



Banesto (Spain)

Poor season so far with little chance of winning the **maillot jaune**. Still smarting over loss of Tour of Spain 1998 winner **Abraham Olano** to ONCE. Unclear how **Alex Zülle** has been affected by his long lay-off



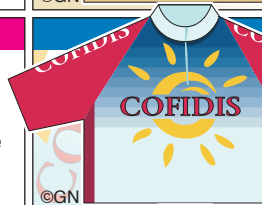
Big Mat Auber (France)

Lylian Lebreton is the rider with the most class among a mix of veterans and untested youngsters. Anything this year's weakest team achieves will make them heroes in their local media



Casino (France)

They don't have the firepower of last year's line-up. Hard workers include **Christophe Agnolutto**, **Pascal Chanteur** and **Christophe Oriol**, who won the opening stage of the Dauphine Libere



Cofidis (France)

Bobby Julich will have to produce the ride of his life to better his third place last year. **Philippe Gaumont** is suspended after an alleged doping case in May



Crédit Agricole (France)

Britain's **Chris Boardman** is an obvious favourite for the prologue. Boardman, who fractured his wrist in a heavy fall during last year's race has focused on what he is best at – racing against the clock



Festina (France)

The whole team will be under the microscope. Festina was kicked out of last year's Tour de France after team director **Bruno Roussel** confessed to an '**organised doping system**'



Française des Jeux (France)

Jean-Cyril Robin is an impressive climber, recruited from U.S. Postal Service after last year's Tour. **Emmanuel Magnien** and **Christophe Mengin** should perform well on the flat stages



Kelme (Spain)

Season started well, peaking with **Roberto Heras**' win at GP Primavera in April. **Santiago Botero** joins the climber **Roberto Heras** and **Javier Pascual Rodriguez** in support of **Fernando Escartin**



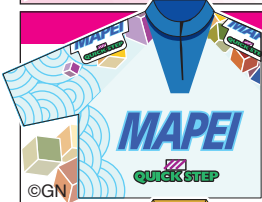
Lampre-Daikin (Italy)

World champion **Oskar Camenzind** may miss the Tour, leaving the team a little light on experience. It is up to superfast sprinter **Jan Svorada** to ensure they don't end up empty-handed



Lotto-Mobistar (Belgium)

Andrei Tchmil has gone from strength to strength with successes in La Primavera, Paris-Nice and the Milan-to-San Remo classic. Cooperation and teamwork continue to be the team's weak spot



Mapei (Italy)

World's best team but emphasis has been on Classics and shorter stage races. Line-up includes **Pavel Tonkov**, **Daniele Nardello**, **Andrea Tafi**, **Tom Steels**, **Giuseppe Di Grande** and **Axel Merckx**



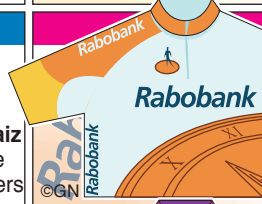
Mercatone-Uno (Belgium)

Cycling hero **Marco Pantani** '**Il Pirata**' is keeping everyone guessing as to whether he will defend his crown. **Stefano Garzelli**, **Enrico Zaina** and **Marco Velo** head a strong back-up team



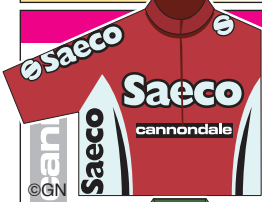
ONCE (Spain)

Laurent Jalabert will vie with **Abraham Olano** for position as team leader – that is, if the team turns up. Team director **Manolo Saiz** and doctor **Nicolas Terrados** have been excluded by Le Tour organisers



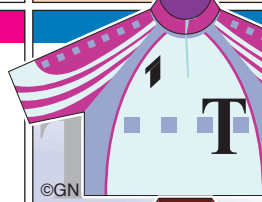
Rabobank (Netherlands)

Michael Boogerd carries Dutch hopes after an impressive fifth place last year. With a strong line-up – including **Niki Aebersold** and the **Zberg** brothers – the team could clinch a string of stage wins



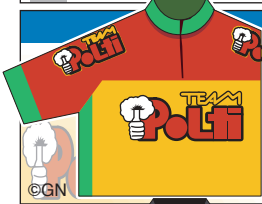
Saeco (San Marino)

Leader **Mario Cipollini** is one of the best bets for a stage win but Swiss rider **Laurent Dufaux** is unlikely to find the form that took him to fourth place in 1996



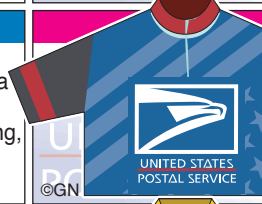
Deutsche Telekom (Germany)

Jan Ullrich, who won the Tour de France in 1997 and came second in 1996 and 1998, is favourite to win this year's race. Italians **Giuseppe Guerini** and **Alberto Elli** will help in the mountains



Polti (Italy)

Without Frenchman **Richard Virenque** – under investigation in a French drugs probe – the spotlight turns to **Davide Rebellin** and young, improving, rider **Mirko Celestino**



U.S. Postal Service (U.S.)

With **Lance Armstrong** for the final overall, **Tyler Hamilton** for the time trials and **George Hincapie** for the sprints, their only weakness is the lack of a pure climber



Vitalicio Seguros (Spain)

Strong team. **Andrei Zintchenko** and the **Gonzalez de Galdeano** brothers offer good back-up and **Santiago Blanco** and **Daniel Clavero** could make life tough for others in the mountains



Cantina Tollo (Italy)

Nicola Minali has won nine stages in the three major tours, but only one in France. He will be hoping to increase his tally but doesn't seem as strong as he used to be. **Bo Hamburger** stands the best chance overall