



ROAD WARRIORS: Tour d'Afrique cyclists ride in the 'Samburu badlands' just north of Mount Kenya. The 12 000km Cairo to Cape Town race is in its eighth week. *Picture: KEVIN YOUNG*

Cyclists head for Kilimanjaro in 8th week of cycle tour

STAFF WRITER

TOUR D'AFRIQUE cyclists will head for the "Snows of Kilimanjaro" section after completing the "Meltdown Madness" in the annual 12 000km bicycle race from Cairo to Cape Town.

After crossing the equator, the scenery changed as the cyclists experienced cooler weather, huge, steep climbs on paved roads and lush green vegetation.

The tour is in its eighth week.

"What made the climbing easier were the amazing views;

Mount Kenya, rolling hills covered with sunflowers and corn crops, thatched cottages and super-friendly Kenyans who smiled and waved and told us 'not much further'," tour leader, Shanny Hill said.

The cyclists arrived in Nairobi on Sunday.

"Tour d'Afrique Foundation, the fundraising arm of the tour, donated bicycles to Maji Mazuri and the National Council of Women in Kenya, two NGOs dedicated to easing the suffering of HIV/Aids victims in Nairobi," said tour spokeswoman Theresa Brown.

"It was more than your average press conference.

"It was full of heart and emotion when the kids from Maji Mazuri arrived on their way to receive their treatment, and recited a poem of celebration they had created especially for the occasion," Hill said.

The cyclists rested in Nairobi on Monday and prepared for the fourth stage, known as the "Snows of Kilimanjaro", which got under way yesterday.

The 12-day, 1 012km section from Nairobi to Iringa in Tanzania will take the cyclists past

Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru and into the city of Arusha.

The cyclists will have three rest days in which to visit the Ngorongoro Crater; Lake Manyara, Taragire and Ruaha.

The tour will head towards Dodoma along roads where the Masai tribe will be their companions.

Dutch racers Adrie Frijters and Eva Nijssen still hold the overall lead in the men's and women's race respectively.

Visit www.tourdafrique.com for regular updates and more information.