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FedGroup Itec sign Knox, aim for Cape Epic podium

The FedGroup Itec professional mountain bike racing team announced on Monday the signing of Max Knox, one of South Africa's most accomplished marathon mountain bike racers.

The announcement comes just six days before the start of 2014 ABSA Cape Epic, where Knox will be paired with compatriot Kevin Evans, giving FedGroup Itec - and South Africa - a very real chance of an overall podium finish in the world's most prestigious mountain bike stage race.



Max Knox (Left) has been signed to the FedGroup Itec team and will join Four-time podium finisher Kevin Evans (Right) and are looking forward to challenging for the title as teammates at the 2014 ABSA Cape Epic which starts on Sunday. Photos supplied.

"No South African team has ever won the Cape Epic and we're excited about the potential of this new FedGroup Itec pairing of Max and Kevin," said Scott Field, FedGroup Chief Financial Officer. "Both are in very good form right now and both have substantial stage racing and Cape Epic experience."

"Max has ridden as a back-up rider to the eventual winners in the Cape Epic for a couple of years, but now he will get the chance to go for success himself. He's a great marathon talent and we're very pleased to add him to our team, not only for the Cape Epic, but on a permanent basis," said Gavin Meyer, Itec Managing Director.

Twenty-six-year-old Knox has started six and finished five Cape Epics. The 2012 South African marathon champion switched his focus to Olympic Cross-Country racing in 2013 and is looking forward to returning to endurance events with FedGroup Itec.

"I've never had a problem with endurance. My early season training hasn't changed really this year. If anything, I've got more speed and power now combined with my endurance and I've not raced much this year, so am very fresh," said Knox. "I'm looking forward to combining with Kevin for the Cape Epic. You can't get a more experienced South African to race with. I'm done with being a back-up rider in the Epic. I'm very keen to go for the win for my new team."

"For a decade Kevin and I have been rivals. I think we can learn a lot from each other. I certainly want to win a Cape Epic title my career and I know it's the one major race title Kevin is missing from his impressive career. It's

the most open Epic in ages and anything can happen in those eight days. But if you're not in the race with some form, you can't be in with a shot at the podium. We're aiming for an overall podium finish for sure," added Knox.



Max Knox has been signed to the FedGroup Itec team and will join Kevin Evans in the team's quest for a place on the overall podium at the 2014 ABSA Cape Epic which starts on Sunday.

"Max is a great marathon and stage racer and his pedigree and record are among the best in South African mountain biking. It's good to see him refocusing on the endurance events," said Kevin Evans. "It's a late change to our team for Cape Epic and it took me a bit by surprise. It's taking a while to sink in that I have gone from African leader jersey contender to overall title contender, which is quite a nice adjustment to have to make." In his eight completed Cape Epics, Evans has finished second once, third three times and fourth once. He missed last year's edition due to illness but is showing good form in the build-up events to the 2014 edition. He was originally paired with Neil MacDonald, a two-time Cape Epic top-20 finisher.

"Neil remains an integral member of the FedGroup Itec team and will be key to our title defence plans at the upcoming joBerg2c and sani2c stage races. The Cape Epic is obviously a high profile goal for us, but we're committed to success at many other races throughout the year too.

"We've secured another top South African racer, Johann Rabie, to race the Cape Epic with Neil. This will be the FedGroup Itec back-up team. Having a back-up team has become the norm for teams that are aiming at the overall title. We are just awaiting confirmation from the Cape Epic organisers on this second team entry," explained Field.