

UCI – INTERNATIONAL CYCLING UNION

President

To the teams invited to the
Paris-Nice

Aigle, 25 February 2008
President's Office / MB / fb

TRANSLATION

As you will know, the International Cycling Union (UCI) has been conscientiously working to carry through a reform of road cycling in recent years. The objective of this reform has been to create stable conditions to allow riders, teams and sponsors to carry out their activities against the background of a predictable environment. Unfortunately, some of the most powerful players in our sport are opposed to this reform.

This situation has become critical as the start of the Paris-Nice approaches (the first stage of the event is scheduled for 9 March). By Saturday (23 February), the Paris-Nice had not been registered on our calendar. (For your information, the other events yet to register on the international calendar are the Paris-Roubaix, Tour de France, Vuelta a España and Paris-Tours.) The UCI was informed that ASO had requested the French Cycling Federation (FFC) to allow it to organise the event as a private initiative under the jurisdiction of French law. This request was today accepted by the FFC.

It should be noted that Paris-Nice could have been organised without any problems or issues of this type if it had been registered, as expected, as part of the UCI Europe Tour, with unrestricted participation.

Paris-Nice thus does not appear on the UCI international calendar nor on the French national calendar in accordance with the regulations. In other words, Paris-Nice remains outside the UCI's federal regulatory structure.

We are sorry that we could not inform you of this earlier.

It is clear that in inviting your team ASO had you believe that there would be international participation in the Paris-Nice, implying registration on the international calendar. Now, just two weeks before the Paris-Nice, the FFC informs us that it has decided to agree to ASO's request, with the consequence that your team, as a UCI licence holder, will not be able to participate in this event.

The consequences of ASO's request to the FFC are significant, both for the UCI as well as for your team.

In terms of UCI regulations, Paris-Nice will be a "rogue" event, in other words a private event without any link to organised sport or the Olympic movement. The UCI will not be involved in any way. The race will not be governed by UCI regulations.

As far as the UCI is concerned, the event will not represent a valid competition and as such there will be no classification, no points, no winner and no rules. No commissaires will be provided under UCI regulations. The decisions of any person acting as a commissaire will not carry any regulatory value.

The UCI will not carry out any anti-doping controls or blood tests. The French anti-doping agency may conduct controls and in this event will also be responsible for managing the results and any related proceedings (except for riders with the French licence for whom the FFC will be the competent body). The validity of all this would depend on French law and not on UCI regulations; the latter will not apply.

I trust that you will not leave the UCI structure and that you will not associate your team with such an event. I would also remind you that UCI regulations prohibit participation in such an event and set out severe sanctions in such cases.

Our regulations (Article 1.2.037) establish that a cycling event can only be organised if it is registered on a national, continental or world calendar.

I am relying on you to respect the regulations, the UCI and your sport, and as a result not participate in the Paris-Nice.

In the knowledge that you may be pressurised by ASO, who may, for example, link the right to participate in the Tour de France to your participation in the Paris-Nice, I would request you to make me aware of any such moves of this kind which would demonstrate the abuse of a dominant position.

As a result of selections implemented or announced by ASO and RCS for participation in their events, you will certainly have understood that the respect of clear rules by all is the best guarantee of the equitable sporting treatment of all teams and riders. Those who are favoured today, may be rejected tomorrow. It is also evident that it is vital for those who want to be protected from the detrimental actions of others should respect the regulations.

Furthermore, the UCI will not consider itself under any obligation towards those parties who have not observed the regulations. Thus, for example, the UCI will give priority in all its programmes, including the biological passport system, to those who have respected the regulations.

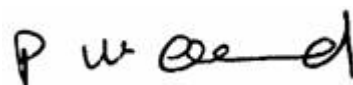
I accept that this is a very unpleasant situation for you, your riders and your sponsors and I am sorry for this. You may say that the UCI and ASO should sort out their own problems. You will however be aware that the UCI has made several concessions to ASO, but in vain. ASO refuses to respect UCI regulations and no longer recognises its authority as the international federation representing your sport.

We have reached the point where you have to ask yourself the following question: should my sport be governed by an international federation that takes decisions in the general interest and implements regulations that apply to everyone and offer me protection; or should it be governed by powerful organisers who decide matters on a case-by-case basis as they see fit?

We are living through some difficult times, but all our efforts will be worth it to safeguard the future of our sport.

I place my trust in you.

Yours in sport,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P McQuaid". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Pat McQuaid
President

Copy to: Astana
UCI Professional Continental Teams
CPA
AIGCP
FFC