

WORLDTEAM PROFILES AND KEY RIDER BIOS

WORLDTEAMS

AG2R LA MONDIALE (FRA)

The French squad, which has now been in the top flight for a quarter-century, shone once more at this year's Tour de France, with Romain Bardet taking third place in the G.C.; it was also his second straight podium finish. He's a true source of inspiration for the team managed by Vincent Lavenu, which has been a real talent nursery, shepherding more than thirty veteran riders into the pro ranks. For those wondering, rising Québec star Hugo Houle won't be competing in front of the home crowd this year, as he's currently busy riding the Vuelta a España. *Founded in: 1992. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 13*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Oliver Naesen (BEL): Age 26, turned pro in 2014. *Palmarès: 5 wins including Bretagne Classic 2016, 2017 Belgian National Championships. This season: 1 win; 3rd in the GP E3, 3rd in the Four Days of Dunkirk, 5th in the BinckBank Tour.* Recruited over the winter after the IAM team folded, Naesen has been one of AG2R's most successful riders this year. His national title win in June capped off an excellent spring run for the Flemish cyclist, who with a bit more luck could have finished on the podium in several of the Cobble Classics. He's excellent in single-day races, but showed that he can also shine as a team rider, supporting Romain Bardet at this year's Tour de France.

Alexis Vuillermoz (FRA): Age 29, turned pro in 2013. *Palmarès: 7 wins including Stage 8 of the 2015 Tour de France. This season: 3 wins including GP de Plumelec-Morbihan and Tour du Limousin.* After a slow start to the season following a car accident that left him with a fractured vertebra, the former mountain biking specialist is back in a big way. He played a huge part in AG2R La Mondiale's fine group showing in the Tour de France (he himself finished 13th in the G.C.) and, while his progress as a hill rider seems to have blunted his *puncheur* qualities, his Tour du Limousin victory shows that he should be a strong contender on the tough Canadian courses.

ASTANA PRO TEAM (KAZ)

The Kazakh squad managed by Alexandre Vinokourov is one of the most formidable in the peloton, but the first half of their season was darkened by tragedy when Italy's Michele Scarponi was killed in a training accident in April. Since then, a Critérium du Dauphiné win by Denmark's Jakob Fuglsang and victory in the Italian National Championships for Fabio Aru (who also wore yellow for two days at the Tour de France and finished 5th in the G.C.) have brightened things up somewhat. *Founded in: 2006. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 12*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Jakob Fuglsang (DAN): Age 32, turned pro in 2006. *Palmarès: 15 wins including 2008, 2009 and 2010 Tour of Denmark, 2012 Tour of Austria, 2017 Critérium du Dauphiné. This season: 3 wins, 6th in the Tour of Valencia.* Very much appreciated as a team rider, the Danish-born Fuglsang, who started out in mountain biking, had the biggest results of his career this year with two stage wins and the overall title at the Critérium du Dauphiné in June. The 2016 Olympic Silver Medalist has cooled off a bit since then: he had to abandon the Tour de France after a nasty crash that fractured his left wrist and elbow, and then suffered a collarbone break in a criterium in Herning, Denmark, on August 12, which means he may be ruled out of the Québec City and Montréal races.

Moreno Moser (ITA): Age 26, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 7 wins including Frankfurt GP, 2012 Tour of Poland, 2013 Strade Bianche. This season: No wins, 38th in the Strade Bianche.* During his first year in the pro ranks, the nephew of 1977 World Champion and 1984 Giro d'Italia winner Francesco Moser was heralded as a star to watch: he got off to a flying start, with 5 wins and 2nd place in the Montréal GP. Aside from a few good results here and there, though, he hasn't really lived up to the hype, and his move to Astana this year hasn't made much difference to his palmarès.

BAHRAIN–MERIDA (BRN)

Created during the off-season at the initiative of Sheikh Nasser bin Hamed Al Khalifa, this team financed by Bahrain hopes to put the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom on the international cycling map. So far, the highlights of squad's rookie season have been Vincenzo Nibali's third-place finish in the Giro d'Italia and the performances of *puncheur* Sonny Colbrelli. *Founded in: 2017. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 7*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Sonny Colbrelli (ITA): *Age 27, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 17 wins including 2014 and 2016 Coppa Sabatini, 2016 Tour du Limousin. This season: 2 wins (Stage 2 of Paris–Nice, Brabantse Pijl).* The man from Lombardy first gained attention with a string of results in Italian semi-classics, and took things to the next level when he joined the WorldTour this year. His authoritative stage win in Paris–Nice put him on the list of sprinter-*puncheurs* to watch, but his win in the Brabantse Pijl also showed his versatility. He's a legitimate contender in either Québec City or Montréal.

Enrico Gasparotto (ITA): *Age 35, turned pro in 2005. Palmarès: 10 wins including 2012 and 2016 Amstel Gold Race. This season: 14th in the Brabantse Pijl.* An experienced rider who had two days of glory in the Amstel Gold Race four years apart, this former Italian National Champion has settled into a role as a lieutenant for leaders like Vincenzo Nibali, with whom he's very close.

BMC RACING TEAM (USA)

Boasting a deep, cosmopolitan lineup, this U.S.-registered team excels on all types of terrain. With almost 48 wins so far, they are the most prolific of the WorldTeams this season, thanks in part to a spectacular spring by Belgium's Greg Van Avermaet, but also to the blossoming this summer of young Dylan Teuns. The only negative this year has been Richie Porte's serious crash in the Tour de France, which led him to abandon the race. *Founded in: 2007. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 48*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Greg Van Avermaet (BEL): *Age 32, turned pro in 2006. Palmarès: 37 wins including 2011 Paris-Tours, 2016 Tirreno–Adriatico, 2016 Olympic Road Race, 2016 Montréal GP. This season: 7 wins including Gent–Wevelgem and Paris–Roubaix.* The Belgian has made a habit out of winning huge races. Last year, coming off an Olympic Gold Medal, he put an exclamation mark on his 2016 season with a victory in the Montréal GP after finishing just behind Peter Sagan two days earlier in Québec City. With several major wins under his belt and appearances in the Québec City and Montréal Grands Prix Cyclistes every year since 2012, Van Avermaet proved he's a great champion this past spring with his dominant performance in Paris–Roubaix, one of the five Monuments of the WorldTour circuit. While he failed to win a stage in the Tour de France, his end-of-season run, with the World Championships in Bergen as the ultimate goal, could see him shine very brightly indeed.

Dylan Teuns (BEL): *Age 25, turned pro in 2011. Palmarès: 8 wins including 2017 Tour of Poland. This season: 8 wins; 3rd in the Flèche Wallonne.* The young Belgian prodigy is undeniably the revelation of the season. His third-place finish in the Flèche Wallonne cemented the potential he'd shown since his days in the Under-23 ranks, and his stunning summer form (eight wins from July 24 to August 13) has made him one of the most eagerly awaited riders at the Québec City and Montréal GPs.

BORA–Hansgrohe (GER)

Originally known as Team NetApp, then BORA–Argon 18 and now BORA–Hansgrohe after another sponsor change, this German-registered squad has moved even more into the spotlight this year with its arrival in the WorldTour and the signing of Slovak sensation and two-time World Champion Peter Sagan. Invited to compete as a wild-card team in the past two editions of the Québec City and Montréal GPs, they are back—only now, they're one of the major teams in the international peloton. *Founded in: 2010. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 26*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Peter Sagan (SVQ): *Age 27, turned pro in 2009. Palmarès: 102 wins including 2013 Montréal GP, 2015 and 2016 World Championships, 2016 Tour of Flanders and 2016 Québec City GP. This season: 10 wins including Stage 3 of the Tour de France, 2nd in Milan–San Remo.* The top star of the pro peloton thanks to his palmarès as well as his personality, the Slovak has been having what you might call an up-and-down season. Yes, he's notched 10 wins, but also saw Monuments like Milan–San Remo (2nd) and the Tour of Flanders (a spectacular crash in the finale) slip from his grasp, and then suffered the ignominy of disqualification from the Tour de France after a sprint mishap with Mark Cavendish. For all these reasons, Sagan—who has had great success in both Québec City and Montréal over the years—will want to put his stamp on the end of the 2017 season, as he guns for an unprecedented third World Championship title at the end of September in Bergen.

Maciej Bodnar (POL): Age 32, turned pro in 2008. Palmarès: 8 wins including Stage 20 of the 2017 Tour de France. This season: 1 win, 2nd in the Europe Championships Time Trial. Often in the shadows but appreciated by teammates as a stalwart all-rounder, the Pole found himself in the spotlight by winning the final time trial of this year's Tour de France, in Marseille, just one second ahead of fellow countryman Michal Kwiatkowski. And it was by a similarly slim margin (two seconds this time) that this loyal ally of Peter Sagan missed out on the European title on August 3.

CANNONDALE–DRAPAC PRO CYCLING TEAM (USA)

This team, sponsored by the famed U.S. bike manufacturer and managed by Jonathan Vaughters, has just been dealt a heavy blow. It announced on August 26 that it had failed to secure enough money for next season, and was freeing its riders of their contracts. The squad impressed this year with Pierre Rolland's strong showing in the Giro d'Italia and, especially, Rigoberto Urán's runner-up performance in the Tour de France. In Québec, its riders will now be hoping to impress other teams enough to find a saddle for 2018. Founded in: 2005 – Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 12

RIDERS TO WATCH

Rigoberto Urán (COL): Age 30. Turned pro in 2006. Palmarès: 9 wins including 2015 Québec City GP, Stage 9 of the 2017 Tour de France. This season: 1 win, 2nd in the Tour de France. Twice a podium finisher in the Giro d'Italia (2013 and 2014), the Colombian climbing specialist put in the most memorable performance of his career so far by finishing second in the G.C. of this year's Grande Boucle, just 54 seconds behind Britain's Chris Froome. Still basking in that glory but now in search of a new team, "Rigo" returns to the roads of Québec, which he fondly remembers, having won in the capital in 2015.

Alberto Bettiol (ITA): Age 23, turned pro in 2014. Palmarès: No wins, 2nd in the 2016 Bretagne Classic Ouest-France, 3rd in the 2016 Tour of Poland, 4th in the 2016 Québec City GP. This season: 6th in the Clásica San Sebastián. It was in last year's Canadian GPs that this powerful native of Tuscany started to fulfill his potential, finishing 4th in Québec City and 7th in Montréal. He's had trouble following up this season, though he had some success in the Tour de France (he came 5th in Stage 3 in Longwy) and more recently at the Clásica San Sebastián (6th place). He'll be leaving at the end of the season to join BMC, but look for him to be in the mix in Québec City and Montréal.

FDJ (FRA)

This French team's 20th-anniversary year has been a season of paradoxes. Halfway into one of their most successful campaigns—which included an excellent Giro d'Italia with Thibaut Pinot (4th in the G.C.), followed by another French National Championships win—they imploded during the Tour de France, with only three riders making it to the Champs-Élysées (the only bright spot was Arnaud Démare's Stage 4 win). It was a bitter blow for the team with the clover jersey, but they seem to have turned things around since August. Founded in: 1997 – Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 25

RIDERS TO WATCH

Arnaud Démare (FRA): Age 26, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 46 wins including 2014 and 2017 French National Championships, Milan–San Remo 2016, Stage 4 of the 2017 Tour de France. This season: 9 wins including Stage 1 of Paris–Nice, Stage 2 of the Critérium du Dauphiné. One of the top sprinters in the world and a tough customer in the Spring Classics as well (he was 5th in Paris–Roubaix this year), Démare is one of the leaders of the FDJ peloton. After winning his second French National Championship in June, he claimed his first-ever stage win in the le Tour de France, but then finished outside the time limits, completely exhausted, five days later. There was talk that he would cut his season short, but a second-place finish at the EuroEyes Cyclassics in Hamburg seems to have reinvigorated him.

Sébastien Reichenbach (SUI): Age 28, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 1 win, 2013 Trofeo Matteotti, 4th in Tirreno–Adriatico 2016. This season: 7th in the Tour of Andalusia, 15th in the Giro d'Italia. After first gaining attention with IAM Cycling in 2013, the Swiss climber decided to join FDJ in 2016, and has since become one of Thibaut Pinot's most loyal domestiques—his work during this year's Giro, when Pinot was a podium threat throughout, was exemplary. Reichenbach's been dogged by a virus since late June, however, and has had trouble rebounding in the second half of the season.

LOTTO SOUDAL (BEL)

Funded since the 1980s by the Belgian National Lottery, this squad is typically a powerful force throughout the World Tour season, although its sprint specialist, Germany's André Greipel, has been less effective than usual this year. It can also look to young talents including Belgian Tim Wellens, whose breakout win came in the 2015 Montréal GP, and Tiesj Benoot, who's on the verge of a major victory. Founded in: 2012. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 14

RIDERS TO WATCH

Tim Wellens (BEL): Age 25, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 13 wins including Montréal GP 2015, Stage 6 of the Giro d'Italia 2016. This season: 4 wins including Stage 6 of the BinckBank Tour (2nd overall).* A hard-won victory in the driving rain on Mount Royal two years ago made the Belgian one of the attacking riders to watch on the pro circuit. Since then he's shown great versatility, chasing down stage wins and G.C.s, and he seems to do even better in difficult weather conditions. Although he had to drop out of the Tour de France because of illness, Wellens has recovered well and is hoping to close out the season strongly.

Tony Gallopin (FRA): Age 29, turned pro in 2008. *Palmarès: 9 wins including Clásica San Sebastián 2013, Stage 11 of the Tour de France 2014. This season: 1 win, 2nd in the Clásica San Sebastián, 2nd in the Étoile de Bessèges.* This Frenchman remains one of the finer *puncheurs* in the World Tour ranks, always keen to keep up in breakaways, but has trouble putting up big wins. The third-place finisher in Montréal in 2014, Gallopin will be riding for AG2R La Mondiale next season. The Canadian Grands Prix courses suit his style.

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 (whose current season was brutally interrupted in the opening time trial of the Tour de France, when he crashed heavily) and Colombia's Nairo Quintana (2nd in the Giro this year but barely a threat in the Grande Boucle), it also boasts plenty of talents who can make their mark in other major races on the World Tour calendar. *Founded in: 1980. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 31*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Jesus Herrada (ESP): Age 27, turned pro in 2011. *Palmarès: 9 wins including 2013 and 2017 Spanish National Championships, Stage 2 of the 2016 Critérium du Dauphiné. This season: 1 win, 3rd in the Spanish National Championships Time Trial, 9th in the Tour de Romandie.* The younger of the Herrada brothers (he'll be accompanied by his elder sibling this year in Canada) won the Spanish National Championships for the second time earlier this year. Though he has few World Tour wins to his credit—one exception being a stage of the Critérium du Dauphiné last year—he's a formidable *puncheur* and climber. Often cast in a supporting role with Movistar, he'll have a chance to shine at these GPs.

Carlos Barbero (ESP): Age 26, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 12 wins including 2015 Philadelphia Classic, 2014 and 2017 Tour of Alentejo. This season: 5 wins including Circuito de Gexto and Stage 4 of the Tour of Burgos; 5th in the Spanish National Championships.* After several years with second-tier teams, this solid *puncheur* has come into his own this season since joining Movistar. He's earned few invitations to World Tour events thus far, but has seen plenty of action in races on the Iberian calendar. Awaiting better times, perhaps?

ORICA–SCOTT (AUS)

Just seven years after its founding, the only Australian team in the top flight has emerged as one of the most competitive. Their ranks include an up-and-coming sprinter (Caleb Ewan), two of the best young riders in the two most recent Tours de France (brothers Adam and Simon Yates), and the seasoned Simon Gerrans, who made history in 2014 by memorably claiming both the Québec City and Montréal GPs in the same year. *Founded in: 2011. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 26*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Simon Gerrans (AUS): Age 37, turned pro in 2003. *Palmarès: 33 wins including 2012 Milan–San Remo, 2014 Liège–Bastogne–Liège, 2012 and 2014 Québec City GP, 2014 Montréal GP. This season: 2nd in the Australian National Championships, 2nd in the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Race, 2nd in the Tour of Norway.* He may have lost much of the punch of his finest years, but the Australian has one of the most enviable records in the Classics among all active racers. The 37-year-old Gerrans has fond memories of winning the double in the Canadian races three years ago, and would surely enjoy some more big wins before he climbs off the saddle for good.

Jens Keukeleire (BEL): Age 28, turned pro in 2010. *Palmarès: 10 wins including Stage 12 of the 2016 Vuelta a España, 2017 Tour of Belgium. This season: 1 win, 2nd in Gent–Wevelgem.* This Classics specialist's two previous outings in Canada, in 2012 and 2014, weren't exactly memorable. But the Belgian is no longer the same rider. He was the only man able to stay on Greg Van Avermaet's wheel at Gent–Wevelgem this year, and but for illness, he could have put up big results in the spring races. Will he be Orica–Scott's ace in the hole this year in Québec City and Montréal?

QUICK-STEP FLOORS (BEL)

Contrary to its form in recent years, the Belgian team isn't sitting atop of the victory table as this season draws to a close, but it remains one of the most consistently effective of the World Teams. Tom Boonen, one of its emblematic figures, may have retired after Paris–Roubaix, but the squad has still performed strongly on all fronts: in the Classics (Philippe Gilbert won the Tour of Flanders), sprints (Marcel Kittel notched five Tour de France stage wins) and even stage races (Bob Jungels was 8th overall in the Giro d'Italia, and Dan Martin 6th in the Tour de France). *Founded in: 2003. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 42*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Petr Vakoč (CZE): *Age 25, turned pro in 2011. Palmarès: 10 wins including 2015 Czech Cycling Tour, 2016 Brabantse Pijl. This season: No wins; 2nd in the Brabantse Pijl, 6th in the Cadel Evans Ocean Race, 10th in the BinckBank Tour.* A sensation in the spring of 2016 when he racked up win after win, the broad-shouldered Czech all-rounder hasn't had as much success this season. But at just 25 years of age, the ninth-place finisher in last year's Québec City GP last year has the potential to become a Classics titan one day.

Dries Devenyns (BEL): *Age 34, turned pro in 2007. Palmarès: 6 wins including 2016 Tour of Belgium and 2016 Tour de Wallonie. This season: No wins, 3rd in the Cerami GP, 5th in the Belgian National Championships Time Trial.* Back "home" with Quick-Step this season after leaving at the end of the 2013 season, this Belgian is equally at home as a model team rider and an aggressive *baroudeur*. After claiming his first pro win in 2009, it took him a long time to taste victory again: he finally captured both the Tour of Belgium and Tour de Wallonie in 2016, giving new impetus to his career.

TEAM DIMENSION DATA (RSA)

The first-ever professional cycling team from an African country was promoted to the World Tour ranks last season. It has attracted stars like Britain's Mark Cavendish, but just as importantly, has allowed South African, Eritrean, Rwandan and Algerian riders to show off their skills on the world's finest road racing circuits. *Founded in: 1997. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 23*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Stephen Cummings (GBR): *Age 36, turned pro in 2005. Palmarès: 16 wins including Stage 13 of the 2012 Vuelta a España and Stage 14 of the 2015 Tour de France, Stage 7 of the 2016 Tour de France.* This season: 2 wins (British National Championships Time Trial and Road Race). Long confined to a domestique role, the Briton eventually came into his own as a sturdy *baroudeur* (though he has struggled somewhat this year). That temperament has seen him carve out a fine palmarès that includes stage wins in the Tour de France, the Vuelta a España, the Critérium du Dauphiné and Tirreno–Adriatico.

Nathan Haas (AUS): *Age 28, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 5 wins including 2011 and 2014 Japan Cup, Stage 4 of the 2016 Tour of Burgos.* This season: 3rd in the Australian National Championships, 4th in the Tour Down Under, 4th in the Amstel Gold Race. Haas proved his maturity with a brilliant performance in front of a home crowd at the Tour Down Under, and has built a solid reputation as a single-day specialist. With very strong finishes in both Québec City (6th) and Montréal (4th) last year, he's further asserted himself this season with, among other strong showings, a fourth-place finish in the always challenging Amstel Gold Race. Definitely a dark horse.

TEAM KATUSHA–ALPECIN (SUI)

Funded by the Russian government and the gas companies and beefed up even more this year with a German co-sponsor, Katusha has one of the biggest budgets of any WorldTeam. Once again this year, they've relied heavily on their talented sprint specialist, Norway's Alexander Kristoff (the newly minted European Champion). He'll be leaving at the end of the season, however, to be replaced by German Marcel Kittel. *Founded in: 2009. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 17*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Simon Spilak (SLO): *Age 31, turned pro in 2005. Palmarès: 13 wins including 2010 and 2015 Tour de Romandie, and 2017 Tour of Switzerland.* This season: 2 wins, 10th in the Tour of the Basque Country. Quite by chance, all of the Slovene's big wins have come in Swiss competitions. He won the Tour of Switzerland for the second time this past June, and has become a specialist in week-long stage races, having ruled out grand tours since 2014. With his talent, anything is possible.

Baptiste Planckaert (BEL): *Age 28, turned pro in 2008. Palmarès: 6 wins including 2016 Tour du Finistère and 2016 Polynormande.* This season: 4th in the Handzame Classic, 5th in the Tour of Murcia. An amazing 2016 season (5 wins and 16 top-three results on the way to finishing first overall on the UCI Europe Tour) led to him being recruited by Katusha. That has meant a lucrative contract, but fewer opportunities to express himself. With his temperament and impressive speed burst, however, he should adapt quickly enough to the demands of the World Tour.

TEAM LOTTO NL–JUMBO (NED)

A fixture of the pro peloton for the past 20 years under different names, this Netherlands-registered squad has had a fine season so far, thanks to several new faces: sprinter Dylan Groenewegen, climber George Bennett and all-rounder Primož Roglič, who claimed the queen stag of this year's Tour de France at Serre-Chevalier. Amid those young talents is Dutchman Robert Gesink, one of three men to have won both the Québec City and Montréal GPs, and still a threat on any given day. *Founded in: 1996. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 20*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Enrico Battaglin (ITA): Age 27, turned pro in 2012. *Palmarès: 2 wins, 2 Giro d'Italia stages in 2013 and 2014. This season: 64th in the Giro d'Italia.* The winner of two Giro d'Italia stages as a member of Pro Continental team Bardiani, this Italian speedster graduated to the World Tour echelon last year. Though he's still looking for his first win, he's regularly finished among the leaders in certain stages of the Giro as well as the most recent Tour of Poland.

Paul Martens (GER): Age 33, turned pro in 2006. *Palmarès: 9 wins including 2010 Wallonie GP and 2013 Tour of Luxembourg. This season: No wins, 5th in the Tour of Limburg.* An experienced rider, Martens has built up a fine palmarès while forging reputation as a reliable, consistent domestique. The 12th-place finisher in Québec City in 2012, he's regularly demonstrated his skills as a tactician in the Classics, with several wins.

TEAM SKY (GBR)

Britain's Team Sky has the biggest budget of any World Tour squad, and with five Tour de France wins in five years, they've made the Grande Boucle their private hunting ground. Well supported once again this year, Chris Froome made no mistakes on the way to claiming his fourth Tour win after a fairly suspenseful three weeks. *Founded in: 2010. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 29*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Sergio Luis Henao (COL): Age 29, turned pro in 2007. *Palmarès: 12 wins including 2017 Paris–Nice. This season: 2 wins including Colombian National Championships, 4th in the Flèche Wallonne.* The Colombian National Champion fulfilled his responsibilities this past March by winning Paris–Nice, then showed spectacular form all spring. He returned to a support role in the Tour de France, but will have another chance at the spotlight as Sky's leader in the Canadian races.

Peter Kennaugh (GBR): Age 28, turned pro in 2010. *Palmarès: 10 wins including 2014 Tour of Austria. This season: 1 win (Stage 7 of the Critérium du Dauphiné).* After supporting Chris Froome in his 2013 and 2015 Tour de France victories, Kennaugh was left off the Sky squad for the Grande Boucle this year, despite a stage win at L'Alpe d'Huez during the Critérium du Dauphiné. That slight led him to agree to a transfer to BORA–Hansgrohe for the next two seasons.

TEAM SUNWEB (GER)

Founded in the Netherlands but registered in Germany for the past three years, the team managed by Iwan Spekenbrink is wrapping up an outstanding season. It owes that success to new recruit Tom Dumoulin of the Netherlands, winner of the Giro d'Italia, but also France's Warren Barguil (soon to return to his home country as a member of the Pro Continental Fortuneo team) and Australian Michael Matthews, plucked from the ranks of Orica, both of whom shone at the Tour de France (four stage wins and the polka-dot and green jerseys respectively). *Founded in: 2005. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 17*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Tom Dumoulin (NED): Age 26, turned pro in 2011. *Palmarès: 19 wins including 2017 Giro d'Italia. This season: 5 wins including BinckBank Tour, 4th in the Clásica San Sebastián.* The Dutchman first gained attention as a climber and has since evolved into a superb time trialist and all-rounder: the quintessential stage racer. He won the Silver Medal in the TT at the Rio Olympics and triumphed in this year's hilly edition of the Giro d'Italia, and is already a favourite for next year's Tour de France. After a welcome mid-season break, Dumoulin came back to dominate the BinckBank Tour (formerly known as the Eneco Tour) in early August, and has his sights set on the Worlds in Bergen. Second in Québec City in 2014, he is set to shine at this year's Canadian GPs.

Michael Matthews (AUS): Age 26, turned pro in 2009. *Palmarès: 33 wins including 3 Tour de France stages, 3 Vuelta a España stages, 2 Giro d'Italia stages. This season: 4 wins including Stage 14 and Stage 16 of the Tour de France, 3rd in Ride London, 4th in Liège–Bastogne–Liège.* The Australian speed merchant was one of the heroes of this year's Tour de France, with two stage wins and the Points Classification to his credit. But he's more than just a bunch-sprint specialist, and season after season is in the hunt to claim a major Classic or the World Championship (he was the runner-up in 2015). In 2016, he was 4th in the Montréal GP and 5th in Québec City: is this the year that he'll prevail in one or even both of the difficult Canadian races?

TREK–SEGAFREDO (USA)

This U.S. team, financed by the major bike manufacturer, is at a turning point in its history, with its leader Alberto Contador set to retire after the Vuelta a España. But this team is more than just the famed Spanish climber, and emerging talents like Belgians Jasper Stuyven and Edward Theuns, and Dutch veteran Bauke Mollema, can look to the future with confidence. *Founded in: 2011. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 13*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Bauke Mollema (NED): *Age 30, turned pro in 2007. Palmarès: 13 wins including Stage 17 of the 2013 Vuelta a España, 2016 Clásica San Sebastián, Stage 15 of the 2017 Tour de France. This season: 2 wins including Tour of San Juan, 3rd in the Clásica San Sebastián.* A formidable climber, the Dutchman made the Giro d'Italia his main focus this year, and finished 7th. But unlike many who attempted both races, he also did well in the Tour de France, prevailing in Stage 15 at Le Puy-en-Velay with a masterful solo effort. He can hold his own with the very best, and should be among the top finishers in one or other of the Canadian GPs.

Jasper Stuyven (BEL): *Age 25, turned pro in 2012. Palmarès: 6 wins including Stage 8 of the 2015 Vuelta a España, 2016 Kuurne–Brussels–Kuurne. This season: 1 win (Stage 7 of the BinckBank Tour), 3rd in the Belgian National Championships, 4th in Paris–Roubaix.* As he showed at Paris–Roubaix this year, where he was part of the breakaway group that produced winner Greg Van Avermaet, this young Belgian is surely a man to watch in future Cobble Classics. Sturdy and a quick finisher, he further proved his worth by conquering the Muur-Kapelmuur in the final stage of the BinckBank Tour. Raw talent.

UAE TEAM EMIRATES (UAE)

Known until this season as Lampre and registered in Italy, this squad managed by Giuseppe Saronni now flies the Emirates flag after an abortive sponsorship bid by a Chinese firm. It hasn't really changed its operating methods but, much like a soccer club, the influx of capital from its new backers has given it a budget potentially as big as that of Team Sky, and thus the ability to sign a major leader. The team has relied heavily on Diego Ulissi, Sacha Modolo and Rui Costa (who's often a fixture in the Québec City and Montréal GPs, but decided to ride the Vuelta a España this year). *Founded in: 1999. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 13*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Diego Ulissi (ITA): *Age 28, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 26 wins including 6 Giro d'Italia stages and 2013 Milan–Turin. This season: 1 win (GP of the Etruscan Coast), 2nd in the Italian National Championships, 5th in the Tour Down Under.* One of the very best finishers in this mostly Italian squad, he can break out of the pack and has a truly impressive speed burst. He's been a little less effective this season, coming oh-so-close to victory in the Italian Championship as well as a stage of the Tour de France. Keep an eye on him.

Marco Marcato (ITA): *Age 33, turned pro in 2005. Palmarès: 6 wins including 2011 Tour de Vendée, 2012 Paris–Tours. This season: 15th in the 3 Days of De Panne.* This *baroudeur's* Paris–Tours win five years ago remains his career highlight. He has relatively few wins on his palmarès, but plenty of top finishes in some of the most prestigious races on the calendar. These days, he's settled into a comfortable role as a road captain, much appreciated by his various leaders.

WILD-CARD TEAMS

ISRAEL CYCLING ACADEMY (ISR)

Formed in 2015 as a third-tier team and now competing at the Continental Pro level, Israel Cycling Academy was created with the objective of developing young riders, and counts Peter Sagan among its supporters. The 16-member roster has a dozen different nationalities represented—Canadians Guillaume Boivin and Benjamin Perry among them. Israel Cycling Academy is competing in the Québec City and Montréal GPs for the first time this year. *Founded in: 2015. Wins in 2017 (as of Aug. 20): 7*

RIDERS TO WATCH

Guillaume Boivin (CAN): *Age 28, turned pro in 2010. Palmarès: 7 wins including 2015 Canadian National Championships. This season: 2nd in the Saguenay GP, 4th in the Canadian National Championships, 12th in Nokere–Koerse.* The Montréal native joined the Israeli team in 2016, and this year put up some great results in the Belgian Classics and, later in the season, on the more familiar roads of the Saguenay GP, which he came very close to winning. Against fierce competition, he'll be intent on proving his worth on home turf.

Benjamin Perry (CAN): Age 23, turned pro in 2015. Palmarès: 2 wins including Stage 5 of the 2015 Tour de Beauce. This season: 12th in the Tour of Azerbaijan. The all-rounder from Ontario joined compatriot Guillaume Boivin with Israel Cycling Academy at the start of this season, reaching the second echelon of international pro cycling and gaining valuable experience in Europe. That should allow Perry, a six-time Canadian Champion in junior categories, to take his game to the next level.

Mihkel Raim (EST): Age 24, turned pro in 2013. Palmarès: 9 wins including 2016 Estonian National Championships and 2016 Tour of Hungary. This season: 3 wins including Stage 4 of the Tour of Colorado; 4th in the Tour of Slovakia. The former Estonian National Champion has nearly half of his team's wins in this, his breakout year. The sprint specialist is eager to test himself on the challenging Canadian GP courses.

TEAM CANADA

Each year since the inaugural Québec City and Montréal GPs, the organizers have given the country's top cyclists an opportunity to race with the world's best and confirm their increasingly impressive profile on the international stage. The Canadian National Team, managed once again by Kevin Field, will feature Antoine Duchesne, whose team Direct Energie was not invited.

RIDERS TO WATCH

Antoine Duchesne: Age 25, turned pro in 2013. Palmarès: 2nd in the 2014 Polynormande, 3rd in the 2013 Canadian National Championships, 8th in the 2016 Tour of Alberta. This season: 16th in the Four Days of Dunkirk. Though his current season has been complicated, with some unfortunate crashes and the news that he won't be returning to Direct Energie (he's hoping to join a top-tier squad), the Saguenay-born Duchesne remains one of the stars of Canadian cycling. At just 25 years of age, he's a veteran of both the Tour de France (2016) and the Olympics, and the best is surely yet to come. Freed of his domestique role, "Tony the Tiger" has a clear opportunity to shine in Québec City and Montréal.

Ryan Anderson: Age 30, turned pro in 2008. Palmarès: 1 win, 2015 Guadania GP. This season: 7th in the Delta Road Race. Anderson, who grew up in Spruce Grove, Alberta, has been Duchesne's teammate at Direct Energie since 2016, and for the past few years has gained valuable experience on the European circuit. More than once, he's come close to a major win that would put some more shine on his palmarès... will it finally happen for him on home turf?

Matteo Dal-Cin: Age 26, turned pro in 2014. Palmarès: 5 wins including 2015 Saguenay GP, 2017 Canadian National Championships. This season: 3 wins including Stage 1 of the Tour of the Gila, Stage 3 of the Tour de Beauce. Ottawa-born Dal-Cin has been a big part of Rally Cycling's success in North American races on the UCI Continental circuit this season (they have 16 victories). With three wins this year including the coveted Canadian National Championships, he's played his role brilliantly, demonstrating great potential not only for the Canadian GPs but for the rest of his career.