

5th of August

World-first bike ride for sustainability

Australian Keith Tuffley has done the Giro and and Tour, now the Vuelta remain.

48-year old Australian Keith Tuffley (living in Switzerland) will attempt a world-first by riding every stage, and every kilometre, of Europe's three Grand Tours; the Giro d'Italia, Tour de France and Vuelta a España – in one season, solo. Getting on his bike at 5am each day, he is riding on the same day as the professional cyclists, crossing the finish line of each stage before the course is closed. Each Grand Tour is 21 days, so he'll be doing this for 63 days, covering a total of 10,253 kilometres all over Europe. The Giro and the Tour is already done, now the Vuelta remain...

No other amateur cyclist has ever attempted this feat, and only 32 professionals have ever done it in the 100 years of the Grand Tours history.

How did the idea come to mind?

The idea came to Keith three years ago, when the Tour de France passed through his village in Switzerland. He decided to ride along for a few days, and realised it was possible to do the whole course this way, cycling roads closed to vehicles and flanked by spectators mere hours before the professionals. So in 2011, he cycled the whole Tour de France. In 2012, he did the Giro d'Italia. This year he decided to tackle all three grand tours.

“At what other global sporting event can you use the iconic venue right before the main event?” he says. “Imagine shooting a few goals at Wembley or playing a match at Wimbledon –mere hours before the big event and surrounded by spectators who have already gathered to see the pros. It's a one-of-a-kind experience.”

Why is he doing it?

«First of all, I love cycling! Secondly, I believe cycling is the mode of transportation that get you the closest to nature, people an places as one possibly can. Thirdly I want to use this opportunity to promote another of my greatest passions; environmental sustainability, using the most eco-friendly way of traveling there is,” Keith says.

63 days on a bike -63 inspirations to environmental sustainability

We believe the issues of sustainability are so complex that people tend to push it aside. So, we've decided to focus on giving people tools to understand more. If one understands more, it is easier to feel and eventually act. And we have enough days. So instead of raising money (which I did the last few years for environmental causes), which I believe gives people a way to bail themselves out of caring, we want to "raise awareness". 63 days on a bike, 63 inspirations to environmental sustainability. It is more challenging, but even more important. So the website, www.grandtoursproject.com, will not only feature daily updates and a daily video, but also daily eco-stories and eco-quotes about sustainability, environmental issues and innovative ways of responding to climate change.

Will he make it?

"I think I have the mental discipline, and the physical strength, to get through this," says Keith. "But I've never done more than one grand tour in a season. And the one major issue is my right knee. I've already had one operation on it and if it gives out and gives me too much pain, well, I might have to pull out. I'm certainly going to give it my best shot."

For more information, images and interviews with Keith Tuffley, please contact:

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