



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **FIRST EIGHT TEAMS ANNOUNCED FOR 2009 AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA**

*World-Class, Accomplished Teams to Compete February 17 in  
San Jose*

*'Best Field Ever to Compete on U.S. Soil Anticipated For Nine  
Day Stage Race'*

SAN JOSE, CALIF., December 18, 2008 – The *2009 Amgen Tour of California*—with a Stage Start, noon, Feb. 17 in San Jose—will once again bring together a world-class field of cycling teams from multiple nations, including eight of the sport's top-rated ProTour teams. Race organizers confirmed today that entries for the fourth annual race will include Lance Armstrong and the *Amgen Tour of California's* two-time defending champion Levi Leipheimer's team, Astana, along with two of the top U.S.-based teams, Garmin-Slipstream (new to the ProTour circuit) and Team Columbia (formerly Team High Road). Also racing will be Team Saxo Bank, which finished in the top-three of the world rankings last season and Quick Step, which claimed 55 victories in the 2008 season.

"We are proud to welcome back to San Jose some of the world's best athletes of our generation," said San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed. "It's my hope that these riders will inspire the community to consider cycling both as a key form of recreational and everyday transportation and as a way to meet their fitness goals in the coming year."

The *2009 Amgen Tour of California* roster includes the following eight ProTour professional cycling teams:

- Ag2r-La Mondiale (FRA)
- Astana (LUX)
- Garmin-Slipstream (USA)
- Liquigas (ITA)
- Quick Step (BEL)
- Rabobank (Netherlands)
- Team Columbia (USA)
- Team Saxo Bank (DEN)

The recently expanded 750-mile, nine-day stage race, considered to be the most important and popular race held on U.S. soil, will take the world's top professional cycling teams from Sacramento to San Diego County from February 14-22, 2009.

In San Jose, the race will begin its Stage 3 start, noon, Tuesday, February 17, at San Fernando and Almaden. Riders will then make their way through the central and northeastern part of the City to Sierra Road en route to their final destination in Modesto.

"The success of the *Amgen Tour of California* has created a very positive reputation among the professional cycling community, which has helped to ensure the high level of competition that people have come to expect from our race," said Andrew Messick, president of AEG Sports, presenter of the race. "We have invited the best teams that the world has to offer to compete on an outstanding course. The success of the race, combined with an updated, world-class route will ensure a level of competition that is unprecedented in the United States."

Split between teams who compete on the UCI ProTour and those who race predominately in the United States, the field of athletes competing in the *2009 Amgen Tour of California* will be one of the most diverse, accomplished groups of cyclists ever assembled for a stage race in the U.S. The full list of teams will be announced in January, with final rosters due in February.

"We have a great roster of top athletes, and the *Amgen Tour of California* delivers a great stage on which to perform," said Bob Stapleton, owner, Team Columbia. "The *Amgen Tour of California* is great for the sport of cycling in the U.S. and great for the sport overall."

Several of the ProTour professional cycling teams will hold their pre-season training camps in California, which will give residents throughout the state an opportunity to watch these elite athletes prepare for the top professional cycling race in the United States.

For more information about the teams competing in the *2009 Amgen Tour of California*, please visit [www.amgentourofcalifornia.com](http://www.amgentourofcalifornia.com).

#### About the Amgen Tour of California

The largest cycling event in America, the *Amgen Tour of California* is a Tour de France-style cycling road race, presented by AEG, that challenges the world's top professional cycling teams to compete along a demanding course. Building on last year's third-annual stage race, which attracted 1.6 million spectators, the *2009 Amgen Tour of California* will be expanded to cover more than 750 miles over nine days from February 14-22, 2009.

#### About Amgen

Amgen discovers, develops, manufactures and delivers innovative human therapeutics. A biotechnology pioneer since 1980, Amgen was one of the first companies to realize the new science's promise by bringing safe and effective medicines from lab, to manufacturing plant, to patient. Amgen therapeutics have changed the practice of medicine, helping millions of people around the world in the fight against cancer, kidney disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and other serious illnesses. With a broad and deep pipeline of potential new medicines, Amgen remains committed to advancing science to dramatically improve people's lives. To learn more about Amgen's pioneering science and vital medicines, visit

[www.amgen.com](http://www.amgen.com). To learn more about Amgen's Breakaway from Cancer initiative, visit [www.breakawayfromcancer.com](http://www.breakawayfromcancer.com).

### About AEG

AEG is one of the leading sports and entertainment presenters in the world. AEG, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Anschutz Company, owns or controls a collection of companies including facilities such as STAPLES Center, The Home Depot Center, Sprint Center, The O2, Nokia Theatre L.A. LIVE and NOKIA Theatre Times Square; sports franchises including the Los Angeles Kings (NHL), two Major League Soccer franchises, a Women's Professional Soccer league team, the Los Angeles Sol, two hockey franchises operated in Europe, management of privately held shares of the Los Angeles Lakers, the ING Bay to Breakers foot race and the *Amgen Tour of California* cycling road race; AEG Live, the organization's live-entertainment division, is a collection of companies dedicated to all aspects of live contemporary music performance, touring and a variety of programming and multi-media production. For more information, visit AEG today at [www.aegworldwide.com](http://www.aegworldwide.com).

### About the City of San Jose

From its founding in 1777 as California's first city, San Jose has been a leader, driven by its spirit of innovation. Today, San Jose stands as the third largest city California, behind Los Angeles and San Diego, and the Capital of Silicon Valley—the world's leading center of innovation. The city, the 10th largest in the U.S., is committed to remaining a top-ranked place to work, live, learn and play, and, with more than 150 miles of bike lanes and paths, aggressively supports cycling as a viable alternative form of green transportation. San Jose's commitment to cycling earned the city a National Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the League of American Bicyclists. As an epicenter of cycling in the San Francisco Bay

area, San Jose is part of one of the world's largest great cycling communities in North America

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## 2009 TEAM FACT SHEET

### ProTour Teams

#### **Ag2r - La Mondiale (FRA)**

**Web site:** [www.ag2rlamondiale-cyclisme.com](http://www.ag2rlamondiale-cyclisme.com)

**2009 Roster:** 30 Riders

**Bike Used:** BH

**2008 Highlights:** Stage wins in the Tour de France, Criterium du Dauphiné Libéré, Vuelta a España, Ronde de l'Isard, Tour de Picardie and Tour de l'Ain. Riders finished first overall in the GP du Canton d'Argovie and GP de Lugano.



**About:** Ag2r – La Mondiale, directed by Vincent Lavenu, is sure to be a notable addition to the 2009 Amgen Tour of California ProTour team list. Though they represent 11 nationalities, they are a French team with French sponsors, so this squad tends to focus on the Tour de France and other important French races, such as the Dauphiné Libéré, which is raced in the region of Chambéry (the company and the team's base). This being said, their ProTour status allows for high expectations in any major stage race, and the Amgen Tour of California is no exception.

They've begun the 2009 season with a few new key riders, including the versatile Alexander Efimkin, formerly a Quick Step rider, who's twin brother Vladimir is already on the team. The Russian is 26 years-old with four professional victories already to his name and a top ten finish at Paris-Nice. Also new to the team are Sébastien Hinault, who won a stage at the Vuelta a España for his former rival team, Credit Agricole; and French rider Blel Kadri, who won a stage and took second overall at the Ronde de l'Isard last season. They have three returning leaders for the 2009 season: Cyril Dessel, Tadej Valjavec and Vladimir Efimkin; but team management plans to give other up-and-coming riders a chance in the leader's role as well. Additionally, talented team members have returned to the racing scene after injury plagued their 2008 season, including: Ludovic Turpin, René Mandri and Yuriy Krivtsov. For many years, the well-rounded Ag2r – La Mondiale organization has asserted that their goal is not to have a single leader, but to have a complete team with riders who can all claim victories.

The team's title sponsors are the Ag2r Group, which is a French-based inter-professional insurance and supplementary retirement fund group; and the La

Mondiale Group, which is a French-based international group for supplementary pension and estate planning insurance.

### **Astana Cycling Team (LUX)**

**Web site:** [www.astana-cyclingteam.com](http://www.astana-cyclingteam.com)

**2009 Roster:** 27 Riders

**Bike Used:** Trek

**2008 Highlights:** Riders finished first overall in the Amgen Tour of California, Giro d'Italia, Pais Vasco, Castilla y Leon and Tour of Romandie. Riders took four stage wins and first overall in the Vuelta a España. Team includes three National Champions representing Kazakhstan, Portugal and Lithuania. Thirty-five victories overall.

**About:** The new Astana Cycling Team is in its second year under the leadership of Johan Bruyneel, the eight-time winning Sports Director of the Tour de France. In Bruyneel's first year, Team Astana accumulated 35 victories, including the prestigious Grand Tours of Italy and Spain. The 2009 squad consists of 27 riders representing nine countries and includes Grand Tour leaders, Lance Armstrong, Alberto Contador, Andreas Klöden and Levi Leipheimer.

After coming off their early season training camps, the squad is motivated and prepared to continue their winning streak at the Amgen Tour of California, as Leipheimer has captured the overall win in both 2007 and 2008, by bringing experienced riders who have found success in "The Golden State."

Sponsored by a consortium of companies hailing from Astana, the capital of cycling enthused Kazakhstan, the team was created to foster national pride and develop the next generation of professional Kazakh cyclists.



### **Garmin-Slipstream (USA)**

**Web site:** [www.slipstreamsports.com](http://www.slipstreamsports.com)

**2009 Roster:** 29

**Bike Used:** Felt

**2008 Highlights:** The team finished first overall in the team time trial in the Giro d'Italia and Tour de Georgia. Riders placed fifth overall in the Tour de France. Riders also placed second and third overall in the Amgen Tour of California, as well as first in the team classification.

**About:** The Garmin-Slipstream team looks to 2009 with the goal of being one of the best teams in the world, as they'll hit the racing circuit as a ProTour licensed team for the first time, with an impressive squad that includes Olympic, world and national champions.



Most of the 2008 squad remains this season, including stars Christian Vande Velde, David Millar and U.S. national road champion David Zabriskie. New to the team is British track star Bradley Wiggins, who is the World track champion in the 4K individual pursuit, team pursuit (world record) and the Madison. Wiggins also won Olympic gold medals in the 4K individual pursuit and the team pursuit in Beijing this summer. Impressive Canadian talents Svein Tuft and Christian Meier join the team for 2009. Tuft took the silver medal in the 2008 World Time Trial Championships in Varese, Italy. Current Canadian national road champion, Meier has been riding for the team as a hard-working stagiaire for the last few months. Also watch out for Dutch sprinter Hans Dekkers, who beat star Tom Boonen to win the Nationale Sluitingprijs this past October.

In California, look for extremely aggressive riding and stage wins from this talented group of young professionals. The team's fearless riding style along with its distinctive orange and blue argyle clothing has made the squad a favorite with fans and media alike.

The team, based out of Colorado, is sponsored by Garmin - a global satellite navigation leader. It is dedicated to promoting ethical sporting and developing the next generation of cycling champions.

## Liquigas (ITA)

**Web site:** [www.teamliquigas.it](http://www.teamliquigas.it)

**2009 roster:** 27 riders

**Bike used:** Cannondale

**2008 Highlights:** Stage wins in Tirreno-Adriatico and Paris-Nice. Four stage wins and Maglia Ciclamino in the Giro d'Italia. Stage wins and team time trial champions in the Vuelta a España. Riders took first overall and claimed a stage win in the Giro de Trentino and Tour de Suisse. Stage win and overall best young rider in the Tour of Missouri.



**About:** As one of the world's top teams in 2009, the Italian Liquigas squad features the arrival of Ivan Basso, a seasoned competitor, who can compete with anyone in the ProTour circuit. The squad also features super-sprinter Daniele Bennati, one of the world's best, and the expected maturation of Vincenzo Nibali and Roman Kreuziger. These elements will ensure that Liquigas, led by team manager Roberto Amadio, remains at the top ranks of the sport.

The Liquigas team sets ambitious goals for the young, talented athletes that wear their jersey and promise to live up to expectations and standards of the ProTour circuit.

Title sponsor Liquigas is a provider of liquefied gas products in Italy. Liquigas is committed to playing a leading role in the great world of international cycling. They are not only the sponsor of this top-notch team, but also the leaders of a Liquigas Camp, which allows children to experience the sport of cycling at a young age.



## Quick Step (BEL)

**Web site:** [www.qsi-cycling.com](http://www.qsi-cycling.com)

**2009 Roster:** 27 riders

**Bikes Used:** Specialized Tarmac SL2 and Roubaix

**2008 Highlights:** Stage wins in the Tour de France, Vuelta a España, Tour of Qatar and Paris-Nice. Riders finished first overall in the Kuurne-Bruxelles-Kuurne and Paris-Roubaix. Riders took first overall and claimed stage wins in the Volta ao Algarve and Ronde van Belgie. Fifty-five victories overall.

**About:** The Belgian Quick Step team consistently produces top-caliber athletes, and will join the Amgen Tour of California in 2009 for the third time. Since its conception five years ago, the team has won more than 200 UCI races and six World Championship titles, including three road titles: two by Italian Paolo Bettini in 2007 and 2006, and Belgian Tom Boonen in 2005. While Boonen remains the team's headliner, younger teammates such as sprinter Wouter Weylandt are starting to emerge as future stars. At the end of 2008, according to recent statistics, this squad stands out as the highest-winning ProTour team in the last five years.

Though the famous Paolo Bettini has retired, 12 new riders have joined the Quick Step squad for the 2009 season. Among them are Sylvain Chavanel and Kevin Deweert from Cofidis; Dominique Cornu and Dries Devenyns from Silence Lotto; Dario Cataldo from Liquigas; and Marco Velo from Milram.

Team sponsor is Quick Step, a trendsetter in laminate floorings produced by Unilin Flooring.

### **Rabobank (Netherlands)**

**Web site:** [www.rabobank.nl](http://www.rabobank.nl)

**2009 Roster:** 30 Riders

**Bike Used:** Giant

**2008 Highlights:** Stage win in the Critérium International. Riders took first in the sprint classification and claimed a stage win in the Tour de France and Tirreno-Adriatico. Riders also took first overall in the Gent-Wevelgem and the Tour de Luxembourg; first overall and a stage win in the Driedaagse van De Panne; and overall best young rider and two stage wins in Paris-Nice. The team also includes the Cyclocross World Champion and the Road and Time Trial National Champions.



**About:** This ProTour team, based out of the Netherlands, is sure to bring a strong squad to the Amgen Tour of California. Rabobank includes three-time World Champion Oscar Freire, two-time Vuelta a España winner Denis Menchov and current Cyclocross World Champion Lars Boom.

Key additions to the 2009 roster include Stef Clement, a gifted time trialist who started out his career at the Rabobank Continental team and then moved to French Bouygues Télécom; Tom Stamsnijder from Gerolsteiner; and Juan Manuel Garate from Quick Step. Newcomers Nick Nuyens from Cofidis and Maarten Tjallingii from Silence-Lotto have signed on as well.

Rabobank, a Netherlands-based global bank, is a committed sponsor, and have been the team's title sponsor since 1996. Rabobank, N.A., a leading California community bank have announced that Rabobank will be a "Founding Partner" of the 2009 Amgen Tour of California.

### **Team Columbia (USA)**

**Web site:** [www.highroadsports.com](http://www.highroadsports.com)

**2009 Roster:** 28 Riders

**Bike Used:** Scott

**2008 Highlights:** Six stage wins in the Tour de France and four stage wins in the Giro d'Italia. Riders took first overall in the Fleche Wallone. The team also includes the World Time Trial Champion.

**About:** 2008 was a very successful year for the squad, posting exciting stage wins in the Giro d'Italia, Tour de France, Fleche Wallone, Schildeprijs, Tour de Georgia, Amgen Tour of California,



Tour of Germany, Tour of Ireland and the Dauphine Libere, among others. With 37 riders from 18 different nations, the men and women's teams finished the 2008 season as the number one team in the world by winning more races than any other team.

On the squad is rider George Hincapie, who is a familiar face and renowned competitor in both American and International cycling. Also look for former World Time Trial Champion Australian Michael Rogers, Tour de France yellow jersey wearer Kim Kirchen and the young, renowned sprinter Mark Cavendish, who had a breakout season in 2008.

Team Columbia seeks to create an environment where success is achieved using the best methods, technology and personal development tools found in the world of sport. Their goals are to make change happen, to win by fair means, and represent the best aspects of sport.

Columbia Sportswear's sponsorship of Team Columbia provides an ideal opportunity for a major American company to support outdoor athletes who demand excellence of themselves and from their high-performance products. Columbia is pleased to promote a sport that is beloved by millions of people around the globe, who enjoy the outdoors and who deserve high-performance apparel for their own activities.

#### **Team Saxo Bank (DEN)**

**Web site:** [www.riis-cycling.com](http://www.riis-cycling.com)

**2009 Roster:** 28 Riders

**Bike Used:** Specialized

**2008 Highlights (as Team CSC):** Riders took first overall, best young rider, first overall team and three stage wins in the Tour de France. Riders also took first overall in the Milano-San Remo, Tirreno-Adriatico, Commerce Bank Int. Championship, Olympic Games time trial, Criterium International, Tour de Pologne, Herald Sun Tour, Monte Paschi Eroica and Rund um den Henninger Turm.

**About:** Saxo Bank brings one of the world's strongest teams to the 2009 Amgen Tour of California. Last season the squad finished at the top of the world team rankings for the fourth year running, and Team Saxo Bank plans to continue their domination in the race scene with top cyclists like Fabian Cancellara, Jens Voigt, Stuart O'Grady, Gustav Larsson, Fränk and Andy Schleck, Matti Breschel and Juan José Haedo.

This group of riders has always found success at the Amgen Tour of California. During the inaugural race in 2006, the Danish team won the team classification and had three cyclists finish in the top-ten overall. In 2007, the same squad, then named "Team CSC", won the teams classification again and finished with four riders in the top-six overall. Voigt finished second after a stage win, and Julich, O'Grady and Christian Vande Velde finished fourth, fifth and sixth respectively. Last season, Fabian Cancellara won the Prologue and Juan José Haedo

followed with a Stage 1 victory. Cancellara and Gustav Larsson both finished in top-five overall.

Team Saxo Bank heads into 2009 after a successful 2008 season. In the Tour de France the Danish team made a strong statement when they took three overall victories: the Yellow Jersey (Carlos Sastre), the Young Rider jersey (Andy Schleck), as well as a victory in the team competition. On top of the many notable victories, the riders from Team Saxo Bank also won bronze medals in both the Olympics (Fabian Cancellara) and the World Championships (Matti Breschel). The team will be looking for both time trial and stage wins in the 2009 Amgen Tour of California – and maybe even the overall victory.

Main sponsor Saxo Bank is an online investment bank. They joined as a co-sponsor mid-season in 2008 and then assumed their title sponsorship of the squad in 2009.

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