Big Changes at Marco Polo Cycling Team; Donckers Koffie becomes the New Title Sponsor

Tuesday, 21 February 2012

Donckers Koffie will be the new title sponsor of the Marco Polo Cycling Team in 2012. Thanks to the new partnership with Donckers Koffie, the UCI Continental team – which has just become the first Ethiopian Continental team after enjoying 10 years of success in China – will be able to race a full season of a pro-level program in Europe, with additional races in Asia and Africa.

The Marco Polo Cycling Team 2011 with Ethiopian riders racing in Europe. (photo: Remko Kramer)

Key sponsors such as n°7even Bikes, FFWD wheels, Specialized helmets, CCN uniforms, Frans Hendrickx, Hi Chew, Dills and WIB will all be supporting Marco Polo Cycling - Donckers Koffie.

Rudi Donckers, owner of Donckers Koffie said: “We are very glad that we can stay involved in cycling and support international developments from the Belgium heartland of cycling. We were directly involved in the Qin Cycling Team last year, but we decided that linking up with a long-existing team like Marco Polo Cycling Team was a more efficient way to reach our commercial goals.

We are pleased that Hi Chew, Dills, WIB and a number of other companies with whom we have enjoyed many successes with over the years, will also be joining us at Marco Polo Cycling. We expect to make a large contribution to this development team and its African riders, and we hope to see the young guys develop as we visit the races throughout the year!”

The 19-strong Marco Polo Cycling – Donckers Koffie roster will consist of 6 talented Ethiopian riders that will join forces with very experienced pro riders like Matthé Pronk (NL), Jan Kuyckx (B) and Léon van Bon (NL), who all decided to continue their contracts with the team.

New Zealand Olympic track medal candidates Marc Ryan (Team Pursuit) and Shane Archbold (Omnium) will integrate the team’ races in North Western Europe into their Olympic program.

Team director Gilbert de Weerdt said: “Next to existing sponsors like Frans Hendrickx, clothing brand CCN and a number of other loyal sponsors, the entrance of Donckers Koffie and their network will give the team the possibility to race a full season of a pro-level program.

We will race numerous 1.1, 1.2 and pro races, with a focus in Belgium and in The Netherlands. Between the one day races, we will also be targeting some important international stage races in Europe, Africa and Asia.

The team will also be supporting the African guys at several Cyclosportive events this season with the aim of following on from our success in the Gran Fondo Eddy Merckx last year, where Solomon Shiferaw showcased his climbing prowess by winning in the Ardennes.

I think this program and our team of incredibly talented athletes combined with the experienced ‘oldies’, will give a fantastic opportunity to the younger guys to develop themselves, hopefully scoring some results in this highly competitive program along the way.”

Marco Polo Cycling – Donckers Koffie 2012:

DE WEERDT Sven

BEL

29.03.1978

KUYCKX Jan

BEL

20.05.1979

VAN MECHELEN Matthias

BEL

23.02.1988

ABRAHAM Daniel

ERI

11.02.1985

ABELLO SANCHEZ Ruben

ESP

19.04.1976

ABEBE Alem Grmay

ETH

15.11.1990

BEKELE Binyam Fitsum

ETH

18.09.1987

GEBRESILASSIE Estifanos Kebede

ETH

18.02.1988

GIDAY Kbrom Hailay

ETH

19.02.1989

KINFE Yirga Woidemariam

ETH

19.02.1988

SHIFERAW Solomon Bitew

ETH

13.07.1987

BARTLETT Chris

GBR

12.08.1986

GREEN Matt

GBR

02.10.1988

PRONK Matheus

NED

01.07.1974

VAN BON Leon

NED

28.01.1972

ARCHBOLD Shane

NZL

02.02.1989

MACIC Christopher

NZL

01.08.1988

RYAN Marc

NZL

14.10.1982

GREENE Edward

RSA

26.11.1990