



ROCHE ON 2010 SUMMER OF CYCLING

Former Tour de France winner, Stephen Roche, will ride The London-Paris 2010. Roche, an ex-world champion and Giro d'Italia winner, has been looking ahead to what will be an exciting summer of cycling.



Scott Sunderland and Stephen Roche leading the peloton in The London-Paris 09

Roche began with Team Sky's debut in the 2010 Tour de France and he believes success will all hinge on Bradley Wiggins for a podium finish. Team Sky will be among the 22 teams starting the world's biggest cycle race in Rotterdam on July 3. Team Sky's aim is to put the first British rider on the Tour de France podium within five years.

Roche, who won cycling's Triple Crown in 1987, said: "There are lots of questions still to be answered by Team Sky and riding in the Tour for the first time together as a team will be a very steep learning curve."

For the first time in many years, the podium places in the 2010 Tour de France are wide open. With many star riders spread across the teams and the addition of the Team Sky newcomers, this year's Tour is poised to be one of the most exciting yet.

Roche said: "I hope we see Edvald Boasson Hagen or Chris Sutton winning a sprint but this will be difficult if Mark Cavendish is as strong as he was in 2009. Wiggins does have the potential to win a mountain or time trial stage. He has the experience of last year and I know he's been developing in the mountains, so the expectation is there and I know morale in the team is high."

Lance Armstrong, Alberto Contador and Andy Schleck are all expected in the line-up for this year's Tour. Team Sky's Tour riders are likely to be announced after the Ardennes Classic at the end of the month and the team is expected to be led by Bradley Wiggins. Roche believes Wiggins now has the experience and maturity as a rider to improve his Tour performance. Wiggins said recently: "I'm hugely proud to be in a British-based team taking on the Tour de France and I'm convinced we'll leave our mark."

Roche said: "For Team Sky, everything will hinge on the performance of Wiggins. If he does well the others will roll in behind him. But at this kind of level everything has to be right. For the Tour de France, the planning has to be right and the riders have to listen to the experienced individuals on the team."



Stephen Roche and Scott Sunderland

Roche rode The London-Paris 09 with Team Sky senior sporting director, Scott Sunderland, who helped mastermind Carlos Sastre's Tour victory with Team CSC Saxo Bank in 2008.

Roche said of Sunderland: "Scott Sunderland is very intelligent and has immense character. He is an impressive individual who thinks hard about strategy. He knows how to win the Tour de France.

"Scott has Sean Yates alongside him and together they have an awesome reputation for attention to detail. Sean worked with Lance Armstrong and wore the yellow jersey. These are two very experienced heads, they are team players and Team Sky's young riders need to listen to them."

Roche's 25-year-old son, Nicholas, will be riding in the Tour for French team AG2R. Roche said: "He's having a great start to the season. He's lost weight and is already at his Tour riding weight. He's had some good finishes already, including a top five and he has the physical fitness and mental potential to win a stage this year.

"He's had the seconds and thirds and is just waiting for that big win. I think that this could be the year that he moves up a notch. Everything's in place and he just now needs a bit of luck. I would be so proud to see him win a stage."

In The London-Paris 2010, which takes place a week before the Tour, Roche will be riding alongside Olympic and former world cycling champion, Rebecca Romero, who is riding The L2P 2010 as part of her switch from track to road cycling. The ride is part of her preparation for the World Time Trial Championship, in Melbourne this September.

Also in the line up is former professional cyclist, Magnus Backstedt, who won the Paris-Roubaix in 2004 and the 19th stage of the 1998 Tour de France, ex-Formula 1 champion, Nigel Mansell, former England rugby captain, Will Carling and All Blacks legend, Zinzan Brooke.

Roche said: "The London-Paris is a great multi-stage ride and it's the highlight of the year for me on the bike. The L2P is serious cycling and I relish the challenge. I also enjoy the atmosphere of The L2P peloton. The riders are a great bunch of people and many of them have become friends."

The London-Paris 2010, staged by HotChillie, the global marketing and events company, is the UK's premier cycloportive. It is recognised as the closest the amateur rider can get to the Tour de France experience. The ride covers 550km in three days with a rest day in Paris. The Daily Telegraph recently ranked The L2P as one of the world's top 25 events, alongside the London and New York marathons. The event has also been named in the top ten of adventure events for women.

This year's L2P sponsorship partners are adidas, Science in Sport, Specialized, Cyclevox, Sigma Sport, Mavic, Ambrosia and Sportique.

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