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**OFOTO / LOMBARDI SPORTS CONTINUES TO SHINE
Team Shows Grit on Mountainous Stage, Raisin Keeps U-23 Lead**

GAINSVILLE, GA. (26 April, 2003) – While a podium place did not materialize on the toughest day of the Tour de Georgia, a determined Ofoto / Lombardi Sport team showed itself as the fourth strongest team on the 122-mile Stage Four from Dalton to Gainsville.

Saul Raisin continued his success by retaining the blue jersey of the top under-23 rider in the race, and taking another formidable step up the overall standings from 26th to 20th overall.

At the end of Thursday's Stage Two, Raisin was back in 35th place overall.

Hopes had been high for other individuals in the team to leap up the General Classification standings today, but in most cases this did not quite happen. David O'Loughlin remained the team's highest placed rider in 16th overall, while Tim Larkin moved up from 18th to 17th.

The stage's decisive move was made on the Woody Gap climb, with about 45 miles remaining. Eight riders broke away from the bunch, and remained clear all the way to the finish.

A chasing group of 12, containing four Ofoto / Lombardi Sports team members, pursued the leaders over the top of the Woody Gap climb, and as stragglers caught up on the descent the chase group grew to 26.

David O'Loughlin (Ireland), Tim Larkin (Phoenix, AZ), Saul Raisin (Dalton, GA) and Andy Bajadali (Sacramento, CA) formed the Ofoto / Lombardi contingent in the chase, but the form and quality of the riders in the lead group, containing six from Saturn and USPS – the two biggest budget teams in the USA – was such that it would not be caught.

Team manager John Durso summed up the team's effort: "It was a hard day for our guys, but they rode really well. You have to remember that we are a young group of riders, and you can't ask too much too soon. But I think with a bit more racing we'll be right there."

Although overall team results are not available at the time of this release, Durso is confident that the team has moved further up the Teams Classification standings. In today's stage, the Ofoto / Lombardi Sports team finished one place higher than the mighty Dutch Rabobank team – which before the stage had, like so many other teams, predicted that today would be its turn to "do something."

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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.lombardisports.com/bike/bike_TEAM.html

