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Ofoto-Lombardi Sports Brings Local National Champ to NYC Race Pro Cycling Team An Accurate Reflection of Local Cycling Community

SAN FRANCISCO (July 27, 2003) – Bicycle racing and athletes not of European descent are not usually associated in the U.S., even by cycling enthusiasts.

In the New York area, however, African-Americans, as well as riders from Latin America and the Caribbean, populate the cycling scene in substantial numbers.

Ofoto / Lombardi Sports team manager John Durso, who hails from Morristown, NJ, has raced in the New York area for many years, and has noticed that the diversity of the fields there has an effect on the style of racing.

“The racing is more tactical as there seem to be more sprinters,” says Durso. “The energy is electric as the multi-ethnic communities seem to really follow the sport and are knowledgeable.”

In contrast to the colorful New York cycling scene, only three African-Americans are currently among the corps of professional road cyclists in the U.S., and two of them are members of the Ofoto / Lombardi Sports Professional Cycling Team.

They are Erik Saunders, 28, a native of Richmond, VA and current resident of Twenty Nine Palms, CA, and Devon Hoff-Weekes, 21, of Oakland, CA.

In addition to the diversity that Ofoto / Lombardi Sports will bring to the New York City Cycling Championships presented by BMC Software, to be held in Lower Manhattan on Sunday, August 3, the team will also bring a local hero in New Jersey native and recently-crowned US Under-23 National Champion, Jonathan Erdelyi (Brick, NJ).

“Erdelyi has been training like a madman for this event,” says his manager Durso, “and to have the National Champion’s jersey in front of the home crowd is amazing.”

Erdelyi, 22, improved on his 3rd place finish in the 2002 Under-23 National Championship and won the title in a 124 mile race on July 3 under brutally hot conditions in College Station, Texas.

Also in the last month, the team’s Jackson Stewart (23, Los Gatos, CA) has placed 2nd in the nationally-ranked Murrysville Cycling Classic and won two of Northern California’s most prestigious races, showing a sprinting ability well-suited to the fast and flat New York City Cycling Championships presented by BMC Software

In addition to Erdelyi, Saunders, and Stewart, the Ofoto / Lombardi Sports roster for the New York race includes Tim Larkin (33, Berkeley, CA), Peter Lopinto, (23, Madison, NJ), and Russell Hamby (24, Sacramento, CA).

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Lombardi Sports is the San Francisco Bay area’s premier sporting goods retailer, located at the intersection of Polk and Jackson Streets in San Francisco. www.lombardisports.com

Formerly America's premier amateur cycling team, **Ofoto/Lombardi** is in its second season as a professional team. The team contains a current National Champion, four ex-National Champions, and a current US National Team Member. National and racial diversity are key elements of the team’s make-up, with an Irish, a Swiss, and a Canadian amongst the American contingent, which contains two of the three African-American professional road cyclists in the world. www.teamofoto.com

