

NEWS RELEASE

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OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE QUÉBEC CITY AND MONTRÉAL GRANDS PRIX CYCLISTES

*All partners have renewed their commitments
Expanded and more entertaining events announced*

Saint-Lambert, Wednesday, June 22, 2011 – At a press conference this morning, Serge Arsenault, President of the Grand Prix Cycliste Québec–Montréal (GPCQM), proudly announced that all partners have renewed their association with these prestige events for their second annual editions. He also unveiled the new lengths of the Québec City and Montréal courses, and confirmed that two *Challenge Sprint* races will be run this year.

“We are very pleased to announce that all of our partners from last year will be back with the Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes for the second editions. To us this is a clear sign of their confidence in all levels of our organization, and such concrete support favours the longevity of these major international sports gatherings on Québec soil,” Arsenault said.

The private-sector partners are Desjardins, Kia, Air Transat and Évasion. Arsenault also took the opportunity to underscore the ongoing support of the events’ four public-sector partners, the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, the City of Montréal and the City of Québec, and confirmed that all media partners will be returning. In addition, in the latter category, *Cyclepresse* magazine has joined the GPCQM partners’ group. It will be producing and distributing free of charge more than 40,000 copies of the official race program to newsstands throughout Québec in early August.

Challenge Sprint

Sanctioned by the Canadian Cycling Association and a key event of interest for the UCI in their globalization vision for road cycling, the Challenge Sprint Pro will feature ProTeam and pro continental racers on September 8 in Québec City. The one-kilometer event ending on the start/finish line of the Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec will feature explosive heats of four riders fighting for the first place. The winners of each heat will qualify for the next round until the final. A Challenge Sprint Canada bringing together the best sprinters in the country will also be on the program.

Novelties

The Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec takes place Friday, September 9, and the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal follows on Sunday, September 11, 2011. At the riders’ request, both events have been lengthened by one lap compared with last year, for a total of 16 and 17 times around the 12.6 km and 12.1 km courses in Québec City and Montréal respectively, bringing the total race distance to more than 200 km in both cities (201.6 km and 205.7 km). The races now compare favourably with some of the major European criteriums on the UCI WorldTour circuit, and are considered as excellent preparation races for the UCI Road World Championships taking place later in September.

Twenty-two teams will line up at the start of the 2011 Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cycliste: 18 ProTeams and 4 professional continental teams. The ProTeam category comprises the top 18 teams in the UCI (International Cycling Union) year-end rankings. These teams are required to enter each of the 27 UCI WorldTour events on the annual race calendar. Note that for the 2011 season, the UCI has changed the name of its premier circuit from ProTour to WorldTour, and has incorporated the so-called historical stage races like the Tour de France and Giro d'Italia into the same calendar. The list of WorldTour teams can be found at www.gpcqm.ca.

In addition to the 18 ProTeams, the organizers have invited four pro continental teams to compete as wild-card entries. This season, Team SpiderTech powered by C10, a squad managed by famed cyclist Steve Bauer, became the first Canadian-based professional continental team in history.

Team SpiderTech powered by C10 boasts several talented racers from Québec, including Guillaume Boivin, Keven Lacombe, Martin Gilbert and David Boily, not to mention the powerful trio of Svein Tuft, Zach Bell and Will Routley. Team Europcar, formerly Bbox Bouygues Telecom, includes Thomas Voeckler, the winner of the 2010 Québec City Grand Prix Cycliste and current points leader on the circuit UCI Europe Tour, as well as a new arrival, Québécois David Veilleux. France's FDJ lost its ProTeam status this season, but continues to be a major force, and counts Québécois Dominique Rollin in its ranks. Cofidis, another French team, rounds out the wild-card list.

International media coverage

Both UCI WorldTour races will once again showcase the province's best features to the world. The international reach will be important as both races are broadcasted live or deferred to over 60 countries. The organization has renewed its agreements with Eurosport channel to reach over 50 million households in Europe and Asia-Pacific, with the Canadian channel Rogers Sportsnet reaching a national audience, as well as with Radio-Canada and Évasion to ensure coverage across the province of Québec. Two new networks, Toronto's Setanta Sport and the American chain NESN (New England Sports Network), will also broadcast the races. The Challenge Sprint will be covered by Évasion and Radio-Canada.

Les Grands Prix Cyclistes Québec – Montréal

In 2009, the Grands Prix Cyclistes Québec–Montréal organization was granted the first two UCI licences for ProTour (WorldTour as of 2011) races in North America. The organization is responsible for planning and putting on races in Québec City and Montréal from 2010 to 2014. Please visit the website www.gpcqm.ca for more details on these races at the premier level of world cycling.

We would like to thank our public partners, the Government of Canada, the Government of Québec, the City of Québec and the City of Montréal, as well as our private partners, Desjardins, KIA, Air Transat and Évasion.

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