



Doors open?

New champ could emerge in 2009

By John Hopkins
Photos by Don Empey

Marie-Josée Boucher may be slowing down a bit in 2009, and that could provide welcome relief to her rivals in the Pro Honda Oils Women's Cup Challenge.

Boucher isn't backing off on her racing program. Oh no, that remains as serious as ever. In fact, the Montreal resident is so anxious to step up her performances in the Parts Canada Superbike and Yoshimura Pro Sport Bike national divisions this summer that the defending WCC champ may not be quite as visible in that category.

"My main objective is the national 600 [Sport Bike] and Superbike series," Boucher said recently. "That takes a lot of energy and I'm not 15 anymore. I will try to do the WCC but it will be harder."

Boucher (shown above left) is back with her Excel Moto Honda team for 2009 and will have a new CBR600RR for the WCC rounds. She has consistently set a high standard for the class over the past few years and no doubt has helped raise the level of women's racing in Canada.

Last year was Boucher's first running as a Pro in the regular ranks and she placed

fourth in point for the HJC Pro Rookie of the Year award on the national tour.

Should Boucher back off on her focus on the WCC there will be plenty of women ready to step up to the plate. Genevieve Lesieur of Val-Belair, QC finished second in the WCC Expert points in 2008 and made a major step forward in her performances. Riding the Chaine Performance Suzuki GSX-R600 Lesieur (shown above right) has stepped up to the Pro ranks for 2009 and made a solid debut in the RACE SuperSeries season opener at the start of May.

Another expected frontrunner should be Vicki Schouten of Richmond, ON. The Kahuna Kawasaki ZX-6R rider was third in Expert points last year and got her Canadian season off to a solid start with a fifth in the Amateur Superbike feature at the RACE SuperSeries opener.

Others to watch for in the Expert ranks include Yamaha rider Josee Bouchard of Ottawa, Honda's Natalie-Catherine Provost from Laval, QC, Cambridge, ON's Karen Grujic on a Kawasaki and the Seamount Brokerage Suzuki of Vanessa Gareau.

The WCC also includes a Novice division at each of its rounds, except the season finale in the Dominican Republic. Anissa

Burachynski of Brampton, ON was the 2008 champion. Last year's runner-up, Kana Matsumoto of Aurora, ON got her 2009 season off to a good start with victory in the Novice Women's opener for the RACE SuperSeries at Shannonville Motorsport Park.

Sara Clode-Carriere of Gatineau, QC placed second in that event and Trenton, ON's Michelle Tennier was third.

The 2009 Pro Honda Oils Womens Cup Challenge opens May 15-17 at Shannonville Motorsport Park and will then run alongside the Parts Canada Superbike Championship on four occasions, at Calabogie Motorsports Park, Circuit ICAR, Mosport International Raceway and Shannonville on the Labour Day Weekend.

The series ends its Canadian season at the final RACE SuperSeries regional at Shannonville on Sept. 25-27, after which the Experts head down to the Dominican Republic for their season finale at the Autodromo Mobile 1 on Dec. 5-6, an event spearheaded by Gareau and her husband, Parts Canada national competitor and Dominican Superbike champion Franklyn Dominguez.

With the quality of the racing continuing to grow and a number of women stepping up their programs the 2009 Pro Honda Oils Womens Cup Challenge should be a classic.

2009 SCHEDULE

May 15-17	Shannonville Motorsport Park	Shannonville, ON
May 22-24	Calabogie Motorsports Park	Calabogie, ON
June 12-14	Circuit ICAR	Mirabel, QC
July 17-19	Mosport International Raceway	Mosport, ON
Sept. 4-6	Shannonville Motorsport Park	Shannonville, ON
Sept. 25-27	Shannonville Motorsport Park	Shannonville, ON
Dec. 5-6	Autodromo Mobile 1	Santo Domingo, D.D. (Experts only)



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