

Boulogne-Billancourt, 28 June 2024

# A FAN-TASTIC L'ÉTAPE DU TOUR DE FRANCE

Held on the same course as the twentieth —and penultimate— stage of the 2024 Tour de France, L'Étape du Tour de France will take the 14,000 cyclists expected to take the start on a romp on the roads of the Alpes-Maritimes between Nice and the Col de la Couillole, under the same conditions as the elite of the sport. The peloton will be a miniature United Nations, with 90 nationalities present and 35% of foreign riders, while 44% of entrants are poised to make their debut in the event. The start list also includes several top athletes.

#### Key points:

- The 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of L'Étape du Tour de France, held between Nice and the Col de la Couillole on 6 July 2024, will pit the field against a 138 km course with an altitude gain of 4,600 metres
- Four mountain passes, including the Col de Turini and the final ascent, on the menu of the ultimate cyclosportive in Europe, the only one held on closed roads
- A prestigious win that catches the imagination
- Star athletes of every stripe and persuasion on the start line
- Over 300 charity race numbers to help Mécénat Chirurgie Cardiaque
- Press accreditation open at <u>registering.aso.fr</u>

The clock is ticking down as the eager participants finish polishing their form, take care of the final details, review the course time and again and visualise themselves tackling the event. The big day is just around the corner for the 14,000 cyclists slated to take part in the race, each with their own goal, each facing their own challenge.

Budding talents have often put their name on the map in L'Étape du Tour de France. The 2017 victor, **Jonas Abrahamsen**, went on to turn pro. He entered the Tour de France last season and even claimed his maiden win in a UCI ProSeries race, the Brussels Cycling Classic, on 2 June. Quite the aspirational tale. There will be no shortage of candidates to succeed **Artus Jaladeau** from Toulouse, who claimed the previous edition and has since turned pro too. The Swiss Dimitri Bussard and the Frenchman **Damien Jeanjean**, second and third last year, are back for more.

In the same vein, several women will be looking to follow in the slipstream of the Czech title holder, **Martina Sáblíková** (a three-time Olympic gold medallist and eleven-time world speed skating champion). The Ukrainian **Victoria Bondarenko**, who fled the ravages of war in her home country for Belgium last April, ranks among the contenders. Another woman to watch is **Julie lemmolo**, a triathlete competing for Team XEFI. A couple of weeks ago in Hamburg, she posted the best ever French performance in an Ironman event, 8:34:03. Her time of 4:28 in the cycling segment was also a French Ironman record. "L'Étape du Tour de France will be a good training ride ahead of the Ironman World Championship in Nice on 22 September", explains the triathlete. "I've been spending the summer in the Alps for several years and putting in some serious mileage. L'Étape du Tour is an opportunity to ride in a laid-back atmosphere, on closed roads and with the organisation on point."

Olympic gold medallists and world champions hit the road





Other elite champions with stellar records from other disciplines will also line up in Nice on Saturday, 6 July. True to L'Étape du Tour de France, skiers will again be turning up in numbers. Among them is the two-time world champion and slalom World Cup winner **Jean-Baptiste Grange**. "I've always loved cycling, but I've never been really good at it", he points out. "I already took part in 2013, when the ski federation put together a team for the stage from Annecy to Semnoz. The final climb put me in a world of pain. This time round, it was Julbo who invited me, with my brother-in-law. It's a nice challenge to celebrate our big four-ohs. This is going to be awesome. It's worlds apart from my experience as a skier. We had to start taking cycling seriously. We put in a lot of training miles. The weather didn't help, but I went out a lot in the spring anyway. I'll have to play it smart and leave something in the tank for the last stretch. It's going to be a gruelling challenge, but I can't wait to start."

Léo Slemett (world freeride champion), Maurice Manificat (four Olympic medals in cross-country skiing), Antoine Collomb-Patton (French para biathlon champion), the ski cross champion Alizée Baron (world championship medallist in ski cross with two Olympic participations under her belt), the Swede Sturla Holm Lægreid (Olympic gold medallist and multiple-time world championship medallist in biathlon) and the ski mountaineering champions Arthur Blanc and Emily Harrop have all thrown their hats into the ring.

## Alexandre Lloveras tackles L'Étape du Tour ahead of the Paralympic Games

Alexandre Lloveras is spending the week before the event at a training camp on the track in Roubaix to prepare for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. He is itching to take the start of his third L'Étape du Tour de France. "I'm raring to go", he says. "Like in previous years, I'll be on a tandem with my father. My brother, an international para triathlete with the French team, will be on a tandem too. It'll be a cool family outing. I'll be a bit tired after the training camp, but it's all about having a blast and overcoming a challenge. It's become a bit of a tradition for me over the last three years. In winter, when it's cold or raining, L'Étape du Tour de France gives me and my father a reason to get out there. This year, with an elevation gain of 4,600 metres, we're going to have a great time. We're in for an awesome day on the saddle."

#### 300 "Runners of the Heart" for Mécénat Chirurgie Cardiaque

Over **300** participants in this edition will be proud to pull on a jersey in the colours of Mécénat Chirurgie Cardiaque. To get their hands on a race number for L'Étape du Tour de France, each of these riders has pledged to raise at least €800 in donations for the charity from their friends and family or with the support of their business. A grand total of more than **€200,000** has been raised in this way. Pinning on a charity race number also puts a human face on the sporting challenge. Mécénat Chirurgie Cardiaque enables children in developing countries with heart defects to undergo surgery, if they cannot be treated in their home country due to a lack of technical or financial resources (average cost of surgery for the charity: €12,000). Over 4,500 children have received treatment since Professor Francine Leca set up the organisation in 1996. It has been a long-standing social partner of the Tour de France for 20 years. Its goal for this edition is to raise enough funds to cover the costs for 17 heart surgeries!

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