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## Cape Epic - SHC

**South Africa, March 28-April 5, 2008**

### Cape Epic draws most competitive field yet



A bunch ride through the scrub at the 2007 Cape Epic  
Photo ©: Frank Bodenmuller

The countdown has started. Only a few weeks remain until the fifth edition of the Absa Cape Epic kicks off. On Friday, March 28, 1,200 riders from 41 countries will embark on a gruelling and adventurous nine-day journey through South Africa's Western Cape. Competing in teams of two, they will ride 966km from the Garden Route town of Knysna to Lourensford Estate in Somerset West near Cape Town, where they will arrive on Saturday, April 5. On their way, the participants will climb approximately 18,529m, including some of South Africa's most magnificent passes.

The 2008 edition has attracted the most competitive field in the race's history. Many of last year's top pros used the race to prepare for the UCI Mountain Bike World Cup, and word seems to have gotten out. One top contender is Christoph Sauser, the reigning World and European Mountain Bike Marathon Champion. Sauser, who has eleven World Cup wins to his name and won the Cape Epic in 2006 with his friend and fellow Swiss rider Silvio Bundi, will team up with Burry Stander this year, the current African and South African cross country champion. It will be Stander's first Cape Epic and also the first time that these two race together as [a team to raise funds](#) for the Songo.info charity.

"I felt that I wanted to give something back to South Africa," said Christoph Sauser. "My winter training base is the beautiful Boland town of Stellenbosch and the beneficiary of my participation will be the community of Kayamandi, a township on the outskirts of Stellenbosch."



2007 Cape Epic men's champions Karl Platt and Stefan Sahm of Team Bulls  
Photo ©: Frank Bodenmuller

Other top teams will include the first Olympic Gold medallist Bart Brentjens and 2006 Marathon World Cup winner in Mont Saint-Anne Alban Lakata (Dolphin); last year's race winners Karl Platt and Stefan Sahm (Bulls); former race winner and multiple World Cup winner Roel Paulissen with reigning U23 cross country world champion Jakob Fuglsang (Cannondale Vredestein 1); multiple Swedish Champion Fredrik Kessiakoff with 2004 Marathon World Champion Massimo Debertolis (Full-Dynamix-RSM); Rune Høydahl and Kristian Torgersen (Høydahl 3); Thomas Frischknecht and Tom Ritchey (Project Rwanda); former Pan American Champion Jeremiah Bishop and 2007 BC Bike Race winner and six-time 24-hour solo world champion Chris Eatough (Trek VW); and multiple TransAlp Champion Carsten

Bresser and former Team Telekom star Udo Boelts (Rocky Mountain/ Cube).

South Africa's top contenders are expected to be Kevin Evans, who placed third at the 2005 Cape Epic, and his team-mate three-time Giro del Capo winner David George (MTN Energade 1).

The women's favorites include marathon specialist Pia Sundstedt and multiple World Champion and World Cup winner Alison Sydor (Rocky Mountain Girls); two-time Pan American Champion Susan Haywood and X-terra triathlete Jennifer Smith (Trek VW WSD).

Of the starting teams, 61% are men's teams, 25% are masters, 10% are mixed and only 4% are women's. More than two-thirds of the field are from South Africa, and 91 percent of the riders are male with nine percent female.

At 18, Christiaan Kriek will be the youngest competitor and 65 year-old Geoff Palister will be the eldest. "It's a rather weird feeling, since I have never thought of myself as being old, especially when cycling," said Palister. "All my cycling buddies are relatively young and they certainly give me no slack in deference to my age." In fact, he will ride with his 20 year-old cycling buddy Mark Evans.