

= 2011 Leopard Trek season =

The 2011 season for Leopard Trek / ?le?o?p??rd tr?k / , its first , began in January at the Tour Down Under and ended in October at the Giro di Lombardia . As a UCI ProTeam , they were automatically invited and obligated to send a squad to every race in the UCI World Tour . The team formed for 2011 as a Luxembourgian national project and boasts that nation 's two premier riders , Andy and Fränk Schleck . Several riders from the Schleck brothers ' former Team Saxo Bank joined the new team .

The team was built for strong showings in the classic cycle races , and includes the best classics rider from the 2010 season , world time trial champion Fabian Cancellara . Though Cancellara did not win any race that awarded points to the UCI World Tour , he consistently placed highly enough that he was briefly the world number one rider in the midst of the classics season . Thanks to Cancellara 's performances and the Schleck brothers both finishing on the podium at Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège , the team was also in the top spot for a time .

Team member Wouter Weylandt died after crashing during stage 3 of the Giro d 'Italia , leading to the team 's mass withdrawal the next day . Though he won a stage with a long solo breakaway in the mountains , and wore the race leader 's yellow jersey for a day , Andy Schleck was runner @-@ up at the Tour de France for the third consecutive year . Brother Fränk joined him on the podium in third place .

The team won its final race under the Leopard name , with Oliver Zaugg finishing first at the Giro di Lombardia . For 2012 , the team was set to merge with the American Team RadioShack , under the new name RadioShack ? Nissan . Though most of that team 's management and sponsors were to come on board , the resultant squad continued to be based in Luxembourg under the same license , meaning it is a continuation of this franchise and not the American one .

= = 2011 roster = =

Ages as of January 1 , 2011 .

= = = Riders ' 2010 teams = = =

= = Genesis of the new team = =

It was first reported shortly after the conclusion of the 2010 Tour de France that Andy and Fränk Schleck would leave Team Saxo Bank , the team for which they had each ridden for the entirety of their respective careers , at the conclusion of that season . It was soon revealed that they would spearhead a new team , one based in their native Luxembourg , led by former Team Saxo Bank staff Kim Andersen and Brian Nygaard . Luxembourg real estate tycoon Flavio Becca was eventually revealed as the team 's owner . Andersen and Nygaard sought him out in May 2010 for advice . Becca , a sports fan , had plans to form a new cycling team himself , and he offered Nygaard the position of general manager for his team , essentially combining their ambitions . Becca also brought Andersen on , giving the Dane a position as a sporting director . Fränk Schleck later revealed that he and his brother had had little to do with the formation of the team , being approached with the prospect of joining at the 2010 Tour of Luxembourg in June . Despite a good relationship with Team Saxo Bank manager Bjarne Riis , the brothers felt the opportunity to ride for a " home @-@ based team " was too good to pass up . Andersen made similar comments , saying that the team would have gone forward even if the Schleck brothers rode elsewhere in 2011 .

A solid portion of the team 's ridership came from Team Saxo Bank just as the Schlecks had , as eight of the eleven riders to depart Team Saxo Bank in the 2010 offseason did so for this team . The most prominent of these was four @-@ time world time trial champion Fabian Cancellara , who was under contract to Team Saxo Bank for 2011 and had to buy his way out of it . After doing so , the Swiss rider signed with the team for three years . The team had hired a roster of 25 riders at the

time of their presentation , with Thomas Rohregger joining in late February .

No title sponsor was announced for the team in 2010 , as it went about signing riders for its inaugural season . It was known simply as the " Luxembourg Pro Cycling Project " for the first several months of its existence . Even as the end of 2010 neared , Nygaard steadfastly refused to reveal the team 's official name , opting to hold off on doing so until the team 's official presentation on January 6 , 2011 . Team member Jakob Fuglsang perhaps inadvertently revealed part of the name in an interview about three weeks before the team 's presentation , saying the team would be called " Team Leopard " and that Leopard would be the name in the center of the jersey . Trek , which signed as on as bike supplier in September , was revealed as a title sponsor at the team 's presentation , officially making the team 's name Leopard Trek . The Leopard name has no particular meaning ; it reflects Becca 's holding company and is simply an animal he likes . The team presentation itself was something of a spectacle , featuring gymnasts , race videos , and presentations for each rider in front of an audience of 4 @, @ 000 people , culminating in Nygaard and all riders appearing on stage wearing suit jackets and black scarves as they posed for photos . Shortly after the team 's presentation , Trek sent out a primer to cycling media detailing their preferences that the team not be referred to with the prefix " Team " as some other teams are and that there be no hyphen between the sponsors ' names . They also specified a preferred verbal pronunciation and that when referred to in print , the team 's name should appear in all capital letters . This last request was not widely adhered to .

When the UCI released its list of teams graded according to their hierarchy that decided who would receive a World Tour license , this team 's signees put them at the top , making them world number one before they even existed . This did not guarantee the team a top @-@ level license , it simply qualified them for it , but they were later announced as having received a four @-@ year World Tour license . Whether intentionally or incidentally , this corresponded to the initial financial guarantee Becca put up for the team . Nygaard hailed the license acquisition as the fruition of many months of hard work . This afforded the team automatic invitations to all World Tour events , including the season 's three Grand Tours .

= = One @-@ day races = =

= = = Spring classics = = =

Klemme got the team 's first @-@ ever win early in the spring season , at Le Samyn . After a solo escapee was caught by an elite 12 @-@ rider group that came clear of the peloton , Klemme timed his attack on the day 's final climb with precision and stayed out front for victory by eight seconds over Kevyn Ista . The team came to the first monument race of the season , Milan ? San Remo , with high ambitions . Cancellara aimed for a second triumph in the race , having previously won the 2008 edition , but he recognized that slipping away unmarked in the race 's final kilometers as he did three years prior would be difficult to do again . He considered Philippe Gilbert to be his principal rival for the race . Cancellara and O 'Grady made the day 's major selection on the Le Manie climb , after a crash 90 km (56 mi) from the finish . O 'Grady hit out on the attack a few times shortly before the end of the race , but it was Cancellara who was present in an eight @-@ rider group that formed on the Poggio which decided the race . These eight riders represented eight different teams , so no one was able to get a proper leadout . After Gilbert , Vincenzo Nibali , and Yoann Offredo opened up the sprint , Cancellara tried to come around them for the win , but was beaten at the line by HTC ? Highroad 's Matthew Goss . Cancellara was deeply disappointed to finish second , feeling that even though he had done one of the best sprints of his life , he had not done adequately to pay off his team 's efforts on the day .

Cancellara was noticeably still recovering from his Milan ? San Remo effort at Dwars door Vlaanderen , where he tried to attack for victory in the finale , but faded quickly and finished only 36th . The squad 's best @-@ placed rider was Posthuma in 31st . Cancellara 's recovery was perhaps complete at the E3 Prijs Vlaanderen ? Harelbeke . After a series of mechanical incidents ,

resulting in several wheel changes and then a whole bike change , Cancellara sped past the trailing peloton on the Oude Kwaremont climb and effortlessly bridged to the front of the race . Once there , he left even the front group on the road well behind him , winning the race by a full minute over second placed Vladimir Gusev . Cancellara said he was more impressed with this victory than when he won the same race in 2010 , and analysis of his win suggested he stood as the odds @-@ on favorite for the Tour of Flanders . Jonathan Vaughters , whose Garmin ? Cervélo team had effectively controlled the front of the race but were powerless to stop Cancellara , stated that should an on @-@ form Cancellara ever get even five seconds ' advantage at the front of a race near the end , he would likely not be seen again . Vaughters joked that rival teams would need a sniper to stop the Swiss classics specialist .

Cancellara 's pedigree , 2011 successes , and status as defending champion made him a major favorite for the second monument race , the Tour of Flanders . Cancellara put in a seemingly decisive move from the head of the main field on the Leberg , the fourteenth cobbled climb on the day 's parcours . He quickly opened up a time gap of over a minute , and the race seemed to be decided . He cracked on the Muur van Geraardsbergen , however , and was swept up by an elite leading group of favorites and contenders . He put in a second acceleration on the last climb , the Bosberg , and was followed by Sylvain Chavanel and Nick Nuyens . Having perhaps spent himself too early in the race by attacking solo and not working with other riders to gain a large time gap , Cancellara could only manage third of the three . After the race , Cancellara blasted Nuyens and the other riders in the race , saying they only rode to keep him from winning . He referred to himself as a " gladiator " and said that the manner in which Nuyens won , staying in Cancellara 's slipstream and then outsprinting him with the line in view , had no value in his eyes .

Cancellara was again thought to be the odds @-@ on favorite at the next monument classic , Paris ? Roubaix . After an aggressive first two hours of racing kept any breakaway groups from going clear , a leading group of 21 slowly formed between the start of the cobbles and the Arenberg sector . They took a maximum advantage of two and a half minutes . The second group on the road gradually whittled down to a select group of top favorites . Cancellara tried several times to accelerate out of this group to bridge to the front of the race . Thor Hushovd , Alessandro Ballan , and Juan Antonio Flecha marked his moves , but did not contribute any work , instead simply holding Cancellara 's wheel . Eventually , Cancellara decided against towing the superior sprinter Hushovd to the front of the race with him , and for a while forewent further attacks . During this time , the leaders ' time gap held steady at about 90 seconds for many kilometers . Right about the time that Johan Vansummeren attacked from the leading group and got free to occupy first position on the road , with 15 km (9 @.@ 3 mi) left to race , Cancellara did likewise out of the group of favorites , putting in easily his most intensive pull . Only Hushovd and Ballan could follow , and they stormed past the remnants of the earlier breakaway , with the exception of Vansummeren who remained out front for victory . Cancellara bested Maarten Tjallingii and Grégory Rast in a sprint for second place 19 seconds back of the Belgian . Cancellara again rued after the race that everyone had marked him and only him . He claimed that the non @-@ cooperation of riders like Hushovd and Ballan had meant victory for him was not possible , and so second place for him was like a victory that day . Vaughters commented that Cancellara was indeed the strongest single rider in the race , but his squad had been the strongest team , which was why they won . Cancellara was also badly isolated from his teammates as a result of his rivals ' tactics and his teammates ' lesser form . The only other Leopard Trek rider after to finish the race was Mortensen in 94th , almost 14 minutes down . Cancellara 's ride was not entirely without reward , as it was after Paris ? Roubaix that he attained the UCI world number one ranking , thanks mostly to his three podium finishes at the monuments .

Cancellara was not considered to be a favorite for the Amstel Gold Race , though he was part of the strong squad that the Leopard Trek team brought to the race . Sporting director Kim Andersen stated the race was more of a goal for one of the Schleck brothers . Cancellara commented that he felt " free as a bird " in the Amstel , riding it for the first time since 2004 , and that he was not under pressure to get a result . He identified Philippe Gilbert as the main favorite for the race , and promised not to ride against him as he felt his rivals had done to him in the cobbled classics . The

race took place two days after Fränk Schleck 's 30th birthday , further intensifying it as a goal for him . Cancellara and both Schleck brothers effectively stayed at the front of the race most of the day , but Cancellara and Fränk Schleck lost contact after crashing on the Gulperberg 28 km (17 mi) from the finish . This left Andy Schleck alone to fend for victory , and his tactic was a solo attack launched from 12 km (7 @. @ 5 mi) out , on the Keutenberg . The tactic was nearly successful , as the younger Schleck brother occupied first position on the road with only 500 m (1 @, @ 600 ft) left to race , but a chase pack led by Gilbert overhauled him at that point . Visibly spent from his solo effort , Schleck had nothing left for the finale and finished 11th , 28 seconds down on race winner Gilbert . He stated after the race that he was satisfied with his effort , feeling that going for the win from so far out was his only play for victory without any teammates in the front group . He may have finished a few positions higher if he had stayed with the Gilbert group , but he almost certainly would have had no chance for victory against the fast finisher Gilbert ; thus , the solo attack was the correct move in his eyes , since his only ambition was victory .

The Schleck brothers were again the squad leaders for the remaining Ardennes classics , La Flèche Wallonne and Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège . Pre @-@ race analyses mentioned them as contenders for both races . At La Flèche Wallonne , Andy Schleck worked for brother Fränk , taking pulls at the front of the main field to help chase down the morning breakaway . He did not feel physically up to riding for the win . Fränk was able to ride at the front of the race all day , and made the selections up to the race @-@ concluding Mur de Huy . Philippe Gilbert made an early attack on the Mur and held on to win ? Fränk was seventh , six seconds back . Both brothers rode well at Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège . On the Côte de Roche aux Faucons , 20 km (12 mi) from the end of the race , they both surged clear of the group of race favorites . Gilbert marked them , and stayed in their slipstreams as the trio surged to the front of the race . Later , the Belgian also took pulls , and even tried to solo for victory , but could not shake the Schlecks . The three survived to the finish , 24 seconds clear of a chase pack that formed on the Côte de Saint @-@ Nicolas . Neither brother attacked in the finale , which came on a slight downhill , leaving the superior sprinter Gilbert to take a rather easy win , his fourth in 11 days .

Despite the spring classics season ending without any victories , Nygaard stated he felt satisfied with the many high placings the team had achieved , particularly in the face of Gilbert 's clear strength . Additionally , Leopard Trek became the number one team in the UCI 's rankings after Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège , a position they had occupied , to no small amount of criticism , before the season and before they officially existed . Nizzolo closed out the team 's early @-@ season account by with a podium finish at the inaugural ProRace Berlin , taking second in the mass sprint behind Skil ? Shimano 's Marcel Kittel .

The team also sent squads to Omloop Het Nieuwsblad , the Clásica de Almería , Kuurne ? Brussels ? Kuurne , the Scheldeprijs and the Eschborn @-@ Frankfurt City Loop , but placed no higher than 11th in any of these races .

= = = Fall races = = =

The team had an excellent later half of the season in single @-@ day races , attaining top @-@ ten placings in all but one such race that they entered . This successful run started at the Clásica de San Sebastián . Both Schleck brothers were mentioned as possible pre @-@ race contenders , and Fränk Schleck rode to sixth place on the day by finishing with the first chase pack back of solo winner Philippe Gilbert and second @-@ placed Carlos Barredo . In August , Nizzolo continued his strong neo @-@ pro season with a fifth place ride at the GP Ouest @-@ France , finishing second @-@ best from the peloton behind three attacking riders who took each podium place just ahead of them .

The team next took high placings at the two UCI World Tour races in Canada , the GP de Québec and the GP de Montréal . Though Andy Schleck intended to start the GP de Québec , he was forced to pull out due to dental issue . Wegmann was mentioned among the pre @-@ race contenders , and it was indeed the veteran German who turned in the team 's top performance . He followed eventual race winner Gilbert when the Belgian made his winning move on the course 's penultimate

climb , eventually coming in fourth at the finish , 14 seconds down . Denifl was the team 's top rider two days later in Montréal . Part of a late breakaway , he occupied third position on the road until the final moments , when Gilbert and his Omega Pharma ? Lotto teammate Jurgen Roelandts surpassed him , leaving him fifth on the day . Back in Europe later in September , the team achieved podium finishes at the Grand Prix de la Somme and the Grand Prix d 'Isbergues . Wegmann finished third at the Grand Prix de la Somme , completing the podium behind Anthony Roux and Lloyd Mondory at the front of a 13 @-@ rider sprint finish . O 'Grady then narrowly missed out on taking a first solo win in three years in Isbergues , losing a two @-@ up sprint to Saxo Bank ? SunGard 's Jonas Aaen Jørgensen and settling for second place overall . Wagner led the peloton over the line 8 seconds later to give Leopard Trek two of the three podium spots .

In October , Wegmann rode to sixth place in his native Germany in the mass finish to the Sparkassen Giro . The next day , trainee rider Rüdiger Selig won a selective sprint finish at Binche ? Tournai ? Binche , beating out former Tour de France green jersey winner Baden Cooke and a field including seven first @-@ division teams . Viganò nearly joined him on the podium , taking fourth place . Zaugg then showed signs of his coming late @-@ season form at the Giro dell 'Emilia , finishing in ninth place 33 seconds back of the solo winner . The team took two top @-@ ten places at the next day , at concurrent races , the GP Bruno Beghelli and Paris ? Tours . At the Italian race , Monfort found his way into a winning breakaway that formed as the morning 's initial breakaway was caught , eventually finishing the day in 7th place , 21 seconds behind the winner Filippo Pozzato . At the same time in France , O 'Grady rode to an 8th place finish behind BMC Racing Team 's Greg Van Avermaet .

With the team 's merger with Team RadioShack already announced , the traditional season @-@ closing weekend in Italy at the Giro del Piemonte and the Giro di Lombardia effectively figured to comprise the team 's final races under this guise . At the Giro del Piemonte , Bennati made each of the day 's selections , first a 31 @-@ rider group that formed at the 85 km (53 mi) to go mark and then a 14 @-@ rider break in the race 's final kilometer . He could manage only seventh in the uphill final sprint , however .

The team did not have any rider highlighted as a favorite entering the Giro di Lombardia ; pre @-@ race analyses held Gilbert as the man to beat . Zaugg rode at the front of the race the entire day , riding off the front to occupy first position as the solo leader on the Villa Vergano climb . He then maintained his advantage on the alternating flat sections and remaining climbs (the Muro dell 'Alpino and the finishing climb in Lecco) , holding on for victory ahead of Garmin ? Cervélo 's Dan Martin and Team Katusha 's Joaquim Rodríguez by 8 seconds . The victory was not only Zaugg 's first monument classic win , or even his first single @-@ day win , it was his first professional victory of any kind , coming at age 30 . Post @-@ race analysis compared Zaugg 's triumph to some of the more notable upsets to which the race has played host in its history .

The team 's lone miss to this level of success was at Vattenfall Cyclassics , where Wegmann finished as the team 's best rider , in 15th place .

= = Stage races = =

After the team had been shut out in early season stage races , Cancellara was victorious in the short individual time trial that closed out Tirreno ? Adriatico . Taking the course some two hours before the race 's top riders , the four @-@ time world champion covered the 9 @. @ 3 km (5 @. @ 8 mi) distance in 10 ' 33 " , and only one rider came within ten seconds of his time . At Critérium International in March , five @-@ time champion Voigt was hopeful of breaking the record he shares with Emile Idée and Raymond Poulidor to stand alone as a six @-@ time champion , but admitted that the course and the weather did not suit him , and so his chances would be slim . During the decisive stage 1 , Voigt bridged up to a morning breakaway some 90 km (56 mi) from the finish on the Col de l 'Ospedale . He said afterward that he might slip away unmarked and stay away for victory , but if he were chased it would make the race hard , and a hard race would suit the Schleck brothers . The latter scenario is exactly what occurred . Voigt was caught well before the summit of the Ospedale and finished the day in 75th place , over 20 minutes down , but the Schlecks both

stayed with the front group on the road throughout the stage . Fränk Schleck put in his own attack for victory 2 km (1 @. @ 2 mi) from the summit and stayed away for victory . Andy Schleck was tenth , a minute down on his brother . The elder Schleck brother held his advantage through the flat stage and individual time trial on day two of the three @-@ stage race , emerging as overall victor .

Bennati found great success at the Circuit de la Sarthe , taking his first wins in over a year at that race . The Italian sprinter first won stage 1 in a full field sprint before Garmin ? Cervélo 's Michel Kreder defeated him in the sprint finish the next day . Later the same day as stage 2 , Bennati won the 6 @. @ 8 km (4 @. @ 2 mi) time trial to extend his overall lead . It was the first time trial Bennati had ever won as a professional . He finished six minutes down in the hilly fourth stage , losing any chance at winning the race overall , but he rebounded to claim a third win in the event in a reduced sprint in stage 5 . Three wins and a second place meant he handily won the event 's points classification as well .

The team rode with heavy hearts at the Tour of California in May . It was their first event back in competition after their mass withdrawal from the Giro d 'Italia the day after the death of team member Wouter Weylandt . The race paid tribute to Weylandt by holding a moment of silence before its first stage and allowing the Leopard Trek team to lead the peloton into the neutralized zone , as well as all organization , staff , and riders wearing black armbands . The team did not attain any victories in the race , with Gerdemann in 11th place their best finisher . Neo @-@ pro Nizzolo took the team 's lone win in the month of May , triumphing in the field sprint finish to Bayern @-@ Rundfahrt 's final stage .

The team proved to be a prolific winner in stage race events over the summer . The first was the Tour de Luxembourg , a race with special meaning for the team as it is in Luxembourg where they are headquartered and derive much of their identity . Several riders all but certain to participate in the forthcoming Tour de France rode the Tour de Luxembourg . Cancellara dominantly won the 2 @. @ 6 km (1 @. @ 6 mi) prologue individual time trial , finishing five seconds the better of Team Europcar 's Damien Gaudin . No other time gap from one rider to the next exceeded three seconds , and most were only fractions of a second . Two days later , Gerdemann seized control of the race by winning stage 2 after dropping two breakaway companions . He rode solo to the win 9 seconds ahead of the peloton , which gave him the race lead . He retained through the conclusion of the race two days later , thus taking the overall crown . Later in the month of June came the Tour de Suisse . Cancellara again proved the best in the prologue time trial , this one 7 @. @ 1 km (4 @. @ 4 mi) long , besting HTC ? Highroad 's Tejay van Garderen by 9 seconds . He then won the longer time trial stage that concluded the event eight days later , a 32 @. @ 1 km (19 @. @ 9 mi) race against the clock . This performance was not as dominant , as his winning margin was again 9 seconds , this time over Team RadioShack 's Andreas Klöden . The team missed out on the event 's final podium but nonetheless showed strongly overall , with Fuglsang , Fränk Schleck , and Monfort all finishing in the top ten . Andy Schleck also took what is for his career a relative rarity gaining a noteworthy result outside the Tour de France . He won the climber 's jersey , having first taken it after stage 7 . Later in the summer , the team won stages at three further events , with Bennati winning sprints at the Tour of Austria and the Tour de Wallonie , and Fuglsang a solo win at the end of a finishing circuit in stage 3 at the Tour of Denmark .

The team also sent squads to the Tour Down Under , the Tour of Qatar , the Volta ao Algarve , Vuelta an Andalucía , Driedaagse van West @-@ Vlaanderen , Paris ? Nice , Volta a Catalunya , the Tour of the Basque Country , the Tour de Romandie , the Four Days of Dunkirk , the Tour of California , the Critérium du Dauphiné , Delta Tour Zeeland , the Ster ZLM Toer , the Tour de Pologne , the Eneco Tour , the USA Pro Cycling Challenge , the Tour du Poitou Charentes , the Tour of Britain , the Tour de Wallonie @-@ Picarde and the Tour of Beijing , but did not achieve a stage win , classification win , or podium finish in any of them .

= = Grand Tours = =

= = = Giro d 'Italia = = =

Leopard Trek entered the Giro with limited aspirations . Squad leader Wegmann was a former Giro mountains classification winner , but he said he would not target that award in the 2011 Giro and instead hoped for a stage win . He said the squad would aim to finish eighth or better in the opening team time trial and that Zaugg was the squad 's general classification rider , though it would be unlikely for him to finish higher than 15th . The squad came in 14th in the team time trial , finishing with eight riders together at a deficit of 42 seconds to the winners HTC ? Highroad . Weylandt was ninth in the field sprint to finish stage 2 the next day .

= = = = Death of Wouter Weylandt = = = =

During the descent of the third @-@ category Passo del Bocco in stage 3 , Weylandt crashed and suffered catastrophic injury . Race doctor Giovanni Tredici and the doctor for the Garmin ? Cervélo team were in cars very near Weylandt 's group on the road , and administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation for approximately 40 minutes . Doctors also gave Weylandt adrenaline and atropine to try to restart his heart , though Tredici stated after the fact that resuscitation efforts were rather clearly in vain , and that Weylandt was already dead by the time they got to him . They were never able to revive the Belgian , and he was declared dead on the spot . A short time later , Weylandt 's body was airlifted off the descent and taken to a nearby hospital , where the pathologist conducting the autopsy concluded that the Belgian had sustained a basilar skull fracture , and had died immediately upon crashing . Weylandt 's death was the first at the Giro in 25 years , and the first at one of cycling 's Grand Tours since Fabio Casartelli died during the 1995 Tour de France .

Manuel Antonio Cardoso of Team RadioShack had been nearest to Weylandt when he crashed , and stated that Weylandt had touched a small retaining wall on the left side of the road with either his pedal or his handlebars , and was then catapulted across the road to the other side , where he again collided with something . He had looked behind him to ascertain his exact position in the race when he clipped the wall . Teammate Stamsnijder also witnessed the accident , saying " it was a very hard fall . " Italian police , conducting an inquest into Weylandt 's death , also took an official statement from the Portuguese rider at Team RadioShack 's hotel . A memorial was placed at the crash site , where Weylandt 's widow and mother , along with cyclists , passersby and residents of nearby villages , placed flowers . The Leopard Trek team remained in the race for another day at the encouragement of Weylandt 's family . Race leader David Millar spent the evening discussing with members of Leopard Trek , his teammate (and Weylandt 's training partner and best friend) Tyler Farrar , and Weylandt 's family how best to pay tribute to the fallen rider . Weylandt wore bib number 108 in the race , and Giro officials have said they will not assign the number in future editions of the race .

The next day 's stage was preceded by a minute 's silence , and ridden as a procession in Weylandt 's memory . In keeping with convention , there was no competitive racing . Each of the 23 teams took to the front of the peloton for about 15 minutes , and the remaining Leopard Trek squad , along with Farrar , were allowed to finish first with their arms around each other . Millar led the rest of the field across the line a few seconds later . No results for the stage were recorded , and it did not count towards the general classification or any of the points competitions . After the stage , instead of any podium presentations , the four jersey classification leaders (Millar , Alessandro Petacchi , Gianluca Brambilla , and Jan Bakelants) appeared on stage with the Leopard Trek team to lead another moment of silence . Subsequently , Farrar and the remaining Leopard Trek squad all decided to leave the race . Feillu did not want to leave the Giro , feeling that continuing to race would have been the best way to honor Weylandt , but he did not mind acquiescing to his teammates ' will . For most of them , the decision was based on a desire to attend Weylandt 's funeral , which took place nine days after his death . Members of the Giro squad served as pallbearers . Other teammates , as well as Farrar , members of Weylandt 's former team Quick @-@ Step , and Giro director Angelo Zomegnan were all in attendance , along with hundreds of cycling fans assembled outside the chapel .

== Tour de France ==

Leopard Trek came to the Tour de France with , per season @-@ long expectations , a squad centered around overall victory . The leader was probably Andy Schleck , entering as runner @-@ up in the past two Tours de France and three @-@ times running winner of the young rider classification , an award for which he was no longer eligible . Brother Fränk said his goal was to have Andy win the Tour , with Fränk himself also there on the podium with him . The remaining squad members were Cancellara , Gerdemann , Monfort , Fuglsang , Voigt , O 'Grady , and Posthuma . Every rider on the squad had ridden the Tour de France before , and all but Monfort , Fuglsang , and Posthuma had previously worn the yellow jersey . Pre @-@ race analysis speculated Cancellara could aim for a few days in the race lead before the course shifted to the high mountains .

Cancellara showed himself in the finale of the Tour 's first stage , which featured a mostly flat course culminating in a short uphill finish . He attacked for victory inside the final kilometer , but Omega Pharma ? Lotto 's Philippe Gilbert quickly closed the gap , effectively neutralizing the move . Cancellara then sat up (abandoned any further attempts to win) , and finished 18th . Both Schleck brothers managed to stay at the front of the race ahead of two major crashes toward the end , which led to riders such as Samuel Sánchez and Alberto Contador losing a minute and 20 seconds . The next day 's team time trial presented an opportunity for the squad . With four @-@ time and reigning world time trial champion Cancellara leading them , they rode to fourth place on the day , within fractions of a second of BMC Racing Team and Team Sky and four seconds the lesser of the day 's winners Garmin ? Cervélo . While the team missed out on taking the yellow jersey , the ride did install Gerdemann , Fränk Schleck , and Cancellara into fifth through seventh place overall , with Andy Schleck in tenth and Fuglsang in 11th tied on the same time , giving the team several options going forward . Two days later , Fränk Schleck was the team 's best man on the Mûr @-@ de @-@ Bretagne , finishing in the leading group with stage winner Cadel Evans . Brother Andy , along with Fuglsang , was in the chase group eight seconds back . Cancellara finished with the second @-@ to @-@ last group a little over four minutes down on the winner , ruling him out of any possibility of wearing the yellow jersey in this Tour .

The next several stages favored sprinters and a solo breakaway winner . The overall standings did not change until stage 9 , when a breakaway group involving Thomas Voeckler gained sufficient time that the veteran Frenchman became the new race leader . The Schleck brothers were two and a half minutes down in the classification at this point , but within a few seconds of the nearest true overall favorite Evans . Fuglsang as well remained in the top ten , 30 seconds the lesser of Andy Schleck and just over three minutes off the race lead . Fränk Schleck took time out of the bulk of the field in stage 12 . With 2 @-@ 5 km (1 @-@ 6 mi) remaining in the stage @-@ concluding climb to Luz Ardiden , the elder Schleck brother broke free of the group of the race 's top riders in pursuit of two down the road . He did not quite reach them , finishing ten seconds back on the day , but the ride moved him up to second place overall , 28 seconds ahead of his brother and 17 the better of Evans . The brothers both missed an important move in stage 16 , ending on the descent from the second @-@ category Col de Manse . Contador , Sánchez , and Evans rode the most aggressive descent , a tactic which gained them a solid measure of time . Evans took 21 seconds out of Fränk Schleck to re @-@ assume second place overall ; the younger Schleck brother lost a full minute and six seconds to the veteran Australian .

The team set about taking time back in the high mountain stage 18 , ending with an hors catégorie arrival at the Col du Galibier . Monfort and Posthuma both made the morning breakaway , providing support for Andy Schleck after he attacked out of the group of overall favorites on the ascent of the Col d 'Izoard . Schleck bridged first to Posthuma and then to Monfort , the latter guiding him down the 17 km (11 mi) long descent of the Izoard , as Schleck is a superlative climber but a poor descender . After catching and surpassing all other remaining members from the morning breakaway , Monfort then rode an extremely lengthy and strenuous pull ahead of Schleck until 17 km (11 mi) remained in the stage , when he finally bonked and dropped back . This left Andy free to climb the Galibier solo , taking the stage win alone two minutes ahead of the next rider , which

happened to be brother Fränk . He rode clear of the group of the race 's top riders in the final kilometer , gaining eight seconds against Evans . While the team 's tactics on the day appeared to cinch the yellow jersey for Andy , prior race leader Voeckler retained the yellow jersey by a margin of 15 seconds . The status quo among the Schlecks and Evans held on stage 19 , though with Voeckler finally falling from the top of the overall classification that gave Andy Schleck the yellow jersey ahead of the stage 20 individual time trial . Stage 19 , ending at Alpe d 'Huez , had favored Schleck ahead of Evans , and he was characterized as missing an important opportunity to pad his lead ahead of the time trial , where Evans ' skills are superior .

Though Evans was the stronger of the two against the clock , Schleck had surpassed expectations in the long time trial at the 2010 Tour de France , leading to speculation as to whether his 57 @-@ second cushion over the Australian could be sufficient for him to win the Tour . Evans rode one of the best time trials of his career , finishing in second place seven seconds off the pace of Tony Martin , the rider who was crowned world time trial champion later that year . Andy said of his and his brother 's rides that they were probably the best time trials likewise of their respective careers , but they were no match for Evans ' performance . The Australian was two and a half minutes better than both of them , taking the overall lead by a minute and a half with Andy slipping to second and Fränk to third . Since the Tour 's final stage is traditionally mostly ceremonial save for a final sprint finish , the time trial effectively cemented the final overall standings . Andy took the positive from the result , saying he and his brother were both proud of each other for their efforts and were excited to stand on the podium together in Paris , even if neither of them was on the top step .

= = = Vuelta a España = = =

Leopard Trek 's squad for the Vuelta a España consisted of Bennati , Cancellara , Fuglsang , Monfort , O 'Grady , Viganò , Wagner , Zaugg , and Rohregger . Bennati was speculated to be a contender for the Vuelta 's sprint stages , while for Cancellara the race represented an opportunity to hone his form ahead of the world championships . No rider on the squad was highlighted as an overall contender .

The squad was one of the first to start the stage 1 team time trial . Viganò crashed at one point and finished almost three minutes behind his teammates , but the squad still managed to put up the day 's winning time , finishing with the necessary five riders together four seconds the better of defending Vuelta champion Vincenzo Nibali 's Liquigas ? Cannondale squad . Fuglsang was the rider who crossed the line first , making him the first wearer of the race leader 's red jersey . He said after the stage that the team had not pre @-@ determined who would cross the line first , as is customarily the case in advance of a team time trial . It had simply been Fuglsang 's turn to ride on the front when the finish line came . He said would try to ride for the overall classification , with Bennati and Cancellara to hunt for stage wins in the sprints and individual time trial , respectively . Bennati contested the sprint finish the next day , taking sixth behind Christopher Sutton . Since Fuglsang also finished at the front of the race , combined stage finishes meant that Bennati would take the red jersey for stage 3 . Solo stage winner Pablo Lastras claimed the jersey the next day , but Fuglsang and Monfort continued to be well @-@ placed in the overall standings .

Neither dropped below 11th place overall heading into the stage 10 individual time trial , where the squad had three riders finish in the top ten . Cancellara 's fourth @-@ place ride was perhaps a disappointment , in that he finished a minute and 27 seconds slower than the stage winner Tony Martin , the rider seen as his chief rival for the world championships time trial . Fuglsang took sixth on the day and Monfort tenth , putting Fuglsang 12 seconds off the race lead in second place overall and Monfort sixth 59 seconds back . Both of them lost time in stage 11 , finishing in a group 27 seconds back of the group containing most of the race 's top riders , but both remained in the top ten overall . Both again fell down the standings in stage 14 on La Farrapona , a day when out of the first 50 riders no more than four finished together . Their overall positions reversed the next day on the storied Alto del Angliru . Monfort finished with a group that lost time to only six riders , while Fuglsang was a further minute and eight seconds down the road from his teammate . This left Monfort fifth overall and Fuglsang seventh , after Fuglsang had been the higher @-@ placed of the

two for the entire race to that point . The next major mountain was Peña Cabarga in stage 17 . Both riders were well off the pace , with Monfort finishing 19th and Fuglsang 31st . Monfort still held sixth overall with the result , but Fuglsang fell out of the top ten , down to 12th place . Fuglsang improved a place to 11th after stage 19 , when Wouter Poels , who had been ahead of him , finished six minutes behind the main field . Those were their final overall positions , with both Monfort 's sixth place and Fuglsang 's 11th representing the best such finishes for either of them in a Grand Tour . The day before the race ended , Bennati gave the team a second stage win , coming home first in a large sprint finish in stage 20 at Vitoria .

= = Away from competition = =

= = = Merger with Team RadioShack = = =

During the Vuelta a España , reports surfaced that the Leopard Trek team was in talks to bring in sponsorship and management from the American @-@ based Team RadioShack . Reports suggested that team owner Flavio Becca was dissatisfied with the team 's management and aimed to bring aboard Johan Bruyneel and others from Team RadioShack . While team officials for Leopard Trek initially denied the rumor , and Bruyneel refused to address them altogether , the merger was confirmed by both sides on September 6 , with five days remaining in the Vuelta . Becca had sought out Bruyneel because of his history of successes in the Tour de France , guiding Lance Armstrong to seven championships there and Alberto Contador to two . Bruyneel later commented that he looked forward to trying to add Andy Schleck 's name to his list of Tour success stories . Bruyneel 's arrival effectively ousted Brian Nygaard , who immediately left his position as the team 's general manager ; it is unclear who , if anyone , succeeded him for the remainder of 2011 . Becca offered him a lesser position within the team , but Nygaard refused it , saying it was as good as being fired . Upon announcing Nygaard 's departure , Becca also revealed that his company would hold the fused team 's license and that it would continue to be based out of Luxembourg , essentially confirming the 2012 entity as an extension of this franchise while Team RadioShack would be considered defunct .

What followed was a period of uncertainty regarding exactly who would and would not be a part of the merged team . Leopard Trek had 27 riders under contract for 2012 and Team RadioShack had 13 ? UCI rules impose a hard limit of 30 riders on top @-@ level teams , meaning at least ten riders with valid contracts would be released from them . Leopard Trek riders were not told about the merger ahead of time and were unsure of their status at a time when riders everywhere looked to conclusively determine their places of employment for the upcoming season . The situation was further complicated by two rider transfers made in August , when Ben Hermans and Grégory Rast signed with Leopard Trek away from Team RadioShack , meaning they had effectively re @-@ joined the team they had only just left . The new team also signed four riders who had not been a member of either side in 2011 . This resulted in 12 riders departing for other teams , with 13 incoming from Team RadioShack 's 2011 formation (that number including Hermans and Rast) and 12 riders being retained from Leopard Trek 's 2011 formation . The fused team announced its new name as RadioShack @-@ Nissan @-@ Trek , though UCI rules limit registry to two title sponsors , meaning their name in the official UCI record is RadioShack @-@ Nissan .

Reactions to the merger were widespread . Amid descriptions of the team as a " super @-@ team " from at least one analyst were Team Saxo Bank manager Bjarne Riis ' claims that he simply looked forward to defeating them . Cervélo co @-@ founder and former Cervélo TestTeam manager Gerard Vroome saw the merger on a strictly business level , with neither side having sufficient resources to field a team at the level they would like , while cooperatively they would . Trek had been bike supplier for both teams in 2011 , and funneling money they would normally spend on two teams into one , coupled with an expected reduction in support from the electronics company RadioShack , would make it all the simpler for them to back a top @-@ level team . The merger also drew criticism , as the two sides ' initial press releases describing it did not make it seem that they

were in agreement over their perception of the merger and the newly combined entity . The fact that neither ridership nor lower @-@ level management nor ousted sponsors seemed to know about the move at all ahead of time also drew criticism .

= = = Rider breakdown = = =

With 58 riders ? excluding Wouter Weylandt , after his death at the Giro d 'Italia ? competing for Leopard Trek and Team RadioShack during the 2011 season , a battle for places on the squad ensued . As UCI regulations stipulated that a squad could not have more than 30 riders for the season , many riders were left without a guaranteed place in the merged RadioShack ? Nissan team for the 2012 season . Thirteen riders remained within the Leopard SA @-@ licensed setup for 2012 ; the two @-@ year contracts of Daniele Bennati and Jakob Fuglsang , as well as the three @-@ year contracts of Fabian Cancellara and Maxime Monfort , and the four @-@ year contracts for Andy Schleck and Fränk Schleck , were all honoured . Joost Posthuma , Jens Voigt , and Oliver Zaugg , who had all joined the team on one @-@ year contracts in 2011 , extended their deals to remain with the team into 2012 . Linus Gerdemann also remained with the team , despite having been linked with Team Katusha , while Thomas Rohregger signed a new two @-@ year deal with the team . Also remaining with the team were Giacomo Nizzolo and Robert Wagner .

= = = Riders in = = =

A total of seventeen riders joined the Leopard SA setup for 2012 , of which thirteen riders had been part of Team RadioShack in 2011 . These riders included American national champion Matthew Busche , Tour of California winner Chris Horner , Vuelta an Andalucía victor Markel Irizar , and Andreas Klöden , who won the Tour of the Basque Country in 2011 . Also joining from Team RadioShack were stagiaire George Bennett ? signing his first professional contract ? as well as Ben Hermans , Ben King , and Portuguese duo Tiago Machado , and Nelson Oliveira . Yaroslav Popovych and Grégory Rast both signed with the team to bolster their efforts in the Classic races , while Jesse Sergent and Haimar Zubeldia followed the lead of some of their team @-@ mates to join the newly formed team .

The four remaining places on the roster were taken by riders who had not been involved with the merging of the two teams , and joined RadioShack @-@ Nissan @-@ Trek from rival squads ; Jan Bakelants joined from the Omega Pharma ? Lotto team , Laurent Didier from Saxo Bank ? SunGard , Tony Gallopin left Cofidis to join the team , while Hayden Roulston joined from HTC ? Highroad , which also ceased to exist at the end of the season .

= = = Riders out = = =

Aside from Weylandt , thirteen members of Leopard Trek in 2011 did not continue with the merged team in 2012 . Will Clarke joined Champion System as the squad made their début as a UCI Professional Continental Team in 2012 . Stefan Denifl and Martin Mortensen both joined Vacansoleil ? DCM , while Anders Lund and Bruno Pires joined Team Saxo Bank . Other riders to join UCI ProTeams were Stuart O 'Grady , who joined the new @-@ for @-@ 2012 GreenEDGE team , Davide Viganò left for the Lampre ? ISD team , Fabian Wegmann joined Garmin ? Barracuda , and late @-@ season stagiaire Rüdiger Selig joined Team Katusha for the 2012 season . Elsewhere , Dominic Klemme and Tom Stamsnijder joined Project 1t4i , later Argos ? Shimano ; Brice Feillu found a place on the roster of the Saur ? Sojasun team , while Martin Pedersen signed with domestic Continental team Christina Watches ? Onfone .

= = Season victories = =