



PRESS RELEASE

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## LAUNCH OF THE QUEBEC CITY AND MONTREAL GRANDS PRIX CYCLISTE

**Québec City, Wednesday, September 6, 2011** – Following the arrival of the ProTeams yesterday, the Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes (GPCQM) Organization launches the UCI WorldTour races today.

Two novelties are on the program for the second edition. Firstly, the addition of **one lap** to each of the races. With the World Championships coming up shortly (September 25 in Copenhagen, Denmark), riders need long and tough races. Both events exceed 200 kilometer in length (16 laps in Québec City for a total of 201 km, 17 in Montréal for a total of 205 km).

The second novelty is the **Challenge Sprint Pro**. Tested last year with Canadian athletes, the event created by Serge Arsenaault comes in full gear with 24 participants, including 22 representatives from the teams entered in the Grands Prix Cyclistes and two Canadian athletes qualified in the Challenge Sprint Canada. They will battle it up over one kilometer on Grande Allée street in Québec City on September 8 at 4 PM. The principle is both simple and exciting: the faster two riders in each heat qualify for the next round until the final. The Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) supports this initiative for which a worldwide future is anticipated.

Speaking about the great support by all ProTeams to the Challenge Sprint Pro, race sports manager Charly Mottet said: "All teams welcomed this new event with enthusiasm and entered a rider. It's a good sign." The overall prize money on offer for the event is 19 740 Euros. The winner could win up to 5,320 Euros.

The **Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec** is run on a demanding circuit, ideal for "punchers", who are capable of producing a violent acceleration on the Old Québec hills. The Côte de la Montagne reaches 13 pc at some stage. "On this type of circuit, one must be opportunistic and position himself well. It's a magnificent circuit," added Charly Mottet, Sport Manager for the GPCQM.

The **Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal** is a difficult event raced on the Mount Royal circuit, a classic course used for the 1976 Olympic Games and the Grand Prix des Amériques in the 1980s. True climbers can express their strength, while punchers also have their chance. The Camilien-Houde hill, 1.8 km in length and with a percentage of 8 pc, will be climbed 17 times. It will not allow for any weakness. The enthusiasm of the public on the climb, so crucial for the riders morale, will create an atmosphere comparable to the Tour de France.

« When I heard the ovation from the Montreal public from the podium last year, I felt something very strong, » said Ryder Hesjedal (Team Garmin-Cervélo), third in the 2010 Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal.

The entry is even stronger than the first edition. Word of mouth worked and numerous riders asked their sport director to come to Québec. With four of the 2011 Tour de France top eleven riders (Samuel Sanchez, Thomas Danielson, Jean-Christophe Peraud and Pierre Rolland), but also world number 2 Philippe Gilbert, the strong man of the 2011 season, Edvald Boasson Hagen, Robert Gesink, winner in Montreal last year, Ryder Hesjedal, Levi Leipheimer, George Hincapie, John Gadret, fourth in the last

Tour d'Italie, Sandy Casar and many others, the field is extremely dense and the favourite list is a long one.

"I'm in Québec to win," insisted Philippe Gilbert. The Belgian lies only six points behind Cade Evans in the UCI WorldTour rankings (574 to 568).

A lot will be at stake. For Philippe Gilbert, the race is about confirming his favourite status but also to take over from Cadel Evans at the top of the world rankings. The 40 points allocated to the winner of each of the races would allow him to move back to the top spot he held in the beginning of the season. For many riders, the aim is to snatch the UCI points allowing their teams to retain their WorldTour status. For the teams, points must be acquired to keep their place in the UCI WorldTour.

"These are important races for all teams. Because we know that they are well organized, that the circuits are nice, that there are many riders and in the end of season, all teams need to collect points for the world rankings," said AG2R-La Mondiale Team Director, Vincent Lavenu.

The WorldTour is a world circuit, which from January to October, brings together the representatives from the 18 ProTeams in various countries around the world. It includes historical competitions such as the Tour de France, Paris-Roubaix, Liège-Bastogne-Liège, and more recent events such as our Grand Prix Cyclistes. Each race awards points to the riders and to the highest ranked teams. The 27 events on the UCI WorldTour circuit take place in eleven countries, from the Tour Down Under in Australia in January to the Italian Tour de Lombardie in October.

### **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 organising races in Québec City and Montréal from 2010 to 2014. Please visit the website [www.gpcqm.ca](http://www.gpcqm.ca) for more details on these races at the premier level of world cycling.

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