TOUR DE YORKSHIRE 2016 – STAGE 1:
A BREATHE OF FRESH AIR SWEEPS THROUGH YORKSHIRE

The wet, windy inaugural stage of the second edition of the Tour de Yorkshire came down to a mass sprint in Settle, where rising star Dylan Groenewegen claimed a prestigious victory on English soil mirroring LottoNL–Jumbo teammate Moreno Hofland’s win last year. The 22-year-old Dutchman was simply too fast for two other up-and-coming sprinters, Aussie Caleb Ewan and German Niklas Arndt, at the end of a stage which saw the six-man breakaway shut down before the pack entered the closing circuit.

A FRIGID APRIL
Pro cyclists will be having nightmares about this April for a long time. Rain pounced the sign-on podium in the charming town of Beverley, start of the first stage of the Tour de Yorkshire, where temperatures barely reached 7 °C. Unfazed by the weather, throngs of fans came out to root for the 141 brave riders, including a certain Sir Bradley Wiggins ready to get some miles in his legs in his quest to claim a new Olympic gold in Rio. As if by magic, the rain stopped and the first rays of sunshine timidly cracked through the clouds in time for the start of the race at 11:54 am.

A ROCKY START
Disaster struck in the very first kilometre, when a group of about twenty riders hit the deck and Jeandesboz (DEN), Simon (COF) and Bystrøm (KAT) were knocked out of the race. It was at this point that a six-man breakaway consisting of Williams (ONE), Politt (KAT), Cronshaw (MGT), Briggs (JLT), Wallays (TSV) and Mora (RAL) slipped away. Their margin grew expanded and broke through the 5-minute barrier at km 34.

SKY AND ORICA TAKE CONTROL
Despite the wind and the rain, Sky and ORICA GreenEDGE set a sustained rhythm to bring the peloton ever closer Mora claimed the first intermediate sprint in Bubwith (km 46.5) ahead of Briggs and Politt, with the peloton trailing 4′ behind. The gap continued to dwindle and had fallen to 3′ by the time they reached the feeding zone, where Peter Weening also decided to call it a day after hurting his ribs in the earlier fall.

WARY WIGGINS
The undulating roads of Yorkshire softened the legs of the men in front. Briggs was the first to pop at km 107, soon followed by Cronshaw. Meanwhile, Bradley Wiggins was dropped by the peloton, as the 2012 Tour de France champion shied away from taking any risks on the wet roads to avoid compromising his build-up to the Olympics, eventually abandoning the race a few kilometres down the road. Williams went first over the only classified climb of today’s stage, Greenhow Hill, ahead of Wallays and Politt, with the peloton a mere 1′30″ back.
TURGIS, VOECKLER AND CUMMINGS LAUNCH LAST-MINUTE EFFORTS

Peter Williams, runner-up in the recent Tro Bro Léon, was the only man left in front by km 131. A counterattack by Edmondson (NPC), Steels (TSV) and Moreno Sala (RAL) caught up with the Brit, but it all came back together at km 154. The peloton, led by defending champion Lars-Petter Nordhaug's Sky team, stayed together until just before the second intermediate sprint, where Turgis (COF), Voeckler (DEN) and Pauwels (DDD) launched an attack, crossing the line in Giggleswick (km 178) in this same order. The former two kept on going, but the bunch gobbled them up with 6 km to go. Stephen Cummings (DDD) attempted a solo effort, but the winner of the stage to Mende in last year’s Tour de France was caught before the final kilometre.

GROENEWEGEN BLASTS TO THE WIN

Dylan Groenewegen, the final wagon in the LottoNL–Jumbo train, capitalised on his raw power and bike-handling skills to beat Caleb Ewan (OGE) and Niklas Arndt (TGA) in the tricky finale in Settle— the seventh career win for the young Dutch winner of the 2015 Brussels Cycling Classic (formerly known as Paris-Brussels).

The 22-year-old sprinter seized the lead in the general (blue-and-yellow jersey) and points classifications, while the untameable Peter Williams pulled on the best climber's jersey and was awarded the combativity prize for today's stage.

ASDA Tour de Yorkshire Women’s Race : The world champion returns to Yorkshire tomorrow

Local native and world champion Lizzie Armitstead, who just won the Tour of Flanders, will ride in the ASDA Tour de Yorkshire Women’s Race, held on the same course and on the same day as stage 2 of the Men’s Race. (Otley-Doncaster, 135.5 km). The world champion, born in Otley, will have the luck to ride on her childhood roads and will be committed to shine in front of her fans. Facing her there will be several well-known contenders like Emma Pooley who will make her comeback to Road competition in Yorkshire. More than a year and a half after her official retirement, the 33 years old cyclist will ride with the Great Britain team, as she may will at the Olympic Games in Rio this summer. On the ASDA Tour de Yorkshire Women’s Race, the two British champion will be, for sure, Yorkshire public’s darlings.

The lead riders in the women’s race: Lizzie Armitstead (Gbr), Kirsten Wild (Ned), Emma Pooley (Gbr), Shelley Olds (Usa), Danielle King (Gbr), Julien D’Hoore (Bel), Annalisa Cucinotta (Ita) and Marta Bastianelli (Ita)

2016 Maserati Tour de Yorkshire ride

On the final day, Sunday 1st May, the Maserati Tour de Yorkshire Ride will give amateur cyclists the chance to ride many of the roads ridden by the pros in a newly designed sportive route, which will start and finish in Scarborough. The sportive route will follow parts of the Stage 3 men's race whilst also taking in several alternative roads to allow for all thousands participants to finish in their own time. A highlight of the sportive will see amateur riders finishing with a 1km sea-front sprint finish and crossing the very same finish line as the professional riders, just few hours before them. There will be three distances for riders to choose from; 40km, 85km and 115km.