



Cyclist Tjarco Cuppens: at the end of his career he will race in Asia

foto Peter Schols

Taiwan promised land for Cuppens

Tjarco Cuppens loves the adventure. Next season the 34 years old cyclist from Landgraaf will race for the Taiwanese Fuji-Cyclingtime.com.

by **Patrick Delait**

What do you do when you are bored of European cycling and when you are looking for a new adventure? If you are Tjarco Cuppens you sign a contract with the Taiwanese Fuji-Cyclingtime.com. At the end of his career the offer of this Continental Team was a blessing for the 34 years old rider from Landgraaf. "In the past I participated at a lot of races in Asia. I love the culture and the atmosphere is less hectic then in Europe. It's always beautiful weather comparing to the European weather. I'd never doubt when Fuji offered me a contract." Cuppens had contact already in March with Chris Lintaman, the Canadian manager and rider of the Taiwanese team, but above that a good friend. In 2007 they were teammates with Team PZ Racing. However they both went their own ways, Lintaman and Cuppens never lost contact.

For Cuppens it's a blessing that they are reunited with Fuji-Cyclingtime.com. After a disappointing season with the Luxembourg Continental Team Differdange, he has only one goal left; "I want to enjoy cycling and when you do that the results will come by themselves." In my situation it doesn't make any sense to compete with the Pro Tour riders anymore. I'm 34 years old and work 4 days a week in a bikshop. I don't want to fill up the bunch. In Asia the level is lower then in Europe, however people don't must underestimate the Asian level, they become better every year. They often start with National Teams and I can insure you that the top-5 riders of Kazakhstan or Hong Kong know how to ride with a bike.

Cuppens will start with his new team in the National tours of Taiwan, Japan and China. Between those races he will participate some smaller races. The first trip to the East Asian Island (23 million residents) will be in January. Cuppens will be expected at the teampresentation and a trainingcamp.

In which team he will come is unknown for the rider from Landgraaf. "The only thing I know is that the team will have a British and Japanese rider beside Lintaman. The other teammates will probably be Taiwanese riders." Cuppens expects a lot of his Asian adventure with Fuji-Cyclingtime.com. "All my travel expenses will be covered. "This is a one in a lifetime chance and I would be crazy if I would refuse this offer.", says Cuppens who stands completely behind his choice.

Between the Asian races Cuppens will also participate the National events in The Netherlands. "With several stageraces in my legs I will have a good level in these National races. That I'm a single rider in these races against some teams doesn't scare me at all. I raced several years in foreign teams before.