



GRANDS
PRIX CYCLISTES
DE QUÉBEC
DE MONTRÉAL

CHAMPIONS' BREAKAWAY
QUEBEC CITY SEPTEMBER 9 MONTREAL SEPTEMBER 11
UCI WORLD TOUR

KEY RIDER BIOS | WORLDTEAMS PROFILES

WORLDTEAMS

AG2R LA MONDIALE (FRA)

In the top flight for the past 24 years, the French squad shone once more at this year's Tour de France, with Romain Bardet—who'll be among the stars racing here in Canada—finishing second in the general classification. A season-win total stuck at six has taken some of the shine off that success, but the fact remains that Vincent Lavenu's team has been influential all season long. *Founded in: 1992. Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 6*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Romain Bardet (FRA): Age 24, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 5 wins including two stages of the Tour de France. This season: 1 win; 2nd in the Tour de France, 2nd in the Critérium du Dauphiné, 2nd in the Tour of Oman.* In 2016, this French climbing specialist continued his impressive rise to the higher echelons of world cycling, proving that he was one of the few men who could give Chris Froome a run for his money, both in the Critérium du Dauphiné and the Tour de France. Though tired after the Rio Olympics, he'll be eager for end-of-season success in Canada, where he has done well in the past (5th in Montréal in 2014, and 7th last year).

Alexis Vuillermoz (FRA): Age 28, turned pro in 2013. *Palmarès: 5 wins including Stage 8 of the 2015 Tour de France. This season: 2nd in the GP de Plumelec, 3rd in the French National Championships.* A series of crashes and health worries have kept his former mountain biking specialist from fulfilling the promise of his exciting 2015 season. Post-Tour de France, though, this formidable *puncheur*, who made the French team at the Olympic Games (where he finished 23rd) seems to be back on form.

Hugo Houle (CAN): Age 25, turned pro in 2011. *Palmarès: 1 win, Canadian National Championships Time Trial 2015. This season: 2nd in the Tour de Beauce, 4th in the Canadian National Championships Time Trial.* Though he failed in his goal of defending his title as National TT Champion, this Quebecer will remember his 2016 season fondly, as he was selected for the Canadian Olympic team and rode for his country in both the Road and Time Trial events in Rio. He also competed in the Giro d'Italia this past May, further proving that he's made great progress.

ASTANA PRO TEAM (KAZ)

The Kazakh squad managed by Alexandre Vinokourov is one of the most powerful in the peloton, and they helped their leader Vincenzo Nibali win the Giro d'Italia this year. But they were less successful in the Tour de France with young Fabio Aru, who'll be looking to finish the season strongly, starting in Québec City and Montréal. *Founded in: 2006 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 27*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Fabio Aru (ITA): Age 26, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 7 wins including 3 stages of the Giro d'Italia (2014 and 2015), 2015 Vuelta a España. This season: 1 win, Stage 3 of the Critérium du Dauphiné, 6th in the Olympic Games.* This Italian climber is one of the most promising talents of the new generation. He won the Vuelta a España at just 25 years of age and finished on the podium of the Giro d'Italia in both 2014 and 2015, but made a rather timid Tour de France début this year, finishing 13th in the GC. He was strongly in contention in the Rio Olympics road race, and will be looking for good results in these two late-season races.

Jakob Fuglsang (DAN): Age 31, turned pro in 2006. *Palmarès: 12 wins including Tour of Denmark 2008, 2009 and 2010, 2012 Tour of Austria. This season: 2nd in the Olympic Games, 3rd in the Tour of Trentino.* Very much appreciated as a team rider, the Danish-born Fuglsang is a top-level road warrior who'll be competing in the Canadian races for the fourth time, after missing out on Olympic Gold in Rio by the slimmest of margins. His weakness as a sprinter is the only thing that has kept him from a richer palmarès.

BMC RACING TEAM (USA)

Boasting a deep, cosmopolitan lineup, this U.S.-registered team excels on all types of terrain with greats like Belgium's Philippe Gilbert, who won the Québec City GP in 2011 but won't be competing this year, Australia's Richie Porte, who joined the team this year, and another Belgian, Greg Van Avermaet, the Gold Medalist in this year's Olympic Road Race. *Founded in: 2007 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 24*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Greg Van Avermaet (BEL): Age 31, turned pro in 2006. *Palmarès: 29 wins including 2011 Paris-Tours, 2016 Tirreno-Adriatico and 2016 Olympic Games. This season: 5 wins including Stage 5 of the Tour de France.* Once disparaged for his inability to come through in biggest races, the Belgian seems to be in the prime of his career since last year. He's coming off a dream summer that saw him win a stage in the Tour de France and claim the Yellow Jersey for three days, and then grab Gold in Rio. This former runner-up and 3rd-place finisher in the Québec City GP would dearly love a win in Canada, having ridden every edition of the Grands Prix Cyclistes since 2012.

Joey Roskopf (USA): Age 26, turned pro in 2010. *Palmarès: 5 wins including 2016 Tour du Limousin. This season: 2 wins; 6th in the Tour of Utah.* This American attracted attention with an individual time trial stage win at the 2013 Tour de Beauce, and over the past month has been fulfilling his promise. With a strong finish on the hilly Tour of Utah course and a win in the Tour du Limousin, he looks to be peaking.

CANNONDALE-DRAPAC PRO CYCLING TEAM (USA)

With the U.S. bike manufacturer as its title sponsor, this team managed by Jonathan Vaughters got a boost in the spring when Australian firm Drapac signed on (the former Drapac Pro Cycling Team had been invited to the 2015 Québec City and Montréal GPs). It features a good blend of experienced riders and younger talents. *Founded in: 2005 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 8*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Rigoberto Uran (COL): Age 29. Turned pro in 2006. *Palmarès: 8 wins including 2 stages of the Giro d'Italia, 2015 Québec City GP. This season: 7th in the Giro d'Italia.* The Colombian climber enjoyed one of the finest days of his career last year in the streets of Québec City, when he blew by the *puncheurs* in the field to take first place. It was a farewell gift to the Etixx – Quick Step stem: he left them for his current U.S. squad, with whom he finished strongly in this year's Giro d'Italia.

Tom-Jelte Slagter (NED): Age 27, turned pro in 2010. *Palmarès: 8 wins including Tour Down Under 2013. This season: 1 win, Stage 1 of the Tour du Haut-Var.* This Dutch *puncheur* hasn't missed a single Canadian WorldTour event since 2012, and has been a consistent podium threat in the Québec City race: he finished 4th in 2015, 5th in 2012, and 7th in 2013.

Mike Woods (CAN): Age 29, turned pro in 2013. *Palmarès: 3 wins including Stage 5 of the 2015 Tour of Utah. This season: 5th in the Tour Down Under.* This Ottawa-born climber turned pro relatively late in his career, and when he finally made it to the top flight this season, he got off to a great start by turning in a 5th-place finish in the Tour Down Under. He was selected for Canada's Olympic Team, coming in 55th in the Rio road race, and will be eager to shine in front of the home crowd.

ETIXX – QUICK STEP (BEL)

This Belgian team has the most wins on the WorldTour for the past several seasons. Featuring sprinters like Marcel Kittel and all-rounders like Tony Martin, they are not only Classics specialists (behind Belgium's Tom Boonen) but also stage race stalwarts, with their ranks now beefed up by the likes of Ireland's Dan Martin, who finished 9th overall in this year's Tour de France. *Founded in: 2003 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 43*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Julian Alaphilippe (FRA): Age 24, turned pro in 2013. *Palmarès: 7 wins including 2016 Tour of California. This season: 2 wins; 2nd in the Flèche Wallonne, 4th in the Olympic Games, 6th in the Critérium du Dauphiné.* After turning heads last year with 2nd-place showings in two Ardennes Classics, this French-born *puncheur* has lived up to his immense potential this season. He is on the verge of a major win—and very nearly got it last month at the Rio Olympics. If he's on good enough form, he will be among the favourites in Québec City and Montréal.

Tom Boonen (BEL): Age 35, turned pro in 2002. *Palmarès: 120 wins including Tour of Flanders (2005, 2006 and 2012), Paris-Roubaix (2005, 2008, 2009 and 2012), 2005 Road World Championships. This season: 2 wins including Ride London Classic, 2nd in Paris-Roubaix.* At the peak of his career, with one of the most impressive palmarès among all active riders, Tornado

Tom didn't expect to be in the pro peloton for too many more years. And yet, nearing 36 years of age, he's just extended his contract for another season, after a year that saw him just miss out on a record fifth career win in the Paris-Roubaix.

FDJ (FRA)

Up to the French National Championships, where its riders monopolized both races, the French team led by Marc Madiot enjoyed a near-perfect first half of the season, with Arnaud Démare's victory in Milan–San Remo, one of the most prized of the Classics, and the arrival of leader Thibaut Pinot among the world's best. But since the Tour de France, which Pinot had to abandon due to illness, the euphoria has ebbed a bit; to add insult to injury, Arthur Vichot has been ruled out of the Canadian races with a shoulder injury. *Founded in: 1997 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 19*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Anthony Roux (FRA): *Age 29, turned pro in 2008. Palmarès: 11 wins including Stage 17 of the 2009 Vuelta a España. This season: 2nd in the French National Championships Time Trial.* This solid all-rounder, who was the runner-up as French National TT Champion this year behind teammate Thibaut Pinot, can get the job done in one-day races, as he showed with his 13th-place finish in last year's Québec City GP.

IAM CYCLING (SUI)

The news broke in May: this Switzerland-registered team will fold at the end of the season after four years, two of them in the WorldTour ranks. It's a tough blow to Swiss cycling and for this remarkable group, which has shown its competitiveness, especially this season. So far, seven of the squad's 28 members have secured saddles with other teams going into 2017. *Founded in: 2013 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 15*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Jarlinson Pantano (COL): *Age 27, turned pro in 2008. Palmarès: 3 wins including Stage 15 of the 2016 Tour de France. This season: 2 wins; 4th in the Tour of Switzerland.* This Colombian climber is one of the most eye-opening riders of the 2016 season. After years of barely living up to the promise he showed with a 3rd-place finish in the 2010 Tour de l'Avenir, he captured a stage of the Tour of Switzerland, followed by another in the Tour de France, where he was an impressive presence.

Martin Elmiger (SUI): *Age 37, turned pro in 2001. Palmarès: 15 wins including Swiss National Championships (2001, 2010 and 2014), 2007 Tour Down Under. This season: 4th in the Arctic Race of Norway.* He may be about to close out his 16th and possibly final season at the highest level of pro cycling, but the former Swiss National Road Champion is still a force to be reckoned with, as he recently showed in Norway.

LAMPRE-MERIDA (ITA)

A formidable force in the élite ranks for a quarter-century now, the Italian squad has always had great success in stage races, notably the Giro. But they've been less than stellar in 2016, much like their star, Portugal's Rui Costa: always on the attack but still looking for that first victory. *Founded in: 1991. Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 16*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Rui Costa (POR): *Age 29. Turned pro in 2008. 22 wins including 2011 Montréal GP, Tour of Switzerland (2012, 2013 and 2014), 2013 Road World Championships. This season: 3rd in Liège-Bastogne-Liège, 5th in the Tour of Oman, 6th in the Tour de Romandie.* Since winning the 2011 Montréal GP, the popular Portuguese rider hasn't missed a single edition of the Grands Prix Cyclistes. The former Road World Champion is especially fond of the Mount Royal course in Montréal, where he's never finished out of the Top 10. He came within seconds of a stage win in this year's Tour de France, finished 10th in the road race at the Rio Olympics, and is hoping his status as a fan favourite on these shores will propel him to victory.

Diego Ulissi (ITA): *Age 27, turned pro in 2010. 25 wins including 6 Giro d'Italia stages. This season: 6 wins including stages 7 and 11 of the Giro d'Italia, 7th in the Amstel Gold Race.* The 5th-place man in Québec City last year, this Tuscan keeps on delivering proof that he's one of the most impressive *puncheurs* in the pro peloton. Further evidence came this year on the roads of the Giro d'Italia, where he bagged two stage wins—but his palmarès is still lacking a victory in a one-day race.

LOTTO SOUDAL (BEL)

Funded since the 1980s by the Belgian National Lottery, this squad has been hot all season long thanks to its sprint specialist, Germany's Andre Greipel, who won Tour de France finale on the Champs-Élysées, and it consistently develops young talents like Belgium's Tim Wellens, who's been an adventurous competitor since winning the Montréal GP in 2015. *Founded in: 2012 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 19*

Tim Wellens (BEL): Age 24, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 9 wins including 2015 Montréal GP, Stage 6 in the 2016 Giro d'Italia. This season: 4 wins including Stage 7 of Paris-Nice, Tour of Poland, 2nd in the Belgian National Championships.* Month after month, this Belgian rider continues to live up to his exceptional potential. His triumph in the driving rain at last year's Montréal GP was reward for his courage; this season, he's been racking up the results, whether it's been taking stage wins in Paris-Nice and the Giro d'Italia, or winning the GC in the Tour of Poland.

Tony Gallopin (FRA): Age 28, turned pro in 2008. *Palmarès: 7 wins including 2013 Clásica San Sebastián, Stage 11 of the 2014 Tour de France. This season: 2nd in the French National Championships, 2nd in the Clásica San Sebastián, 2nd in the Étoile de Bessèges.* This Frenchman remains one of the finer *puncheurs* in the WorldTour ranks, but has yet to taste real success. Third in the 2014 Montréal GP, the nephew of Alain Gallopin, directeur sportif of Trek-Segafredo, experienced one of his most bitter disappointments this past June when he came oh-so-close to claiming the French National Championships.

MOVISTAR TEAM (ESP)

Founded 36 years ago, the Spanish team boasts one of the most imposing armadas in the pro peloton. Led by riders of the calibre of Spain's Alejandro Valverde and Colombia's Nairo Quintana (who are busy competing in the Vuelta a España this year), it also features plenty of talents who can make their mark in other major races on the World Tour circuit. *Founded in: 1980 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 32*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Jon Izagirre (ESP): Age 27, turned pro in 2010. *Palmarès: 9 wins including Stage 16 of the 2012 Giro d'Italia, 2015 Tour of Poland, Stage 20 of the 2016 Tour de France. This season: 5 wins including prologue of the Tour de Romandie, Stage 8 (time trial) and 2nd in the general classification of the Tour of Switzerland, 3rd in the Tour de Romandie.* The Basque rider is normally fairly discreet, but this season he's shown such consistency that on many other teams, he would be a leader. An excellent all-rounder and a gifted climber, he's at his best in week-long stage races. In this year's Tour de France, he prevailed in the final mountain stage at Morzine.

Jesus Herrada (ESP): Age 26, turned pro in 2011. *Palmarès: 8 wins including 2013 Spanish National Championships, Stage 2 of the 2016 Critérium du Dauphiné. This season: 1 win, 2nd in the Tour du Haut-Var, 2nd in the Tour of Madrid.* A veteran of the Canadian Grands Prix Cyclistes since he made his début as a pro, the younger of the Herrada brothers (José, five years his senior, also races for Movistar) is a powerful finisher, as he showed this year by winning an uphill finish in a stage of the Critérium du Dauphiné.

ORICA-BIKE EXCHANGE (AUS)

The only Australian team in the top flight—which underwent a name change in June of this year when cycling gear retailer BikeExchange signed on as a sponsor—made history at the Canadian GPs in 2014 when Simon Gerrans became the first man to win both races the same year. His countryman Michael Matthews has what it takes to succeed him. *Founded in: 2011 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 20*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Adam Yates (GBR): Age 24, turned pro in 2014. *Palmarès: 4 wins including 2015 Clásica San Sebastián. This season: 4th in the Tour de France, 7th in the Critérium du Dauphiné.* The sensation of the summer after finishing just off the podium in the Tour de France (and clad in the White Jersey as best young rider), this British rider is one of the brightest lights of the emerging generation. This year he'll be racing in Canada without his twin brother and teammate Simon, who's competing in the Vuelta a España.

Michael Matthews (AUS): Age 25, turned pro in 2009. *Palmarès: 29 wins including 3 stages of the Vuelta a España (2013 and 2014), 2 stages of the Giro d'Italia (2014 and 2015) and 10th in the 2016 Tour de France. This season: 4 wins including prologue and Stage 2 of Paris-Nice, 3rd in the Ride London Classic.* Australia's Matthews was the runner-up in last year's Québec City GP and, eight days later, finished second only to Peter Sagan at the Road World Championships in Richmond, Virginia. He's already shown that he's more than just one of the world's best sprinters. He earned his first Tour de France stage victory in July, and is still looking for a major win at a single-day event.

TEAM DIMENSION DATA (RSA)

When it earned promotion ahead of this season, Team Dimension Data became the first-ever team from an African country in the UCI World Tour, and is making its first appearance in the Canadian races. Led by stars like Britain's Mark Cavendish, the team has provided the means for South African, Eritrean, Rwandese and Algerian riders to show off their talent in the world's greatest bike races. *Founded in: 1997 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 28*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Daniel Teklehaimanot (ERI): *Age 27, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 7 wins including 2013 Prueba Villafranca. This season: 2 wins, Eritrean National Championships (road race and time trial), 16th in the Tour of California.* A multiple winner in both the road and time-trial events at the African Cycling Championships and a product of the UCI's World Cycling Centre training program in Switzerland, Eritrea-born Teklehaimanot made history in 2012 as the first black African cyclist to compete in the Vuelta a España, and has helped make cycling extremely popular in his country. He won the mountains classification in the 2015 Critérium du Dauphiné and has twice competed in the Tour de France.

Serge Pauwels (BEL): *Age 32, turned pro in 2006. Palmarès: 1 win, Stage 15 of the 2009 Giro d'Italia. This season: 9th in the Tour of Yorkshire.* A fine climber and tireless attacker, this Belgian rider is due for a prestige win. He has a stage win in the Giro d'Italia to his credit (following the retroactive disqualification of Italy's Leonardo Bertagnolli). Earlier this year, he just missed out on what would have been the greatest thrill of his career, finishing 2nd in Stage 12 of the Tour de France, atop the iconic Mont Ventoux.

TEAM GIANT-ALPECIN (GER)

Created in the Netherlands but registered in Germany for the past two years, this team is managed by Iwan Spekenbrink and will be rebranded as Sunweb-Giant for 2017. In late January of this year, five of its riders were involved in a horrific training-camp crash in Spain. Team leader John Degenkolb of Germany is racing again after a long recovery period. In the interim, Dutchman Tom Dumoulin, who won two stages at the Tour de France before winning the Silver Medal in the Rio Olympics Time Trial, filled in brilliantly. *Founded in: 2005 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 9*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Simon Geschke (GER): *Age 30, turned pro in 2009. Palmarès: 3 wins including Stage 17 of the 2015 Tour de France. This season: 15th in the Frankfurt GP.* This German rider, easily recognizable in a peloton thanks to his bushy beard, hasn't had as much success this season as in years past, but he remains a tough customer in the most demanding races on the World Tour calendar. He finished among the leaders in last year's Québec City GP (12th overall) and proudly represented his country at the Rio Olympics last month, finishing 13th in the Time Trial.

Laurens Ten Dam (NED): *Age 35, turned pro in 2002. Palmarès: 2 wins including Stage 1 of the 2008 Critérium International. This season: 10th in the Tour of California.* Ninth overall in the 2014 Tour de France, this experienced Dutch rider has taken on the role of road captain in his first season with Giant-Alpecin.

TEAM KATUSHA (RUS)

Funded by the government and the gas companies, this Russia-registered squad has one of the biggest budgets of any WorldTeam. Though their sprint specialist, Norway's Alexander Kristoff, has been less effective this year, and leader Joaquim Rodriguez of Spain is preparing to call it a day, Katusha has fortunately seen young Russian rider Ilnur Zakarin live up to his potential. *Founded in: 2009 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 20*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Ilnur Zakarin (RUS): *Age 26, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 15 wins including 2015 Tour de Romandie, Stage 11 of the 2015 Giro d'Italia, and Stage 17 of the 2016 Tour de France. This season: 2 wins including Stage 6 of Paris-Nice, 4th in the Tour de Romandie.* The young Russian all-rounder has some prestige wins to his credit, including Stage 17 of this year's Tour de France at Finhaut-Émosson in Switzerland. And had he not crashed 48 hours before the final finish line, he would have finished in the Top 5 at the Giro d'Italia.

Jurgen Van den Broeck (BEL): *Age 33, turned pro in 2003. Palmarès: 2 wins including Stage 1 of the 2011 Critérium du Dauphiné. This season: 8th in the Tour of California.* The Belgian finished 3rd in the 2010 Tour de France (after the disqualifications of Contador and Menchov), and then 4th in 2012, but had trouble matching that form in the following years. A win in the 2015 Belgian National Time Trial Championships set him on the comeback trail, but he crashed out of this year's Tour de France, suffering a broken collarbone.

TEAM LOTTONL–JUMBO (NED)

A fixture of the pro peloton for the past 20 years under different names (most famously Rabobank, and most recently Belkin), this Dutch squad has yet to notch a major win this season. They were close to a dream result at the Giro d'Italia, where Steven Kruijswijk wore pink for five days before crashing into a snowbank on a descent. Robert Gesink and Wilco Kelderman have also been unlucky this year, but the emergence of sprinter Dylan Groenewegen is a bright spot. *Founded in: 1996 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 14*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Wilco Kelderman (NED): *Age 25, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 7 wins including 2013 Tour of Denmark. This season: 4th in the Tour of Andalusia.* The Dutch climber is having trouble living up to the promise he showed during the 2014 campaign, when he attracted attention with a 7th place in the GC of the Giro d'Italia. Every so often, he's in the mix with the frontrunners, but never seems able to exercise his full talent, frequently hobbled by bad luck.

Moreno Hofland (NED): *Age 25, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 16 wins including Stage 2 of Paris-Nice 2014. This season: 12th in the Tour of Limburg.* This unheralded rider joined the club of élite sprinters when he won a stage in the 2014 Paris-Nice race. He hasn't been quite as successful since then, though this year he's been in the runner-up position no less than four times. At age 25, he still has a few hurdles to overcome.

TEAM SKY (GBR)

Britain's Team Sky has the biggest budget of any squad on the World Tour, and with four Tour de France wins in five years, they've made the Grande Boucle their private hunting ground. Earlier this summer, with impeccable support from his teammates, Chris Froome cruised to his third TdF victory. One of the key men helping out was Welshman Geraint Thomas, who'll be one of the highest-profile riders at this year's Canadian GPs. *Founded in: 2010 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 34*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Geraint Thomas (GBR): *Age 30, turned pro in 2007. Palmarès: 11 wins including Paris-Nice 2016. This season: 2 wins including Tour of the Algarve, 15th in the Tour de France.* When not assigned to a support role in aid of Chris Froome, this two-time Olympic Gold Medalist in Team Pursuit is one of Team Sky's leaders. The Welshman had a remarkable start to the 2016 season, then he had disappointing results in the Spring Classics, which were his priority. He redeemed himself by besting Alberto Contador to win Paris-Nice, and competed in the Rio Olympics. He'll be looking to wind up the season strongly in Québec.

Lars-Petter Nordhaug (NOR): *Age 32, turned pro in 2005. Palmarès: 9 wins including 2012 Montréal GP. This season: 6th in the Tour of Yorkshire.* The Norwegian is the only man to have given Team Sky a win in the Canadian races. That victory, in the 2012 Montréal GP, remains a memorable career highlight for this *puncheur*, who often finds himself in a team rider role.

TINKOFF (RUS)

Colourful billionaire magnate Oleg Tinkov has decided to wind up his investment in this Russian team at the end of this season. Its two leaders will try to give him a memorable sendoff: Spain's Alberto Contador is attempting to win his fourth Vuelta a España title, and Slovak sensation Peter Sagan will race in Canada, sporting his Rainbow Jersey as the reigning Road World Champion. *Founded in: 2001 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 28*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Peter Sagan (SVK): *Age 26, turned pro in 2009. 87 wins including 2013 Montréal GP, 2015 Road World Championships, 2016 Tour of Flanders. This season: 9 wins including Gent-Wevelgem plus stages 2, 11 and 16 of the Tour de France.* The current World Champion is the undisputed superstar of the pro peloton today. Both his racing style and his flair for finish-line antics have earned the Slovak his reputation as the most popular rider of his generation. A four-time winner of the Green Jersey (Points Classification) in the Tour de France, he also competed at the Rio Olympics—in Mountain Biking! He's now back on the road and making a welcome return to Canada (where he won the 2013 Montréal GP). With Tinkoff disbanding, Sagan has signed for three seasons with Bora.

Rafal Majka (POL): *Age 26, turned pro in 2011. Palmarès: 7 wins including 2014 Tour of Poland, 3 stages of the Tour de France (2014 and 2015). This season: 1 win, Polish National Championships; 3rd in the Olympic Games.* Riding in the shadow of Tinkoff's star members, the Polish climber manages to put up good results. Though he has few wins, he is now a two-time winner of the Polka Dot Jersey as best climber in the Tour de France (2014 and 2016), and grabbed the Bronze Medal in this year's Rio Olympics road race.

TREK-SEGAFREDO (USA)

This U.S. team, financed by the major bike manufacturer, is approaching a turning point in its history, with three of its most famous members, Switzerland's Fabian Cancellara, Luxembourg's Frank Schleck and Canada's Ryder Hesjedal, all set to retire at the end of the season. And next year, they'll welcome another veteran, Spain's Alberto Contador, to the fold. *Founded in: 2011 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 18*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Ryder Hesjedal (CAN): *Age 35, turned pro in 2003. Palmarès: 5 wins including the 2012 Giro d'Italia. This season: 60th in Liège-Bastogne-Liège.* The time has come for the Victoria native to turn the page on 14 seasons as a pro cyclist, which will be forever marked by his victory in the 2012 Giro d'Italia—the only Grand Tour win by a Canadian. After moving to Trek this past winter, he wasn't able to restart his career. He'll say a fond farewell to the sport by racing in his home country at the Québec City and Montréal GPs.

Bauke Mollema (NED): *Age 29, turned pro in 2007. Palmarès: 10 wins including Stage 17 of the 2013 Vuelta a España, 2016 Clásica San Sebastián. This season: 1 win, 3rd in the Tour of Andalusia, 11th in the Tour de France.* Just 72 hours before the final stage of the Tour de France, the Dutchman was still in second place overall, but fell out of contention in the final two Alps stages. He showed great character by bouncing back a week later to win the Clásica San Sebastián.

WILD-CARD TEAMS

BORA-ARGON 18 (GER)

Created in 2015 following a partnership between the former NetApp team (rechristened Bora) and Montréal-based bike manufacturer Argon 18, this German-registered squad is competing in the Grands Prix Cyclistes as a wild-card entry for the second time. After this season, the squad will undergo a big change, as a new sponsor, Hansgrohe, has stepped in—and enabled it to sign Peter Sagan for the next three seasons. *Founded in: 2010 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 8*

RIDERS TO WATCH.

Emanuel Buchmann (GER): *Age 23, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 2 wins including the 2015 German National Championship. This season: 8th in the Tour of Trentino.* The surprise winner of the German National Championships last year, Buchmann has lived up to his promise as a climber this season, notably at the Tour de France (he was 21st overall and 4th in the Young Rider Classification). He has his future laid out for him.

Sam Bennett (IRL): *Age 25, turned pro in 2011. Palmarès: 13 wins including 2014 Clásica de Almería. This season: 1 win, Stage 1 of the Critérium International.* This Irishman, who's among the top 10 sprinters in the world, won admiration for his courage in this year's Tour de France. After a crash in the very first stage left him with broken fingers, "Sammy B" rode on undeterred for three weeks, finishing the Tour and even placing 8th in the final stage on the Champs-Élysées.

TEAM DIRECT ENERGIE (FRA)

After the withdrawal last year of longtime title sponsor Europcar, manager Jean-René Bernaudeau ensured the survival of his team thanks to plenty of negotiating. The squad, which includes Québec's Antoine Duchesne in its ranks, has refocused its objectives around Bryan Coquard, who has notched the most wins of any World Tour rider this season. *Founded in: 2000 – Wins in 2016 (as of Aug. 22): 22*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Antoine Duchesne (CAN): *Age 24, turned pro in 2013. Palmarès: 2nd in the Polynormande 2014. This season: 21st in La Méditerranéenne.* The Saguenay-born rider has taken things to another level in the past few months, after a great start to the season that culminated with a win in the Paris-Nice Mountains Classification. He was then invited to ride the Tour de France for the first time, and had the honour of competing for his country at the Rio Olympics.

Bryan Coquard (FRA): *Age 24, turned pro in 2013. Palmarès: 28 wins including 2014 Paris-Camembert and 2016 Four Days of Dunkirk. This season: 13 wins including Boucles de la Mayenne, 4th in the Amstel Gold Race.* The Silver Medalist on the track in the Omnium at the 2012 London Olympics, this French rider has gone from strength to strength since making the switch to road racing. He was literally millimetres away from his first-ever stage win in the Tour de France this past July. A top talent for sure.

Thomas Voeckler (FRA): Age 37, turned pro in 2001. Palmarès: 46 wins including 2007 GP de Plouay, 2010 GP de Québec. This season: 4 wins including Tour de la Provence and Tour of Yorkshire. The man from Alsace, who spent several days in yellow in the 2004 and 2011 Tour de France, needs no introduction. He got back on the winning track this year after two years without a victory. Now near the end of his career, he will be forever remembered as the very first winner of the Québec City GP.

TEAM CANADA

The Canadian National Team, managed once again this year by Kevin Field, features riders recruited from teams on the Continental circuit (the third tier of international pro cycling), and gives the country's top cyclists an opportunity to race with the world's best and confirm their increasingly impressive profile on the international stage.

RIDERS TO WATCH

Bruno Langlois: Age 37, turned pro in 2009. Palmarès: 10 wins including 2016 Canadian National Championships. This season: 2nd in the Delta Road Race. This veteran rider from Rimouski enjoyed the most memorable moment of his career this past June when he won the Canadian Championship on the Ottawa circuit.

Guillaume Boivin: Age 27, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 6 wins including 2015 Canadian National Championships. This season: 7th in the Umag Trophy. Riding with the new Israel-based Academy Team, this Montrealer spent a good part of the season (until May) competing in Europe. Since returning to North America, he's been eagerly awaiting the Grand Prix Cyclistes to show what he's capable of. He's coming off a nasty crash during sprint training in late August, however, which may hamper his form.

Ryan Roth: Age 33, turned pro in 2002. Palmarès: 9 wins including 2012 Tro-Bro Léon. This season: 4 wins including GP de Saguenay, Canadian National Championships Time Trial. This all-rounder from Kitchener, Ontario is a man reborn since signing with Silber Pro Cycling, which like him is having an excellent year on the UCI America circuit. Keep an eye on him.