



Six years ago, the WorldTeams first crossed the Atlantic!

Saint-Lambert (Québec), Tuesday, June 9, 2014 – In September of 2010, the planet's top road cyclists competed in UCI WorldTour races in the Americas for the very first time, at the Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes. Five years on, Serge Arseneault and his team are proud to see how far their project has come and the enviable place they've carved out on the world stage, and intend to ensure that this new North American cycling tradition continues for a long time to come.

A STORY OF PASSION, VISION AND GRANDEUR

Just a few years ago, elite-level road racing was viewed as pretty much exclusive to Europe, but the WorldTour's expansion to Québec has certainly helped to globalize the sport, and it has provided an outstanding showcase for homegrown talent as well. The organizers are proud to have invited Canada's national cycling team to compete every year since 2010, and to have played a role in the rise of several Quebec riders to the WorldTeam ranks. Before long, the races attracted the cream of the pro racing crop, including four Tour de France winners in Alberto Contador, Cadel Evans, Chris Froome and Andy Schleck, as well as Rui Costa, the reigning UCI Road World Champion, who has included Québec City and Montréal in his datebook every year since the inaugural edition. There's also Robert Gesink, the only man to have stood at the top of the podium in both Québec City and Montréal. And the city courses have been the scene of memorable performances by riders like Simon Gerrans, Philippe Gilbert, Peter Sagan and Thomas Voeckler, and Canada's own Ryder Hesjedal, to name only a few. And last but definitely not least; we must highlight David Veilleux, the first Quebecer to have completed the Tour de France.

The unique character of these events was evident right from Year Two of the GPCQM, when the Challenge Sprint Pro made its début in Québec City. This exciting and innovative concept, a world first that features the top sprinters from each of the WorldTeams, marked an exciting addition to the discipline of road cycling, accentuating its athletic character as well as boosting enthusiasm for city circuits. Then, to keep GPCQM fever spreading, in 2013 the organizers introduced two mass recreational rides held in parallel with the pro races: the La Québécoise and La Montréalaise Cyclosporives. They give riders of all levels the chance to benefit from the expertise of international-calibre organization and experience the sport in an exciting and different way, during a week of 100% cycling. In 2015, another new experience was launched: a national criterium. The addition of the Critérium National de Montréal is one of the initiatives launched by GPCQM in order to support the development of road cycling in this country and to encourage local cyclists and cycling in general. This is a development competition for riders with a UCI license in the Junior, Espoir and Élite (17 to 29 years old) categories. After a long absence on the city scene, the organization is proud to welcome the Women back to this world-class event. This news also heralds the return of women's cycling to international competition in Montréal – a first since the last World Cup in 2009.

In this spirit of promoting the sport to up and coming riders, GPCQM recently announced its association with the Fédération Québécoise des Sports Cyclistes (FQSC) in order to financially support the Coupe du Québec Espoirs de cyclisme sur route (9-16 years old) and a preparation phase for the Juniors and Espoirs categories in order to get ready for the Canada Games (July 11 and 13). GPCQM has also developed a training program to offer young riders the chance at the incredible opportunity to be part of these major events.

OUTSTANDING BENEFITS FOR QUÉBEC

"Québec City and Montréal have become essential stops for the WorldTeams, who year after year are committed to delivering fantastic performances for their fans here," says Arseneault, President of the Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes, adding: "Besides bringing great visibility to our National Team riders, these events have showcased the host cities on the world stage and created significant economic, social and tourism benefits for Québec." Since 2010, the direct and indirect economic benefits to the province have amounted to some \$180,000,000, and visitors have spent about \$48,000,000*. Since their inception, the races have generated a total of 80,000 hotel nights in accommodations for the competitors and the teams' support staff, the organizers, and visitors from here and abroad*.

Since 2010, the GPCQM have acquired an excellent reputation among the riders. That popularity has also spread globally, with outstanding media coverage in more than 130 countries, where the races are beamed into one billion homes. The organizers rely on the following media organizations, among others, for that impressive reach: TVA Sports (local), SportsNet One (National), beIN Sport (États-Unis), Eurosport et Sporza (Europe et Asie pacifique), TDN (Mexique et Amérique centrale), ESPN International (Brésil et Amérique du Sud), FOX Sports (Australie), J Sports (Japon), Sony SIX (Inde), Sports TV (Moyen-Orient) et SNTV (Agence de nouvelles).

AN EXPERIENCE, A BRAND, A SUCCESS STORY

The Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes have also established benchmarks of quality for one-day races on city circuits, and succeeded in delivering a modern, glamorous experience for the riders, the various stakeholders in the project, and the public, who enjoy up-close access to these high-profile events. That in-person audience is also growing and becoming increasingly diverse. Since the inaugural editions in 2010, the races have attracted closed to 950,000 spectators*.

Serge Arsenault is a cycling buff and former sports journalist, and someone who truly cares about the athletes. To ensure their comfort, for the first races in 2010 he chartered an aircraft to fly the riders, their teams and their equipment, plus European media representatives, from Paris to Québec City. This partnership with Air Transat is very much appreciated. It makes the experience even more memorable for the teams since it's the one time during the season when they can all be together on the same flight. The teams are also put up at the same hotels and get together one more at meals during the Grands Prix Cyclistes week.

From the technical challenges of the course through Québec's capital city to the daunting Mount Royal loop in its metropolis, these two exceptional city circuits demand absolute proficiency on the part of the competitors. The high calibre of competition has ensured the renown of the GPs around the world and in the pro racing community. "It was no accident that the UCI officially sanctioned these circuits in 2010," says Charly Mottet, Sports Manager of the Grands Prix Cyclistes, ex-Circuit Director for the UCI WorldTour and a former World No. 1 in the 1980s. "The organizers saw this initiative as the opportunity to expand the WorldTour race calendar beyond its traditional borders. As we approach this fifth edition, we can say mission accomplished! These races have built their reputation on excellence. We salute Serge Arsenault and his team for their daring in bringing top-level cycling to North America." Mottet adds that the logistics behind these sporting events is impressive. Since 2010, Air Transat has carried*: 1280 bikes; 3040 wheels; 960 bike stands; and 80 tonnes of equipment in total.

THE MONTRÉAL AND QUÉBEC CITY GPs: THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Québec City and Montréal, the venues for these elite competitions, are outstanding sites that are now part of cycling tradition. Now, just before the 6th edition of the GPCQM, the organization is proud to announce that it has renewed its agreements with the cities and will pursue its activities until 2019.

For the sixth edition, the organizers wanted to pay tribute to the fans, who have been increasingly numerous and loyal over the years. As a result, in Montréal spectators will be invited to enjoy close-up views of all the action from brand-new viewing stands at the Start/Finish line, and watch live giant-screen coverage of the entire race on the Fans' Village site, which will also feature plenty of festive activities. In addition, the organizers are proud to announce their support for the Université de Montréal's Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer (IRIC), which will be hosting the "IRIC Mount Royal Tour" on the morning of the Montréal Grand Prix Cycliste.

The GPCQM team acknowledges the vital support of the following public- and private-sector partners: : the government of Canada, the government of Québec, the city of Québec, the city of Montréal, the National Battlefields Commission, the Québec Tourism Bureau, Montréal Tourism, Québecor, Air Transat, and TVA Sports (official GPCQM broadcaster).

– 30 –

SOURCE: The Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes

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*Source : Alliance Canadienne du Tourisme Sportif, sondages terrain 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014