

FLAMME ROUGE

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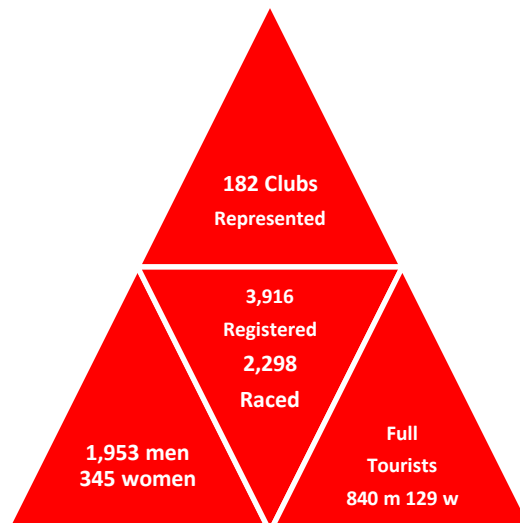
FRR *Event Report*

Series 3

Tour Watopia

Jan 2 – 10 2024

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Simply the best Events on Zwift... (still your words...)

I didn't think we could out perform Tour France so soon, it was brutal and the most engaged Tour to date – but we all did! Watopia engagement across Discord and social media was fantastic, echoed out on the virtual road with new friendships being formed and alliances in race. Live streams, promo video snippets, and of course our own ZMS powered live stream events with Si Bradeley on the mic and a very green RC in support all raised the profile of the event for everyone in the community.

The Watopia format worked well considering it's design, the iTT up front really helped move riders early who for whatever reason were not positioned well by the FRHC class process, and Stage 2 added to this as riders simply found they were in the wrong place – so we could avoid destroying a riders Tour 2 days in. The Tour was designed to assess the field early, keep the peloton together longer, keep everyone interested well into the Tour, gradually introduce the hills to a breaking point before ramping up to the finish line... results would show that I think we achieved this and it's certainly a design that will be repeated.

Fair margin was still to play a big part as we saw later in the Tour, by which time riders should have been a little more fatigued and therefore should be a lot more around their profile threshold value – and as a reminder to everyone who has not picked this up – FRHC was based off zFTP and weight at the start of the Tour - NOT 5min or 20min power – and it was not reassessed over the week where weight moved and/or zFTP moved.

Prior to Stage 7 - riders were communicated to over email, Discord, Facebook and in the Pen where I could join - we advised riders to be careful as FM was narrow. The course was not chosen for its looks it was chosen to make riders think – it even contained two downhill sections so should riders really have pushed outside of FM for their class?

FRR Tours are won over the sum of the Stages and developing a different approach to succeed given this format.

The rules were there in black and white (one day everyone will read them, one of my failings in the past has been to be 'too nice' as commented by many in accommodating change – well Stage 7 tested that and with the help of our FRR-vada group who independently reviewed the penalty process. The overwhelming collective decision was that they remain – which in 99.9% of cases was accepted – but 100% enforced as we had already done in stages prior to stage 7 without issue from any riders who had gone outside the FM range.

Final point on this, the penalty process worked well, much better than mid race upgrades which destroy the class the rider get's moved to, however we will look at the level of penalty and equally how this may work given a much longer event.

I want to give a massive thank you to the FRR-vada group and all the riders who responded so well to the requests for tech, Bio and riding style questions. Vada is made up of trusted and experienced Zwift riders who have a wealth of experience virtually and in real life at all levels of

racing – their diligence and insight is truly staggering and it is directly through their work that so many ‘would be stars’ are removed from the competition leaving the genuine riders to race.

Over the course of the week we must have looked at 10% of those who rode in the Tour from reports by riders or from general performance shown in Leaderboards. It is a process that most will be unaware of but it is an organisers duty to do more and to take decisive action for the good of their event – if they don’t then we may as well just all use Zpower. We don’t name and shame as there is no need to as it is a private thing, some are unaware of the issues highlighted but others are only too aware... but in all cases they either continue for the exercise and fun they are getting or slip away into the ether to try their hand again somewhere else.

I shall certainly be advocating going forward a community wide Global list of riders who have failed checks but equally of riders who have verified themselves too – but without sharing the personal data that has been confided to FRR – I’ll be in touch with groups next week. Obviously, it would be great if the platform did this at source but that’s not going to happen so we will prune our own branch and look to keep our events fair.

One thing we have not done to date is DQ riders on Zwiftpower, we will start to do this as of Watopia for riders who fail to respond to the requests – these will be processed next week – hitting Profiles may make them think twice about their setup and being honest racers.

The Final results when you scan the two tables in the report show just how close the racing was across the week, top GC places separated by minutes or seconds in some cases after hours of racing and other jerseys separated by less than one segments effort – all shows that everything went down to the last Stage as hoped with very few exceptions.

This Tour I’ll let the report do the talking but I want to highlight just a couple of people worthy of a special mention.

First Åsa Fast-Berglund (SZ) who stepped up to compete in the male GHT space, not only did she excel but was awarded joint first place with Philippe Hakier (5W4T) – admittedly our resulting design did not cater for this situation, it will in the future. Asa was exceptional in accepting the time adjustment for Stage 7, as the design did not alter the GHT upper range for Asa away from the ladies GHT level as such the rider did not blow class whereas a male competitor certainly would have if they had done the same. Time adjustment was more than the final eGAP so it was right to jointly award as we have done.

Readhead awards are always special, they highlight riders who ordinarily never expect or seek the limelight and on the platform have very little recognition. This Tour we tracked age for the first time so we can see our most senior operators and at 70+ I can only hope I can still cycle by then... crazy thought that I am closer to 70 than 40 ...though at times Hayley does say I’ll be lucky to make it to 57!

We recognise this Tour the efforts of **Heinz Stahl (VELOS)**, **Lisa Stanley (CCNS/LWATT)** and **Quique Penaranda (HISP)** for their immense efforts to complete the Tour – an inspiration to us all.

We are also adding to this list a lady who very much gave what she had to give, needed to recover during stages 4 and 5 but was back to complete 6 of the 8 stages – recommended by a few for consideration and I had to agree that adding **Jackie Birch (ART)** just echoes what FRR is all about – inclusion at all levels whether you finish or not.

We remind in each report that the Tour is a fast moving, physically and mentally exhausting event which requires fast decisive action to keep the Tour on track – we need to result quickly, investigate and act on issues raised all within 24 hrs before we do it again... and we do – some decisions may not be popular but they are always for the good of the Tour and to maintain fairness.

Finally I want to remind you about the **Charity Day** we announced on the Stage 4 show – **May 18th 24hrs Ventoux (Ven Top)** – which is our mountain.

FRR Charity Fund Raiser ...link

We are aiming to make that a big day across the platform and we'll be approaching Zwift and partners to help with communication and marketing to boost that fund raising effort.

CFC are our charity partner, but we want to support other incredibly deserving groups too like BeMoreFreddie (check that channel for why) and as extra incentive a percentage of the funds raised will be given to the top three teams on the day for charities of their choice.

I feel excited just typing this out .. more details to come but please try and save the date ...do one ascent do 10 it will all be appreciated.

FRR is a series unlike no other as I hope new riders have discovered over the course of the week, do we get everything right... no... do we know everything ...no... but we do listen, learn and adapt to fine tune and improve each Tour ... yes! This is why so many return and bring more and more friends each time and for that we thank each and everyone one of you because whatever you goal for the Tour we are in it together and of course not everything is in our control and not everyone will make it to the end.... but that is the challenge!

Tour Watopia Series 3 Podium Report...link

and finally...

I want to thank everyone who has taken the time to send funds through the [FRR GoFundMe](#) page, we do not push this and mention it only in passing as we all have our lives to live and I know we are all living in a much harder economic period than most can ever remember.

I'm honoured that you let me into your lives each Series and appreciate every donation and ounce of perspiration. FRR will continue to evolve and in 2024 we are expecting big change – all donations are fully appreciated and will be used wisely.

As you may know 20% of donations received will be given to chosen charity [Cyclists Fighting Cancer](#) who do great work helping children and adults recover from cancer through the power of the bike.

What's next.... World Tour on 29th February with the preview show on Friday 26th January 1900GMT – registration will open on the 27th January.

World Tour - Triqueta, is One Grand Tour separated into three 7 Stage editions – Complete all three editions for the combined Grand Tour Title or pick which edition you can join or just join stages – it's your choice and may be by the end of it you'll be ready to tackle our **World Championship** two back to back races one time slot one global event.... **April 12 1900GMT.**

Soon profiles will reset and LOANs will be removed and Tour changes will be released before the Schedule show, as we need a little more time to consider and design them well.

So from everyone at FRR thank you all for joining the event – the competition, camaraderie, team support, feedback, positivity and support is simply overwhelming (and those that have had other agendas will either see the light or see the door) – what we do is very personal to us and I see that too in the riders who join and contribute.

Finally, a very special thank you to Hayley and my family for supporting me throughout the Series – it's an immersive experience all the way through and I couldn't do it without them as every hour on the bike takes 20 to of ours to get it there!

See you very soon!

Richard – Hayley - Lee

Join us in the [FRR Facebook Event Group](#) and we also have a [FRR Discord](#) server