



## The UCI's New 'ProTour' Will Revamp the Structure of Professional Cycling in 2005!

By Barry Boyce, *CyclingRevealed*, February 2005

**In its 'ProTour' statement the UCI indicted, "...cycling must evolve if it wants to remain one of the most popular sports in the world and build on the success that it has enjoyed since its beginning."**

### The Announcement:

**October 2, 2004** in Verona, Italy Hein Verbruggen the president of the **UCI- Union Cycliste Internationale** (International Cycling Union) made official the details of a new 30-race ProTour. The new structure will force the major professional teams to compete in all the ProTour's events. "You cannot force a rider to ride when he does not want to, but I think in the future teams will select riders who want to ride in more races," Verbruggen said. A statement believed to be aimed at Lance Armstrong and his past 'solo focus' on the Tour de France.

The ProTour's aim is to create an exclusive elite group of teams to give their sponsors the best media exposure possible. In October Verbruggen said: "We've already got 17 teams and major sponsors signed up for the Pro Tour, and we've agreed to accept three more. We've talked to many race organizers and they're becoming more and more enthusiastic about the Pro Tour." **[NOTE: the UCI settled on 19 teams: Quick Step, Davitamon-Lotto, CSC, Bouygues Telecom, Cofidis, Credit Agricole, FDJeux.com, Gerolsteiner, T-Mobile, Fassa Bortolo, Liquigas, Domina Vacanze, Lampre-Caffitta, Rabobank, Euskaltel-Euskadi, Illes Balears-Banesto, Liberty Seguros, Saunier Duval-Prodir, Discovery Channel]**

### The UCI's ProTour stated three objectives:

- To make cycling more attractive to the public, especially by improving participation levels at key events of the season.
- Increase the interest that it generates with investors, by offering teams, organizers, broadcasters and their main partners, guarantees as regards the profit that they will make from their investment. For that, the big races must benefit from as much media coverage as possible.
- Contribute to the development of cycling on all continents (outside Europe), by providing it with an environment in which it can flourish without suffering from the competition of UCI ProTour races.

## The Structure:

The ProTour Reform, which groups all major one-day and stage races, will eliminate the two separate rankings, the World Cup and UCI rider rankings. January 1, 2005 the international calendar will change significantly. Road racing will be based on the following structure:

<b>COMPETITIONS</b>	<p><b>1 ProTour Circuit</b> Professional teams with a license (obligatory) Professional teams (on invitation/without points)</p> <p><b>5 Continental Circuits</b></p> <p><i>* Race Category- Hors Classe</i> Professional teams with a license (without points) Professional teams Continental teams</p> <p><i>* Race Category- Class 1</i> Professional teams with a license (without points) Professional teams Continental teams National teams</p> <p><i>* Race Category- Class 2</i> Continental teams National teams Regional and Club teams</p>
<b>TEAMS</b>	<p><b>20 top-level ProTour teams with a license (see NOTE above):</b> <i>UCI Definition-</i> The 20 teams will be able to acquire a ProTour license for a maximum duration of 4 years. Licenses will be issued in accordance with strict criteria (sporting, ethical, legal and financial) and will entail clearly defined rights and obligations, particularly in terms of participation in ProTour races.</p> <p><b>Professional teams</b> <i>UCI Definition-</i> These are professional structures having successfully undergone a financial and legal audit carried out by the UCI. Their status (label) must be renewed each year.</p> <p><b>Continental teams</b> <i>UCI Definition-</i> These are professional and non-professional structures recognized and certified by the National Federations of the country where the majority of the riders come from. Each NF may register a maximum of 15 Continental teams that fulfill the following criteria: 8 to 16 athletes, the majority of riders under 28 and regulated transfers.</p> <p><b>National teams</b> <i>UCI Definition-</i> The structure of national teams will remain unchanged. Nonetheless the UCI intends to raise their status by giving them a central role in Continental Circuits.</p> <p><b>Regional and Club teams</b> <i>UCI Definition-</i> As in the past, regional and club structures will have access, to a limited extent, to races on Continental Circuits. Regional and club structures will be placed under the responsibility and authority of the National Federations.</p>

<b>CLASSIFICATIONS</b>	<b>For each Circuit:</b> 1 Individual Rider Classification  1 Classification by Country  1 Classification by Team
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The leader of the ProTour classification will wear a white jersey with a blue neck and sleeves.



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## The Continental Circuits



**The UCI- *Union Cycliste Internationale* (International Cycling Union) has issued the following statement about the 5 Continental Circuits:**

The potential for the development of cycling on the various non-European continents is enormous (big audiences, promising riders, ideal environment and enthusiastic partners). The introduction by the International Cycling Union of the 5 Continental Circuits provides an adequate and realistic context in order to encourage the expansion of cycling, everywhere in the world.

**The creation of UCI Continental Circuits has 2 objectives:**

*Strengthen the interest generated by top level cycling races on each continent, with the media as well as the public, thanks to:*

- Improved clarity of the calendar (structuring by continent, clear hierarchical organization of races, clearly defined participation rules).
- The improvement of races on a sporting level; a greater number of points at stake increases the importance of competitions, riders' motivation and the quality of the event.

*Encourage the creation of durable structures, able to stimulate the development of cycling on all continents, thanks to:*

- Dividing up of the calendar enabling teams, even if their resources are modest, to take part in an international hotly contested challenge. The most talented riders would progress, before joining a UCI Pro Team.
- Improvement in the appeal of continental races (the biggest races of the UCI Asia Tour, for example, will be considered in the same way as the most prestigious races on the UCI Europe Tour), which would encourage new organizers and their partners to also develop cycling on their continent.

### **What are the UCI Continental Circuit Rankings?**

Races on the Continental Circuits have an individual ranking, a team ranking and a country ranking.

The rider in the first place of the individual ranking of the Continental Circuit at the end of the season will be the sacred winner of his Circuit.

Go to the UCI web site links below for details on each Continental Circuit:

#### **UCI Africa Continental Circuit**

*Schedule not available*

#### **UCI America Continental Circuit**

<http://www.uciamericatour.com/imgArchive/Calendar/CAL-ROA-2005-AMERICA.pdf>

#### **UCI Asia Continental Circuit**

<http://www.ucasiatour.com/imgArchive/Calendar/CAL-ROA-2005-ASIA.pdf>

#### **UCI Europe Continental Circuit**

<http://www.ucieuropetour.com/imgArchive/Calendar/CAL-ROA-2005-EUROPE.pdf>

#### **UCI Oceania Continental Circuit**

<http://www.uciocianiatour.com/imgArchive/Calendar/CAL-ROA-2005-OCEANIA.pdf>

For everything UCI go to their web site:

<http://www.uci.ch/>