

**Press release**  
- for immediate release -

*From 30 April to 5 May, the #TDR2019 rich line-up will guarantee suspense*

## **An array of favourites promises a great battle that will be spiced up by the presence of the Swiss team!**

**Morat (FR), 17 April 2019** / Having already announced the start sites for each stage and its main sponsor, Le Maréchal cheese, the 2019 Tour de Romandie still had to unveil the stars of its 2019 peloton. It did so this Wednesday, 13 days before the prologue in Neuchâtel, also revealing the details of the route that awaits one of the most promising pelotons the race has seen. Rarely has the array of favourites been so wide. Firstly with Geraint Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> of the last Tour de France, then with Primož Roglič, TdR title winner, Luis León Sánchez (Vuelta Ciclista a la Región de Murcia Costa Cálida), Kudus Merhawi (Tour du Rwanda), Colombians, Winner Anaconda (Vuelta a San Juan Internacional), Daniel Martínez or Rodrigo Contreras.

Adding Rui Costa, Tony Martin, which duel with Stephan Küng in the final time-trial in Geneva we are excited about, or David Gaudu, Michael Woods, Simon Spilak, Ilnur Zakharin and Remco Evenepoel, allows to expect a battle of great intensity on a very strong course, in the Romandie fine setting. And this without mentioning Andrey Amador, Sonny Colbrelli, Domenico Pozzovivo, Eros Capecchi, or sprinters such as Viviani or Sam Bennett, for the arrival in Morges, instead of Romont (three times the "Brit" wall!) or in La Chaux-de-Fonds (2989 m denivelation).

Team Sky, lead by Geraint Thomas, one day in yellow in 2012 after his victory in the prologue, might win the doublé TdR-Tour de France, will it race for the win? The title winner, Primož Roglič, who went on to have a fantastic Tour de France (4<sup>th</sup>) and has already won this year's Tirreno-Adriatico, could well do it again. In terms of revelation, we will see if the young Belgian Remco Evenepoel confirms his nickname as the "new Merckx". This TdR will be the first major test on a stage race for the 2018 double junior world champion.

Thomas de Gendt, who won the stage ending in Yverdon alone and ahead of the pack last year and was classed best climber, will be among the leaders: he just won a stage and the jersey for the general climbers classification in the Volta Ciclista a Catalunya.

### **Record number of Swiss riders and baptism of fire for Danilo Hondo and his guys**

On the Swiss side, a record of 17 riders is confirmed: Mathias Frank and Silvan Dillier, Tom Bohli, Danilo Wyss and Gino Mader, the Swiss armada of la Française des Jeux with Stefan Küng and the Valaisans Steve Morabito, Sébastien Reichenbach and Kilian Frankiny, without forgetting the adventurer Michael Albasini, who dreams of winning a last flower bunch on his last tour. In addition, the seven Swiss riders from the national team.

In the absence of a Swiss professional continental team, the UCI has authorised a Swiss national team to compete in the Tour de Romandie. Our best talents will be lining up under the orders of Danilo Hondo: "We are coming to take on the global elite. Dylan Page should be there. And if, in a stage that is not too hard, he manages to stay in the leading group all the way, then he may create a surprise in the sprint.

We will also have the resources to aim for a good spot in the general classification. Simon Pellaud, Patrick Schelling and Roland Thalmann are also favourites."

For Richard Chassot, the presence of this Swiss formation adds spice and attractiveness for the Romand public. "If they achieve something, it would be the pinnacle." Perhaps by slipping into a sustained breakaway or by winning a leader jersey.

### **Le Maréchal: a world champion at the head of the sponsor peloton**

In terms of sponsors, there are also champions on the starting list: Le Maréchal won the gold medal at the World Championships Cheese Contest 2018 USA, in the Semi-hard Cheese category. Seeing this family business displayed on the race leader's jersey near its own terroir is symbolic for the Tour de Romandie: the smallest of the great sponsors for the greatest of the small tours!

The head of the organisation, Richard Chassot, and the Fondation Tour de Romandie are thrilled about the quality of the peloton of partners, with the faithful jersey sponsors BliBlaBlo (net+), Banque du Léman, JouezSport!, accompanied by Aquatis, Caffè Chicco d'Oro, as well as Prodis for the combativity prize, Von Bergen Transports, Tissot and Europcar. Newcomers to welcome to the cavalcade: Air Production, who will capture the TdR best moments or the playful Genevan Velosophe Cyclist Beer.

### **VIP hosting: the TdR is bending over backwards**

Large numbers of spectators are expected at the start sites, along the roads and in the finish villages. To take good care of its partners and VIP guests at each stage, the Tour de Romandie has organised [several additional programmes](#), including in particular reception areas in adaptable coaches. From the VIP area at the start site with its buffet for CHF 100, to the "discovery day" in a helicopter, the cycling kingdom is opening itself up to the sport's enthusiasts and to those wishing to explore this universe from the inside (<https://bit.ly/2G1fpfN>).

The media coverage enjoyed by the event, with the magnificent images produced by RTS broadcast in 190 countries, and live in 80 of these, ensures a global reach for Romandie. With a great social media presence, moreover, the TdR is going to offer among its new features a daily live rendezvous on Facebook, "Autour de Romandie" (Around Romandie), in the minutes before the start. Spread the word!

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