

Multiple winner Lange unveils powerful team

BY KEVIN MCCALLUM

Sunday's Pick n Pay The Star Fast One will see the debut of Team Medscheme, the newest and most experienced team on the South African cycling scene.

Team owner Malcolm Lange, the most successful South African cyclist with 395 major race victories, unveiled a powerful six-man squad for the 2009 season yesterday. Lange, who came close to retiring at the end of 2007, has found a new lease of life in his racing career and at the age of 35 will once again be the spearhead of the team.

Lange has brought his close friends Nic White and Neil MacDonald, with whom he raced at AIG, HSBC and MTN, to form the experienced core of the team. Waylon Woolcock is a talented all-rounder who was at MTN last year, while Arran Brown, considered South Africa's next big sprinting sensation, and Hanco Kachelhoffer, both join from the Durban-based House of Paint squad. Former pro Colin Parsons will manage the squad. Compact, experienced and talented, Team Medscheme are expecting much this season.

"For me, the best thing about this team is that we have so many options," said Lange. "We have a really good squad for the one-day races and for tours. Nic is one of the most experienced tour riders in the country, while Hanco is just incredibly talented.

"I think the size of the team

will change racing in this country, because it's good to have another strong team competing, and not just one big team dominating, which was making racing predictable. The other teams will focus on me and try to stop me winning races, but we don't just have one plan; we have Arran and other options. That's the way racing should be – unpredictable and exciting."

Lange's then-MTN teammate Jay Thomson won last year's Pick n Pay The Star Fast One after Lange, White and Woolcock forced a break 40km into the race.

Lange does not think the same will happen again on Sunday.

"It's hard to say what will happen on Sunday. It will be a fast race. I don't think it's going to split, unless there's a really serious gutter session and one team takes the initiative, it could split. I think it will come down to a big bunch sprint," said Lange. "It's also early season, so guys don't know what sort of shape their legs are in yet. I don't know where my legs are yet."

Brown admitted that while he was happy with his form, he was not yet at his peak, having only started training just over a month ago.

Despite having a "scratchy throat", Brown had been quick at the team's track training sessions and had been pushing Lange hard in the sprints. On Sunday, he will be looking after Lange, though.

"The type of race suits Malcolm, so I'm going to be leading him out," said Brown.

