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Wildcards for Omloop Het Nieuwsblad awarded to Belgian and French teams

The Belgian cycling season starts on Saturday 29 February with the iconic opening classic Omloop Het Nieuwsblad celebrating its 75th anniversary. All the teams of the highest level in procycling will take part as was the case in 2019. The cycling mad city of Ghent will also be able to give six UCI ProTeams a warm welcome at 't Kuipke. A total of 25 teams will fight for the win on the Onderwijslaan in Ninove.

As the first UCI WorldTour race of the season on European soil, Omloop Het Nieuwsblad presents a very strong line-up. Just like in 2019 all 19 teams of the highest level of cycling, the UCI WorldTour, will contest the Omloop. Belgian team Deceuninck – Quick-Step who won the race last year with Zdenek Stybar will take on the second Belgian WorldTeam: Lotto-Soudal. Former Omloop winner Philippe Gilbert (2006 &

2008) joined the team this winter.

Team CCC of former winner Greg Van Avermaet will naturally not be missing from this year's race and the same goes for the German team of BORA - hansgrohe, the team of Peter Sagan, and AG2R La Mondiale, where the Naesen brothers Oliver and Lawrence reunited in the past transfer season.

Next to all 19 UCI WorldTeams, six UCI ProTeams will make their way to Ghent. Total Direct Energie and Circus – Wanty Gobert already safeguarded their ticket at the end of the 2019 season through their position on the World ranking. Three of the other four wildcards go to the Belgian teams Sport Vlaanderen – Baloise, Alpecin – Fenix and Bingoal – Wallonie Bruxelles.

General Race Director Scott Sunderland explains: *“As an organisation we have awarded wildcards to strong classics teams to participate in Omloop Het Nieuwsblad. Teams that will animate the opening weekend of the Belgium Classics with their ambitious, attacking style of racing. Each year we see these teams playing an important role in the final outcome of the race.”*

“Four wild cards will be granted with three going to Belgian UCI ProTeams. These Belgian teams, two from Flanders and one from Wallonia, deserve their chance to prove something on their home soil, in one of the biggest of the Flanders Classics' Spring Races. I am convinced they won't disappoint”, Scott Sunderland concludes.

Finally, the Omloop Het Nieuwsblad organization welcomes another French team: Arkéa-Samsic. Scott Sunderland: *“This team has classics pedigree in one-day races with some top names in their ranks. They have definitely earned the right to be there at the start in Ghent.”*

The fans at 't Kuipke can look forward to a festive start on the 29th of February when Omloop Het Nieuwsblad celebrates its 75th birthday. No less than 25 teams take part in this special anniversary edition. The names of the riders fighting for the first big prize of the Spring Classics' season to take over the crown of Zdenek Stybar on the

UCI WORLDTEAMS



AG2R La Mondiale



Astana Pro Team



BORA-Hansgrohe



Bahrain-McLaren



CCC Team



Cofidis



Deceuninck-Quick-Step



Israel Start-Up Nation



Groupama-FDJ



EF Pro Cycling



Lotto Soudal



Mitchelton-Scott



Movistar Team



NTT Pro Cycling Team



Team INEOS



Team Jumbo-Visma



Team Sunweb



Trek-Segafredo



UAE Team Emirates

UCI PROTEAMS



Alpecin-Fenix



Sport Vlaanderen-Baloise



Bingoal-Wallonie Bruxelles



Circus-Wanty Gobert



Team Arkéa-Samsic



Total Direct Energie