

PHUKET GAZETTE

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Phuket cyclists bag numerous trophies in Tour of Friendship



Team members from Siam Bike Tours and Z-Coaching Phuket. Photo: Blackgroup Bike

PHUKET: Siam Bike Tours and Z-Coaching Phuket joined forces to produce a team of eight strapping cyclists, ready to take on the Tour of Friendship (TOF) five-day race from April 30-May 4.

The event took place in Bangkok and Kanchanaburi, where the recent heat wave has been even more intense than in Phuket.

Now in its 28th year, the event attracted over 200 riders this year, of which over 120 were international cyclists as well as top-ranked Thai riders.

The Phuket-based team was successful across several categories, showing their strength in climbs and the

ability to outsprint the opponents in mass sprints, but just as importantly, their consistency across the entire 450 kilometers of the race.

The 2005 Ironman Hawaii World Champion Faris Al-Sultan also joined the team. He was the overall winner of the age 30-39 category, securing his victory with a convincing stage win on day three, where he was the fastest rider of the entire peloton.

His teammates Christian Rothart and Manop Suwannachit played crucial roles in his victory, supporting him throughout the race.

The competition in the 50-59 age group was decidedly strong. Jurgen Zack, head coach at Z-Coaching Phuket, secured second place overall, topping off his podium spot with a win in the final stage. Close behind him was Martin Brot, coming 3rd overall and also taking a stage win on day three.

To finish off the hat trick of stage wins in this age group, Kurt Schlaepfer won on day two to come in 5th overall. Jean Perrin fought bravely in the age 60-69 category, winning on day four to secure 2nd place over the five-day event.

Isabelle Boyer-Moulin rode consistently over all five days to place her as 2nd female overall.

Collectively, the team came away with a significant trophy haul, once again proving that hard work, consistency and fun get you the right results.

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