

PRESS RELEASE

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Czech Tour: safer yet more challenging

World cycling will be seen live on the Czech roads at the end of July, when the Czech Tour takes place from 27 to 30 July! The Jumbo-Visma team, whose jersey is worn by reigning Tour de France champion Jonas Vingegaard, has confirmed its participation at the biggest domestic stage race. Lining up second at the start of the top category will be Bora - hansgrohe, whose roster also includes Sam Bennet, who boasts stage-wins at the Spanish Vuelta. The prelude to the Czech Tour, which has a new name, will be the Under-23 Peace Race in the second week of June.

New name, higher standard

"We are showing the world that we know how to organise cycling in the Czech Republic. We are building a national sports treasure. That is also why we have the word Czech in the title. We want it to be clear with which country we are connected. We are inspired by the best events abroad, we look at the Tour de Suisse, the Tour de France and others. We want to constantly improve, move higher. To prepare races that will be regularly on the calendar of the world's best riders and teams. We are preparing attractive and very demanding stages, while at the same time placing great emphasis on faultless service," says Leopold König, director of both races.

In an effort at further increasing the safety of the Czech Tour and the U23 Peace Race, Leo König invited South African Robert Hunter, a nine-time Tour de France participant, to join the organising team. He also takes care of safety at the Tour de Suisse. "Organizing at the World Tour level is routine for him. A racer's eye sees safety and the courses a little differently, we agree on a lot of things and see them the same way. For both the quality and the safety of the race, cooperation with such experts is the right way forward," says Leopold König, who has already toured the individual stages with Hunter by his side.

The general partner remains SAZKA, whose name has been linked to the race. The Czech Tour is also part of the Europe Tour series in 2023.

"Sazka is a big supporter of Czech cycling and we have big plans for the Czech Tour. It is the largest cycling race on Czech roads and our goal is clear, we want to move it up to the World Tour category and thus rank it among the most prestigious races in the world. The Czech Tour should be a festival for cyclists and fans alike, and one that the Czech Republic can be proud of," says Petr Jonák, director of external relations and sustainability at Sazka, adding: "Cycling is one of the most popular sports in the Czech Republic. We thus want to focus also on amateur cyclists, families with children, as well as on other cycling disciplines."

World Tour teams at the start

"The presence of Bora - hansgrohe and Jumbo-Visma, two elite teams from the World Tour, confirms that we are heading in the right direction. And we are in discussions with other great teams," says Leopold König, director of both events.

In total, ten UCI ProTeams teams have already signed up for the Czech Tour. The starting list may therefore include an extraordinary group of elite Czech riders. Daniel Babor, Tomáš Bárta and Michal Schlegel wear the jersey of Caja Rural Seguros RGA, Karel Vacek rides for the Italian Corratec team, Vojtěch Řepa for the Spanish Equipo Kern Pharma team, and the American team Novo Nordisk has Matyáš Kopecky in its ranks.

The registered teams include the Italian Eolo Kometa team with Lorenzo Fortunato, who won a stage at the Italian Giro, and the Norwegian Uno X, whose roster includes Alexander Kristoff as the winner of the Milan San Remo Monument, the Tour of Flanders and four stages on the Tour de France. Of course, there is also the domestic elite in the form of the Elkov Kasper and ATT Investments teams.

A total climb of 11 190 metres over four days

During the four stages of the Czech Tour, cyclists will ride 665.8 kilometres and climb 11,190 metres. The royal stage underwent fundamental changes. Cyclists will ride the Dlouhá strána twice, but the finish line will be at Červenohorské saddle. An elevation gain of almost 3,500 metres in a single stage will also be a test for seasoned climbers and riders preparing for the Vuelta, who should be on the starting list.

"I believe that by moving the race to the week immediately following the Tour de France, the Czech Tour will be used as preparation by cyclists who want to fight for a result at the World Championships and the Spanish Vuelta," says Leopold König.

The U23 Peace Race? A test comparable to races in the Alps and the Pyrenees

This year, the Peace Race is also part of the Nations Cup, which is in the highest category in the world for riders under the age of 23. It also includes stages in Poland, Slovakia and Hungary (Orlen Cup in May) and in France (Tour de l'Avenir in August). Four days of tough battles in Jeseníky are always a test for the young cyclists of their endurance and readiness to step up to the absolute cycling elite.

In the past, Tadej Pogačar (UAE Emirates), Filippo Zana (Jayco AlUla) and David Gaudu (Groupama - FDJ), all mainstays of their respective teams on the World Tour, have been among the winners here. This year, a total of 421.4 kilometres await the rising stars of the peloton, during which they will climb 7,651 metres. The royal stage has also undergone changes, as on June 10 the young competitors will ride up the Dlouhá strána and then climb to the Červenohorské sedlo.

"Every year we see talented young competitors race here, who will soon find a place on the World Tour. Individual national teams send their best cyclists to the Peace Race. They are often on the rosters of teams from the elite division or belong under the wings of pro-continental teams. And everyone regularly praises the fact that the Jeseníky Mountains reveal the strengths of all riders. Without exaggeration, we can say that it is a race comparable to those somewhere in the Pyrenees or the Alps," says Leopold König, director of the Under-23 Peace Race.

A big attraction is the potentially strong composition of the Czech national team, which could consist of competitors belonging to the World Tour or UCI ProTeam rosters. "I'm in touch with them, but of course it depends on the programs of their permanent teams," König points out.

Attractions for fans: a race on bike trainers and a photography exhibition

An extensive accompanying programme for both races awaits fans. During the winter months, they were able to go on a joint ride with the Czech professional Daniel Turk on the ROUVY

platform. In the autumn, ROUVY will also host a race against the backdrop of the Czech Tour for all enthusiasts.

Cycling fans in the capital will also get the opportunity to relive the exceptional moments of the Czech Tour, the Peace Race, as well as the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia. In the summer months, an exhibition of photographs by leading sports photographers will be held in Prague's Bořislavka, led by Markéta Navrátilová, who has photographed twenty-five years of the Tour de France.

The photos will be exhibited from the end of June to August. The exhibited photos will also be available to buy and the proceeds will go to support underprivileged children via the Czech Olympic Foundation, whose main partner has long been Sazka.

Program Czech Tour 2023

- Stage 1 - 27 July: Prostějov – Uničov (164.7 km/2 139 elevation gain)
- Stage 2 - 28 July: Olomouc – Pustevny (163.5 km/2 731 elevation gain)
- Stage 3 - 29 July: Moravská Třebová – Červenohorské sedlo (158.9 km/3 344 elevation gain)
- Stage 4 - 30 July: Šumperk – Šternberk (178.7 km/2 976 elevation gain)

Program Peace Race U23 – Grand prix Jeseníky

- Prologue – 8 June: Jeseník – Jeseník (3.1 km/25 elevation gain)
- Stage 1 – 9 June: Jeseník – Rýmařov (122.8 km/2 086 elevation gain)
- Stage 2 – 10 June: Bruntál – Červenohorské sedlo (129 km/2 819 elevation gain)
- Stage 3 – 11 June: Jeseník – Jeseník (166.5 km/2 721 elevation gain)

Accreditation, PR, photo, video, stage information and logos: www.zavodmiru.com/cs/pro-media

Accreditation, PR, photo, video, stage information and logos: www.czechtour.com/cs/pro-media

Partners of Czech Tour

general partner Sazka | **main partners** Allwyn, MND, Národní sportovní agentura | **partners** ACE sport, Crystal Bohemia | **with support from** Olomouc Region, Moravian-Silesian region, Uničov, Prostějov, Olomouc, Moravská Třebová, Šumperk, Šternberk, Český svaz cyklistiky | **supplier** Radioking

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Sazka a.s. is the largest and oldest lottery company in the Czech Republic, providing customers with the widest portfolio of games and everyday entertainment thanks to constant innovation and a responsible approach. The most famous game is Sportka, a popular game with more than 65 years of history. Since 2014, the company has been the operator of the Eurojackpot lottery, one of the largest games in Europe. The family of entertainment games also includes scratch cards, sports odds betting and quick-turn games. Sazka provides its products on the

online gaming portal www.sazka.cz and through a unique sales network with more than 7,800 points of sale across the Czech Republic. Sazka's terminals can also be used for a range of common transactions, from deposit book withdrawals to credit top-ups to direct debits. Non-lottery services also include the operation of SAZKAmobil, the largest Czech virtual mobile operator. Sazka is a leader in responsible gaming. In addition to international certificates from the European Lottery Association and the World Lottery Association, it develops its own Play with Reason project and prevention programmes in cooperation with non-profit organisations. Sazka and the Allwyn Group are members of the multinational investment group KKCG, which operates in 33 countries. www.sazka.cz.