

UCI ProTour: Winterthur Insurance new partner of the Tour de Suisse and the Tour de Romandie

IMG, the company that organises the Tour de Suisse and the Tour de Romandie, UCI ProTour races that take place in Switzerland, announced on 6 February 2006, the signing of a three-year sponsorship agreement with Winterthur Insurance. From 25 to 30 April, the jersey of the points ranking for the Tour de Romandie will include the Winterthur logo, as well as, from 10 to 18 June, the jersey of the best sprinter of the Tour de Suisse. The Winterthur Group is one of the leading insurance companies in the market. It employs more than 19,500 people worldwide.

Reelection of Hein Verbruggen to the IOC

Hein Verbruggen, President of the International Cycling Union from 1991 to September 2005 and current Vice-President, was reelected as member of the International Olympic Committee at the 118th IOC Session, on 10 February in Turin, Italy. Hein Verbruggen, who was succeeded by Pat McQuaid as head of the UCI, has been an IOC member since 1996. He is chair of the coordination commission for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

The UCI Women's Road World Cup begins in Australia

The 2006 UCI Women's Road World Cup will start on 26 February 2006 in Geelong, Australia, on a 120 km circuit. The best athletes, who for the last four years have got used to restarting competitions on this continent, will then stay in the region for the second of the round of the World Cup, which will be held in Wellington, New Zealand on 5th March. This year, the UCI Women's World Cup will include 12 races, on the European, American and Oceanian continents.

Women's road cycling is currently enjoying a period of great development. The record number of teams registered has been broken (28 teams) and, for the first time, an Asian team, Giant Pro Cycling (HKG) will be making its debut at the highest level.

New trainees at the UCI African Continental Centre

On 1st February, the UCI African Continental Centre, which is in South Africa, welcomed a new batch of 25 trainees from 14 countries (Algeria,

Burundi, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa, Tunisia and Zimbabwe).

The young riders will be staying at the Continental Centre for 6 months, as part of a proficiency and detection programme. They will train on the road and on the track. The best of these riders will have the chance of going to the World Cycling Centre in Switzerland, where riders aiming for the highest level are trained (UCI World Championships and World Cups, Olympic Games).

The African course is being run by Jean-Pierre Van Zyl, manager of the Centre and bronze medallist in scratch at the UCI Track World Championships in Stuttgart in 2003.

The following riders have been sanctioned for doping offences:

Alberto ARGIRO ZAPATA (COL), tested positive with EPO during the race Vuelta a Costa Rica 2004 (CRC), sanctioned by COLOMBIAN CYCLING FEDERATION, suspension of 2 years from 7 June 2005 to 7 June 2007, disqualification of the race.

Magalie LALANDE (FRA), tested positive with Salbutamol during the race Tour Féminin en Limousin (FRA) on 23rd July 2005, sanctioned by FRENCH CYCLING FEDERATION, warning and disqualification of the race. **Bart OEGEMA** (NED), tested positive with Salbutamol during the race Vuelta a Lleida (FRA) on 6th June 2005, sanctioned by FRENCH CYCLING FEDERATION, warning and disqualification of the race. **Roger DE BREUKER** (BEL), tested positive with Fenetylline, Amphetamine during the race World Masters Championships in St-Johann (AUT) on 27th August 2005, sanctioned by ROYALE LIGUE VELOCIPEDIQUE BELGE, suspension of 2 years from 5th November 2005 to 4th November 2007, disqualification of the race. **Luca DE ANGELI** (ITA), tested positive with EPO during the race Settimana Ciclistica Internazionale (ITA) on 22nd March 2005, sanctioned by FEDERATION ITALIENNE DE CYCLISME, suspension of 2 years from 2nd December 2005 to 2nd December 2007, disqualification of the race.