

2016 TOUR OF THE GREAT SOUTH COAST August 10 – 14



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SCOTT RIDES BACK TO THE GREAT SOUTH COAST

London Olympian and Commonwealth Games triple gold medallist Scott Sunderland heads a classy line-up of Australasian cyclists to contest next week's Lakes Oil-Fulton Hogan Tour of the Great South Coast.

The West Australian speedster, who this time last year harboured dreams of competing at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, hopes to reinvigorate his stalling career at the five-day tour – a race he knows well, winning four stages in dashing style at the 2015 version.

Sunderland, 28, will ride as an individual in the small Inform Racing team in the 100-strong field, which contains seven New Zealanders, an American, and emerging cyclists from all Australian states. (Field attached).

Olympic and cycling authorities virtually pulled the rug from underneath Sunderland's feet when his pet event – the 1000-metre track time trial – was deleted from the Games program in the mid-2000s.

Sunderland won the frenetically-gruelling time trial at the 2010 New Delhi Commonwealth Games and retained his title in Glasgow four years later. He also netted gold in the three-man team sprint in Delhi – the event in which he represented Australia at the 2012 London Olympics, narrowly missing a bronze medal.

It was Sunderland's plan after last year's Great South Coast Tour to switch to track endurance racing so he could hopefully be considered for selection in Australia's top-flight four-man teams pursuit squad in Rio. He abandoned those plans around Christmas when he decided to change his career direction and concentrate on road racing as a professional.

Sunderland secured a contract with the San Francisco-based Illuminate team, but his opportunities have been restricted by illness and injuries.

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He crashed out of a major tour in China last month, but is banking on achieving impressive results at the Great South Coast Tour to give him an important confidence-booster.

“The Great South Coast Tour is such a good event that I'm really happy to be racing in it again,” he says. “If I can land a couple of stages, it will be a big help to me.”

Because of some of the tough terrain, Sunderland may not be a contender for overall victory, but he is certainly a strong candidate to win the Campolina sprint and criterium championships.

The 511-kilometre tour starts with a criterium at Mount Gambier's Vansittart Park at 11 a.m. next Wednesday and ends with another street race on Portland's spectacular waterfront at 12.30 p.m. on Sunday, August 14. (Course attached).

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