



GRANDS  
PRIX CYCLISTES  
**DE QUÉBEC  
DE MONTRÉAL**  
#GPCQM GPCQM.CA

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## USUAL SUSPECTS FAVOURED TO SHINE IN GPCQM RACES

Québec, Wednesday, September 5, 2018 – Past winners Greg Van Avermaet (BMC Racing Team), Tim Wellens (Lotto Soudal), Diego Ulissi (UAE Team Emirates) but also former podium finishers like Michael Matthews (Team Sunweb), are again expected to steal the show both on Québec's Grande Allée on Friday and in Montréal's Mont Royal on Sunday.

As GPCQM's executive vice-president Marcel Leblanc explained, "we have a high class field, with several riders in great shape and several former winners like Van Avermaet, Wellens, Ulissi, Rui Coasta and Simon Gerrans, the most often crowned rider in our races with three wins". And the usual suspects made it clear their ambitions were high in a season where the World championships, held on a hilly course in Innsbruck, Austria, might suit the climbers better than the riders favoured to do well in Canada.

Olympic champion Greg Van Avermaet won in Montréal in 2016 but has yet to raise his arms in Québec City despite four podium finishes in the old capital. "I'm happy to be here again. These are races that suit me well, there's always a great atmosphere and good crowds. I hope to be at my best level now and to be there in the finale. Hopefully I can win Québec after a few times on the podium."

Also winner in Montréal in 2015, fellow-Belgian Tim Wellens is eager for more, especially on Sunday, on a course made even harder by the addition of a new climb in the finale. "Montréal suits me better, the course is beautiful and there are fewer turns than here. Of course I'll be closely watched but when you have the legs you can make a difference," he said.

Among the riders who always did well in Canada but who have yet to clinch the laurels, Australia's Michael Matthews is all the more eager to shine as he had a lacklustre season after suffering problems with his saddle's height and as he has not been retained by his national team for the worlds. "It will be less stressful because I was forced out of the Tour and I'm not doing the worlds. I love to come here. Like the other guys have said, it suits our characteristics and it could lead to an exciting race for us and for the crowds," he said at the pre-race press conference.

Another rider to watch will be in-form Slovenian Matej Mohoric (Bahrain-Merida), who had a fantastic run of success in August winning the Binck Bank Tour and the Tour of Germany.

It will also be a special moment for Australia's Simon Gerrans (BMC Racing Team), the only rider to have won both legs of the Canadian World Tour week the same year in 2014. "He announced his retirement at the end of the season. We are privileged that he has chosen to ride his last laps in Quebec and Montreal," Marcel Leblanc said.

Canadian participation will be stronger than ever with the usual presence of the national team as well as five Canadian riders in the line-up of American outfit Rally Racing, Guillaume Boivin and Benjamin Perry in the ranks of Israel Cycling Academy while Hugo Houle is part of a strong Astana Pro Team. "We have a good team. Québec suits me a bit better than Montréal. I'm seeking a good result for the team but also for all the Canadian fans supporting me," said Houle, who targets a top 10 finish on Friday.

The fans will be lining the roads as usual, much to the satisfaction of local authorities. For Gouvernement du Québec sports minister Sébastien Proulx, the Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec provides “moving postcards that are really stimulating”. “It’s a unique opportunity to make Québec famous and to invite people from here and abroad to come and visit us.”

“It’s a must-see event, a classic,” echoed Québec City council’s Steeve Verret, in charge of the major events. “It’s a magnificent event that allows our town to be showcased in 130 countries. For Québec, it’s an honour to welcome the riders.”

#### **ABOUT THE #GPCQM**

The Grands Prix Cyclistes de Québec et de Montréal, the only two spots on the International Cycling Union (UCI) WorldTour in the Americas, contribute to fulfilling one of the primary objectives of the International Cycling Union (UCI): the globalization of the WorldTour circuit. These tour stops are in addition to the existing, officially sanctioned events in Europe and Oceania. Since 2010, the organization has been responsible for the planning and the conduct of the GPCQM and counts on the invaluable support of public and private partners: the Government of Canada, the Gouvernement du Québec, the city of Québec, the city of Montréal, the National Battlefields Commission, Québec City Tourism, Tourisme Montréal, Québecor, Air Transat, and TVA Sports (official GPCQM broadcaster).

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