

# **EXCLUSIVE interview – Edinburgh gets involved with UCI World Championships**

**From the moment Scotland was revealed as host for the inaugural Cycling World Championships, David Lappartient, the President of the sport's global governing body, the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), knew Edinburgh just had to be involved.**

This country's capital is, after all, far too scenic not to be included as one of the key venues.

Traditionally, each cycling discipline has held its own, individual world championships.

Until now.

Over eleven thrilling days in August, around 2,800 riders from over 170 nations will compete for more than 200 gold medals in what will be the first World Championships in which 13 cycling disciplines will combine their individual World Championships for the biggest cycling event the world has ever seen.

Glasgow may be playing host to the majority of the disciplines included in this mega-event, but Edinburgh is by no means being left out.

The city has the privilege of hosting one of the blue riband events of the entire championships – the men's road race.

The starting point for the race will, by anyone's standards, be stunning.

The field, which will include the very best male road riders on the planet, will line up at Arthur's Seat as the riders prepare to battle for gold over a 277.6km route that will enable the peloton to head west from Edinburgh over the Queensferry Crossing to Fife and Stirling before ultimately concluding with ten laps of Glasgow, crossing the finish line in George Square.

While Glasgow is billed as the primary host of these World Championships, Lappartient has, from the very early planning stages of this event, been adamant that as many cities and towns across Scotland as possible must be involved in these Championships, with Edinburgh having been top of the list to play a part.



The 49-year-old Frenchman, who was also, last year, elected as a member of the International Olympic Committee, visited Edinburgh last month to check on the progress of the

preparations and he was delighted with what he saw which has, he believes, vindicated his decision to include cities outwith Glasgow in this extraordinary event.

Lappartient said: "From the very first discussions we had with The Scottish Government and with Glasgow, we all wanted, together, to ensure that the event went all across Scotland.

"This country has some absolutely wonderful landscapes and iconic scenery and we wanted to use as much of it as we possibly could.

"Cycling is unique in that with so many disciplines, it's the perfect sport to showcase a country and from the very beginning, we knew we'd have a significant proportion, maybe 50 percent, in Glasgow but we also wanted to use all the cities and regions across Scotland.

"Having the men's road race start in Edinburgh is very important and will be a fantastic way to show off the city along with the world's best road riders.

"So this event will not only be a big thing for Glasgow, it'll be a massive thing for the whole of Scotland and Edinburgh will play a huge part in that. And we're sure the capital will do a fantastic job."

These Championships may be focused on crowning new world champions but Lappartient is hopeful the benefits of what he calls a "festival of cycling" will be felt by the entire Scottish public.

He said: "These World Championships will see the best elite riders in the world race for gold medals but also, the goal is to get more people across the country riding their bike.

"Cycling is a sport which has so many different strands to it; bikes are for transportation, bikes are for leisure and bikes are for competition. There are so many ways to use your bike

and I hope the Scottish public see that and embrace it.”



Visit Scotland Kenny Lam