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News**Even Lance can't wait**

I've never seen so many people on bikes - Armstrong

March 12, 2010 *Edition 2*

NATASHA PRINCE, MURRAY WILLIAMS and KEVIN MCCALLUM Staff Reporters

Even the world's most famous cyclist says he can't wait to ride in the Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour.

Lance Armstrong said yesterday he had "never seen 38 000 people on bicycles" at a competitive race before.

Armstrong will join tens of thousands of cyclists on the streets of Cape Town on Sunday. He and his teammate, South African pro-cyclist Daryl Impey, will both ride in the jersey of Armstrong's newly formed Team RadioShack.

Even as Armstrong threw his weight behind the city's safer cycling campaign this week, the recent cycle-related horrors on the Cape's roads continue: two cyclists were knocked down in Hermanus by an allegedly drunk driver this morning. At the time of going to press, the pair were being treated in a local hospital.

Meanwhile, the organisers of the Pick n Pay Cape Argus Giro del Capo are hoping that the four-day professional stage race, which ends today with the time trial on Signal Hill, will be replaced by a longer, more prestigious tour next year.

The event, which was initially cancelled after a sponsor could not be signed, was saved in December when the sponsors of the Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour came on board. However, it has been learnt that Cycling SA is hoping to host a Tour of South Africa before the Cycle Tour next year.

It has been some time since the Rapport Tour traversed South Africa and hosted the likes of Jan Ullrich and Sean Kelly.

This year the Giro del Capo was downgraded to a national tour and not an International Cycling Union graded race, as it has been for several years.

The event has attracted a strong field, but some of the competitors are not happy that the short, sharp nature of the race has seen a mountain biker, albeit one as strong as Burry Stander, lead the event going into today's final stage on Signal Hill.

Back in Cape Town, Cycle Tour co-organiser Dave Bellairs was on the starting line this morning in discussions with Armstrong's team about where he would start in the race, and suggestions were that it could be in the "Invitational" group, up front.

On Armstrong's chances of victory, Bellairs said: "Daryl and Lance are going to have their work cut out for them if they want to win it, up against the passion of the local riders and what winning this race would mean to them.

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"But wouldn't it be lovely if Lance won? Who needs seven Tours de France when you have one Argus!"

Yesterday Armstrong, talking to staff and patients at Groote Schuur Hospital on a cancer awareness campaign, said the next few days were a "huge weekend, not only for South Africa and Cape Town but for cycling all over the world".

"I've never seen 38 000 people on bicycles. The most I've ever seen was about 200 at the Tour de France," he said.

Armstrong arrived in town this week to promote and support the JAG Foundation, which encourages healthy lifestyles through the development of sport.



He joins a list of celebrities who have raced in the Cycle Tour in the past, including fellow Tour de France legend Miguel Indurain and actor Matt Damon.

For Steve Kitshoff, who has been fighting off cancer for the past year, meeting Armstrong has been inspirational.

Steve, a Groote Schuur High School pupil who turns 18 today, met the cyclist at Groote Schuur Hospital yesterday.

He said he admired Armstrong because he too had suffered from and overcome testicular cancer.

"He makes me believe that nothing is impossible, even if you're going through a really bad experience, you can get through it."

Steve was diagnosed with testicular cancer, which later spread and attacked his abdomen and his chest.

He went for his final chemotherapy treatment three weeks ago. He now has to undergo several more tests but is recovering well.

Yesterday Armstrong told a room full of doctors, cancer survivors and media that it was very difficult to get rid of the stigma of cancer.

Meanwhile, the Cape Argus Lifecycle Expo opened its doors to the cycling community at the Good Hope Centre yesterday, with about 79 000 visitors expected before the exhibition ends tomorrow afternoon.

Armstrong and Impey will be signing autographs at the Livestrong stand at the expo today, between 5pm and 6pm.

The Cycle Tour is set to generate about R400 million for the Western Cape economy from money spent on travelling, accommodation and fuel as out-of-towners arrive in droves.

Residents and visitors not participating in the Cycle Tour should plan their routes carefully on Sunday as many road closures are planned around the event.

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Residents in Muizenberg, St James, Kalk Bay, Clifton, Bantry Bay and Sea Point have been encouraged not to park along the Main Road.

Last year's gale-force winds will be foremost in the minds of cyclists, but the predicted wind speed is a more moderate 45km/h on average.

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