

THE PIONEER

MTB STAGE RACE, SOUTHERN ALPS, NZ

January 27, 2016

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Free to use editorial image attached. Caption: Laurence Mote hard at work training for The Pioneer

CHRISTCHURCH MAN RECOVERS FROM NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE TO RIDE THE ALPS

Riding for seven days over the Southern Alps, covering over 500km and climbing over 15,000m is tough enough for the fittest of us but how about if your heart stopped for 20 minutes and your life hung in the balance in an induced coma for 24 hours?

Imagine how each pedal stroke will feel, how amazing every stunning view will look and how incredible the sensation will be when Laurence Mote takes on The Pioneer next week after coming back from just that near death experience.

Life changed significantly in March 2013 for the Christchurch resident who on Sunday will ride off on the 7 Day Epic with close to 300 other hardy bike riding souls. He was out helping his wife do a bit of bee keeping and got stung on the ankle. Mote went into anaphylactic shock and lost consciousness. His heart started slowing and then it stopped, CPR was performed and his heart stopped fully for 20 minutes.

“The ambulance took me to hospital where I was put in an induced coma for about 24 hours. I came out of that ok, I was able to talk to people and I answered emails and that sort of thing and then I started going downhill again. I had a blood clot in my brain, so I had a stroke and started having seizures. They put me in another coma. Then I woke up out of that one, I gained consciousness but I couldn’t really talk and I couldn’t walk.

“Things were pretty dire, I had a catheter and things like that. I just knew from that point I was in deep shit and that I had a long road ahead of me, that’s when my recovery started. But at the same time my family had been through a huge amount of trauma, basically they didn’t know whether I would survive and they thought I would be a vegetable for the rest of my life. It was all very traumatic but we’ve come a long way.”

The 41-year old from Sumner has a cycling background so taking part in the Pioneer race, which takes place from Sunday January 31 to Saturday February 6, was a no brainer.

“I used to race for New Zealand for a number of years and I raced for three years on the World Cup circuit back in the late 90’s. I retired about 16 years ago, now I’m just a regular commuter cyclist. Because of the brain injury I suffered from the accident I can no longer work. I’m legally blind so it’s a bit challenging finding work that I can do.

“I’m doing a bit of volunteer work though, for Trail Fund NZ. At the moment I’m helping to plan a new track which is going to be built in Christchurch, but basically I cycle everyday because I can’t drive so that’s my form of transport. I also find that it gives me energy and clears my head and gives me a good dose of oxygen and a good dose of adrenalin.”

The Pioneer race takes riders through outstanding terrain, with great climbs and descents on New Zealand Cycle Trails, farm tracks, DOC trails and along world-class single tracks between Christchurch and Queenstown, traversing the stunning Southern Alps.

Mote has come out of his accident on the right side and is getting his life back on track. He’s doing The Pioneer race with good mate Huw Kingston.

“Huw’s an Australian. He’s actually an event organiser over in Australia and so he runs a really big event called the Highland Fling and his company is called Wild Horizons. He was the guy that actually ran the Mountain’s to Beach race which I’ve done in south New South Wales.”

Mote is feeling a little nervous about the race because it’s quite an undertaking, but now he’s seen the race guide he’s feeling slightly better.

“I had a really good ride last week. I rode about 65km and did about 2500m of climbing and felt really good. So all things are indicating that I will be ok but I’m still a bit nervous, especially around recovering after each day. It’s going to be a definite challenge but I’m looking forward to it.”

He carries his EpiPen around with him everywhere, so it will be on hand during the Pioneer race. Although he has been desensitized to bee venom, getting an injection every six weeks, which is equivalent to two bee stings. That’s his maintenance.

Mote has a simple approach to The Pioneer race this weekend.

“In previous years I would have been racing to compete, now I’m racing to complete and that’s the key thing. For me it’s about the camaraderie with my teammate and I’m hoping that we get to ride with some other teams as well and chat away and enjoy the scenery. Hopefully we can enjoy the weather, although I imagine we are going to have some challenging days if this summer is anything to go by.”

ENDS

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EVENT LAUNCH

Media are invited to attend the event launch on Saturday January 30 from 5pm at North Hagley Park, and to discover some of the amazing stories behind the Pioneer participants. From the elite front runners (including North American based Kona Endurance teams and our own Olympic hopeful Anton Cooper) to the celebrity (multi-sport legend Steve Gurney among them) to the ‘human interest’ stories behind the rest of the field, many of whom will take on perhaps the biggest challenge of their lives.

DAY ONE

Stage One of The Pioneer on Sunday features a prologue stage around Christchurch before the event heads to Geraldine and its journey towards and over the Southern Alps, arriving in Queenstown on Sunday 7 February. Day one also includes One Day riders with 53km, 37km and short Kids ride options. All start and finish at race HQ at Hagley Park.

Event Schedule [CLICK HERE](#)

1. Entries by Pioneer Event
 - 7-Day Epic – 242 riders
 - 3-Day Traverse – 58 riders
 - MTB Day Rides in Queenstown and Christchurch - 191 riders
2. 25% of riders are international visitors
3. Top 3 international markets – Australia, USA, Canada and Spain
4. 82% male riders / 18% female
5. Average age – 45 years
6. Oldest - 69 years
7. Youngest - 5 years
8. 7-Day Epic Course stats - 7 days of racing, 569kms of riding and 15,273m of climbing
9. 3-Day Traverse Course stats – 3 days of racing, 241 kms of riding, 7,574m of climbing
10. Number of hosted media 6
 - 2 x Australia, 2 x UK, 1 x USA, 1 x NZ

11. Number of individual land guardian/owner agreements – over 50



ENDS

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Please note Gurney will be available in Christchurch in the lead up to The Pioneer from Thursday for interviews and filming

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