

JEWELRY

Breitling supports timekeeping tradition, touts first-ever cycling sponsorship

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Carl Fredrik Hagen of Norway shows off the official Q.36.5 team kit, which includes Breitling's Endurance Pro watch. Image credit: Breitling

By MARYBETH CONNAUGHTON

Swiss watchmaker Breitling is officially sponsoring its first professional cycling team.

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It will support the 24 members of the multinational Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team as they train and compete ahead of the 2026 Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) World Tour. Breitling has maintained a close relationship with the cycling world for the better part of a century, and this latest effort comes at a time when the rest of the world is embracing the sport with similar enthusiasm.

"Because of the immense—and growing—popularity of the sport," said Donnie Pacheco, founder of Donnie P. Consulting, Seattle, "This new venture affords the brand the opportunity to connect with the consumer over a shared passion."

"It expands their reach within the sporting world and will allow consumers to think of them beyond nautical sports. Precision timepieces are a natural fit for training, racing and timed sports."

Racing ahead

The Q36.5 Pro Cycling Team is starting its journey toward the (UCI) World Tour on a roll.

In addition to its backing from Breitling, the team benefits from the leadership and support of some of the cycling world's most venerable figures.

Acting as General Manager is Douglas Ryder, former Olympic competitor in the men's individual road race, who previously managed the UCI WorldTeam Qhubeka NextHash.

Italy's Vincenzo Nibali holds the distinction of winning all three cycling Grand Tours, including the Vuelta a Espaa, one of only seven riders ever to do so. He is the team's advisor.



Team Q36.5 represent 13 countries from across the world. Image credit: Breitling

The competing body itself is further supported by four more champions. New Zealand's Jack Bauer, Australia's Damien Howson, Italy's Gianlucca Brambilla and Sweden's Tobias Ludvigsson have all completed 10 seasons of the World Tour.

For others, such as Ethiopia's Negasi Haylu Abreha and Corey Davis of the U.S., this is their first entry into the professional arena.

Regardless of nationality—the team represents 13 countries—or level of experience, members present a united front thanks to their official uniform. It comes provided by the team's fellow sponsor and namesake, Italian sporting goods manufacturer [Q36.5](#).

[Breitling](#) is represented on the official 2023 team kit via the sleeves of the grey jersey and the top of the Lycra shorts. It shares space with other sponsors including financial firm UBS and German automaker Mercedes.

And since races are won and lost by fractions of a second, crucial to the kit is Breitling's contribution—its Endurance Pro watch. Lightweight and durable, it is designed for athletes who rely on the most precise timekeeping.

Training began on Jan. 11 with a first-year agenda of developing the younger riders. Part of this development will be placing in a series of races before heading to the UCI World Tour's host city of Montreal.

Their first of these competitions will be a 4-day road cycling race through Saudi Arabia—the Saudi Tour—which takes place starting on Jan. 30.

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A post shared by BREITLING (@breitling)

Wheels keep turning

Breitling's trajectory has long run parallel to the world of cycling.

Since the 1950s, the brand has acted as official timekeeper for such major international races as the Tour de France, and the Flche Wallonne, and the Giro d'Italia.

In commemoration of the latter race, Breitling co-branded a watch for the Italian market. The Giro d'Italia edition, a race-specific reimagining of the Premier watch, remains a rare and coveted find among watch collectors.

Two of the most celebrated cyclists in the history of the sport, road cyclist Gino Bartali and "Champion of Champions" Fausto Coppi both acted as ambassadors for Breitling.

Before sponsoring Q36.5, Breitling began lending support of another kind. In partnership with South African organization Qhubeka, the brand works to provide remote communities with bicycles which, in turn, provide those communities with greater access to employment and educational opportunities. Nexthash, Mr. Ryder's former team, was named for the organization and worked to help raise awareness on its behalf.

With this first official sponsorship, Breitling continues to move swiftly ahead to the future.

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