
The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 30-06-2008 18:47

It is almost upon us and I cannot wait. It is the event of the Summer.

Yellow - Valverde
Green - Hushovd
Polka - Soler

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by diggedy derek - 30-06-2008 19:12

I know we generally have a ban on haters on these threads. But, even though my heart absolutely yearns for the Tour De France, after so many drug scandals last year, my head tells me..... this event is waaaay too discredited to bother with.

It really pains me to say that, too, with the possible exception of The Ashes, I've never watching enjoyed a sporting event as much as the Tour.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 30-06-2008 19:56

I am an optimist and I like to think that last year was the turning point. I know there have been many turning points and things aren't perfect. I'm sure there will be further bad things happening but I love it.

Even though last year was terrible in many obvious ways it was still utterly gripping and compelling.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 30-06-2008 22:05

Fausto Ptang wrote:

I am an optimist and I like to think that last year was the turning point. I know there have been many turning points and things aren't perfect. I'm sure there will be further bad things happening but I love it.

Even though last year was terrible in many obvious ways it was still utterly gripping and compelling.

I tried explaining this in the office today - no joy I'm afraid - looks like I'll have to battle for the remote come July 5th in our office!

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 30-06-2008 22:09

What about coverage on ITV4?

Is it live at the weekend and nightly highlights again?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 30-06-2008 22:12

I've got money on McEwen for green despite Lotto's claim that they'll be concentrating on Cadel in GC - 5/1 seem like

decent odds, especially if Cadel doesn't live up to early expectations.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 30-06-2008 22:32

<http://www.prendas.co.uk/details.asp?referrer=RHS&ID=1737>

<http://www.prendas.co.uk/details.asp?ID=1738>

<http://www.prendas.co.uk/details.asp?ID=1515>

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 01-07-2008 15:03

Eurosport has a Fantasy Tour De France game.

It's free, and you can set up a mini-league.

There's another fantasy TDF game on a site called Velogames.

With this one, you can't set up a mini-league. But if you pay £1.50 for the premium content and win any of the competitions, you get the choice of a replica shirt or a cycling magazine subscription.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 01-07-2008 16:38

McEwan not getting any team support shouldn't make any difference to be honest. He doesn't really have a lot of support (last year's stage to Canterbury being a rare example of the contrary). He does his own thing and doesn't ride like an Italian sprinter or like Boonen. He doesn't use a train really.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 01-07-2008 18:06

Jaune - it's a climber's course all over. Cunego.

Vert - Boonen

Pois - David De La Fuente

Blanc - I can never remember who's eligible. Thomas Lovkvist if he is, otherwise Remy Di Gregorio.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 01-07-2008 18:12

Oh, and it's been a great couple of days on the cleaner sport front. Floyd Landis has lost his final appeal, while Michael Rasmussen's got a two-year ban. Get in!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 01-07-2008 20:45

BB - Boonen is banned.

A few people think Cunego will win but I can't see him not having a bad day over the three weeks.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 01-07-2008 21:44

Wait, what? I haven't been following stuff for a bit - what'd they get him for?

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 01-07-2008 21:46

Oh, that? I just assumed it was going to blow over.

Mental. Well, then, Bennati.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 02-07-2008 05:58

Nope he's not riding either.

Just realised that Ricco is riding. I'm going to go for him to win instead of Valverde, even though he's going to be knackered.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by The Purple Cow - 02-07-2008 13:14

Yellow = Valverde

Green = Hushovd

Polka = Soler (unless he goes for the G.C., in which case De La Fuente.)

White = Gesink (He will win the G.C. within 5 years)

I wouldn't entirely rule out Cadel Evans. If it wasn't for his his knee-nack, he might have won it this year. Curnego is bound to have one bad day, and when he has a bad one, it's generally v.bad.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Oldelpaso - 02-07-2008 16:55

Hushovd for green. McEwen and Friere are playing second fiddle to GC contenders, and I doubt that Baden Cooke is going to be willing to act as lead out for Hunter. There aren't many flat stages though, so there's always the possibility that a GC rider could go for green if the yellow jersey slips out of reach.

Evans looks to be going for an Indurain style time trial led win, but I don't think he'll gain enough time to succeed, given his lack of aggression on the open stages. Valverde to win, with an honourable mention for Sastre.

Kreuziger to win the white jersey - he's the man in form.

Unsure about the mountains. Soler will be up there, but to avoid having the same choice as everyone else I 'll go with Piepoli.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 03-07-2008 00:55

Whaaaaaat, no Benna neither? I need to start paying attention. Fucking seriously?

In that case, nail Cunego on for the win for me. There'll be eight other superb riders there with no other thought in their heads but to put him over the line first, and I'd fancy him on his own anyway. This is a different Little Prince/Rabbit we're dealing with...

Cuh, McEwen then. He's never needed his team before. And while Gesink is a superb call, I've nailed my colours to the relevant mast already.

re EVANS: This isn't a triallist's course. Never going to happen. I think Sastre has a great shot atsecond though (you all know) I'd desperately love to see him win...

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by thom - 03-07-2008 13:30

Have you guys seen this? Google Maps have got interactive photos of the entire route

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 03-07-2008 13:42

There's nowt at all in the North-East, is there.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 05-07-2008 09:48

Just champagne.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 05-07-2008 09:55

Google have made some great things, but that interactive Tour de France photo thing reaches Microsoft levels of cumbersomeness.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 05-07-2008 10:11

Just learnt that there will be no time bonuses in this year's Tour. Is that all of them (the bonuses for stage winners and runners-up, as well as the in-stage sprint time bonuses)? What was the reasoning behind the change?

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Donald Potts - 05-07-2008 11:16

A clear sign of the rise of British cycling and the decline of the post-Armstrong/Landis US entrants is that this year on letour.fr if you want the site in English you click on a Union Jack rather than a Stars and Stripes.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by hissing fauna - 05-07-2008 11:40

is there a live stream anywhere?

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 05-07-2008 11:53

Try myp2p.eu

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by hissing fauna - 05-07-2008 11:58

of course. There's me thinking it's only for football. ta.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 05-07-2008 12:00

Yeah, it's always worth checking there. Some of the baseball is superb quality even full screen, as well.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 05-07-2008 12:13

Sean Kelly's Waterford accent gets stronger with every passing year.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by bull bull - 05-07-2008 15:10

Oooh, think he'll keep it the whole way?

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 05-07-2008 19:18

The accent? Yes.

The jersey? Nah.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Billy Casper - 05-07-2008 20:40

He'd better not. I put £2 on Cunego today at 12-1 because of what you said earlier.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 05-07-2008 20:47

My time bonuses query from earlier on is all the more pressing now, isn't it? If they haven't stopped time bonuses, Valverde is already 21 seconds clear of his main rivals?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Inca - 05-07-2008 21:08

Go Garmin-Chipotle!

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 06-07-2008 08:49

The lack of time bonuses are likely to favour riders like Cadel Evans who can just ride conservatively, sucking someone's wheel and not win stages with a bit of panache and style.

On the positive side it will keep things tighter, right up until the Alpe d'huez stage.

You have to feel sorry for Duclos-Lassalle, broken wrist after 100km and also Soler, already 3 minutes down. He should get that back in the mountains, but the GC is already out of reach.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 06-07-2008 13:46

I think Soler will be quite happy to be that far down at this stage - he was never going to be a serious GC challenger, but this frees him to do a big solo day in the mountains hoovering up KOM points without becoming a threat and being chased, a la Virenque and Rasmussen.*

*There's illustrious company, eh?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by The Purple Cow - 06-07-2008 18:50

My brother Tim rode L'Etape de Tour 2008 today, from Pau to Hautacam. Thus adding Tourmalet and Hautacam to his list of the great Tour climbs that he's climbed. He aims to do them all before he hangs up his cleats.

He finished the 159 km in just under 8 hours which is not bad for a bloke who will be 50 in a few weeks.

The Rapha site has a nice pictorial overview of the entire route.

<http://www.rapha.cc/index.php?page=490>

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 06-07-2008 18:53

Fantastic achievement. Well done to him.

Two cracking stages so far.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 06-07-2008 19:33

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/7491644.stm>

The new Alpe d'Huez.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 07-07-2008 13:00

I would so love to be able to hear the guru Sean Kelly commenting. A remarkable man, almost mute as a rider and now he predicts entire stages live on TV.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 08-07-2008 18:49

Laurent Fignon was desperately trying not to say too much about Schumacher's performance today. To paraphrase:

"That's... remarkable. 33 seconds more than Cancellara. That's... a lot better than he's ever done before... that's... well, Cancellara didn't have a great day... but... "

Followed by rapid looking-up in the studio of past performances in time trials. It all seemed depressingly familiar. I hope it isn't.

Cadel Evans was likeably bumbling in his post-race interview, especially as Valverde was finishing as he was being interviewed live, and he was trying to convert French times into English in his head.

I don't know what you get on Eurosport, but we get lots of interesting backstage stuff, like the weights of specific riders' bikes, average weights, why time trial bikes are heavier, the lightest bike, interviews with the guys making sure the bikes conform to regulations (and close-ups of their little measuring devices to make sure riders' arm joints aren't opened more than 120 degrees)... the news that Cancellara would be using a 54x11 bracket... and so on...

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 08-07-2008 18:51

And already, the "cleanest ever" TdF has a rider in third place who's come back after serving a ban for EPO. He's British, of course, so we'll forgive that then ...

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 08-07-2008 19:02

Did anyone see Le Blaireau confirm his reputation as a hard-man after yesterday's stage, when that protestor leapt onto the presentation platform?

While security men gawped, Bernard was in there like a shot, and sent him sprawling off the platform with a shove the average prop-forward would've been proud of.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 08-07-2008 19:22

Rogin the Armchair Fan wrote:

And already, the "cleanest ever" TdF has a rider in third place who's come back after serving a ban for EPO. He's British, of course, so we'll forgive that then ...

Yes, I'm sure he was Scottish when he was caught ...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bo! Seleccão - 08-07-2008 22:23

Usually I can't give a toss in the first few stages but I've found every stage totally engrossing so far. Valverde's last minute sprint in the first stage. The inevitable grinding down of the break-away in the second stage, the successful break-away in the third stage and then a very surprising and entertaining time-trial today.

Add to this the fact the peloton has been torn into bits in almost every stage due to crashes and the general intense pace they're going, means there's been far more action than you'd normally expect in the early stages of TdF.

Of course there are no big names and nobody is really looking that good but for the sheer unpredictable carnage alone of the opening stages, this is looking like it'll be a dramatic and very watchable Tour.

One question, does Millar have a chance? I can't stand the arrogant twat but I seem to remember him being adequate in the mountains, certainly good enough to hang in there.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 08-07-2008 22:34

I'm no expert, by any stretch of the imagination, but I don't think he has enough of a gap on the real mountain men to make a mark on GC.

Nobody on Eurosport gave him much hope today.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bo! Seleccão - 08-07-2008 22:47

It's strange, the Portuguese commentators on Eurosport were really bigging him up today as a contender who is looking more composed than Cadel Evans, who they were all saying would win the Tour during the first stage.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 08-07-2008 23:32

Schumacher's a great, great rider. He's got a pretty good rep on cleanliness, and while he's never shown particular TT prowess before, it's not outrageous for a guy of his riding profile.

Bear in mind, also, Cancellara is (a) focussing all his training on the Olympic TT so is not in ideal shape and (b) apparently spent rather a lot longer toying with the idea of also doing the Olympic Pursuit than was let on, also affecting his training schedule...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 09-07-2008 05:59

One question, does Millar have a chance? I can't stand the arrogant twat but I seem to remember him being adequate in the mountains, certainly good enough to hang in there.

I very much doubt it. He's after a day or two in yellow. His climbing ability is not going to be good enough. He'll do well enough to hang in the race but not to win it. I agree with Toro regarding Schumacher.

Cavendish seems a real surly so and so though doesn't he? He's won a couple of stages in the giro and he's good on the track but he treats journalists and team mates like he's some sort of bike-diva. He's got a fair bit to prove.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Donald Potts - 09-07-2008 06:22

He's got a pretty good rep on cleanliness,

What does this mean? That he hasn't been caught yet?

Remind me what was the name of the nice Mennonite boy who couldn't possibly have been cheating?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 09-07-2008 08:49

Kim Kirchen is looking good in green, he can also climb quite well. He came second on the stage last year when Vinokourov put in the amaaaazing solo ride (completely drug assisted).

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-07-2008 08:59

It's the golden age of Luxembourgish cycling, innit?

Charly Gaul would be proud.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-07-2008 09:03

Bafflin, have you picked up the L'Equipe "Legendes" special issue on Hinault? It looks the business.

The RAI commentary is quite poor and ridiculously biased, btw. Eurosport with Kelly is better, but I really miss the obsessive levels of the France 2/France 3 stuff that you get (and which I was able to catch in Switzerland over the weekend).

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by evilC - 09-07-2008 10:19

Question:

I notice that Lemond was an official guest of the Tour, the other day. I didn't know if maybe he was a bit of a persona non grata these days, for insisting that Armstrong was using drugs:

<http://www.mywire.com/pubs/AFP/2004/07/16/508276?extID=10037&olIID=229>

...and for the follow-up accusations:

http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=060625151133.h15qwb4a&show_article=1

http://bikehugger.com/2007/05/lemond_drops_a_bomb.htm

<http://www.cyclingnews.com/news.php?id=news/2006/jun06/jun26news> (Scroll down a little.)

However, what I'm really interested in is if - given this is a 'renegade' tour, this year - Lemond was made an official guest before Armstrong was (so as to send some kind of message, maybe) or if they were given equal billing as guests. I just didn't see or hear mention of Armstrong before Lemond's presence got picked up on by our media.

Politics, politics!

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 09-07-2008 15:17

***** SPOILER ALERT *****

Woo-hoo! A Manx win!

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 09-07-2008 16:41

He's got a pretty good rep on cleanliness

Actually I don't think he has. He was suspected of doping before and was cleared.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/07/08/sports/tour.php>

I haven't seen the highlights from today, but good news about Cavendish. Or is it? I saw him interviewed the other day and the bloke seems a right wanker.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-07-2008 16:43

Yeah, Marca had two pages about Schumacher's "issues" today (one and a half of which were of course devoted to how unfair the allegations against Contador are by comparison).

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 09-07-2008 17:02

ursus arctos wrote:
Eurosport with Kelly is better

Sean Kelly once responded to an interviewer's yes/no question by nodding his head vigorously.

Nothing wrong with that, of course, except that it was a radio interview.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 09-07-2008 17:17

William Fotheringham mentioned that in this morning's Guardian, and how it was "recreational" amphetamines - then again, they told Boonen he wasn't welcome after his cocaine episode.

Cavendish seemed quite un-wanky in his post-stage interview. He said it was the biggest thing that had ever happened to him, that he'd dreamt of winning a Tour stage as a child, and repeatedly thanked his team-mates for their work in setting him up. When they asked whether he would be leaving for the Olympics before the end, he reiterated what he said before the Tour: that he didn't think it was fair to the Tour or the sponsors to drop out and that he wanted to try to survive the mountains and make it to Paris.

No, I haven't seen the L'Equipe special, ursus. And my local newsagent has never heard of it. Then again, he's a moose-headed buffoon.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 09-07-2008 17:25

You need a new marchand de journaux.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 09-07-2008 17:38

Having recently read the David Walsh book about Lance and doping I've come to admire Greg Lemond even more. His cycling compny is a subsidiary of Trek bikes who are or were very much Armstrong's bike-makers. Lance is certainly alledged to ahve threatened Le Mond's bike business if he continued to speak out against Lance. The same goes for Jonathan Vaughters and Frankie Andreu.

I am certainly more inclined to believe that LA doped after coming back from cancer. Did anyone see the programme on ITV4 the other night from about 2004? Some fella was on there fawning over LA, talking about his weight-loss etc etc. Apparently he didn't really lose any weight after having cancer. Thought I'd mention that.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 09-07-2008 23:05

Bloody hell, good for Cav.

What does this mean? That he hasn't been caught yet?

Remind me what was the name of the nice Mennonite boy who couldn't possibly have been cheating?

No. Schumacher races for a team with an extremely good anti-doping ethos (by insistence of their sponsors, who being a Mineral Water company are rather more hands on in this than most), and is himself generally one of the riders who others in the peloton point to as probably clean. This in fact came out rather clearly following the thing at the Worlds - it was fairly widely accepted that the speed was almost certainly recreational, simply because most of the peloton reckoned he was not a cheat.

The Landis comparison is hopelessly wide of the mark. He raced for probably the most compromised team in the history of the sport. He had previously been one of Armstrong's and Bruyneel's deeply suspect squad. He came from (relatively speaking) nowhere to a dominating position just as his marketability began to take off. And there was a decided dearth of positive sentiment towards him among the peloton.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 09-07-2008 23:11

Incidentally, did we find out if Lovkvist is still eligible for the white? If so, he's sitting pretty nicely. If not, I wish I'd picked Nibali.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 10-07-2008 00:31

Incidentally, while I think Millar is a genuinely reformed and penitent character, I do think it's a bit rich to see him touted as a torchbearer for cleaner sport.

But I hadn't realised until just now that he requested his 2003 stage win be scratched from the records. Fair fucks.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by evilC - 10-07-2008 02:40

Fausto Ptang wrote:

I haven't seen the highlights from today, but good news about Cavendish. Or is it? I saw him interviewed the other day and the bloke seems a right wanker.

I get the impression that, after Cavendish's mega-surly post-race interview the other day, his team bosses gave him a rocket over the PR factor and 'encouraged him' to be more approachable - hence the smiley competition-announcing spot on ITV4 the next day and the rather more forthcoming interviews since.

I have to say that the initial petulant exchange with the ITV4 man left me feeling that the bloke is a bit of an arsehole,

though, which is a shame.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 10-07-2008 05:35

I think you're right there Clive because he did remark on it in his post race interview yesterday. He sort of laughed it off, but he was your classic 'sing when your winning' type of spoilt kid. I just sat watching him beaming last night and muttered to myself, "All smiles now is it?" Which probably says more about me.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Donald Potts - 10-07-2008 07:50

I wasn't actually directly comparing him to Landis, though whatever you write with hindsight, Landis was presumed clean up until the point where he was clearly proven not to have been.

I have no idea whether Schumacher is clean, not clean, or liked by other riders, I am just cynical (with good reason) about all riders in the Tour. I presume some of them are not actually cheating, but it also seems like these days what is being contested is which rider/team can beat the tests, rather than which is the best.

Le Tour is still a spectacular event, but the actual competition is deeply flawed as a result.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 10-07-2008 08:06

Not to derail the discussion, but Lokvist is eligible for the White Jersey and is currently leading that table, ahead of Nibali and Monfort, with Andy Schleck fourth.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 10-07-2008 08:13

Andy Schleck should take it unless he gets relegated to Super Duper Domestique by CSC.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 10-07-2008 22:56

i'd say kreuziger will put a few minutes on the other white jersey contenders in the mountains

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 10-07-2008 23:35

Fausto Ptang wrote:
Having recently read the David Walsh book about Lance and doping I've come to admire Greg Lemond even more.

Didn't he nearly die from a shotgun wound?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 11-07-2008 06:02

He was shot by his brother-in-law if I remember rightly in 1987. He retruned to win the tour twice a couple of years later.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 11-07-2008 14:17

I saw that ITV4 doc Fausto. I particularly like the bit where all the yanks (including his mother) said he was "confident" whereas the English bloke said he was "cocky" !

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 11-07-2008 17:48

How could I forget Ricco was riding?

He's another excellent white contender*, obvs.

*you know what I mean...

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Inca - 11-07-2008 18:11

Don't worry. Cycling's one of the sports where a sentence like that wouldn't be taken to mean what it could otherwise.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 11-07-2008 18:19

So it goes.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 11-07-2008 19:05

What a cock.

Is this another finger pointing back to Discovery?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-07-2008 19:06

Or Liquigas.

Or Spain.

Or . . .

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 11-07-2008 19:08

From BBC Sport

After an anomaly in Beltran's pre-Tour blood test, the Spaniard was targeted by France's Anti-Doping Agency (AFLD).

Excuse my ignorance, but why did they let him start the race?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 11-07-2008 19:12

There are between 10 and 20 riders who had such anomalies, but none of them were over the established limit.

No list of the "anomaly" riders has come out yet, but I expect a leak shortly.

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Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 11-07-2008 20:37

The "established limit" is, of course, way above the realm of what is naturally possible.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 11-07-2008 23:44

No it's not. It's over the realm of what's naturally possible for most people, especially at the end of a prolonged period of exercise. But Damiano Cunego, for instance, in rest periods, has been naturally a little over the fifty since the age of thirteen.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 12-07-2008 03:09

Well, well, Tricky Beltran, one of LA's all conquering disco boys.

Let's just hope it's the old guard being rooted out once and for all. Ever the optimist, eh?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 12-07-2008 06:26

Until that announcement, made during the post-stage programme, I'd thoroughly enjoyed yesterday's stage. I had a crash the day before, involving a prodigious amount of blood, gravel and hot tarmac, so it was my excuse to plant myself in front of the telly all afternoon.

The president of the AFLD was quoted as saying ten of the riders have been sent warning letters telling them that their

blood samples show a number of anomalies and that they should speak to their team doctors, because "their results aren't abnormal but are worrying for their health," that it's for medical and not disciplinary reasons, but telling them «qu'ils sont dans le collimateur de l'AFLD» (a weirdly colloquial choice of phrase for an official statement - it means 'to have it in for someone').

By a strange coincidence, William Fotheringham pointed out yesterday with regards to Ricco that "there are other question marks, at least so far as the drug testers are concerned: he has been tested four times in the past five days."

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 12-07-2008 07:00

What happened BSS? How badly were you hurt?

The Spanish and Italian riders who are guilty or a concern must be in so deep that they can't step away. The stress of being caught these days must enormous. Look at how the likes of Landis, Rasmussen et al have had their lives cave in. I don't understand them.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 12-07-2008 07:50

Nothing broken, thanks Fausto, but bruising and lots of cuts to my legs, shoulder and arm and three quite deep slices and a fascinating chunk of flesh taken out of one hand. (I had a helmet on, but no gloves).

It didn't help that I fell in loose gravel with hot tarmac underneath (they were re-laying the road and rely on traffic rather than steamrollers to pack it down) so had gravel and hot tarmac stuck in all the wounds. (Handy hint from the road-workers' boss: sunflower oil is a gentle but time-consuming way to remove tarmac from human skin). French gravel seems unnecessarily sharp, if you ask me.

The doctor thought that hydrogen peroxide poured into the open wounds would be fun, and suggested little sticky things to hold my hand together rather than stitches, in case there was still anything underneath.

I just have to get the blood and tarmac off the bike, my sunglasses and drinking bottles, now.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 12-07-2008 08:57

Jesus Christ, Bafflin. Pls take care of yourself.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 12-07-2008 09:15

Yikes.

That's sad but unsurprising news* about Ricco, perfectly consistent with his utter, utter brattiness, even though that's the best thing about him.

On the other hand - I think the targeted testing is a superb idea, a brilliant move by Anne Gripper**, but it's surely unfair to allow details of who is being targeted to become public like that. It opens the way to all sorts of whispering campaigns...

*not that he's actually tested positive for anything, but that he's aroused enough suspicion with his bio profiles to merit targetting.

**I heart Anne Gripper

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 12-07-2008 13:25

Yikes Baff! Sounds grim. Still you'll look like a real road warrior if you can get out on your bike while you've still got the gauze on.

Riding without mitts? You're a genuine hardman aren't you?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bo! Seleccão - 12-07-2008 15:30

Another win for Cavendish and another very gracious post-race interview, thanking his team for controlling the race, helping him up the cat 3 climb and then giving him the best possible lead-in to the sprint.

Saying that, credit to him, he looked unstoppable at the end.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 12-07-2008 16:17

He did look unstoppable. I'm not sure he had a great lead out. His team sort of controlled the race but in the final straight he had Ciolek but Steegmans and Friere were in just as good positions, but Cavendish popped out MacEwan style and had too much speed. It was fairly comfortable in the end. A tough day for all concerned, terrible conditions especially for Ricco.

Evans looks in control but he's bound to have a bad moment - but how bad depends on whether he can win the whole thing. His time hasn't come yet. Monday should be his first tomorrow. Tomorrow may see the end of Millar's top ten place. Good though isn't it?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bo! Seleccão - 12-07-2008 18:58

Yeah, I'm really enjoying it. I'm Growing an increasing fondness towards Kim Kirchen. Even though he's in the yellow jersey, he refuses to take his place safely tucked behind the head of the peloton, instead he takes to the front, tries to win points on stage sprints and was doing everything he could to assist team-mate Cavendish for today's win.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 12-07-2008 20:25

Yeah you're right. I've a feeling he might pay for that though.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 13-07-2008 10:40

Kirchen looks like he is trying to cover points to hold the green jersey overall - a real yellow jersey wouldn't mess with sprints, too risky, he has also been quite cautious about his prospects in the Pyrenees. To date he has been inconsistent in the mountains having the occasional off day. His preparation this year has been different though but only the next few days will show how effective.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 13-07-2008 10:45

toro toro wrote:

No it's not. It's over the realm of what's naturally possible for most people, especially at the end of a prolonged period of exercise. But Damiano Cunego, for instance, in rest periods, has been naturally a little over the fifty since the age of thirteen.

Fair enough, I thought the Tour limit was 60%, but it seems it has been lowered down to 50%.

According to my medical of last month my level is 47%.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 13-07-2008 10:56

Some riders have won both yellow and green. Hinault and Mercx both did it. Mercx on more than one occasion. I'm not suggesting that Kirchen compares to either of those two but it might be possible in a transition year like this. AC will be back to dominate next year, so this is the big chance for the likes of Evans, Kirchen and Valverde. It's probably their only chance. May as well go for it.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 13-07-2008 13:00

The paint on my late 80s Olmo is starting to chip at an alarming rate.

Is it worth my while to repaint the thing? How difficult is this and do I take off the old paint first?

The original paint job is fairly ugly, so I wouldn't be sad to see it go.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 13-07-2008 13:43

No idea, but I'd imagine that it's something a professional should do. Then again I'm clueless with this sort of thing.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 13-07-2008 16:00

Awww, what a rider!

Great stage that. Tomorrow should be spectacular, I'm just not sure I'll see the end what with graduating at five and all...

Fair enough, I thought the Tour limit was 60%, but it seems it has been lowered down to 50%.

No, it was always fifty. That's very high for anyone who's regularly engaged in top-level sport.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 13-07-2008 16:32

I can remember something on Dutch telly about most riders regularly having levels of 55 and 56. Maybe this was in the Bjarne Riis days, before there was a limit at all.

I'd love to know how many riders test at bang on 49%.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by toro toro - 13-07-2008 16:52

yeah, it was. Riis himself was known as "Mr. Sixty" which, if true, is staggeringly dangerous. This was the period when most of the peloton used to keep their bikes on turbo trainers in their hotel rooms so they could set the alarm to wake them every two hours, and spend fifteen minutes spinning to get the heart rate back up to a remotely sane level so their blood didn't coagulate while they slept. The fifty percent thing was brought in officially not as an anti-doping measure (because, of course, it couldn't establish guilt to a legally useful level) but for the safety of the riders. Of course, granting exemptions to people with naturally higher levels gave the lie to that - by the "safety" reasoning, they shouldn't have been allowed race at all...

And a huge number of them. Indeed, they'll stay there for the entire duration of a Grand Tour, which is basically impossible by legal means. That's one of the things the biological passports should do a great deal to discourage.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bo! Seleção - 13-07-2008 22:24

Great stage today, lovely attack by Ricco, the sheer pace of his climbing was a joy to watch. The fact that most riders were bitching afterwards about Ricco being too far down the standings for anyone to care about chasing him didn't matter, it was a great win by someone who appears to be on the path to great things.

I'm really, really enjoying this tour. It seems fairly obvious that it's clean just by the changing fortunes of the riders on the stages, the way De la Fuente and Schumacher would try to break only to find themselves completely knackered and struggling to hold on the back of the peloton after being caught was captivatingly human and natural.

Tomorrow is going to be incredible, I though Samuel Sanchez looked comfortable all day, any chance of him making an impact tomorrow?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 14-07-2008 00:07

Watching Ricco head off and the peleton of favorites fail to react was almost like a rerun of Rasmussens ride last year when he pedalled away without being chased as he was considered to much of an outsider... until he suddenly did well in the TT.

The advent of epo and thicker blood coincided with an increase in riders dying of heart attacks.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by The Chubby Cyclist - 14-07-2008 08:12

I love watching riders attack and try and blast their opponents out. It doesn't feel like a "fair" win of the Tour if you win it in the time trials but just tootle along near the front of the bunch and just watch the attacks. If only nobody had mentioned the questions Ricco's cleanness, because that's exactly the kind of ride I want to see.

Do they put EPO in the water in Luxembourg, by the way? Holders of yellow, green and white jerseys today.

I really like that Kirchen is still in both yellow and green. It means there's no question that he's been the best rider so far in the tour.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 14-07-2008 10:14

Bit of a fluke though, if Schumacher hadn't ridden into his back wheel and fallen off then Kirchen wouldn't have taken the jersey till yesterday when Schumacher lost time. Even Kirchen is kind of bemused by it.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Donald Potts - 14-07-2008 10:38

It seems fairly obvious that it's clean just by the changing fortunes of the riders on the stages, the way De la Fuente and Schumacher would try to break only to find themselves completely knackered and struggling to hold on the back of the peloton after being caught was captivatingly human and natural.

Or they are struggling to get the dosages right to get maximum benefit while beating the tests

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 14-07-2008 14:59

There might be, at most, a few domestiques that are clean. I don't think cycling has gone from rife drugs taking to a clean sport in a space of a few years.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 14-07-2008 15:01

Cadel Evans is attacking.

Commentator: "That's the last thing I expected!"

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 14-07-2008 15:04

Sastre is great. You keep thinking he's cracked but he just keeps coming back.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 14-07-2008 15:40

Sastre was just hanging in there though really wasn't he? I thought Voight and Cancellara were great. It was a really tough day today, Pieploi is a fantastic climber and Frank Schleck has put himself into a place where he can strike in the Alps, he won on Alpe D'Huez the last time the tour was there. Satre and Andy will work for him now. Popyvych was poor today, and a lack of team mates has to be Evans' achilles. With time bonuses Schleck would be in yellow by now - ho hum. Any news on what happened to that motor cycle rider? Looked very grim at the top of the Tourmalet.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-07-2008 17:52

This was the stage my bro' did last week. Very different weather then though. Rained all day, and at the peaks the fog visibility was down to 10m.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 14-07-2008 18:31

Bryantop wrote:

I don't think cycling has gone from rife drugs taking to a clean sport in a space of a few years.

Given what happened in last year's Tour de France alone, you'd imagine not . . .

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by The Purple Cow - 14-07-2008 18:39

ITV-4's 7 p.m. wrap-up show seems to consist of 10 minutes of cycling and 50 minutes of adverts.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 14-07-2008 19:58

I must admit that before this started I was less excited about it than any Tour for the past 20 years. But it's growing on me fast.

Apparently Cadel Evans wants to model himself on Indurain. Cadel, I knew Miguel. Miguel was a hero of mine. Cadel you're no Miguel Indurain.

I see the comparison, but Indurain did more than just stay with the leaders. He personally chased down breakaways, didn't just let people go on a "how few seconds can I spare them" basis. He assumed his responsibilities as Patron. He also used to win the time trials in a stunning, exciting manner, while Evans seems content to merely trundle in in 3rd or 4th behind the specialists.

How fitting that Evans should hold the Yellow jersey by one second. It just about sums him up, the calculating bastard. My main interest in this tour is rapidly becoming the "Anyone but Evans" factor.

Maybe he'll prove me wrong one day soon, and get up out of his saddle and show me his "gros moteur"

Dutch TV were really laying into The Caisse D'Epargne team today for throwing all their eggs into the Valverde basket,

and ignoring Parriera's chances. If he hadn't had to fuck about helping Valverde he could have stayed with the Evans group up the Tourmalet and not had to drag the Valverde group along into the wind on the flat between the last 2 cols. As it was he blew it on the Hautacam and now they are left with no one in the General.

I like Ricco. He's a sort of Cycling Cassano. But the Saunier tactics were a bit wierd at times. At one stage Ricco was leading the Evans group chasing down Piepoli.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 14-07-2008 20:02

Maybe he'll prove me wrong one day soon, and get up out of his saddle and show me his "gros moteur"

I like cycling, but not as much as I like ladies' tennis, in that respect...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 14-07-2008 20:20

toro toro wrote:

yeah, it was. Riis himself was known as "Mr. Sixty" which, if true, is staggeringly dangerous. This was the period when most of the peloton used to keep their bikes on turbo trainers in their hotel rooms so they could set the alarm to wake them every two hours, and spend fifteen minutes spinning to get the heart rate back up to a remotely sane level so their blood didn't coagulate while they slept. The fifty percent thing was brought in offically not as an anti-doping measure (because, of course, it couldn't establish guilt to a legally useful level) but for the safety of the riders. Of course, granting exemptions to people with naturally higher levels gave the lie to that - by the "safety" reasoning, they shouldn't have been allowed race at all...

And a huge number of them. Indeed, they'll stay there for the entire duration of a Grand Tour, which is basically impossible by legal means.

That's one of the things the biological passports should do a great deal to discourage.

I was just wondering, when do the effects of Doping wear off? How long before your body returns to "normal"?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 14-07-2008 20:32

I am starting to like Evans. He is limted and he lacks panache but he's hard and surly. He's uncomplicated and yet it's refreshing to have a top sportsman who is free of bluster and bravado. He was cut and bruised today and he had a couple of digs off the front and yet none of the main contenders could drop him. Schleck (Frank) is well placed with a stronger team around him, but Evans should be able to mark him and then TT him into defeat. Evans may have won last year had he not tried matching AC blow for blow.

Ricco is too far behind to win the GC and I reckon today he was just riding for Piepoli, which is fair enough. Ricco didn't lose the tour today, his TTing has made sure of that.

TPC there's a 10 minute film of some blokes doing (or failing to do) the etape on the cycling page of the BBC site. The weather does indeed look rubbish.

I think the rest day has come at the right time for Evans. I think it's a three rider race now between Evans, Shleck and Menchov. The intriguing thing now is whether Evans can withstand the fury the CSC team are going to unleash in the Alps. If he can then he'll be a worthy winner.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 14-07-2008 21:40

Where's Bradley Wiggins?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by mafu - 15-07-2008 00:17

he skipped the tour to prepare for the olympics instead

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin Smoke Signals - 15-07-2008 11:43

Did anyone else see the three French cyclists having a laugh during the lull before the Tourmalet? Two Francaise des Jeux riders were being entertained by (I think) someone from Agritubel, who stood up out of the saddle and did an exaggeratedly bad climbing action, to great amusement from the other two. It looked like he was doing an impression of Evans, to me.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 15-07-2008 12:26

Yeah I saw that. If it was a dig at Evans - then laugh it up over-paid, under-achievers or rasther non-achievers.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 15-07-2008 22:34

Erm, this is shaping up quite bloody nicely, isn't it?

I think the most salient thing over the next few days may well be the fact that both CSC and Saunier Duval have two guys in striking distance. If, say, Sastre and Cobo go up the road, Evans has a very hard time deciding whether to chase them and risk tiring himself and getting buried by Schleck and Ricco, or let them go and make up their losses. I don't see him squaring the circle.

There's a whole bunch of excellent riders could still do this. Menchov is looking good - we know he can TT, we know he can climb, and while he's never quite got it together at Le Tour, he's won the last couple of Vueltas after racing the Tour beforehand - this year he raced the Giro first, and so is theoretically racing with his (superb) Vuelta legs.

Efimkin and The White Jay-Z are two excellent young riders, who've long promised to be contenders. I think Evans and Schleck will underestimate them at their peril, and if the tactical shitfight becomes too engrossing one or other could well sneak away and put himself in the reckoning.

So basically, superb parcours so far. It's hard to think of one which has seen so much spectacular action at this stage, and yet is so genuinely open.

Also, anyone mocking Evans' climbing style is okay with me. OTF Italophiles should know how important styling and profiling is, but once the road tilts upwards he looks like a gorilla on a tightrope.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 15-07-2008 22:37

http://bernhardkohl.at/fotogalerie2/showit/photos/tour_08/thumbs/0040.jpg_t400.jpg

The White Jay-Z

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 16-07-2008 06:12

Today is a day for Juan Antonio Flecha.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Donald Potts - 16-07-2008 09:59

Another EPO bust this morning. Moises Dueno Nevado.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kuhsek - 16-07-2008 10:00

But it's not a day for Moises Duenas Nevado.

Second positive EPO test. And not one of the riders who had letters sent to them last week, either.

Damn. Beaten to it.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 16-07-2008 11:37

Will be interesting to see if the 30 gendarmes who raided the hotel (where both Barloworld and Bouyges Telecom were staying) will have found anything of interest.

Quite a shock that it is a Spaniard, of course.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 16-07-2008 12:11

Since all 17 teams have now left the ProTour, will OTF be taking the opportunity to enter a team in their place? We already have Fausto, Felicity, Toro, La Lanterne Rouge, Baroudeur, TPC...

I wouldn't mind being a domestique. You get first dibs at the musette.

This is interesting...

The news came on a day when one of the ProTour's main aims - globalisation - received a boost. A new professional team, called Katyusha and backed by a consortium of Russian businesses with €30m (£23.8m) a year, will join the peloton in 2009, targeting the new Tour of Sochi and the Tour de France.

The budget is enormous, given that most teams operate on a budget of around 6-8M euros a year.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 16-07-2008 12:17

Incidentally, just seen this:

Jesus Christ, Bafflin. Pls take care of yourself.

Thanks, ursus, I'm healing up nicely.

Did you get one of those L'Equipe Hinault specials, by the way? I found a source if you want one.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 16-07-2008 12:19

Extremely interesting, sounds like Son of Astana to me.

Also interesting that they named the team after a piece of artillery.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 16-07-2008 13:01

I've only had a chance to flick through it so far, but it's good stuff. I picked up a copy in town yesterday, and they had a couple left. If anyone else would like one, let me know.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 17-07-2008 05:56

That is a greta name for a team isn't it?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 17-07-2008 10:45

Surprise, surprise.

L'Equipe is reporting that "traces of third generation EPO" have been found in Ricco's samples from the 3rd and 4th of July.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 17-07-2008 11:08

Daft fucker.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by hissing fauna - 17-07-2008 11:12

BBC on it as well

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 17-07-2008 12:10

Fuck. The whole team's pulling out. Evans has less to control now. It really does test your patience, this sport. Every year the Tour promises showdowns, revolution, and the unexpected. Every year I spend countless sunny afternoons in dark campsite bars, ignoring my children, waiting and hoping for this to happen. Yet nearly every year a sort of sad inevitability takes hold and the predictable result you are hoping not to see ends up happening.

As Toro was saying above, I could see a real dog fight developing in the Alps this year and the Sauniers would have been a major factor. It's just going to turn into an Evans grind though, isn't it?

Another whole year has passed and cycling has once again let itself down while it is in the world spotlight. I don't think it's got much time left now to save it's credibility. Personally, I don't care what the rest of the world think so long as the cycling community remains large enough on its own, but these constant withdrawals ruin the Tour as a spectacle.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 17-07-2008 12:20

Oh and you can count me in for the OTF team as well. Every year I "hisse la carcass" over big Pyreneen hills on a fat tyred Hybrid with rack lock and mudguards. I'm not quick, but I never stop until I get to the top. I could be the sort of domestique who takes the leader up the first big climb and then holds on for about the first 3 or 4k in the final climb, before the big boys begin their mano a mano.

I also used to start the Tour threads back in the old amateur days of OTF. The threads used to be called "Round And Round And Up And Down We Go Again".

Since then, I've tended to defer to people on here who are real cyclists and follow things much more closely than I do. But I still read all the cycling threads avidly.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by chasbo - 17-07-2008 13:03

Disappointed to hear about Ricco but I suppose that attack on the mountain the other day was too good to be true. This is the first Tour I have taken a proper interest in and had taken a shine to Ricco.

What length ban is he looking at or does this end his career?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by La Lanterne Rouge - 17-07-2008 13:14

Silly cunt. Clearly the authorities knew, though, from what was said a couple of pages ago. It's also a shame. I hope there are still some climbers trying to destroy the peloton in the Alps.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 17-07-2008 15:01

Maybe we should get used to the Tour being won by guys grinding out a victory as every spectacular ride of the past few years has proven to be drug related.

Basically it is not possible for a rider to win the tour by spectacular feats, the body can not do it and recover the next day to stay with the peleton.

On that basis the likes of Evans or Schleck deserve the podium, they ride like human beings.

I'm delighted the lying slug has been shown up.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 17-07-2008 18:24

Indeed.

I still think CSC are going to shred this up bigstyle, though. Sastre's the best remaining high-mountain climber, so he'll make a load of time if let go. If not, Evans will end up giving Frank Schleck an armchair ride to the line. And since Popovych looks out of sorts, his team won't be able to do much for him. Compare CSC, who have just about the toughest-ass domestiques around, in any terrain.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 17-07-2008 19:02

Cough

SECOND toughest-ass domestiques, Toro.

After me and Logan Mountstuart in Team OTF, who will be mixing elbows and head-butts with anyone who tries to cut up rough with you and the rest of the OTF stars. (And eating all the best snacks before delivering the musettes - or I will, anyway).

Interesting that Saunier Duval left en masse today, unlike the teams of the others who've been caught. Because when Piepoli and Cobo Acebo crossed the line on Hautacam I turned to Mrs Bafflin and voiced my suspicions in what I believe is known as "no uncertain terms".

Interesting post on today's Guardian blogs:

I race as a clean amateur in the Benelux elite road race scene. In this context "amateur" doesn't mean middle aged guys doing cyclo sportives, but well organised sponsored teams of young riders competing in races of almost equal distance and speed of the professional events. The riders just don't receive an official salary.

In Holland there are never any doping controls at the amateur classics, stage races and criteriums. In Belgium there are more controls, but it's normally known in advance, and even then, only a small random selection of riders are pulled for a test. Therefore a doping rider can either pull out of the race beforehand, or take a gamble.

At a Dutch elite / espoir classic, out of the 160 riders at the start, probably somewhere between 20 and 50 are doping. Amateurs can't afford EPO, but anabolics and amphetamines are within the budget, and easily available through gyms and the internet.

Riders in the know are aware of who is doing it, and when they are "charged" or not, but the culture is one of silence. I know of a Dutch rider in the tour right now who was runoured to be full of pharmaceuticals as an amateur, and it's unlikely that he quit his habits when he went pro.

This whole problem starts with the amateurs, and even probably the juniors, and until each country stops pretending its own riders are clean and actually pays for proper testing at amateur level this is going to continue.

Never underestimate the obsession with becoming a pro that many young amateurs have....the kind of ambition that

drives young men to train 20 hours + a week is the kind of ambition that in some, will lead to experimentation with doping to keep the dream alive. Then, even when you make it as a pro, you go from being an exceptionally good amateur to one of the weakest riders in the pro peloton, and it's only a matter of time before you learn about better doping products.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 17-07-2008 19:19

Erm, blimey. Already his country's best?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 18-07-2008 00:04

Since we're past the spoiling time, that's Cavendish. Three stage wins in his second tour, already a record for a Brit.

This is pretty informative on the Ricco sitch.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 18-07-2008 00:09

More; Roche Pharmaceuticals (heh!) who make Micera assisted in developing a test very quickly, so that dopers could be caught unawares. Micera has a half-life of 130 days, orders of magnitude more than "normal" EPO, meaning that a cheat doesn't have to top up as often, and so will show less variation in his test - it looks like an elegant response to the biological passport/longitudinal testing approach, except that the authorities have double-bluffed them nicely here.

Also, Mauro Gianetti, Saunier Duval's DS, was very close to bringing in a T-Mobile/CSC-style comprehensive testing programme for this season, but concluded that it couldn't be done economically, particularly with the teams paying for the biological passport system too. Bet he wishes he'd decided differently now...

Anyway, the team has withdrawn in large part because of his own reaction to then situation, it seems.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 18-07-2008 09:22

Any "Manxman gets third leg" headlines?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Purves Grundy - 18-07-2008 10:15

Dunno, but there was this truly sublime opening paragraph in the daily Telegraph:

On a day when the Tour de France's latest doping crisis produced another villain, Britain's Mark Cavendish restored cheer and a degree of credibility by becoming the first Briton to win three stages in a single edition of cycling's showcase event

Because clearly the event had no credibility at all while it was being won by foreigners. Still, everyone's cheered up now that the Brits are winning. Hurrah!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 18-07-2008 17:11

I don't want to spoil today's stage results, but I will say that there was an incident that wasn't the greatest advert for Specialized bikes.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 18-07-2008 20:35

It certainly persuaded me not to even glance in their direction when I go bike shopping tomorrow. Great crash though.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 19-07-2008 06:24

Piepoli sacked as well then. I suppose his win on the Hautacam is tainted now. Schleck could have won that stage, assuming that Cobo is suspect as well. I am very impressed by Preud Homme's outspoken stance. I was impressed with him last year but I loved his straight forward line last year when he said that Saunier Duval's DS was basically a man of limited morals.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 19-07-2008 07:21

They were talking about the prize money last night. You get 8,000 euros for a stage win, 2,000 for the most combative rider award... and 350 euros for every day you wear the yellow jersey*. Which seems a bit pathetic.

(*At least I think that's what they said. I was in the middle of something at the time and only half listening.)

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by jefe - 19-07-2008 08:48

I never knew there was prize money for those sort of things. Hmmm.

And while we're here, I'd like to send a big fuck you to DirecTV for bumping Versus up a package level in the middle of the Tour meaning I don't get to watch it anymore.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 19-07-2008 09:35

Purves - thing is, Cavendish is known as an outspokenly clean rider, to the point where a good few of the others resent his "teacher's pet" sort of manner. I know you're picking up on a fairly different undercurrent from the Torygraph, but in that respect at least, it's probably fair enough.

Fausto - I agree, Preudhomme's been a breath of fresh air both ethically and in terms of setting the course. Do you have details of what he said about Gianetti, though? David Millar seems convinced that he (Gianetti) is one of the good guys...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Purves Grundy - 19-07-2008 10:28

It's not even an undercurrent, though. He didn't restore cheer and credibility by being an ostentatiously clean rider. He did it by becoming the first Briton to win three stages .

There probably is a case to be made for a successful clean rider being just what this tour needs to restore its cheer and credibility. That piece, though, was pure "Fog On Channel; Continent Cut Off".

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Kowalski - 19-07-2008 13:11

Who has won the most stage in a single Tour?

Is it Eddy?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 19-07-2008 15:53

Super Mario?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 19-07-2008 17:20

Merckxx and Freddy Maertens, with 8. Eddy did it twice.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Inca - 19-07-2008 18:54

jefe wrote:

I never knew there was prize money for those sort of things. Hmmmm.

And while we're here, I'd like to send a big fuck you to DirecTV for bumping Versus up a package level in the middle of the Tour meaning I don't get to watch it anymore.

Ah man, that's horrible. I probably don't get it anymore either.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 19-07-2008 19:02

Hmmm... of course it couldn't have been Super Mario. He always gave up at the first hill.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 20-07-2008 04:34

I do miss Cipo's panache. He'd win 4 or 5 stages, then the road would have a 2% slope and he'd shrug his shoulders and get in the car.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 20-07-2008 09:11

Cavendish has realised he's got no realistic chance of the green jersey (despite his four wins) and has pulled out of the race today, ahead of the first big Alp.

Sensible, I'd say. He must have a pretty good chance of medals in Beijing - I heard him and Bradley Wiggins would be going for the Madison on the track, will he be entered in the road race as well? If that went to a sprint he'd presumably be favourite?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 20-07-2008 11:34

Yeah, but it's a pretty tough course by all accounts, and fairly unlikely to end in a sprint - also, the Madison training will be too specific, and he'll just end up being peaked for neither. So he's not in the Road Race squaad...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 20-07-2008 13:52

Pereiro fell over a guard rail and broke his shoulder? Blimey.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 20-07-2008 15:19

Indeed.

I can;t find anywhere showing this - which is annoying, as it looks fantastic. The break are gone, and I think of them, Arrieta will climb his way to the win.

Meanwhile, CSC are giving it socks as the peloton approaches the final climb. Evans must be peeing himself.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 20-07-2008 15:25

Ha, Arrieta's immediately dropped. Typical.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 20-07-2008 15:45

Evans dropped!

This is great stuff, Menchov's riding a stormer...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 20-07-2008 16:01

Bloody hell, what a race!

Schleck has seven seconds on Kohl, eight on Evans. Menchov is at 38, Vandeveldel at 39, Sastre at 49.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by steveeeeeeeee - 20-07-2008 17:10

That was an absolutely fantastic stage and proof, if needed, that the Tour has improved as a spectacle rather than declined since Lance's retirement and all the EPO busts.

Feel sorry for Menchov, he was free on his attack but fell off, yet still kept up with Sastre when he made the final attack. Even though he lost the yellow, I was really impressed with Evans, battled his bollocks off to try and keep up with every attack, of which there were countless. I don't think Vandeveldel looks good enough, to me he just seems a slightly inferior version of Cadel Evans.

Anyway, Menchov is my man now, I thought he was superb today.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 20-07-2008 20:47

What an absolutely fantastic days racing.

Andy Schleck was superb as was Menchov and Sastre. Evans is a gritty rider, you have to hand it to him. He was being attacked by evryone, it was relentless and although they broke him in the end, he refused to hit the canvas.

This is going to keep happening for the next two stages. They need to put time into him before the TT. The poor bloke is going to be punch drunk by Saturday.

Best day of sport all year that was.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Etienne - 21-07-2008 07:55

I think Evans might be saved by how many people are challenging though. So Menchov or Kohl might be wary of attacking Evans and leaving themselves open to each other and to CSC. Which is where Sastre and F Shleck have the advantage in having Andy to lead the pace and chase down the attacks - even if Menchov hadn't crashed yesterday Andy was already beginning to bridge the gap. He rode an amazing stage.

I really want to be able to give the Tour the indifference I now have for athletics, but stages like yesterday are too good.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 21-07-2008 08:11

The French TV commentators were expressing their general surprise at how well Vandeveldel is doing - for a guy who previously hasn't figured as a contender in other big races...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 21-07-2008 10:28

Most enjoyable stage. My wife didn't even mind missing a few minutes of the Open to watch the end. I just wish ITV4 were showing the full stages during the week as well as at the weekend.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 21-07-2008 10:47

loose cannon wrote:

The French TV commentators were expressing their general surprise at how well Vandeveldel is doing - for a guy who previously hasn't figured as a contender in other big races...

There was a nice piece by Paul Kimmage on Vande Velde in the Times yesterday

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 21-07-2008 22:51

You're right, that's a nice piece. Interesting that Armstrong had to have his stats "massaged".

I felt sorry for Menchov - he looked to have got clear when he fell. One report suggested the others slowed for him, but it to me looked like they did momentarily, saw his chain was slipping and so went off. He did well to get back to them, but seemed to have used up almost everything to do so.

Fabulous stage though. Evans was incredibly gutsy all the way to the end.

Did anyone see when Cancellara started winding it up for CSC and the peloton went rolling through that speed trap on the flat? The sign showed 70 kph...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by steveeeeeeeee - 22-07-2008 10:33

I'm thinking about skipping today's stage, got a dissertation to write and would like to go swimming this afternoon.

Can toro or another authority confirm for me that tomorrow is the big one.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 22-07-2008 12:29

Today they're already reaching the top of the Col de la Lombarde, and have Col de la Bonnette-Restefond to go.

Tomorrow certainly is The Big One: the Col du Lautaret, Col du Galibier, Col du Télégraphe, Col de la Croix de Fer and l'Alpe d'Huez.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 22-07-2008 15:14

Still sounds like it was worth watching, though I'm much less keen on stages that end with a descent than with a peak. Vandavelde lost a fair bit of time, and Menchov 30 seconds on the rest of the ones at the top.

How do team tactics work for Sastre and Schleck? Is Sastre honour bound to work for Schleck or if he feels right tomorrow can he attack and attempt to win the race himself?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Doctoro Doctoro - 22-07-2008 17:03

It depends. He's nominally the senior guy, but CSC now hold the yellow, and it would be very bad form to attack. He could do it under team orders, or if Schleck was in trouble, but it would be very much looked askance at if he did it off his own bat.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by steveeeeeeeee - 22-07-2008 18:06

Got back in time for the climb and descent at the end, Menchov unlucky to lose a few seconds on the descent but I think if he's going to attack tomorrow, those seconds will be insignificant. However, can't see him getting much over the combined forces of the Schlecks and Sastre. Cadel Evans was excellent again and I've really warmed to him over the course of this tour as just a fantastic athlete in the sense that he'll never win anything but he'll always put in a good fight. Vandavelde confirmed my suspicions on Sunday that he's a bit lightweight.

Can't remember the name of the South African rider who went off the side of the mountain but good god was he lucky to stop falling where he did. You didn't really get a sense of the inclination of the slope until the spectator climbed down to assist him.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 22-07-2008 18:07

I think today's result sets that strategy up a bit better than before, though. Two of the better TTers among the remaining contenders dropped back a fair bit, leaving Evans a bit more isolated. He'll always try and ride defensively, but they know they have to put time into him. So I'd expect a long-range attack by Sastre, which Evans will have to respond to, followed by very hard attacking by both Schlecks on the Alpe.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bafflin - 22-07-2008 18:43

You didn't really get a sense of the inclination of the slope until the spectator climbed down to assist him.

Absolutely. It gave me the heeby-jeebies. But that flattening effect was everywhere today; it was quite bizarre the way the helicopter cameraperson kept tilting the angle of the shot, so you had the weird impression of everyone standing up in the saddle and apparently crawling along an apparently flat road.

Schleck seemed to have rather a bad day today. His brother kept looking back at him to make sure he was still there. They seemed to be contolling it to keep it at an in-between pace - fast enough to discourage any attacks, but not so fast as to put him into the red.

I can't wait for tomorrow. I've told everyone I'm not available for the duration.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 22-07-2008 18:44

Yeah I think Toro has nailed it there. So far Evans has been gutsy but a bit jittery, he's chased everything and everyone down. He didn't really need to chase down Valverde on Prata N. the other day, so I think CSC's greater tactical nous will do for him tomorrow.

Tomorrow is going to be fantstic and I'm on holiday.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by steveeeeeeeee - 22-07-2008 19:31

Yeah, I'm off to a festival tomorrow but I refuse to leave until the stage has finished, even if it means pitching my tent in the dark,

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 23-07-2008 09:52

Excited? I am.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 23-07-2008 10:09

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7va4Amv5Ds&NR=1>

For those who didn't see the crash yesterday.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 23-07-2008 10:37

Frank hasn't been making too many over-positive sounds, l'Equipe angle is that he doesn't have the reserves left to burn off his challengers. Ironically his bro. Andy seems to be steaming but is too far back having lost time at Hautacam due to a 'fringale'.

L'Equipe also highlighted that the Sastre-Schleck relationship isn't the best, they even compared it to the Lemond-Hinault 'partnership' (i.e. with friends like that, your enemies are to be greatly feared)

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 23-07-2008 12:45

Gangster Octopus wrote:

I just wish ITV4 were showing the full stages during the week as well as at the weekend.

And low! It came to pass...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jorge Porbillas - 23-07-2008 15:52

Awesome ... won't spoil it for the highlights viewers, suffice to say it'll be difficult for the producers to decide which bits to leave out of tonight's programme

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by gerontophile - 23-07-2008 16:09

I must agree. Not a huge fan, but that was a cracking race.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 23-07-2008 16:15

SPOILER ALERT

Toro will be chuffed. Shame he couldn't take a bit more time. Don't think it will be enough.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 23-07-2008 18:53

...

there aren't any words

...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 23-07-2008 19:53

Can someone get this off my telly? I had to miss 20 minutes of an old ODI because YATR wanted to watch it?

The commentators kept saying stuff I didn't understand like "he really deserves third place", when there seemed to be lots of other people in the hunt for third place. Presumably they'd got a lift halfway round the course. Then there was a "look at him! He's on his back wheel waiting to pick him off!" Indeed he did, but the other bloke picked him back again. Apparently this was no embarrassment to our commentator sages.

And they seemed unusually fixated on a pair of brothers.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 23-07-2008 20:14

You really do have to search for le Tour on TV. It's hardly dominating the schedule. It's on 2 specialist, minority channels.

Anyone see ITV 4's 20 greatest tour moments?

I can't quite believe Flecha's stage win and celebration wasn't in there. ;-)

http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/39290000/jpg/_39290663_flechceleb_afp.jpg

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jimski - 23-07-2008 20:24

I only take a very limited interest in cycling, but why do they have these time trials? It seems to destroy the whole purpose of the race. They spend days and days on complex, tactical cycling and then it all ends up coming down to who (of the leading riders) cycles fastest individually?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by E10 Rifle - 23-07-2008 20:27

What old ODI were you watching Tubbs?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 23-07-2008 20:35

Jimski - in the first place, it's an important discipline in and of itself - the GC is supposed to be about finding the best all-round cyclist.

Secondly, the time gaps that can be opened up among the favourites in a TT are actually pretty small compared to those in the mountains, unless you're Miguel Indurain - even in this race, serious contenders, guys like Cunego, Valverde, and Schleck Minor, have dropped eight, nine minutes in a day. The only thing about the TT is, the gaps are more predictable.

Which leads us to the third thing - considerations about the Time Trial play a large role in the tactical calculations in the mountains. Were Evans not a far superior time triallist to any of the CSC contenders, there's no way Sastre would have done that today - he and Schleck would have ridden defensively, then maybe tried to pick a few seconds off at the end. It was precisely because he needed to build up a buffer that Sastre attacked from as far out as he did. So TTs paradoxically make mountain stages better.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 23-07-2008 20:36

How young does Flecha look there?!?!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jimski - 23-07-2008 20:46

Toro, thanks for the explanation. I just don't like the way most reports seem to be assuming Evans will win now, as though the time trial stage is utterly predictable. (But I can see your point that the other stages make use of this time trial 'predictability' to make the tactical choices during those stages even more complex.)

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 23-07-2008 21:23

I think there's a degree of overstatement going on in the reports, to be honest. Sastre isn't a topline Triallist, but he's pretty damn good for a climber, with a string of high Grand Tour finishes to prove it - so the difference is less than many people assume.

And furthermore, I think it's remarkably easy to underestimate the psychological effect of wearing the yellow jersey. If

anything's going to make him ride out of his skin, that'll be it.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by EIM - 23-07-2008 22:19

Do people actually watch this then?

Fucking hell. You'd love the cycle path down by the Lune in Lancaster. It's proper busy, all year round.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Tubby Isaacs - 23-07-2008 23:12

England v SA, the qualifying game from the 92 World Cup, E10.

SA were a better side and had the better of the rain rule (this time) but despite having McMillan, one of the best allrounders, they batted him at 7 and tried to fiddle an allotment of 8 from Cronje, Kuiper and Peter Kirsten.

Chris Lewis and Neil Fairbrother got England home.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Rogin the Armchair Fan - 23-07-2008 23:19

then it all ends up coming down to who (of the leading riders) cycles fastest individually?

Isn't that the point?

If it was down to who can ride the best tactical tour over a series of 21 single-day races, the yellow jersey would be awarded to the winner of the green jersey, no?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jimski - 24-07-2008 06:30

No, the green jersey is the one that tends to go to specialist sprinters who then get hammered on the mountain stages.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by loose cannon - 24-07-2008 07:10

Gah - ok, great team tactics by CSC but it has to be ulcer-inducing for Frank Schleck to realise that he had become a pawn in holding Evans in check while Sastre barrelled down the road to take the yellow jersey. Equally Evans vs CSC was the battle of a man vs hydra as he tried to track Schleck and then tried to drive the bunch after Sastre, all the time with shifts of rhythm coming from occasional attacks. It's a unique TdF, I've never seen anything like it.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 24-07-2008 07:21

Sastre's rubbish at time trialling no? Wasn't he blown off the podium at this stage in the year that it was Landis v Pereiro v Sastre?

So it's basically Evans's to lose?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by La Lanterne Rouge - 24-07-2008 07:35

I've warmed so much to Evans over this tour. His laconic comments about wearing a helmet early on. His leading the pack up the climb yesterday to try and chase down Sastre (and even getting a few seconds back towards the end of it), his work on Sunday's stage.

He may not blast everyone away going up a mountain, because he can't, but he's working and working and working at it.

I'm also, nearly always, much happier to see the bloke without the strong team do well. When it's Menchov or Evans working the lead pack, you know it's them alone trying to do it, and it's the talent of the individual. When there are four CSC riders up front, it's just a bit less gladiatorial. I think it comes from all those years of watching Lance with 4 or 5 team mates dominating in the Alps and preventing attacks and controlling the whole thing.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 24-07-2008 17:52

Sastre's rubbish at time trialling no? Wasn't he blown off the podium at this stage in the year that it was Landis v Pereiro v Sastre?

So it's basically Evans's to lose?

No, he's very good, and will beat at least 90% of the peloton's times, just not as good as Evans. He was blown off the podium, but that was by Kloeden, who is/was a superlative tester.

It's going to be very, very close, I think.

LLR - I dislike seeing one team with a load of subordinates grinding everyone down and launching their guy a la Armstrong, but I greatly enjoy seeing a team with a bunch of genuine contenders, so that opponents don't know who to watch, which is very different. That's why I love this CSC, that's why Saunier Duval were great to watch (albeit with some undue assistance), especially with Simoni there too, and that's why T-Mobile's constant failure to pincer attack anyone but themselves was so disappointing...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 24-07-2008 21:07

Besides, CSC have some great characters. Voight alone is a great character. USPS had Armstrong and a load of faceless drones, many of whom have since been discredited (Hamilton, Beltran, Heras). Cancellara is an exciting rider, his gallop to that early stage win last year and his stints driving the peloton this year have been brilliant. Stuart O'Grady is a gutsy, gutsy rider, watch his Paris-Roubaix ride last year and of course Cancellara the year before.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Purves Grundy - 24-07-2008 21:27

Didn't Evans beat Sastre by more than Sastre's current lead over a distance half that of the coming time trial just two weeks ago?

I'm one of those people who thinks that a TDF won without winning a single non-time-trial stage is no victory at all, so I really hope Sastre can rise to the occasion.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 24-07-2008 21:57

He did, but this one is hillier, Sastre's a guy who's always strongest at the end of a big tour, and the yellow is a huge motivation. The extrapolation ITV were making from the previous TT (where Evans wins by about forty seconds) was absurdly simplistic.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 25-07-2008 08:09

I want Sastre to win, but you have to admire Evans. He's a gutsy, punchy son of a gun. He's got a weak team, he's been battered every day and yet he's still unbowed. It's not his fault he hasn't got an explosive burst of pace or that he lacks panache. He's not that type of rider, but he's tough and unforgiving and I don't begrudge him any success. Contador looms on the horizon like a potential 5 time winning spectre. We might not get a close finish like this for a number of years, so let's make the most of it.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 25-07-2008 17:09

He can help riding the bike like it's a dizzy goat, though.

I'll admit I'm coming around to him, too, but mostly because of how much he looks like Dexter.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 26-07-2008 13:17

These carbon time trial bikes are incredibly ugly.

The team Colombia ones are especially grotesque.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 14:29

Great time by Schumacher, looks like a second TT win for him.

Excellent time by Cancellara, too, but he may now be worrying about Beijing. Then again, he's been doing absurd amounts of domestique stuff for the past few weeks, that's going to take his edge off a bit.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 14:48

Evans saving himself for the second half of the stage, or cracking under the pressure? Kohl's ahead of him at the first

checkpoint.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 14:52

Sastre only eight seconds behind. Menchov is looking like he could threaten if things go his way in the back end.

Kohl's ride is... excellent. Unexpectedly so.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 14:58

Great time by Kreuziger, he's putting very serious pressure on the maillot blanc.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 15:01

The crucial bit seems to be the 18-36 km section - that's the piece in which Cancellara and Schumacher put massive time into everyone else. Menchov has dropped right back in that section too.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 15:04

Evans 1.30 down on Cancellara at 36 km. Come on Sastre!

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 15:04

Schleck held the white jersey, yes?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 15:06

Kohl still keeping pace with Evans

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 26-07-2008 15:07

Sorry. I'll stop this solo time-trial style approach to the thread and go back to being a domestique

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 15:11

Yes, and after 36k, Sastre's only 23 seconds down. Barring catastrophe, he's going to do it!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 15:12

Didn't see the new page, that was to the Schleck question...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 15:24

Sastre is catching Frank Schleck!

I think this puts the justification of CSC's tactics beyond any conceivable question...

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 15:27

Schleck warned for drafting Sastre. Damn right, he was totally taking the piss there.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 26-07-2008 15:33

Woo Hooooooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!!!!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Jimski - 26-07-2008 15:38

Really pleased the time trial wasn't as 'predictable' as so many media experts proclaimed, and credit to Toro for getting it right!

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by evilC - 26-07-2008 15:48

Wow!

Well, you have to salute Sastre, there. Great ride. Actually, great ride on this stage and the last few - when you think about it, when he made that break in the mountains, he must have known he felt good enough to control the stages from there on in. Great planning, great execution.

I have to say that I actually like Evans alot more than I did before this race. Although he's shown himself to be emotional - 'human', if you like - he's never been really badly petulant in the same way that I think Mark Cavendish was. I don't think I'll ever warm to Cavendish, just like I never warmed to Armstrong, after his fellow-competitor-punching brat years.

But back on Evans, I feel really sorry for him, actually - he didn't deserve to have as poor a ride as that. I really, really wish they just allowed racing on the last day, because if he and Sastre (and maybe a few others) were within a few seconds of each other, it would have been fantastic to see them all going at each other hammer & tongs on the way into Paris. Not going to happen, unfortunately, but there you go.

Best tour I think I've ever seen though. Can't wait for next year's already!

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 26-07-2008 19:08

Fantastic from Sastre (and Kohl too). I've just been listening on the radio to an interview with the Flanders Carlos Sastre fan club. Apparently he is an extremely nice fellow (Sastre).

Before and during the Tour Evans was being compared to Indurain. Now he's going to be second again he will no doubt be compared to Poulidour.

The main difference is though, that Indurain and Poulidour actually won quite a few stages.

To be fair to Evans, Sastre was the only rider in the top six who actually won an etape this year, which is pretty sad really.

Schumacher has had a brilliant tour, hasn't he?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 26-07-2008 20:22

Vive La Tour

All is well with the World. The Good Guy wins at Alpe D'Huez with a stunning attack, founded on great tactics and a gutsy, hard as nails team.

I have grown to love Bjarne Riis' interviews. They are a lesson in understatement and avoidance of hyperbole.

Well done Carlos. Thor Hushovd to win tomorrow.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 27-07-2008 02:15

Good call, though I'd love to see Zabel take it, along with one last Green Jersey.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 27-07-2008 05:33

I'd like to see Zabel win the stage, but I think the green jersey is going to Friere. He's 42 points ahead and there are 42 points available today.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 27-07-2008 08:55

Yeah. Come on Zabel, for old times sake. Barring that, a dashing French win a la Eddy Seigneur.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by mafu - 27-07-2008 16:27

http://newsimg.bbc.co.uk/media/images/44867000/jpg/_44867087_-41.jpg

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 28-07-2008 11:20

I've always been a fan of Carlos Sastre's climbing, and I'm delighted by his win.

But there's something sickening about Mr. 60% being the winning team leader. I don't trust anything anymore. Sastre's time trial was unusually good as well.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 28-07-2008 17:44

I undersand what you mean Bryan, but I'm not sure Sastre's time trial was that good. It was good and better than usual, but you'd expect that. Also it was really only that good compared to Evans, who performed poorly. Besides they have been that close in a TT before.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 18:05

Yep. Plus, Mr. 60% genuinely seemed to have repented even before his public admission, and had put the most stringent independent testing regime in the sport on his team voluntarily. He offered to renounce his victory when he confessed, as well, before ASO could make an issue of it. I think he has to be seen, now as very much a force for good in the world.

And as Fausto says, Sastre's TT wasn't particularly unusual. It was right in line with what I predicted, just about in the top ten percent.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 28-07-2008 18:39

So Sastre wasn't taking an unusual amount of drugs? Just his normal ration?

I'm happy he won, but to imagine that this sport is anything other than drug ridden seems spectacularly naive. Every rider in the top 20 (at least) is doped up.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 18:52

Horseshit.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 28-07-2008 19:01

Is that what they're taking these days?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 19:41

Considering your usual stance on religion threads, you are making some remarkably sweeping statements, in the absence of very much evidence, and in the face of loads.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 28-07-2008 19:47

I tend not to have much of a stance on religion threads to be honest, and steer clear of them.

I'm not sure what evidence I'm in the face of, either.

I'd love the Tour to be clean I really really would, but after years of cheating and teams and riders and doctors working out ways of beating the tests, I really don;t believe for a moment that the tests have suddenly caught up with those trying to beat them. Occasionally riders make a mistake, and get caught. Most of the time they stay ahead of the tests. The race is still a fantastic spectacle, and gripping viewing, but I cannot for second imagine its remotely clean. Since I believe everyone is cheating I think it's all more or less competitive, so it's still enjoyable viewing. But, really, do you really think they're clean? Honestly?

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 28-07-2008 20:03

I remember last year's Tour de France, when Toro tried to argue that the fact that what seemed like half the field had been thrown out of the competition after getting caught, was actually proof that the sport was now cleaner than ever before. This is a bit like saying that if you catch your wife repeatedly cheating on you, and each time she comes clean about it and doesn't deny it, then it shows that she's an honest person.

Of course they're on fucking drugs.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 20:20

With the greatest of respect, HoH, that is one of the dumbest analogies I've ever heard. Sorry.

If in a large population, all the wives that people thought were fucking around got caught doing so, we might reasonably conclude that not too many others were, since it's evidently so easy to get caught. That's an infinitely better analogy to the argument I made, and still a gross simplification.

Look, Ricardo Ricco was using state of the art stuff, that had been on the market less than six months, and got done. Because they have a test. And even that was one of the only ways it seemed technically possible to get past the longitudinal testing which no other sport implements.

Cycling has by orders of magnitude the most stringent testing measures of any sport. And partly as a result, it has a very

high comparative detection rate. Yet people extrapolate from this to the claim that it's in worse shape than any other sport, for no other reason than that "of course" it is.

I really don;t believe for a moment that the tests have suddenly caught up with those trying to beat them.

Who said anything about "sudden"? It's taken painful decades of false start after false start, and almsot wrecked the sport commercially in the process.

Occasionally riders make a mistake, and get caught. Most of the time they stay ahead of the tests.

On what possible basis do you claim this? What mistake do you think Ricco made, for instance? How do you think that somebody can "stay ahead of" longitudinal testing, if not the way he tried?

The race is still a fantastic spectacle, and gripping viewing, but I cannot for second imagine its remotely clean.

"Argument from personal incredulity". See Dawkins threads passim.

Since I believe everyone is cheating I think it's all more or less competitive, so it's still enjoyable viewing.

Well, this is one of the fallacious ways of thinking that allowed doping to be tolerated for so long. Of course, richer and more successful guys like Ricco, Armstrong, and Pantani can afford better and less easily detectable stuff. One of Tom Simpson's roommates told the story of seeing Simpson's drug chest one day - they both spent about ten percent of their income on drugs, but Simpson made ten times what he did, and had correspondingly better stuff.

Do I think they're clean? Most of them now, yes, even if they haven't always been. I think those that aren't are getting caught in increasing numbers and with increasing publicity, coming out of it financially ruined, and I think the riders themselves are more and more seeing that.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 28-07-2008 20:31

Toro De France wrote:

If in a large population, all the wives that people thought were fucking around got caught doing so, we might reasonably conclude that not too many others were, since it's evidently so easy to get caught. That's an infinitely better analogy to the argument I made, and still a gross simplification.

Hahaha, I knew you were going to respond with something like that.

Toro De France wrote:

I think those that aren't are getting caught in increasing numbers and with increasing publicity, coming out of it financially ruined, and I think the riders themselves are more and more seeing that.

But if this was the case, surely they would have all stopped after seeing what happened to Marco Pantani. Instead, as we saw in the 2007 Tour, they went at it in greater numbers than ever before.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 20:49

So you were aware of the problems with your analogy and posted it anyway. Great.

And classic use of "surely" to plaster over a patent non sequitur. For one guy to get caught in comparative isolation allows the "occasionally someone messes up and gets caught" way of thinking, particularly when the testing regime is as comparatively lax as it was a decade ago. My whole point was to demonstrate how that has changed, how the testing and catching is now systematic, and how "occasionally someone messes up, but if I'm smart I'll be fine" is no longer a rationally viable mindset to adopt.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 28-07-2008 21:19

Top 20 on drugs? Horseshit indeed. Top 100 I'd say. The "clean" ones are clean in the sense that they are drugged up to just under the test limits.

Cycling is the only sport that would hold up Bjarne Riis and David Millar as forces of good.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 28-07-2008 21:33

Go on, evidence please. Or reasoning from evidence. Or, you know, anything at all other than bald assertion. Jesus, you guys make AIATL look like the model of reasoned deduction.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 28-07-2008 23:20

Toro De France wrote:

So you were aware of the problems with your analogy and posted it anyway. Great.

Shane, you well know the point I'm making, and saying stuff like "your analogy only applies if it's other people's wives" is just linguistically pirouetting around it.

It's a question of trust. Everyone knows that the Tour de France has a massive credibility problem -- but, more than that, it has been killed by something slightly different: a massive believability problem. Given what has happened in the event over the past few years -- indeed, the past decade if you include Lance Armstrong, which I certainly would -- the average onlooker simply cannot place their faith in it any more. That's the sad fact of the matter.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 29-07-2008 06:49

Let's take Sastre. Why do you think he's doped. He didn't do anything super human. He performed within the limits of his ability. He had one outstanding stage, the rest of the time his team protected him or knocked lumps off his opponents. There were very few eye-brow raising performances. Ricco's was one, Schumacher's time trialling was a bit and perhaps the Saunier Duval dominance in Italy. Every other performance was Gerdeman like. By that I mean, if you remember Linus Gerdeman last year won a mountain stage and was dying by the time he got to the end. He was foaming at the mouth and hanging off his bike. It took him about 4 days to recover. This year you could look at stage wins by Simon Gerrans. A great stage win but then he was nowhere. There were no Floyd Landis stages, no riders who made huge efforts followed by great recoveries.

I understand why people (usually people who don't follow cycling) say that drug-use is still rife, but I'm not sure what else cycling can do. Also cycling deserves this reputation, but the argument here is pretty futile, how can each side prove their case?

I feel that most if not all of the top 20 are clean. The testing is more rigorous than any other sport and I believe that the rides this year support that. As for Riis and Millar being held up for forces of good. Are you seriously suggesting that other sports aren't hypocritical? Don't start me.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 29-07-2008 10:29

There were no Floyd Landis stages, no riders who made huge efforts followed by great recoveries.

I dunno, Sastre demolished the peloton on the Alpe d'Huez all by himself and then put in the greatest time trial performance of his career a couple of days later.

It would be a shame if he's on anything, because I've always liked the guy and always thought he was clean. I always thought the same about Vinokourov too...

Cycling has fucked up it's credibility so much that anybody who achieves anything has a hint of suspicion about them.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 29-07-2008 11:44

He did demolish the field, but he's got a great track record as a climber. He had his team blasting away all day for them and he launched one great attack. The only one of the tour. It was less than one hour of riding for a proven climber and it was decisive. He rode a good time trial. Not a great one.

Great team + Great tactics + Proven Climber + Limited Opposition = Maillot Jaune

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by evilC - 29-07-2008 11:59

Why is there no jersey for 'Most Combative Rider' (the one that spends most time on breakaways)?

Given that they add spice to what might otherwise be a very dull race, don't they deserve some recognition?

I know there used to be a multicoloured 'combined jerseys' jersey, but I'm not sure if that included combativity.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 29-07-2008 18:23

UCI rules limit the number of jerseys to four. That's why they had to give special numbers for the Lanterne Rouge (the last guy on GC) when they reintroduced it. I think the leader of the prix combatif gets special numbers too.

Shane, you well know the point I'm making, and saying stuff like "your analogy only applies if it's other people's wives" is just linguistically pirouetting around it.

I know perfectly well the point you're making, and I've pointed out why it's flawed, but if you think that - or anything like it - was my response then I'd ask you read what I wrote again.

It's a question of trust. Everyone knows that the Tour de France has a massive credibility problem -- but, more than that, it has been killed by something slightly different: a massive believability problem. Given what has happened in the event over the past few years -- indeed, the past decade if you include Lance Armstrong, which I certainly would -- the average onlooker simply cannot place their faith in it any more. That's the sad fact of the matter.

Woah, just a minute, I sense shifting goalposts here. Before, you were saying that they were all on drugs. Now you're saying that the man in the street thinks they're all on drugs. That's quite a retreat.

I wouldn't deny that the average onlooker thinks that, and it's a serious problem for the sport. But the average onlooker doesn't know what he's on about. And quoting the view of the average onlooker as evidence for the truth of his beliefs suggests that neither do you.

Bryan - they climbed the Alpe on Wednesday, he was carried by his team for another two days, and then put in a perfectly solid TT. That is not remotely a superhuman recovery, particularly for a guy who it's been long known is comparatively better at recovering at the back end of a Grand Tour, but can suffer the first time they do consecutive days

in the mountains.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 29-07-2008 22:28

Where's the evidence that the sport has cleaned up?

About four guys get caught every tour, the 2006 winner got his yellow jersey taken off him, and the 2007 winner didn't take part this year because the remnants of his team's setup are in the shit for having loads of drugged up riders.

This is pretty much the same peloton that, to a man, treated that Simeoni like a piece of shit for speaking up about drug use.

Meanwhile, former cyclists go on about how most of the peloton have always had the most advanced drugs test avoidance techniques known to man. We know that HGH is basically undetectable. Yet, despite all this I'm supposed to just assume that the testers suddenly now have the edge after 40 years of constantly being a step behind?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Hieronymus of Hesselink - 29-07-2008 22:46

Toro De France wrote:

I wouldn't deny that the average onlooker thinks that, and it's a serious problem for the sport. But the average onlooker doesn't know what he's on about. And quoting the view of the average onlooker as evidence for the truth of his beliefs suggests that neither do you.

2007: two teams are forced to pull out in mid-race over drug issues, including the pre-race favourite after being caught for an illegal blood transfusion. Two more leading riders are kicked out for drugs. The subsequent holder of the yellow jersey is also withdrawn by his own team after being caught lying about why he skipped drug tests. The green jersey is won by a guy who subsequently turns out to be a cokehead.

2006: thirteen riders are expelled from the tour during the prologue for being on drugs, including the guy who a year later gets handed the 2007 Tour by default because others got done for drugs. Floyd Landis flies away from the rest of the field during the 17th stage and subsequently gets done for steroid abuse and is stripped of his tour win.

1999-2005: Lance Armstrong.

Isn't it strange that anyone could look at the modern Tour de France and think to themselves that the peloton was full of people on drugs?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 30-07-2008 01:03

OFFS. Do you imagine that any of this is news to me?

Read what I wrote again. The positives, and the individuals who are recording them, are indications that the most stringent testing regime in world sport is working.

I see you're now effectively conflating the (separate) points of "they're all on drugs" and "people think they're all on drugs" - that's either yet more goalpost-shifting or yet more evidence of confusion.

Bryan - if you won't actually read where I've explained what the evidence is, then you probably will have to "just assume" whatever point of view you adopt. But don't ask me for it again, Christ. HGH doesn't have much use for cyclists, sprinters aside. But longitudinal testing will pick it up, yes. And given that my whole argument has related to the historical progression of doping in the sport, to wave your hands and invoke "40 years of history" without specifics as a rebuttal

shows (again) that you haven't taken the trouble to read what you're taking issue with.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 30-07-2008 06:01

<http://touregypt.net/wildegyp/pech.JPG>

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 30-07-2008 06:25

What's that mean Ad?

What would you all like the cyclists to do to prove their integrity? I suggest that most of the teams are now doing all they can.

Toro's point about the man in the street are more than valid. As a cycling fan virtually everyone else I know isn't interested and immediately dismiss it as drug-ridden. I don't blame them but it does get tiresome and their perceptions aren't really a reflection of the here and now.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 30-07-2008 06:27

It's a Nile Perch, FP. An animal that lives in the Nile.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 30-07-2008 16:49

Bryan - if you won't actually read where I've explained what the evidence is, then you probably will have to "just assume" whatever point of view you adopt. But don't ask me for it again, Christ. HGH doesn't have much use for cyclists, sprinters aside. But longitudinal testing will pick it up, yes. And given that my whole argument has related to the historical progression of doping in the sport, to wave your hands and invoke "40 years of history" without specifics as a rebuttal shows (again) that you haven't taken the trouble to read what you're taking issue with.

I've seen the Tour proclaimed clean by fellow cycling fans every year since 1999, based on the same evidence each time. It always turns out to be bullshit in the end. Even Lance's refrigerated 1999 pee samples eventually got rumbled in 2006. The cyclists have always been a step ahead of the testers. The proclaimed efforts to clean up the tour always turn out to be hollow and baseless.

Cycling fans can be like Liverpool fans. I'm sure the Liverpool fans are convinced they'll win the PL at the start of every season, but nobody else ever is.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 30-07-2008 17:27

In denial?

Oh dear.

=====

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Logan Mountstuart - 30-07-2008 20:22

Bugger. I saw this and thought "Oh wow, 2 whole new pages of Tour De France discussion".

But all it is is drugs drugs drugs. I know it's a problem, but I can't help feeling Anglo Saxons love tearing down things they don't quite understand while ignoring the plank in their own eyes.

But have Athletics or above all, Football put in half the effort to stop it, or recognise the problem even, that cycling has?

All I know is, the Tour mustn't be allowed to die or even be undermined. France is currently searching for it's soul. All it's traditions and things that make it unique are under threat.

It's got to hold onto what makes it different, and non conformist, and the Tour is one of them.

All very dramatic, but then I'm drunk (on wine).

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Fausto Ptang - 30-07-2008 21:06

Anglo-Saxons. Love it. Funny, but you may be right. None of us apologists are Anglo-Saxons as far as I'm aware.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 30-07-2008 21:32

I've seen the Tour proclaimed clean by fellow cycling fans every year since 1999, based on the same evidence each time.

People have been pointing to longitudinal testing since 1999? Or did you just not read what I wrote?

Even Lance's refrigerated 1999 pee samples eventually got rumbled in 2006.

This refutes anything anybody has said how? Or did you just not read what I wrote?

The cyclists have always been a step ahead of the testers.

So Ricco outwitted the testers by being one step ahead when he used cutting-edge doping technology to evade the longitudinal tests, did he? Or did you just not read what I wrote?

Andy - well, if you're going to argue with fish pictures, remember you're dealing with the Daddy...

http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/___data/assets/image/0012/164001/flounder.jpg

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 30-07-2008 22:19

People have been pointing to longitudinal testing since 1999? Or did you just not read what I wrote?

Pointing out new testing methods in general, which turn out to be no good because the cyclists just find a way around them.

Some people (including Ricco) have and will always get caught, that doesn't mean that the testers are catching everybody. Just the people who they happen to be catching. That's really the only point I was trying to make.

Yeah, there's new methods like longitudinal testing, but like I said, the more resourceful and financially well off riders can find a way around that if they want to:

Now, he says, athletes are skirting such longitudinal testing by using "microdoses" of EPO to subtly manipulate test results. "Because they know we're looking for these sudden, large fluctuations, he says. "They've become more clever in the way they take their drugs."

Bugger. I saw this and thought "Oh wow, 2 whole new pages of Tour De France discussion".

But all it is is drugs drugs drugs. I know it's a problem, but I can't help feeling Anglo Saxons love tearing down things they don't quite understand while ignoring the plank in their own eyes.

Heh, everybody in Holland knows it's drug riddled and will admit it up front. I've never heard a Dutch person try to claim otherwise anyway...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 30-07-2008 22:38

Well, this feels like banging my face against a wall, for all that you're actually prepared to engage with anything I've written.

To the one "microdose" of substance, well, microdosing has been going on for quite a few years now - it's one of the chief ways to get the effects of EPO use without testing positive under normal regimes but... will be picked up by a sufficiently fine-grained longitudinal testing regime. Indeed, that's exactly what Rasmus Damsgaard, also quoted in the article, offers to the increasing numbers of teams who've hired him to administer independent testing regimes. Cycling goes far beyond WADA in anti-doping measures, which is one of the reasons Dick Pound was so hostile to it.

Ashenden's critique boils down to "the system doesn't work if done on its own (he ignores targeted testing of the sort that has worked so well under Anne Gripper), on the cheap (ie with insufficient regularity or fine-grainedness), and by people who have vested interests in contradicting each other." Well, duh.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 31-07-2008 05:53

I believe I'm the only anglo-saxon involved in this argument.

And my criticism of cycling as drug riddled should not be taken to imply anything about whether I think other sports are clean or not.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by La Lanterne Rouge - 31-07-2008 08:27

Bryantop wrote:

Some people (including Ricco) have and will always get caught, that doesn't mean that the testers are catching everybody. Just the people who they happen to be catching. That's really the only point I was trying to make.

Do you consider it just coincidental that every rider who's had a genuinely astonishing performance in the last 3 tours (Landis, Rasmussen, Ricco) has tested positive? And all the others who've had good performances have looked completely fucked the next day or two? Sastre had the common sense to time his one attack on the very last hill of the Tour so that him being knackered would have far less impact as nobody would be able to attack him on the next flatter couple of stages. Not that I'd be sure Sastre was clean.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 31-07-2008 09:17

Ricco has admitted his EPO use, will not challenge his suspension, and appears to be prepared to name names when it comes to how and where he got the stuff.

This morning's Corriere della Sera* reports that his conversion was the result of being woodshedded by his parents for three days, but whatever the real reasons are, it is a refreshing instance of a guy putting his hands up and admitting it was a fair cop.

* yes, it is a bit strange that Italy's largest morning paper is called the Evening Courier, but things can travel slowly down here.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ad hoc - 31-07-2008 13:36

"woodshedded"?

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Gangster Octopus - 31-07-2008 13:44

Being shown something nasty...

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by ursus arctos - 31-07-2008 13:46

I was wondering if that one had made it to the other side of the Atlantic.

It means "chastised", and comes from "being taken behind the woodshed", that being allegedly the favourite location for rural parents to beat their children.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Bryantop - 31-07-2008 16:33

Well, this feels like banging my face against a wall, for all that you're actually prepared to engage with anything I've written.

The feeling is very much mutual.

I don't believe the testers are on top of the drug taking, you think they are.

There is no cast iron evidence to support either claim, so I don't see the point in discussing it any further.

Re:The Tour de France 2008

Posted by Toro De France - 31-07-2008 18:52

Erm, I've been meaning to apologise about the tone of that.

Still, you're using the absence of "cast-iron" evidence to overlook the overwhelming weight of evidence. You've cited virtually no evidence in support of your case, and just reiterated over and over again that they are all on drugs, they must be. You're asking, in effect, that I "prove" that cycling is generally clean, which is of course impossible. All I can do, which I have done, is lay out why all the available signs point to it finally being - generally - clean.

Surely you can see that?

=====