

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12pm 3rd April

Tour of Britain 2008 Takes Cycling to the People:

Iconic London circuit lays down blueprint for future Tour finishes
Overall Finish in European Capital of Culture
New Stage in North East of England
Daily TV coverage



3rd April London Transport Museum – Covent Garden

Today (3rd April) at the London Transport Museum, Technical Director Michael Bennett and CEO Hugh Roberts unveiled the route of the 2008 Tour of Britain

Michael Bennett said:

"This is the most ambitious and wide reaching edition of the race to date with an 8 day route starting in the heart of London and finishing in Liverpool. From the Thames to the Mersey, this is an iconic route that presents a wonderful picture of Britain."

Introducing the race to an audience of partners, sponsors and members of the press, Hugh Roberts declared:

"The event you see before you today is the distillation of four years of development and strategic growth, doubling in length over that time. Along the way we've instigated the creation of a multi-force escort team for race safety and acted as a springboard for the generation of cyclists who are making the UK the world leader in the sport. The Tour of Britain is at the heart of cycling in the UK, taking the sport to the people."

The launch event saw a number of firsts unveiled by the organisers of the race:

Central London Start

The 2008 race will begin with an 85km stage around an 8.5km circuit in the heart of London. Following on from last summer's Tour de France grand depart, spectators will have another opportunity to see the peloton race en masse around the city centre with all the action covered live on a giant screen.

The 8.5km circuit that the organisers have created along with partners TfL will, in future years form the finale of the whole race as part of a 4 year deal also announced today.

Finish in Liverpool: European Capital of Culture

For the finale of this year's race, The Tour returns to the North West, the region where it all began in 2004 and where better than Liverpool, European Capital of Culture. The final stage of the race will begin in Blackpool, another regular stopping

off point for the Tour over the last 4 years. The celebrations will begin as soon as the race hits the streets of Liverpool, but the riders work will not be over as they entertain the crowds with several laps of finishing circuit around the city, showing off to the watching world the huge changes that Liverpool has undergone as part of its renaissance.

New Stage for the North-East

With an extra day on the itinerary for 2008, The Tour of Britain selected the North East region from a number of bids to host the additional stage. The first visit of the race to the region will begin in Darlington, one of England's six cycling demonstration towns, before heading north to finish in Gateshead.

Daily ITV coverage

For the first time in its history, The Tour of Britain will receive daily coverage on free to air TV in 2008 with a one hour highlights package being broadcast on ITV4 every evening throughout the race and repeated the following day. Daily coverage will bring the race to a wider audience than ever before and with regional news previews the night before each stage, there'll be no excuse for missing The Tour in 2008.

At the recent world track championships in Manchester Team GB shattered the world record in the team pursuit. Three of the quartet who smashed that record took part in The Tour of Britain last September and observers of the sport will hope to see a victorious Team GB return to the race this year, with gold medals from Beijing to show off to the ever appreciative British public.

Cycling in the UK is enjoying a buoyant time at the moment with more people using bikes than ever before and the men and women of our national squad dominating the sport on the track. As a sport and as a means of transport, cycling is on the up and The Tour of Britain is very much at the heart of that success.

Mike Thompson, Head of Sponsorship & Events at E.ON, Official Partner of The Tour of Britain, said "We are extremely proud to be an Official Partner of this celebrated race for the third year running, particularly in this Olympic year which promises to be an exciting one for British Cycling. With the 2008 race now extended to 8 stages and with daily TV coverage of the race, we will reach an even larger audience throughout the UK, including some of our key sites and customer regions."

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For further press information, please contact Paul Rowlands on 07921 612091
Information & images can be downloaded from www.tourofbritain.co.uk from 12pm
on 3rd April