an 85km race in Belgium. It was great experience and I am fit and in good condition for this event," he said.

He accepts he is stepping up in class in this race and enters Wednesday's start at Mt Gambier without great expectations.

"It is all about gaining experience. It looks a really tough course, over 500km, and I've only ever ridden in a two day event before," he said.





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Turnbull, who names his strengths as time trialling and climbing, began his promising young career at the Blackburn club in 2012. He moved to St Kilda in 2014 and then joined Inform Tinel. Team management considered him one of the best first year under 19 cyclists in the country and promptly promoted him to the senior ranks this year.

"School has been very accommodating. The teachers give me 'homework' to complete, which I've done overseas and I will do again on this tour, and so far I've managed very well."

Turnbull is one of 28 up-and-coming cyclists keen to impress in the CFMEU Rising Star category.

So rather than partying with mates like most 17 year-old birthday boys, he'll be pumping the pedals in southwest Victoria between Heywood and Casterton over 92.9km. He'll contest four sprints and five hill climbs and have little time to admire the stunning scenery of rolling hinterlands on the route that takes in Hotspur, Digby, Merino, Paschendale, Henty and Sandford.

Turnbull is part of the six young Victorian cyclists who will represent the Inform Tinel team, and one of the 18 under 23-year-olds from Victoria in the Rising Star battle.

But the competition is widespread. South Australia has nine representatives, New South Wales six, Tasmania and the ACT two apiece, with Samuel Phipps travelling from New Zealand for the season launch of the national road series.





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Max Stewart, also from Victoria, celebrated his 17th birthday only last month and will be joined by another Rising Star contender Drew Morey in the Terengganu team which includes five cyclists from Malaysia under the directorship of former dual British road cycling champion, England's Jeremy Hunt. That will be an experience.

While they will have youth and unbridled enthusiasm on their side, many of the 100 cyclists are hardened veterans with exceptional experience. The 2012 race winner Anthony Giacoppo returns. The West Australian, 31, won the inaugural tour in 2012 and has won 40 professional races in Australia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

He will compete in the seven-man Isowhey Sports Swiss Wellness Team alongside local up-and-coming Warrnambool talent Sam Lane and Robbie Hucker, with fellow West Australian Scott Sutherland, bronze medallist at the London Olympics, and SA pair Chris Harper and Tim Roe and young Tasmanian Alastair Christie-Johnson.

Christie-Johnson will know plenty about this iconic cross-border tour of South Australia and Victoria, gleaned from his father Andrew.

Andrew, as team director, has enjoyed four wins from the five tours conducted so far. He began with Giacoppo on the 2012 initial tour, followed with outstanding Victorian road sprinter Brenton Jones in 2014, then the New Zealander Patrick Bevin (who has just contested the Tour de France), and Bendigo's Sam Crome last year.





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Event overseer John Craven said a field of about 100 cyclists would tackle the 500km event from July 26-30 on what was recognised as a challenging season launch because of its difficult mix of terrain with criteriums, multiple sprints and hill climbs which provide some of the tightest and hard fought racing contests on the national circuit.

The competitors will start in Mount Gambier, travel to the coast at Port MacDonnell before crossing the border to tackle the rolling hinterland of Heywood and Casterton. They then return to the picturesque Cape Bridgewater circuit and Portland for the final CBD waterfront criterium.

“The Tour of the Great South Coast is developing a formidable reputation as a breeding ground for the future stars of Australian and New Zealand cycling,” Mr Craven said.

“It is exciting that the winner of the 2015 tour, New Zealand cyclist Patrick Bevin from the Avanti Racing Team, has just ridden in the Tour de France and is in impressive form.”

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