

= 2011 Cofidis season =

The 2011 season for the Cofidis cycling team began in January at the Grand Prix d'Ouverture La Marseillaise and ended in October at Paris ? Tours . Cofidis was a UCI Professional Continental team in 2011 , meaning they had to be proactively selected by the organizers of UCI World Tour events , including each of the season 's Grand Tours , if they were to compete .

The team 's most successful rider in 2011 was David Moncoutié . The veteran Frenchman won the Tour Méditerranéen and Tour de l'Ain overall crowns , as well as successes in the Vuelta a España . Moncoutié took a stage win and the King of the Mountains , each for the fourth straight year (a new record for the mountains title) . Sprinter Samuel Dumoulin was also a prolific winner , winning six races .

= = 2011 roster = =

Ages as of January 1 , 2011 .

= = One @-@ day races = =

The team was active in races which preceded those known as " classics " and the traditional start of the spring season . At the Grand Prix d'Ouverture la Marseillaise , held in January as the first race of the season in France , El Fares rode to tenth place by finishing in the main field behind the solo winner . In February , Gallopin was the team 's best finisher at two of the races in the Vuelta a Mallorca series , coming ninth at the unofficial Trofeo Palma de Mallorca and tenth at the Trofeo Inca .

= = = Spring classics = = =

Duque took a high placing at the Gran Premio dell'Insubria @-@ Lugano , finishing just off the podium in fourth place , coming home in a group that trailed two leading riders . At Kuurne ? Brussels ? Kuurne , a race which included most of the sport 's top teams , Petit finished ninth in a field sprint finish at the front of the race . Ista narrowly missed out on a victory at Le Samyn in early March . The race 's top finishers came across the finish line scattered , in groups of eight or fewer . Ista finished second , alone , 8 seconds back of solo winner Dominic Klemme . Two weeks later , Keukeileire finished fourth in a sprint at Nokere Koerse . Gallopin finished on the podium at Cholet @-@ Pays de Loire . Team Europcar 's Thomas Voeckler won the race with a late attack , with the peloton coming so close to catching him at the finish line that there was no time gap . Gallopin was first from the peloton for second overall . Vogondy rode to fourth place at the Route Adélie de Vitré , just missing the podium after figuring into a winning breakaway .

The team picked up their first single @-@ day win the same day as the more prestigious Tour of Flanders , in which they participated but were not especially competitive , with Duque in 19th their best finisher . The race they won was the inaugural Flèche d'Emeraude , a new race in the UCI Europe Tour and the French Road Cycling Cup . Gallopin came first at the head of a field sprint in Saint @-@ Malo . Zingle figured into a winning breakaway at the Brabantse Pijl , the precursor to the Ardennes classics . He took seventh place , a minute and a half back of the winner Philippe Gilbert . Vogondy was sixth at the Tour du Finistère , finishing with a big main group behind two leaders .

Demaret took the team 's second single @-@ day win at the Tartu GP in late May . He was the best of a five @-@ rider breakaway at the front of the race , one which included teammate Taaramäe . That same day , Gallopin took sixth in a sprint finish to the Grand Prix de Plumelec @-@ Morbihan . The team 's last race of the early season was Halle ? Ingooigem in June , where Sijmens rode to ninth place .

The team was not especially competitive at the spring season 's monument classics , coming in 37th at Milan - San Remo , 19th at the Tour of Flanders , 29th at Paris ? Roubaix , and 57th at Liège

? Bastogne ? Liège . The team also sent squads to the Trofeo Laigueglia , Omloop Het Nieuwsblad , Gran Premio di Lugano , Les Boucles du Sud Ardèche , Dwars door Vlaanderen , E3 Prijs Vlaanderen ? Harelbeke , Gent @-@ Wevelgem , Scheldeprijs , Paris ? Camembert , the Grand Prix de Denain , the Amstel Gold Race , Tro @-@ Bro Léon , La Flèche Wallonne , the Eschborn @-@ Frankfurt City Loop , and the Tallinn @-@ Tartu GP , but finished no higher than 12th in any of these races .

= = = Fall races = = =

The team secured several high placings in the later season , but did not obtain any victories . In late July , the team took two of the top six placings at the Polynormande , with El Fares in second and Gallopin in sixth . El Fares had been part of a breakaway , and Gallopin first from the peloton four and a half minutes back . The result put Gallopin into the lead in the French Road Cycling Cup , the year @-@ long competition among French single @-@ day races where French riders , and those on French teams , can earn points . Cusin came eighth at the Tour du Doubs in September . Petit just missed out on the podium at the Grand Prix de Fourmies , finishing fourth in a large field sprint . He made the podium in a similar finish at Binche ? Tournai ? Binche in October , finishing third . Also in October , Dumoulin took ninth place at Paris ? Bourges , from a selective sprint of ten riders . Duque was seventh in a leading group of thirteen at the Grand Prix de la Somme . Though he won only the one race , Gallopin 's consistent high finishes in the French single @-@ day races made him the overall victor of the season @-@ long French Road Cycling Cup , which he clinched after the Tour de Vendée .

The team sent squads to the Châteauroux Classic , the GP Ouest @-@ France , Paris ? Brussels , the Grand Prix Cycliste de Québec , the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal , the Grand Prix de Wallonie , the Tour de Vendée , and Paris ? Tours , but finished no higher than 11th in any of these races .

= = Stage races = =

The team got their first win of the season , in their first stage race , at the Étoile de Bessèges . Dumoulin made a late selection in stage 3 , joining nine other riders who finished just ahead of the rest of the peloton , and won the sprint to the finish line . Later in February , Moncoutié won the queen stage of the Tour Méditerranéen , finishing at Mont Faron . He had previously won stages there in 2003 and 2009 , but his win this year was enough to win him the race overall thanks to his time gap . The squad also won the teams classification . Dumoulin took another win later in February , in the first stage of the two @-@ day Tour du Haut Var . He stayed latched onto Rinaldo Nocentini 's wheel during the stage 's final climb , and came around him in the sprint .

Taaramäe took fourth overall at Paris ? Nice in March , winning the youth classification with this performance , which was easily the strongest for an Estonian rider in the event 's history . Taaramäe turned in a similar strong ride at the two @-@ day , three @-@ stage Critérium International , finishing on the event 's final podium in third place , and securing the youth classification . At the concurrent Volta a Catalunya , Dumoulin took two stage wins . The first was in stage 5 , on an uphill false flat finish which Dumoulin felt suited him well . The second was more unexpected , in that it was a dead flat run in to the finish on wide roads , a more traditional field sprint . Dumoulin was delighted to win twice in front of some of the sport 's biggest stars , and stated that his next goal would be a major spring classic , perhaps the Amstel Gold Race . Dumoulin , however , was not a factor at the Amstel , finishing 104th , over eight minutes behind the winner .

In June , Maté won the final stage at the Route du Sud , coming best in a five @-@ man breakaway sprint . Keukeleire , a prolific winner in his neo @-@ pro season of 2010 but shut out in the first several months of 2011 , took his first win of the year in July at the Tour of Austria . He won a selective sprint at the end of stage 3 , finishing at the head of a 23 @-@ rider group that included the race 's top riders . It was also in that stage that Edet took the lead in the mountains classification . He went on to win it at the end of the race , holding off Skil ? Shimano 's Alexandre Geniez by a

single point .

The team took several wins in August . Dumoulin took a win in the first stage of Paris ? Corrèze , breaking away near the end of the day to finish 4 seconds better than the main field . By finishing in the front group the next day , he secured overall victory in the two @-@ day event . On the same day Dumoulin secured Paris ? Corrèze , Cusin narrowly defeated Saxo Bank ? SunGard 's Matti Breschel at the end of stage 2 at the Tour of Denmark . After laying 28 seconds down in the overall classification before the final day at the Tour de l 'Ain , Moncoutié secured overall victory the next day . He missed out on the stage win to FDJ 's Thibaut Pinot , but by finishing only 3 seconds back he moved past previous race leader Wout Poels to win the event itself . Lastly , Gallopin took a stage at the Tour du Limousin . He took his second win of the season by breaking away from the peloton within stage 's final kilometer , and holding on for first by 6 seconds .

The team also sent squads to the Volta ao Algarve , Three Days of West Flanders , the Circuit de la Sarthe , the Presidential Cycling Tour of Turkey , Four Days of Dunkirk , the Circuit de Lorraine , the Tour of Belgium , the Critérium du Dauphiné , the Tour of Slovenia , the Eneco Tour , the Tour du Poitou Charentes , and Circuit Franco @-@ Belge , but did not obtain a stage win , classification win , or podium finish in any of them .

= = Grand Tours = =

As a Professional Continental team , Cofidis needed to be selected by the organizers of any of the Grand Tours in order to participate . They were selected to ride the Tour de France and the Vuelta a España , but not the Giro d 'Italia .

= = = Tour de France = = =

The Amaury Sport Organisation announced the wildcard entries to the Tour de France in January , much earlier in than in past years . Cofidis , who had participated in the Tour every year of their existence , were among the four teams added to the 18 UCI ProTeams obligated to attend . After not racing the Tour in 2010 and indicating at the time that he may not return to it , Moncoutié decided instead to ride the 2011 Tour with hopes of winning the King of the Mountains title . The decision put a bit of doubt to his potential return to the Vuelta a España , notwithstanding the team needing a wildcard for that race as well , in spite of his three @-@ year string of winning the mountains classification at that race . Taaramäe , Dumoulin , El Fares , and Vogondy were also named to the squad .

Taaramäe finished near the front of the race on stage 1 atop the short Mont des Alouettes hill . He was distanced by stage winner Philippe Gilbert and eventual Tour de France winner Cadel Evans , but finished with the main front group six seconds back for eighth on the day . The team had a very poor team time trial , coming in 21st . They were second to last , ahead of Euskaltel ? Euskadi , who are renowned for having weak time trialists on their roster , and only by 2 seconds . The result dropped Taaramäe down to 66th place . The squad was mostly quiet in the first half of the Tour , with Gallopin taking fourth in a field sprint to finish stage 5 and Dumoulin tenth in stage 10 their best finishes .

On stage 13 into Lourdes , which included a passage over the hors catégorie climb Col d 'Aubisque , Moncoutié figured into a ten @-@ man breakaway . Given the lack of overall threat in the group , the peloton did not mount a serious chase , meaning the stage winner would come from this group of ten . FDJ 's Jérémy Roy broke away from the group on the way up the climb . Moncoutié strenuously chased him , with Thor Hushovd following behind . The other breakaway riders all faded , finishing five minutes back on the stage . Roy crested the Aubisque first , and Moncoutié second . Hushovd , a rider known as a very strong descender , caught up with Moncoutié on the way down the Aubisque . With a short flat section still to race after the descent , Moncoutié and Hushovd worked cohesively as a chase group behind Roy . They caught and passed Roy 3 km (1 @. @ 9 mi) from the end of the stage , and Hushovd eventually dropped Moncoutié as well to be the solo stage winner ; Moncoutié finished second and Roy third . Moncoutié was roundly criticized by the

French press for collaborating with Hushovd in the chase , with Roy (a fellow Frenchman) up the road . To that point in the Tour , no French rider had yet won a stage . Team manager Boyer defended Moncoutié , saying Hushovd was likely to surpass Roy and win any sprint at the end of the stage no matter what , and by working with him Moncoutié assured himself second place rather than falling to third .

Taaramäe took over the white jersey for best young rider from Rigoberto Urán on stage 18 . Urán finished a distant 27th on the day , seven minutes off the pace of stage winner Andy Schleck . Taaramäe 's eighth place , three minutes back of Schleck but four minutes the better of Urán , moved him into 11th place overall and into the best young rider 's position , by 33 seconds over Pierre Rolland . Rolland won the stage at Alpe d 'Huez the next day , with Taaramäe finishing 14th two minutes back . This gave Rolland an advantage of a minute and 33 seconds going into the stage 20 individual time trial , where Taaramäe 's skills are superior . Taaramäe indeed finished better than Rolland in the time trial , tenth to Rolland 's 21st , but gained only 48 seconds . This was insufficient to win back the white jersey before the final , largely ceremonial stage into Paris on the Tour 's final day . Taaramäe finished the Tour in 12th place overall , at a deficit of eleven and a half minutes to Tour champion Cadel Evans . Moncoutié was not a major factor in any classification , finishing 41st overall and 25th in the mountains classification . Given his result at just 24 years of age , and that he retains eligibility for the white jersey in the 2012 Tour de France , Boyer expressed that he was quite pleased with Taaramäe 's performance , and that he expected the Estonian to be a contender for the overall podium at the Tour within two or three years .

= = = Vuelta a España = = =

Cofidis was one of the four wildcard entries to the Vuelta a España . After a disappointing Tour de France , Moncoutié decided to ride the Vuelta in hopes of capturing his fourth consecutive King of the Mountains jersey at the Spanish Grand Tour , which would be a new record . While he had entered 2011 thinking it would likely be his last season as a professional rider , Moncoutié changed his mind about that as well and said he would " probably be part of the bunch in 2012 . " Taaramäe was also named to the team for the Vuelta .

The squad did slightly better in the stage 1 team time trial than they did in the equivalent stage at the Tour de France , coming 17th of 22 teams . Moncoutié secured a high placing on stage 6 , coming in ninth on the day with the lead chase group that finished behind four Liquigas ? Cannondale riders at the head of the race . Taaramäe climbed with the race 's best riders on stage 9 , coming in seventh on La Covatilla . However , he was not any sort of overall threat ? he was already over an hour down in the overall standings , having been in breakaways in stages 4 , 6 , and 8 which did not succeed and lost considerable time to the stage winner each day .

Moncoutié participated in a winning breakaway in stage 11 . Some 19 km (12 mi) from the end of the stage , which concluded on a climb at Estación de Montaña Manzaneda , Moncoutié set out on a solo attack to win the stage . The attack was successful , and the veteran Frenchman won a Vuelta stage for the fourth consecutive year . He said after the stage that he rued falling short at Sierra Nevada , and had studied this course profile carefully to know when to attack to get away for victory . The result also moved Moncoutié up to second in the mountains classification , just a single point behind Ag2r ? La Mondiale 's Matteo Montaguti . He took the jersey two days later on stage 13 by joining another winning breakaway . Montaguti had also made the breakaway , but he was unable to stay at the front of the race all day . Moncoutié took two second places and one win on the final three climbs of the day , resulting in a 12 @-@ point lead over Montaguti in the classification . The next day was another good one for the team . Taaramäe made the morning breakaway and held off the race 's top riders as they neared the front of the race . He held on for victory atop La Farrapona by 25 seconds ahead of eventual Vuelta champion Juan José Cobo in second , as all other members of the breakaway finished well back .

Moncoutié all but clinched his mountains classification triumph on stage 15 . While he finished nine minutes behind Cobo on Angliru , he won the day 's second climb to score ten mountain points and increase his lead over Montaguti to 22 points . He scored his final mountain classification points on

stage 17 , ending with a total of 63 . Montaguti nearly reclaimed the jersey on stage 18 , when he made a breakaway and Moncoutié did not . Fortunately for Moncoutié , teammate Sijmens had made the escape group and kept Montaguti from maximum points on four of the five climbs . Given that riders who are not involved in a classification nor have teammates that are will generally not ride against someone who is , Sijmens ' presence in this breakway was effectively the only way Moncoutié could have retained the jersey . Moncoutié continued to lead Montaguti , by a score of 63 @-@ 56 . Neither rider scored again , and Moncoutié won his fourth consecutive mountains title , a first in Vuelta history . He was the team 's best overall finisher as well , but was not any real threat , coming in 37th overall at a deficit of over an hour to Cobo . Taaramäe , for his part , did not complete the Vuelta , abandoning on stage 17 .

= = Season victories = =