

Pistorius I want to work with children

Killer's freedom plan

Oscar Pistorius is lining up a job working with children when he gets out of jail.



SINGLE CELL Pistorius

The Paralympian – known as the Blade Runner – shot dead lover Reeva Steenkamp, 29, on Valentine's Day in 2013.

He was cleared of murder last year after a six-month trial but found guilty of culpable homicide.

He will be freed from prison in three months' time.

The South African is desperate to get his life back on track and wants to work with disadvantaged youngsters.

A source said: "He is keen to become involved in assisting children. His legal team are trying to help with this."

Pistorius, 28, was handed a five-year jail term but will serve just a sixth of the sentence under South African law.

He has been held in a single cell at the notorious Kgosi Mumpuru prison in Pretoria, over fears he will face attacks from violent inmates.

The source added: "He is managing in jail. He's isolated

New row over duke statue

Two islanders are involved in a petition war over a statue of the Duke of Sutherland.

The 100ft monument in memory of the 1st duke, politician George Granville Leveson-Gower, stands on top of Ben Bhraggie near Golspie, Sutherland.

Lewis resident John Morrison wants it to be taken down because of the role the duke played in the Highland Clearances.

But fellow resident Steve Doogan has launched a counter petition to save the statue.

Bear's tomato source

Scotland's only female polar bear is addicted to tomatoes.

Victoria was brought from the Arctic to Highland Wildlife Park to mate with Arkos – one of the two resident male polar bears at the attraction.

Staff at the park near Kincaig, Inverness-shire, have found she loves tomatoes.

HWP's Douglas Richardson said: "We give them to her as a treat and she eats them whole. They disappear rapidly."



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ADVENTURER MARK BEAUMONT

WHITE

ON THE UPS AND DOWNS OF EPIC AFRICAN CYCLE

LINE FEVER

He came close to death when his boat capsized on a record bid to row the Atlantic but adventurer Mark Beaumont has said his latest challenge is his toughest ever.

The Scot is trying to break the record for riding the 6200-mile length of Africa, from Cairo to Cape Town, in 50 days. So far, he is on target in his Africa Solo bid and, after 28 days, he has cycled 4199 miles and averaged 150 daily miles.

The current Guinness world record stands at 59 days and eight hours.

But Mark, 32, of Perthshire, has faced gruelling conditions and numerous difficulties riding through the first five countries of his eight-country expedition – including an attempted robbery.

Starting in Cairo on April 10, he has cycled the lengths of Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania and reached Zambia on Friday.

Mark said: "These past few weeks have been the toughest riding of my life. It has been brutal at times and I've faced very tiring days of between 11 and 13 hours in the saddle."

"The biggest challenges have been the weather, including heavy rain, storms and very high temperatures."

"In Sudan, it reached 39C and I felt suffocated by the baking heat. Then in Ethiopia, it was heavy rain and thunderstorms that made progress difficult."

Mark also revealed that on his trek through Tanzania, a man tried to mug him while he was having lunch.

He said a "bit of a scuffle" broke out after a drunk who wanted his cash "got a bit boisterous".

The Glasgow University graduate says the state of the roads in Africa have led to many mechanical problems.

He added: "Many roads I thought would be paved are not and the rain has made them extremely muddy. My bike is a great touring bike but it is not well suited to the unpaved roads."

"Mud has clogged up many parts of the bike and I have had too many punctures to count. I also had to ride with a broken sprocket for days before I was able to fix it."

"That meant I couldn't use that gear and had to spend more time pedalling out of the saddle, which is exhausting."

"These might seem like small problems but when you are riding 150 miles a day, that can be tiresome."

In addition, Mark has been troubled by health problems.

He said: "This is an unsupported record-breaking attempt so it's impossible to take all my own food."

"I've been relying on eating food when I can find it and some of the meals have been taken at roadside stalls. I guess it's inevitable but these haven't all agreed with me and I've been hit by stomach issues a couple of times."

"One night recently, I couldn't sleep and this caused me to be far weaker during

■ **Fiona Russell**

subsequent riding days. There have been days that have been very, very hard."

Another more unexpected problem came in Ethiopia. Mark said: "I had heard the southern part of the country might not be too friendly but it wasn't good at all."

"The atmosphere felt threatening and I faced youths throwing stones at me. It didn't feel like a great place to be riding on my own."

Another daunting stretch came in northern Kenya, where political unrest saw Mark being accompanied by an armed security escort for 300 miles.

Yet the dad-of-one, who broke the round-the-world cycling record in 2008, remains amazingly upbeat.

He said: "As well as tough days, there have been many fantastic days."

"Sudan was very hot but I flew through that country with an amazing tailwind."

"I have also enjoyed epic climbs, such as the incredible Blue Nile Gorge in Ethiopia, and lots of fabulous scenery and wildlife."

"Most people have been very friendly and welcoming, helping me with food, water and a place to stay each night."

Despite stomach issues, Mark describes the food as "generally fine".

He said: "I burn about 6000 calories a day so it's vital that I find a lot of filling food. I have been mostly lucky so far with big plates of local produce but I am still losing weight."

On day 24, having ridden 164 miles, Mark reported with delight on Twitter: "Found a place on outskirts of Arusha [Tanzania] that did full cooked breakfast and cappuccino!"

Although Mark has included a tent in his minimalist 8kg bike packs, he is trying not to camp.

He said: "I'm carrying a tent but I'm not keen on camping at night because of safety. Each day, before darkness comes, I need to find a place to stay and so far, things have gone to plan."

"I have had adequate lodgings and never needed to use my tent."

While Mark has already completed



ON A MISSION Mark, left, sets off on his epic cycle in Cairo last month. Above, he tries to fix his bike and, top, more trouble after a puncture

"I faced youths throwing stones at me. It did not feel like a great place to be riding on my own"

social media to Africa Solo.

"I haven't taken on a major bike challenge since the 2010 American ride and the increased interest in my cycling has been significant with many, many thousands following me online."

"I'm delighted that I appear to be inspiring so many more people to take an interest in cycling and hopefully to get on a bike."

As part of this mission, on Mark's return he will be fronting the campaign for Cycling Scotland's annual event, Pedal for Scotland, which takes place on September 6 and includes several mass participation rides.

Mark said: "I've been delighted to be an ambassador for this all-inclusive event for the past few years."

"I will be opening the event and then riding the Classic Challenge route."

Meanwhile, Mark has less than three weeks left to successfully complete the Africa ride. He is looking forward to flatter terrain in Zambia and Botswana before cycling into South Africa to reach Cape Town.

He said: "I reached the halfway mark almost exactly on target and, if I keep to my average of 152 miles a day, I might even get to Cape Town a few days earlier than predicted."

"I'm looking forward to a more leisurely speed and the chance to chat to people when I ride Pedal for Scotland in September."

Mark's record bid is backed by LDC, the Drum Property Group, the Wood Foundation, Martin Currie, the Weir Group and Endura.

The project has raised more than £30,000 for Orkidstudio, a humanitarian architecture and construction charity of which Mark is patron.

For more details on Mark's Africa cycle, read his updates on Facebook.

Join the chain gang for country's big bike rides

Scotland's biggest bike event is now in its 17th year, with three rides to choose from on September 6.

WEE JAUNT

This nine-mile cycle from Kirkliston Leisure Centre to Murrayfield Stadium is perfect for those new to, or just back in, the saddle as well as families.

CLASSIC CHALLENGE

At 47 miles, this is the event's most popular ride, attracting more than 7500

PEDAL FOR SCOTLAND

cyclists last year. The wheels are set in motion from 7.30am at Glasgow Green, finishing at Murrayfield Stadium. It's a perfect challenge for riders of all ages and abilities but could require a little training preparation for those not used to longer cycles.

BIG BELTER

This 110-mile route through the southern uplands is ideal for more experienced road cyclists. It uses the same start and finish points as the Classic Challenge but takes riders through seven local authority areas incorporating some of the best sections of Scottish cycle racing circuits. For more information or to sign up for an event, see pedalforscotland.org

Don't miss your training guide Part 1
Inside Seven Days magazine