

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

## GILBERT AS EXPECTED

**Québec, Friday, September 9, 2011** – He was everyone’s favourite and Philippe Gilbert did not fail to deliver and win the second Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec over 201.6 kms on Friday. The Belgian champion added a 17<sup>th</sup> victory to his remarkable 2011 record in style to achieve his other goal of making it to the top of the UCI WorldTour ranking, thanks to the 80 points awarded to the winner.

While the 16 laps tired out most of the field, ten strong men emerged in the last lap and Gilbert attacked once, twice and finally three times to win ahead of a brave Robert Gesink, on the podium for the third time in succession in Canada. Colombia’s Rigoberto Uran rewarded Team Sky for their constant efforts all day by taking third place.

The tone was set from the gun when Dane Michael Morkov, the Challenge Sprint Pro winner a day earlier, attacked with former Canadian champion Will Routley. The attempt was short-lived but 10 kms later, two riders emerged, Italy’s Cristiano Salerno (Luquigas) and Spain’s Jesus Herrada (Movistar), quickly joined by France’s Tony Hurel (Europcar). The peloton decided to let them go and the trio held a maximum lead of 6:10 minutes at km 43.

At that stage, Team Sky decided to take care of the chase and steadily brought the gap down to under three minutes. With five laps to go, the peloton raised the tempo and Herrada, the last escapee to give up, was caught 49 kms from the line. In the meantime, the Spaniard had collected enough points to secure the mountain classification.

On the junction, Garmin-Cervelo took the reins and Christian Vandeveldel seized his chance to go. The American was joined by Lars Nordhaug (SKY), Tom Stamsnijder (LEO), Jan Ghyselinck (HTC), Philip Deignan (RSH), Maciej Paterksi (LIQ), Rui Faria Da Costa, Luis Pasamontes (MOV), as well as Matteo Trentin (QST). As Jurgen Roelandts (OLO) and Leonardo Bertagnolli (LAM) joined them, they were reined in with 32 kms to go.

Trentin, Faria and Pasamontes kept fighting, briefly with Canadian champion Svein Tuft, but with 15 kms left in the race, Philippe Gilbert decided it was time to move. First accompanied by Bjorn Leukemans (VAC), Robert Gesink (RAB), Simon Clarke (AST), Levi Leipheimer (RSH), Gerald Ciolek (QST), Rigoberto Uran (SKY), Marco Marcato (VAC), Fabian Wegmann (LEO) and Simone Ponzi (LIQ), he tried to go on his own in the last lap. But the attempt failed and the Belgian thought it wiser to wait for his chasers and save energy for the finale.

While Gesink tried to force the decision in the Cote de la Montagne, in vain, Gilbert struck in the very last climb to drop everyone except the Dutchman. One blow was not enough and he struck the fatal one just before the red flame for a brilliant win.

**Gilbert: “Mission accomplished”**

“It was an extremely difficult race because Team Sky took over from the start. It went extremely fast. In the last third, everybody was tired. Nobody was able to attack because there was a strong headwind. It was hard to control because I had no teammate. I panicked a bit, I was on my own and I was not sure how to get out of it.”

“Then Rabobank opened up the race and it went clearly better. It’s always easier between strong men. I tried to go at the start of the last lap but the group behind kept organised. I relaxed and tried to recuperate. In the last climb, I put the high gear and made the difference.”

“For the first time this season I was a little stressed because I had only six points to take for the World Tour Ranking but they were six hard points. Finally it turns out for the best.”

“In Montreal, I’ll be under far less pressure. It’s already mission accomplished for me.”

**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](http://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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