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Raisin Takes U-23 Jersey at Dodge Tour de Georgia Will get keys to City of Dalton on Saturday

SAN FRANCISCO (April 22, 2003) – The much-heralded Dodge Tour de Georgia commenced today in Savannah, with Georgia native Saul Raisin of the Ofoto / Lombardi Sports Cycling Team posting the fastest time among Under-23 riders in Tuesday's 2.6 mile Prologue.

"I went out hoping to win the under-23 jersey," he said afterwards.

"I wasn't getting up to speed on the straights like I like to, but I kept pushing as hard as I could," said Raisin, whose time of 5:18 was good for 42nd overall on the day.

Riding in the biggest race of his career to date, Raisin hopes to keep U-23 lead, and the Best Young Rider jersey that comes with it, at least until Saturday's Stage 4, which starts in his hometown of Dalton, Georgia.

Prior to the start of the stage, the Mayor of Dalton will present the young cyclist with the key to the city, in a ceremony at 9:30am.

"It's really cool, as a cyclist you don't really get any recognition, and then one day a stage of a big bike race comes to your home town and it's a really big deal."

The mayor's office of Dalton contacted Raisin's family for this special award after learning of his participation in the race.

As to his prospects in the stage that starts in his hometown, Raisin is hopeful but realistic. "I'd love to win that stage, but it could well be the deciding stage of the Tour, so I don't think I'll be handed anything on a plate. Still, I will be trying to do something special on that day."

Other notable finishes for the team include David O'Loughlin of Ireland, the team's fastest rider, with a time of 5:13 that placed him 23rd out of 140 starters. Tim Larkin (Berkeley, CA) took 27th place, with Erik Saunders (Twenty-nine Palms, CA), the only African-American cyclist in the race, 45th.

The Ofoto / Lombardi Sports Cycling Team ended the day in 7th place out of 18 teams, 37 seconds behind Teams leader Saturn.

The Dodge Tour de Georgia will visit nine cities with its six stages covering over 600 miles, beginning in Savannah on April 22 and concluding in Atlanta on April 27.

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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.lombardisports.com/bike/bike_TEAM.html

