


Team Amani 2025

For Amani SLP, please see

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tQMqyGMi9tHnn5NI0y9tSziElX1qYNdzir7JD8pSXlg/edit?tab=t.0>

Action images:  AMANI OSTRO GRAVEL 2025 Action Shots

Blog

Headline:

Team Amani Tackling 2025

Subheadline:

Absolutely Up For It!

Text:

Embed YT interview of Mikel at top of page - Arnau is completing...

Mikel Delagrange of Team Amani has always taken the long view. He knows when you are helping to build an organisation as ambitious and positive as the Amani Project, some things take time. The best things in life always take a bit of time. And even if Mikel is reluctant to tout their big plans too loudly, they definitely have goals and ideas beyond the usual one or two-year cycle most teams will have. “We do have a 10-year plan. We have it on paper, and we take it very seriously. There is a very ambitious goal with very ambitious timetables,” Mikel explained.

“We are trying, from the ground up, within two Olympic cycles, to field a team that will be invited as a Pro Continental squad to the Tour de France. An all-African squad with all African management who are competing with the best in the world. We want to bring people on the journey, and we think that if we succeed, that process will change the sport. Just by our presence, if we race in places that have never seen anyone like us, the sport won’t be the same afterwards.”

It should be abundantly clear by now that the Team Amani and Amani Project goals go far beyond finding sporting success. Team Amani is more than a group of elite athletes from East Africa trying to find ways to race with the best in the world. Team Amani and the Amani Project work to introduce cycling not only as a way of life, but as a key to life, for new generations of athletes in East Africa and beyond.

Taking care of the now while investing in the future

When we say that Team Amani is building from the ground up, we mean that they are not just scouting for adult athletes from around the region, but are establishing a structure in the Amani Project that can coach and educate children, teenagers, and adults how to train, how to negotiate international travel, how to take care of their bikes and equipment, in addition to developing the race craft they will need to succeed.

“We just don’t have any examples to look to. You know, we can’t just say, well if we just do everything the same way Jumbo-Visma does it, then we will find success in five years’ time. That doesn’t work for us. We have a strategy, but we are not 100% sure it’s going to be successful,” Mikel explained. “We’re looking primarily at road and gravel. From the development project on up. Because part of our strategy is to blur the lines between these disciplines. At least for our kids, they are already able to switch from MTB to road to gravel racing from one week to the next. Like Pidcock would have done or Van Der Poel. But those are our kids. We still have to get results this year. So we are bringing in pros who maybe don’t come from that multi-discipline background or mindset.”

The task of keeping international interest in the Amani Project falls to the current Team Amani pros, to prove the concept can succeed. But many of the current pros have come from the road and have limited experience in gravel riding. “Some of our strongest riders have never been on a gravel bike before because they just came from only the road. It’s complicated. But from a management point of view, we have a really good team. Tsgabu (Grmay) is our leader with a lot of experience,” Mikel said. “And we know a lot of people in Kenya who are up for it. I think as long as we stay positive and we have a lot of fresh energy coming in from the athletes and our partners are supportive, then we have the space to try to go out and solve the problem.”

Expanding to the road

The introduction of a UCI Continental Team Amani has helped open the doors to a wider selection of athletes from East Africa. “The most exciting aspect is that there had been so many riders on the continent who loved what we were doing, but were reluctant to give up wholesale what they’ve been doing on the road. And when they found out that they could ride for us and also maintain their road dreams, it became a lot easier to have those conversations,” Mikel explained. “With new countries like Ethiopia and hopefully Eritrea coming in, it will increase our capacity, from a sporting perspective, by a lot. That’s really encouraging.”

Of course, establishing a road team also requires much more material support. Bikes, wheels, kit. “To be honest, Factor has been great. Calvin (Chan, Factor CEO) and Rob (Gitelis, Factor Founder) have been really supportive,” Mikel said. “For instance, when I told them we were establishing the Black Mambas development team, and we had an offer from another bike brand to come on board for our development team, Calvin said, ‘No we’ll do it.’ And for me, that’s a strong sign of support. It’s not just interest in the glamorous and glitzy pro team that gets attention because we’re the only black athletes in the race, but it’s also the boys and girls at home. They are the future of the team. And that means a lot to have that kind of support.”

Creating their own opportunities

Receiving invitations to the races has proved to be among the biggest challenges, especially now in their first year outfitting a road team. “You have to build all these bridges with respect to all the people who are organizing these races. And that just turns out that the road is a lot more political. So there have been a lot of lessons learned quite quickly in this space,” Mikel said.

It adds another layer of complication when Amani riders have gaps in their racing schedule that European counterparts just don’t have to worry about. “There’s already progress. If you look at it on the road side, you see some of the best African athletes go to the Tour of Rwanda for example, and they are competing against UAE and IPT, and beating them in many cases. But those European-based guys go to their next race the next week, and then another the week after, and the week after that. Whereas the kids in Rwanda sit on their hands until potentially the World Championships.”

This is already a situation Mikel and Amani have faced in the gravel sector. And they addressed that by establishing some of their own races like the Migration Gravel Race. This multi-day event across the Maasai Mara region of Kenya has quickly blossomed into one of the hardest, most prestigious gravel races in the world, and part of the Gravel Earth Series. It entices many of the top gravel pros from around the world and gives African athletes the chance to test themselves against the biggest names in the sport.

Creating opportunities for their own riders, as well as riders from around Africa, is one of the keys to success for Mikel and the Amani Project. “The thing is, it’s really just about time. I know we are going to solve this. If we have enough time. We’re buying time for these kids to be able to come through the ranks and get the exposure, have the fails to be able to grow and compete at a high level. And then hopefully that divide just keeps shrinking so that people will know that if there is a bike race, and you are on Team Amani, you’re up for it!” Mikel explained.

“We’re really working on addressing how to solve the issues facing our athletes. That’s what we’re really putting our minds to, and that’s why I think this project is a little bit different compared to those who have come before us because we are taking that on, rather than just complaining about it, we say, okay, we’ll organize our own races here, we’ll create an environment with our development centre that mimics, to the extent that we can, race-like-scenarios, we will bring the best possible athletes from across the continent to one central place, and then we are of course, going out and racing.”

Stronger together

Amani takes a two-pronged approach, simultaneously building a team of pros ready to tackle Unbound, the Gravel Earth Series as well as road races and the World Championships to be held in Rwanda, while also establishing a community in Iten where young athletes can train and grow.

“We’re trying to put that alchemy all together into creating an environment that allows our athletes to be at races and be competitive. At the same time, we’re creating space for the kids and allowing the kids just to be kids and go experience cycling in a way that there is not so much pressure that they feel like, ‘shit, if I don’t manifest into a world beater next year, then I’m out.’ You know? It’s important to get the balance right,” Mikel explained.

A bike design that’s ready to roar

For the 2025 Amani Edition to be used by the team on the road with the OSTRO VAM and on gravel with the OSTRO Gravel, the art direction of the graphic design complements the Rapha Amani kit without being a carbon copy. It takes elements of the Rapha Amani zebra pattern and combines it with a bold orange fading into a large section of exposed raw carbon to highlight Factor’s layout expertise.

Mikel Delagrange is as enthusiastic about the design as the rest of the riders:

"The new OSTRO VAM and OSTRO Gravel design represents an answer to that primal call we all hear from time to time beckoning us to go further, to dream bigger... the call of the wild... and that answer is ... yes. Yes I will, yes I can.”

SECURE YOUR LIMITED EDITION TEAM AMANI EDITION

Each of the stunning designs will be made available for purchase as a limited edition. To place your order for the Factor OSTRO VAM Amani Edition or the Factor OSTRO Gravel Amani Edition, simply fill out the form below.

Provide your contact information and any specific inquiries you might have. We will respond promptly with details on availability, pricing, and how to complete your purchase.

{input form}

EDM

Subject:

Factor's Team Amani wild graphic

Headline:

Bikes designed to roar

Text:

Marking the fourth year in Factor's sponsorship of Team Amani, our art department created a motif that riffs a bit off the 2025 Rapha-designed team kit while incorporating a bold splash of orange for the OSTRO VAM, which Team Amani will be racing on the road, and the OSTRO Gravel, which they will use to challenge the toughest gravel races in the world. Unlike previous Amani Editions, though, it's not all loud and proud, since a large section of raw carbon introduces a quite stealthy effect that succeeds also in highlighting Factor's expert carbon layup.

Available to purchase for a limited time, through your local Factor dealer or at factorbikes.com.

CTA:

Order your Amani OSTRO VAM

Order your Amani OSTRO Gravel

Social:

Designed for racing in the wild, the 2025 OSTRO Gravel Amani Edition briefly broke cover this past weekend at Traka in Girona. If even the eagle-eyed among you missed it, now's your chance not only to have a nice long look, but to add one to your collection.

Available both as an OSTRO VAM and an OSTRO Gravel the 2025 Amani Edition design contrasts the understated, beautifully executed raw carbon with a splash of orange and zebra pattern to celebrate the team's East African roots and inspire us all to dream big and follow the call of adventure.

To celebrate the release, we also sat down with Amani Project co-founder and Chief Cheerleader, Mikel Delagrange. Click the link in the bio to learn about the origins and goals of this rapidly expanding project.