



## INTERNATIONAL CYCLING UNION

President

### **To riders in teams invited to the Tour de France**

Sent by email only

Aigle, 05<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
Ref: Presidency

### ***Tour de France 2008***

Dear Riders,

I last wrote to many of you before Paris-Nice this year.

You will have heard of the announcement made on Tuesday that the French Cycling Federation (FFC) has once again agreed to facilitate the running of an ASO event outside the rules of the UCI. By allowing ASO to create a parallel system under which to run its races the FFC is once again contributing to the extremely serious crisis the sport in which you do your job finds itself in.

The Tour is our sport's flagship event and in a radical new development in ASO's push to undermine our authority and create structures that more easily follow its commercial interests it is holding this great race hostage. It is putting riders in the position that they have to choose to break the UCI's rules if they are to participate in the Tour.

I believe that the Tour and other great events belong first and foremost to the riders that make them special races. It's a great shame for the sport that the FFC, who failed to take their responsibilities to pay riders their prize monies from last year's Tour until very recently, should assist ASO in removing the Tour from the established international calendar.

You may know that your team has been asked to sign a contract similar to, or harder than, the one that teams were forced to sign to participate in Paris-Nice this year. Sadly this type of one-sided arrangement is the future for our sport if ASO succeeds in its objective of removing the authority of the UCI from its races. Given the balance of power between everyone else and ASO you should be aware that this is just the beginning and that ASO will ask for more and more from teams in future contracts.

As a rider this contract between your team and ASO has a great impact on you. By signing the contract your team effectively throws all the rights you have under the UCI Rules in the bin. I understand that there are clauses in the contract that have a very direct effect on riders, including provisions that whereabouts information will be provided to the French authorities.

As for Paris-Nice, the contract also most likely provides that ASO can throw a team or a rider out of the Tour just because they consider unilaterally that their presence harms the image of the race

It is just this type of race by race negotiation that the UCI and in the particular the ProTour project has tried to bring to an end. By creating a season-long series providing participation guarantees to the top teams and riders, the UCI has worked hard to create a solid, predictable and well regulated environment in which riders, teams, sponsors and organisers can thrive and do not depend on one single event whose private organiser can then impose its views on teams and riders. With ASO's system the riders and teams are at the total mercy of an organiser's commercial interests. This really is a terrible step backward for cycling. Without clear rules, stable participation rights for teams and comprehensive doping controls as only the UCI can provide I am sure that there will be a reduction in sponsor interest and increased instability in the professional peloton in what is already a difficult time. This will also have a negative impact on salaries.

In terms of practicalities there will of course be no UCI commissaires at the Tour, no UCI doping controls, no UCI points to count towards World Championship qualification and quite simply no rules as far as the UCI are concerned. The situation regarding the validity of insurance is unclear and riders will have only the "protections" afforded you by the ASO contract.

Riders who participate in the Tour run outside the UCI's rules and in the ASO system will also, of course, be liable to UCI sanctions. Sanctions for riders who have participated in non-UCI events will be decided upon at the end of the season.

I appreciate that those riders selected are under enormous pressure to participate in the Tour, under whatever system it is run. However, as with Paris-Nice, if riders participate in it as currently scheduled they will be breaking UCI rules and assisting ASO in its plans.

If you have further questions about the implications for you as a rider of ASO's actions please contact your rider representatives at the CPA who will give you a view independent of the UCI or ASO.

Yours sincerely,



Pat McQuaid  
President

Cc: Astana  
CPA