



# TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST 2017

JULY 26 - 30

## OLLIE RIDES HIGH IN DIFFERENT SADDLE

MENTION the name Ollie and sports fanatics instantly think of champion jockey Damien Oliver. However a different Ollie this week will be out to etch his name in Australian sporting glory in a different saddle.

Geelong’s young cyclist Oliver Kent-Spark is fresh from a successful year in Europe and expects to be a key player in the 500km Port of Portland-Fulton Hogan Tour of the Great South Coast.

Kent-Spark, at 24, is one of the nation’s most promising cyclists, the 2014 Melbourne to Warrnambool cycling classic being among a host of achievements.

While he does not expect overall victory in the South Australia/Victoria cross border event which begins in Mt Gambier on Wednesday and ends in Portland on Sunday, Kent-Spark does expect a bold showing from his Drapac Pat’s Veg Cycling team.

“Matt Ross and Brad Evans (NZ) will be the go-to men but I am fit and in good form after the time in Europe and I’ll be an opportunist in a lot of stages,” he said.

Ollie took to the saddle only after a severe football injury.

“When I was 13 I suffered stress fractures in my back from football so I had to avoid impact sport. I rode with my dad as he prepared for the Make A Wish Foundation ride and soon after, in 2007, I had my first serious ride for the Geelong Cycling Club.

“Everything has been an experience since. I enjoyed a wonderful year in 2014 when I won the Melbourne to Warrnambool, and then won the King of the Mountain, Sprint and Most Aggressive rider titles at Toowoomba and capped it off with the King of the Mountain title on the Tour of Adelaide.





# TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST 2017

JULY 26 - 30

- 2 -

"I've been improving slowly and I've just spent the last year in Belgium, where I rode throughout France, Belgium, Luxembourg and in the Tour of Britain.

"I'd already raced in Belgium at an amateur level in 2011 and 2012 as well as at the top level on the Australian domestic scene since 2009.

"It is all experience and I've returned from Europe this time in good condition which should hold me in good stead for this tour.

"I've ridden the Tour of the Great South Coast a couple of times without any exceptional success, but with a bit of team success.

"It is a tour that always provides a good race, and I'd like to think there are sections there that will suit me. I am an opportunist. I am really comfortable if we are finishing in a small group just like in the Melbourne to Warrnambool but I am more a lead out rider if there is a big bunch, and that's where Matt Ross and Matt Evans hopefully can bring us some team success."

Kent-Spark, who has combined his cycling with a Bachelor of Management course at Deakin University, certainly will be one to watch as he concentrates on his penchant for a breakaway.

The tour begins with a 36km criterium at Mt Gambier on Wednesday morning before a 65km road race around Blue Lake.





# TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST 2017

JULY 26 - 30

- 3 -

On Thursday, the road race of 137.6km is at Port MacDonnell, before the tour crosses the border into Victoria for the demanding 92.8km road race from Heywood to Casterton.

On Saturday, the cyclists face a 121.4km challenge at Cape Bridgewater before Sunday's 48km finish at Portland.

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

**Kipp Kaufmann**  
Cycling Australia  
0430 303 577

**Rod Nicholson**  
Media Officer – Caribou Publications  
0417 134 673

**John Craven**  
Caribou Publications  
0408 558 469

