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**2013 USA Pro Challenge Professional Cycling Race Route Through
Loveland, Windsor, Estes Park and Fort Collins Announced**

*American Cycling's Most Difficult Race Returns to Test the Pros
with Altitude and Challenging Terrain*

Fort Collins, Colo. – April 25, 2013 - The route for the 2013 [USA Pro Challenge](#) professional cycling stage race, taking place Aug. 19-25 in Colorado, will take riders on a heart-pounding journey through the breathtaking Colorado Rockies. The largest spectator event in the history of the state, the USA Pro Challenge continues to set records in professional cycling history by taking the riders to unprecedented elevations. In 2012, with a lead change nearly every day, one of the closest professional races in U.S. history came down to the final moments of the Individual Time Trial in Denver, and this year's route promises to bring just as much drama.

"The most important thing to us in creating the route for the 2013 USA Pro Challenge was to find a course that would be safe and challenging for the riders, while providing ideal viewing locations for the crowds of spectators," said Shawn Hunter, CEO of the USA Pro Challenge. "This year we are, once again, taking them to the highest point of any professional cycling race with Independence Pass. We're also returning to the iconic Time Trial route in Vail. The best in the sport will be racing through Colorado communities for what will be an epic week in professional cycling."

The race will visit eight official host cities for the starts and finishes of each stage, ranging from small towns to cities as large as Denver, with a population of more than 615,000. All with varying elevations, the starts and finishes of most stages in the 2013 USA Pro Challenge are above the highest points in the Tour de France. The two new cities joining the 2013 race – **Loveland and Fort Collins** – each offers breathtaking scenery in Larimer County that will add to the overall excitement.

Back by popular demand, the 2013 route will feature the Vail Time Trial course that was used in the 2011 edition and was largely taken from a race forever etched in cycling history – the Coors Classic. Additionally, the race will borrow from the 2011 route for the ever-popular Denver circuit finish. Giving fans a chance to see the riders nine times (eight laps) and the riders plenty of opportunities to get familiar with the course, this will bring another exciting finish to seven days of fiercely competitive racing.

"We've set out to create the greatest professional cycling event in the U.S. and with each edition the route continues to evolve, the competition continues to be fierce and the fans continue to come out in droves," added Hunter. "In looking at the route we have outlined, each day is a challenge, which will create some amazing racing. This year is looking like it will be the best yet."

“We are thrilled to share our world-class venue and world-class people with the fans, riders, crew and media that will visit Northern Colorado,” commented Eric Thompson, Co-Chair and Spokesman. “The eyes of the world will be on us August 24th and we are committed to provide a safe, unique, and exciting experience for everyone. The Northern Colorado USA Pro Challenge Local Organizing Committee will be working closely over the next four months with local authorities and municipalities to inform residents and businesses that could be temporarily impacted by rolling closures along the route that weekend.

One of the most highly anticipated events on the race calendar, the 2013 USA Pro Challenge will test the riders’ strength and endurance over a nearly 600-mile course. Highlights of the route include:

Stage 1: Aspen Circuit Race – Monday, Aug. 19

The 2013 USA Pro Challenge begins with its biggest opening day hurdle ever. The new for 2013 Aspen/Snowmass Circuit may be short on distance, but it packs a punch that will welcome the riders to Colorado. Consisting of three 22-mile laps, 66 miles total, Stage 1 packs in 3,080 ft. of climbing per lap with minimal recovery, so this is no easy start. Each lap will see the racers fight for position onto the narrow, but beautiful Maroon Creek Bridge, then grind up to Snowmass Village. A quick descent leads to two short, but steep climbs and a quick loop through downtown before doing it all again. Pair that with a starting elevation of 7,900 ft. and you have one tough opening day. No one will win the 2013 USA Pro Challenge on this opening day, but without a strong start, someone could lose it.

Stage 2: Aspen to Breckenridge – Tuesday, Aug. 20

While much of the Stage 2 course has been used in previous years, 2013 will mix things up by taking the riders in different directions, creating a unique new stage. The familiar battleground of Independence Pass will be anything but easy as riders ascend the 12,000 ft. climb, the highest point reached in any professional cycling race. Then they’ll continue on through some familiar spots as the race zooms through Buena Vista, Fairplay and Alma, before tackling Hoosier Pass from the south this year. But it’s not over until it’s over, so before crossing the line the riders will have to conquer the nasty 15 percent grade of Moonstone Rd. in the heart of Breckenridge, before bombing down Boreas Pass to the waiting crowd.

Stage 3: Breckenridge to Steamboat Springs – Wednesday, Aug. 21

Stage 3 will be difficult to predict for even the biggest cycling fans. Can the climbers hold off the field or can the sprinters hang on? Stage 3 of this year’s USA Pro Challenge is wide open for the taking. After leaving Breckenridge, Swan Mountain Rd. provides a great launch pad for breakaways as the riders weave north to Kremmling, but it’s all just a prelude to the day’s main showdown on Rabbit Ears Pass. Climbing the challenging eastern slope will give the climbers a chance, but they will have to hold off the sprinters for 20 miles after cresting the top as they head downtown Steamboat Springs. Can they do it? Or will there be a repeat of 2011’s thrilling and monstrous field sprint?

Stage 4: Steamboat Springs to Beaver Creek – Thursday, Aug. 22

Stage 4 is the Queen Stage of the 2013 USA Pro Challenge. It features some previously used terrain, but with some added spice. One thing is for sure, the road to the final podium in Denver goes straight over Bachelor Gulch. A new start in Steamboat will send the race off onto new country roads around Routt County. This roller coaster of small hills gives way to a gentle route south until the racers have to climb up from the river bottom at State Bridge. That’s just the beginning, as the new approach to Beaver Creek will now send the racers up the new climb of Bachelors Gulch. It may not be the longest or most well-known climb, but it is quite possibly the toughest. The relentless grade with pitches up to 18 percent will do real damage and create the sort of epic racing for which the Pro Challenge is known. After Bachelor Gulch, the leaders still have to race down a technical descent and power up the final 2 km climb to Beaver Creek Village. By that time the winner may not even have the strength left for a victory salute.

Stage 5: Vail Individual Time Trial – Friday, Aug. 23

The last time the USA Pro Challenge visited Vail, the Time Trial was decided by 58 hundredths of a second. Competition will be equally fierce this time around, but the names may change a bit. The course's roots are in Colorado racing lore and trace back to the Coors Classic. Starting in Vail and climbing most of the way up Vail Pass, the route is no easy proposition, even for the best racers on earth. The gentle grades of the first half of the course give way to a steady climb for the last three miles. But it takes more than legs on this strategic course; go too hard early and the climb may kill your chances, but conserve too much for the climb and the leaderboard may be out of reach.

Stage 6: Loveland to Ft. Collins – Saturday, Aug. 24

With a flat speed-fest scheduled for Sunday in Denver, any contenders for the Leader Jersey will have only this stage left to make a move or lose it all. The outskirts of Loveland will see the racers off at The Ranch as they spend some early miles on the flat windswept plains passing through the Town of Windsor and turn south through Centerra before reaching the central downtown and west foothills of Loveland. Then it's up Big Thompson Canyon where things will heat up. Split north onto Devils Gulch, the race's last King of the Mountains competition, before hitting Estes Park and back down the Big Thompson. Horsetooth Reservoir provides one last chance for aggression on its steep rollers. If no one gets away here, look for the sprinters to have their day to scream into the heart of Old Town Fort Collins.

Stage 7: Denver Circuit Race – Sunday, Aug. 25

We marvel at their raw speed. We watch their daring moves and nerves of steel as they fight for position with awe. We gasp at their handling skills. They are the sprinters. And for six days they have been fighting over mountains trying to stay with racers 20 or more pounds lighter. They have flirted with thin air and time cuts, but today belongs to them. The Denver Circuit takes the best parts of the 2011 and 2012 Denver stages and combines them into a new circuit. It still hits all the Denver highlights – LoDo, City Park, Civic Center Park. There isn't a bad viewing spot. Watch for early breakaways...can they hold off the surging peloton? Watch the teams cue up and try to set up their sprinters...can they get to the front? Watch the last corner and see who has the nerve to take it the fastest and claim the final prize in the shadow of Colorado's Capitol.

Host city information, maps and elevation profiles are available on the race website at <http://usaprocyclingchallenge.com/2013-route>.

Local Northern Colorado-Stage 6 specific information is available at <http://www.nococycling.com/route> and will be updated regularly. Local sponsorship opportunities, route information and volunteer sign up information can be found on-line.

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About the USA Pro Challenge

Referred to as "America's Race," the USA Pro Challenge will take place August 19-25, 2013 and travel through eight host cities from Aspen to Denver. For seven consecutive days, the world's top athletes race through the majestic Colorado Rockies, reaching higher altitudes than they've ever had to endure. After attracting more than 1 million spectators in 2012, making it one of the largest cycling events in U.S. history and the largest spectator event in the history of the state, the USA Pro Challenge is back for 2013. Featuring a challenging, 599-mile course, the third annual race will spotlight the best of the best in professional cycling and some of America's most beautiful scenery.

More information can be found online at www.USAProChallenge.com and on Twitter at [@USAProChallenge](https://twitter.com/USAProChallenge).

About Northern Colorado USA Pro Challenge LOC

The Northern Colorado USA Pro Challenge Local Organizing Committee continues its unique approach to bring this event to Larimer and Weld Counties as such, the development of the first Northern Colorado Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), binding together the 5 municipalities, Estes Park, Fort Collins, Larimer County, Loveland and Windsor, is in the process of being approved. This IGA is the entity that will execute the agreement to host the stage with Classic Bicycle Race, the owner of the USA Pro Challenge.

For more information, visit www.nococycling.com and on Twitter at [@NocoCycling](https://twitter.com/NocoCycling).

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