

All set for a classic 2016 Haute Route Alps from Nice to Geneva

The peloton for the 2016 Haute Route Alps is coming together in the scorching summer heat of downtown Nice, the capital of the French Riviera, for one of the toughest events in amateur cycling.

Riders have come from all over the world – from as far afield as Brazil, Russia, Singapore and Australia – and in their minds is the daunting challenge that only the Haute Route offers some of the best amateur riders in the world.

Starting at dawn tomorrow, with the first of seven fully timed and ranked stages, hundreds of competitors will tackle just under 22,000 metres of climbing over 800kms of road. It will test even the toughest athletes to the absolute limit as they make their way to the finish at Geneva on September 3rd.

The forecast looks good for the week with a sizzling hot first day en route to the French ski resort of Auron which sits a full 1,600 metres above the beach at Nice where thousands were enjoying the sun this afternoon.

Ben Chandelier, event director for the Haute Route series, says the 2016 Haute Route Alps looks set to be a classic and a worthy follow-up to last week's hugely successful Haute Route Pyrenees.

"Once again we have laid on a true test for our riders in some of the most iconic cycling country in the world," said Chandelier.

"Our team is dedicated to ensuring that competitors in the Haute Route Alps enjoy every minute on their bikes and the benefit of being 'treated like a pro' before, after and during their rides. This is something that makes the Haute Route unique," he added.

As usual the peloton will be accompanied by 37 marshals on motorbikes plus medical and mechanical support on the road and there will be hundreds of volunteer marshals helping to direct riders safely from start to finish each day.

Stage one begins with a little loosener up the Col de Nice, just outside the city, before the field takes on – for the first time in the Haute

Route - the Col de Turini, renowned for its presence in the Monte Carlo rally.

Other highlights of what promises to be a memorable week of personal goal setting and achieving will be the first ever Individual Time Trial up the iconic Col du Galibier and the 17 hairpins on the climb up the Lacets de Montvernier on day five.

For every Haute Route rider there is a personal goal on the horizon this week. Teri Waldron, aged 52, from Nova Scotia in Canada is aiming for the top third among the women and top-half overall. "I want to see beautiful countryside, challenge myself physically and participate in an event that I think will be fantastic," she said.

David Hofman, 36, from Prague is looking to "have a blast" on his bike. "I'd like to be in the top 150 – that would be fine," he said. Ben Wood, meanwhile, a 37-year-old rider from Leeds in the UK, says completing the course is the first goal. "To survive – and after that to push myself pretty hard," he said.

The Haute Route Alps peloton is home to 50 different nationalities. Among them is a select group of 29 riders who are taking on the formidable Triple Crown, riding all three Haute Route events back-to-back and who have just finished the first stage in the Pyrenees.

The Haute Route Alps is followed by the final event in the series, the Haute Route Dolomites Swiss Alps which runs from Geneva to Venice, starting on September 5th and finishing on 11th September.

Follow the 2016 Haute Route series though our live coverage at www.hauteroute.org and through our official facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.