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[Astana Saves Manolo Saiz's ProTour Cycling Team](#)

The Kazakh are the new main sponsor of the Spaniard's team

It seems like Manolo Saiz's career in the sport of cycling is far from being over. Even if he has been dragged into the latest doping scandal, the Spaniard has now set up a deal with Astana Company. As you already know, his ProTour cycling squad has been dropped off - less than two weeks ago - by sponsor Liberty Seguros (an American insurance company), due to Police investigations concerning Saiz's involvement in the scandal. Yesterday, Kazakh Alexandre Vinokourov stated that he still trusts his manager and that he is convinced he will have a shot in the next Tour de France. Everybody was asking, though, who will back them up financially in the 3-week competition, since Le Tour is, by far, the most impressive race in the history on cycling. Well, it seems like Vinokourov had some inside information that was only released to the press earlier today. As it happened, Astana - a Kazakh sponsor - will take over the Saiz team starting this year's French competition. "The sponsor will be backed by the five biggest companies in the country. Kazakhstan is undergoing considerable economic growth thanks to the country's resources", said the media release on Tuesday. It seems that the company has signed a 3-year contract with ProTour, with the option of extension for another three seasons. Since the second sponsor - German engineering company Wurth - remained with the team, the complete name of the new squad will be Astana-Wurth. And, as it's most likely to happen - not because the new sponsor is Kazakh, but because he is the true leader of the team - Alexandre Vinokourov will lead the way through the Tour de France next month. The Kazakh has a pretty good chance of fighting Ivan Basso in the mountain stages, as well as in the time-trials, where he managed some great performances in the past. Having succeeded a second place overall in the 2002 Le Tour, his hopes for a win this year couldn't be higher, especially with Lance Armstrong out of the picture.