The Tour de France 2017 starts today in Düsseldorf with the individual time trial

The German time trials world champion Tony Martin grasps the yellow leader's jersey /The start is at 3.15 pm at the Düsseldorf trade fair

The cycling world is watching Düsseldorf today with great anticipation! On Saturday, 1 July, the Tour de France 2017 kicks off with the individual time trials over 14 kilometres through the state capital. 198 cyclists from 22 teams will be setting off along the course of the 1st stage at Düsseldorf's trade fair, riding along Rheinufer in the direction of the old town and from there, back to the finish area at the fair. The individual time trials start at 3.15 pm. The German time trials world champion and freshly baked German champion Tony Martin goes to the starting line in Düsseldorf as one of the top favourites. ARD, WDR, ONE and Eurosport are live on the scene for their TV viewers. The race can also be viewed online in the live stream on Sportschau.de. At the opening of the A.S.O. Village at 1 pm, there is a remembrance of the late Federal Chancellor Dr. Helmut Kohl.

Düsseldorf's Lord Mayor Thomas Geisel is confidently looking forward to the start in a few hours: "Everything is prepared for a successful start to the Tour de France. From today, the focus is on top sport. I've got my fingers crossed for all the cyclists, and I hope to see great performances and fascinating pictures from the 1st and 2nd stage in Düsseldorf! Of course, I'd be especially happy if Tony Martin were to win."

Prominent guests are expected to the 1st stage:
Prince Albert II. of Monaco, Anne Hidalgo (Mayor of Paris), Laura Flessel-Colovic (Sports Minister of France), André Kuper (President of the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia), Heiko Maas (Federal Minister), Anne-Marie Descôtes (French Ambassador in Germany), Dr. Nikoalaus Meyer-Landrut (German Ambassador in France), Maria Lorena Gutierrez Botero (Ambassador of Colombia), Renata Kaznowska (Vice-President of Warsaw), Isabelle Berro-
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Amadei (Ambassador of the Principality of Monaco), Jan van Zanen (Mayor of Utrecht), Hans Wilhelm Reiners (Lord Mayor of Mönchengladbach), Marcel Philipp (Lord Mayor of Aachen), Dr. Peter Kurz (Lord Mayor of Mannheim), Barbara Ludwig (Mayor of Chemnitz), Reiner Breuer (Mayor of Neuss), Angelika Mielke-Westerlage (Mayor of Meerbusch), Klaus Pesch (Mayor of Ratingen), Christoph Schultz (Mayor of Erkrath), Dr. Ulrike Nienhaus (Mayor of Kaarst), Marc Venten (Mayor of Korschenbroich), Hubert Bruls (Mayor of Nijmegen), Rose Wiliams (Mayor of Reading), Thomas Hendele (District Administrator of Mettmann), Hans-Jürgen Petrauschke (District Administrator of Neuss), Wolfgang Spelthahn (District Administrator of Düren), Alain Courtois (First Councillor for Sport in Brussels), Rudolf Scharping (President of the Bund Deutscher Radfahrer (German Cycling Federation), Andreas Gursky (Photographic Artist) and Albrecht Woeste (Honorary Citizen of the City of Düsseldorf).

Anyone who wants to see the pro cyclists live and close up has the best opportunity at today's individual time trials. The sports fans can experience the start at Düsseldorf's trade fair grounds where the cyclists set off on the round circuit through the inner city at intervals of a minute. For this, the route first takes them along Rheinufer in the direction of the cultural centre Ehrenhof and over the Oberkassel bridge. Thus, the visitors on the left bank of the Rhine in Düsseldorf can also see the pros in their race against the clock. Over the Rheinknie bridge, the race track then leads back towards the city centre. The Rhine tower and the state government of North Rhine-Westphalia serve as a backdrop here. Past the Media Harbour with the famous Gehry buildings and on to Düsseldorf's most famous strip: Königsallee. At the end of the "Kö" the cyclists pass the Triton fountain and turn into Heinrich-Heine-Allee, past the Deutsche Oper (opera house) and back to Rheinufer.

**Finishing straight is 3.3 kilometres long**
The following finishing straight of 3.3 kilometre along the Rhine takes the cyclists back to the fair. It provides the best prerequisites for the time trial.
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specialists who fight for the first yellow jersey on this stretch. At the same time, it offers visitors a good chance to see the 198 pros zoom past today. Those who find a spectator's place at the fair don't just see the start, but also the finish of the 14-kilometre-long route. The length of the time trials also promises a first hint at the form of the leaders of the general classification.

The winner of the 1st stage will be honoured at the victory ceremony at 6.48 pm. This is to be held in the finish area of the trade fair grounds at Rotterdamer Straße.

The little bike pros will also be honoured today: before the start of the professional cyclists, the grand finale of the children's cycling competition, the Petit Départ is to be held. The winners of the six preliminaries are set to compete on the official route of the Tour de France and starting at 12 am, they will roll from the official start ramp at the trade fair grounds. Starting at 1.45 pm, the publicity caravan will drive along the route.

**Entertainment along the route is provided for**

Anyone who doesn't manage to get a good place along the route today has the opportunity to follow the race on one of the eight LED walls. For visitors in the inner-city centre, this has a double benefit: they can experience the cycling pros live on the route and once they have passed through, they can switch to the live transmissions in the event area at the "Festival du Tour", at Burgplatz, Marktplatz or at Grabbeplatz. Further LED walls are located at Graf-Adolf-Platz, the Bürgerwiese at Rheinpark, at K6-Bogen and on the picnic meadow on the edge of Hofgarten.

In addition to the pure transmission, visitors can enjoy the gastronomic offers, for example at the international Bürgerwiese at Rheinpark, south of the Theodor-Heuss bridge, where there are also hands-on activities for everyone. Onlookers can also expect similar goings-on at the picnic meadow on the edge of Hofgarten. Here, there's also plenty in store for children with special kids' activities. Sporting visitors are especially well provided for today at the "Festival du Tour" in front of the state government. Here there is a stage programme and sporting activities organised by sports clubs and organisations. Hobby cyclists can get information about cycling holidays in
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North Rhine-Westphalia. But also music lovers are well provided for here: the Big Band of the German Armed Forces is performing at 7 pm. And if you fancy seeing prominent sports people who are not whizzing past on bikes for a change, you should visit the action area of the German Armed Forces at Unteren Rheinwerft. On the stage at Burgplatz visitors are given information on all aspects of the Grand Départ, and get to see talks with.

The musical highlight will be the "Tour de France 3D" concert of the group Kraftwerk at Ehrenhof. As an opening act, there will be a performance by the group AIR, which will play at 7.30 pm. The concert is sold out.

All media information from the state capital of Düsseldorf to Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017 can be found on our media portal at www.duesseldorf.de/international/letour/media-portal.

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