

= 2015 Tour de France =

The 2015 Tour de France was the 102nd edition of the Tour de France , one of cycling 's Grand Tours . The 3 @, @ 360 @. @ 3 km (2 @, @ 088 mi) -long race started in Utrecht , the Netherlands , on 4 July 2015 , and concluded with the Champs @-@ Élysées stage in Paris , on 26 July . A total of 198 riders from 22 teams entered the 21 @-@ stage race , which was won by Chris Froome of Team Sky . The second and third places were taken by the Movistar Team riders Nairo Quintana and Alejandro Valverde , respectively .

BMC Racing Team 's Rohan Dennis won the first stage to take the race leader 's yellow jersey . Trek Factory Racing rider Fabian Cancellara claimed it on the second , only to lose it after crashing out on the following stage . This put Froome in the lead , after the Tour 's first uphill finish . He lost the position to Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step 's Tony Martin at the end of the fourth stage , but Martin 's withdrawal from the race after a crash at the end of the sixth stage put Froome back into the lead . He extended this lead during the stages in the Pyrenees and defended it successfully against attacks from Quintana during the final stages that took place in the Alps .

Froome became the first British rider to win the Tour twice , after his 2013 victory . Peter Sagan of Tinkoff ? Saxo won the points classification . Froome also won the mountains classification . The best young rider was Quintana , with his team , Movistar Team , the winners of the team classification . Romain Bardet of AG2R La Mondiale was given the award for the most combative rider .

= = Teams = =

Twenty @-@ two teams participated in the 2015 edition of the Tour de France . All of the seventeen UCI WorldTeams were automatically invited , and obliged , to attend the race . On 14 January 2015 , the organiser of the Tour , Amaury Sport Organisation (ASO) , announced the five second @-@ tier UCI Professional Continental teams given wildcard invitations , one of which , MTN ? Qhubeka , was to become the first African @-@ registered trade team to participate in the race 's history . The team presentation ? where each team 's roster are introduced in front of the media and local dignitaries ? took place at Lepelenburg Park in Utrecht , the Netherlands , on 2 July , two days before the opening stage held in the city . Each team arrived in small boats along the Oudegracht canal .

The number of riders allowed per squad was nine , therefore the start list contained a total of 198 riders . From the riders that began the race , 160 made it to the finish in Paris . The riders came from 32 countries ; France , the Netherlands , Italy , Spain , Belgium , Australia , Germany , Great Britain and Switzerland all had 10 or more riders in the race . Eritrean riders Daniel Teklehaimanot and Merhawi Kudus , both of MTN ? Qhubeka , became the first black Africans to compete in the Tour de France . The average age of all the riders was 29 @. @ 67 ; the youngest was Kudus , at 21 , and the oldest was the 41 @-@ year @-@ old Matteo Tosatto of Tinkoff ? Saxo . Cofidis was the youngest team and Trek Factory Racing the oldest .

The teams entering the race were :

= = Pre @-@ race favourites = =

In the lead up to the Tour , the main contenders for the general classification , known in the media as the ' big four ' , were Chris Froome (Team Sky) , Alberto Contador (Tinkoff ? Saxo) , Nairo Quintana (Movistar Team) and Vincenzo Nibali (Astana) . All had won at least one Grand Tour , amassing a total of twenty Grand Tour podiums . Former Tour de France winners Froome (2013) and Contador (2007 and 2009) returned to the race having crashed out of the 2014 edition . The riders considered outsiders were Tejay van Garderen (BMC Racing Team) , Thibaut Pinot (FDJ) , Joaquim Rodríguez (Team Katusha) , followed by AG2R La Mondiale 's Jean @-@ Christophe Péraud and Romain Bardet .

Froome had shown his form during the season with overall victories at the Vuelta a Andalucía and

the Critérium du Dauphiné , the Tour 's warm @-@ up race . Contador had earlier in the season won the Giro d 'Italia and was aiming to become the first rider since Marco Pantani in 1998 to achieve the Giro @-@ Tour double . He was also aiming to hold all three Grand Tour titles simultaneously , having won the 2014 Vuelta a España . Thirteen days before the start of the Tour , Contador won the Route du Sud , defeating Quintana by seventeen seconds . Quintana placed second in the 2013 Tour , winning the mountains and young rider classifications . He was absent in 2014 as he concentrated on the 2014 Giro d 'Italia , which he won . His major victory of the 2015 season was the Tirreno ? Adriatico . The defending champion Nibali was considered a contender , although his best result of the season was tenth in the Tour de Romandie , and placed thirteenth at the Dauphiné .

The sprinters considered favourites for the points classification and wins on the flat or hilly bunch sprint finishes were Alexander Kristoff (Team Katusha) , Mark Cavendish (Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step) , Andre Greipel (Lotto ? Soudal) , Peter Sagan (Tinkoff ? Saxo) and John Degenkolb (Giant ? Alpecin) . Kristoff and Cavendish both showed their form during the season coming into the Tour , with eighteen and twelve wins , respectively . Greipel was also a contender , spearheaded by his sprint train , much like Cavendish . Three @-@ time consecutive winner of the points classification Sagan was expected to have a hard time repeating as winner due to the changes in the classification 's point structure and also due to the fact he had to ride in support of Contador . Degenkolb , who won the one @-@ day classic races Milan ? San Remo and Paris ? Roubaix in the season , would take the lead of the Giant ? Alpecin team due to the absence of the 2014 Tour 's four @-@ stage winner Marcel Kittel , who was not selected due to lack of fitness .

= = Route and stages = =

On 8 November 2013 , the ASO announced Utrecht would host the 2015 edition 's Grand Départ (the Tour 's opening stages) . It was the sixth time the Tour had started in the Netherlands , a record for a country outside France . The previous five were : 1954 , in Amsterdam ; 1973 , in Scheveningen ; 1978 , in Leiden ; 1996 , in ' s @-@ Hertogenbosch ; and 2010 , in Rotterdam . Utrecht paid the ASO a reported ? 4m to host the Grand Départ . The full route of the Tour was unveiled on 22 October 2014 at the Palais des Congrès in Paris .

After the first stage in Utrecht , the second stage left the city to finish in the region of Zeeland in the south of the Netherlands . The third began in Antwerp , Belgium , and concluded at the Mur de Huy , a steep climb known for its inclusion in the one @-@ day classic race La Flèche Wallonne . Stage four started in Seraing , before ending in Cambrai , France ; it featured seven cobbled sectors with a combined distance of 13 km (8 @.@ 1 mi) . Stages five to nine crossed northern France westwards , beginning in the region of Nord @-@ Pas @-@ de @-@ Calais and ending in Brittany . The riders then took an air transfer to the south of the country for next three stages through the Pyrenees , which include the Tour 's most climbed mountain , the Col du Tourmalet , on stage eleven . Stages 13 to 16 formed a continuous four @-@ stage journey that navigated eastwards to the Alps . Four stages took place in and around the mountain range , before a second air transfer taking the Tour back to the north east to finish with the Champs @-@ Élysées stage in Paris . The Tour included six new start or finish locations : Utrecht , in stage 1 ; Zeeland , in stage 2 ; Livarot , in stage 7 ; La Pierre Saint @-@ Martin , in stage 10 ; Muret , in stage 13 ; and Sèvres , in stage 21 .

At the announcement of the route , the race director Christian Prudhomme described it as " atypique " (English : " untypical ") , adding " If you do not climb , you will not win the Tour in 2015 . " The most noticeable differences were the lack of time trial kilometers and the mountainous terrain . There were 21 stages in the race , covering a total distance of 3 @, @ 360 @.@ 3 km (2 @, @ 088 mi) , 298 @.@ 7 km (185 @.@ 6 mi) shorter than the 2014 Tour . The longest race stage was the fourth at 223 @.@ 5 km (139 mi) , and stage 21 the shortest at 110 @.@ 5 km (69 mi) . The opening individual time trial was 13 @.@ 8 km (8 @.@ 6 mi) ? although it was too long to be classified a prologue ? and the team time trial on stage 9 was 28 km (17 @.@ 4 mi) . Stages 3 and 8 , although officially classified flat , finished at the Mur de Huy and Mûr @-@ de @-@ Bretagne respectively , whilst the hilly stage 14 ended at the Côte de la Croix Neuve . There were seven

stages defined as mountainous , six of which had summit finishes : stage 10 , to La Pierre Saint @-@ Martin ; stage 11 , to Cauterets ; stage 12 , to Plateau de Beille ; stage 17 , to Pra Loup ; stage 19 , to La Toussuire - Les Sybelles ; and stage 20 , to Alpe d 'Huez) . On 25 June , it was announced that due to a landslide , the route of stage twenty would be changed , bypassing the Col du Galibier and instead climbing the Col de la Croix de Fer . The stage distance , however , remained intact . The rest days were after stage 9 , in Pau , and 16 , in Gap .

= = Race overview = =

The race 's opening individual time trial stage in Utrecht was won by Rohan Dennis of BMC Racing Team by a margin of five seconds over Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step 's Tony Martin , with Trek Factory Racing 's Fabian Cancellara a further second down . Dennis set the record for the fastest average speed in a time trial at the Tour , with 55 @.@ 446 km / h (34 @.@ 5 mph) . His win put him in the race leader 's yellow jersey . On stage two , crosswinds along the coastal route to the finish in Zeeland caused the peloton (the main group) to split into echelons , resulting in time gaps between riders . The stage ended in a bunch sprint , won by André Greipel , putting him in the green jersey as the leader of the points classification . Dennis was in a group that finished one minute twenty @-@ eight seconds in arrears . Cancellara finished third placed in the stage and took the race lead , profiting from a time bonus missed by Martin , who came in ninth . The general classification favourites that gained time from being in the leading group of twenty @-@ six were Chris Froome , Alberto Contador and Tejay Van Garderen ; the other favourites finished in the same group as Dennis . On the third stage , the race was neutralised following a major crash 58 km (36 mi) from the finish which put six of riders out of the race , including Cancellara . The peloton continued to the final climb , the Mur de Huy , where Joaquim Rodríguez held off Froome to take the stage by one second . Rodríguez was awarded the first the polka dot jersey as the leader of the mountains classification and Froome took the yellow , while also gaining time over the other general classification favourites . It was the third day in succession Martin ended in second place overall , and to three different riders . The partially cobbled fourth stage saw Martin take the victory and the yellow jersey with an attack on the lead group 3 km (1 @.@ 9 mi) from the finish in Cambrai .

On the fifth stage , a bunch sprint occurred and Greipel got the better of it by beating Peter Sagan and Mark Cavendish , respectively . In the sixth stage , Zden?k ?tybar of Etixx ? Quick @-@ Stepwon after escaping on the concluding small ascent in the port city of Le Havre . A crash in the final kilometer forced Martin to abandon the Tour with a broken collarbone , the second yellow jersey wearer to surrender after Cancellara . A record was set after the stage , with Daniel Teklehaimanot becoming the first black African to lead the mountains classification . Although Froome now led the race , no rider wore the yellow jersey on stage seven as Martin had finished the stage and earned the right to wear it . Cavendish won the seventh from a bunch sprint in Fougères , Brittany . Froome was awarded the yellow jersey after the stage . Stage eight , finishing atop the Mûr @-@ de @-@ Bretagne , saw the first French victory of the Tour , with AG2R La Mondiale rider Alexis Vuillermoz launching an attack inside the final kilometer to take the victory . The general classification favourites finished together except Vincenzo Nibali who lost ten seconds . Sagan moved into the green jersey . BMC Racing Team won stage nine 's team time trial by one second over Team Sky . The squad of Nairo Quintana , Movistar Team , came in third , four seconds in arrears . Alberto Contador 's Tinkoff ? Saxo in fourth , twenty @-@ eight seconds down , and Nibali 's Astana following , a further seven seconds behind . The first rest day took place the following day in Pau .

Stage ten was the race 's first arrival at altitude with the finish at La Pierre Saint @-@ Martin in the Pyrenees . The day 's breakaway was caught and passed on the final climb by a select group . Froome attacked with 6 @.@ 4 km (4 mi) remaining to take the win , with teammate Richie Porte and Quintana a minute in arrears . The stage saw time gaps open up across the general classification leaders . The biggest loser was Nibali , who came in twenty @-@ first , over four minutes behind Froome , who increased his lead to second placed Tejay van Garderen to two minutes and fifty @-@ two seconds . Froome took the polka dot jersey and Greipel the green . Stage eleven was another mountainous stage ; it was won by Rafa? Majka (Tinkoff ? Saxo) , who

was part of the early breakaway and attacked on the slopes of the Col du Tourmalet . He soloed across the line in Cauterets one minute ahead of second @-@ placed Dan Martin (Cannondale ? Garmin) . The green jersey returned to Sagan . Rodríguez gained his second victory of the race on stage twelve ; he was part of an early twenty @-@ two rider breakaway that reached the final climb to Plateau de Beille . Froome kept his lead intact .

Stage thirteen saw the escapees being brought inside the one kilometer to go marker (known as the flamme rouge) . Greg Van Avermaet of BMC Racing Team took the uphill victory ahead of the chasing Sagan . On stage fourteen , a twenty @-@ four rider breakaway reached the final climb , the Côte de la Croix Neuve . After the breakaway had fractured , Thibaut Pinot and Romain Bardet led over the summit , before Steve Cummings of MTN ? Qhubeka overtook them to take the victory at Brenoux Airport on the plateau above Mende . Sagan was part of the breakaway , amassing maximum points at the intermediate sprint . Over four minutes after Cummings had finished , Froome outsprinted Quintana while the other general classification favourites were slightly distanced . Quintana moved into second place overall , displacing Van Garderen . Stage fifteen had for principal difficulty the Col de l 'Escrinet climb , which saw most of the sprinters succeeding at passing the climb in the lead group , with the notable exception of Cavendish . Greipel won his third stage of the Tour , followed by John Degenkolb and Alexander Kristoff , respectively . On the next stage , featuring the Col de Manse as the final climb , Rubén Plaza (Lampre ? Merida) escaped the leading group of breakaway riders on the ascent . Sagan chased him down the descent , but to no avail as Plaza soloed to victory in Gap . The next day was the second rest day , spent in Gap .

Stage seventeen , the first of four Alpine stages , saw third placed overall Van Garderen withdraw from the race with illness . The stage was won by Giant ? Alpecin 's Simon Geschke , who escaped from the breakaway with under 50 km (31 mi) remaining to win in Pra Loup . Fifth placed overall Contador crashed on the descent of the Col d 'Allos , losing over two minutes to race leader Froome . On stage eighteen , Bardet attacked the breakaway close to the summit of the Col du Glandon and opened a gap on descent before riding solo to victory in Saint @-@ Jean @-@ de @-@ Maurienne . Bardet moved up to tenth overall and became joint first with Rodríguez in the mountains classification , displacing Froome . In stage nineteen , Nibali broke away from the general classification group close to the summit of the Col de la Croix de Fer to bridge and pass the breakaway group and win at La Toussuire - Les Sybelles . Quintana came in second , forty @-@ four seconds later , with Froome coming in a further thirty . In the Tour 's penultimate stage , a select group of riders attacked on the Col de la Croix de Fer and made it to the finish on Alpe d ? Huez , where they met the disintegrate early breakaway . Pinot attacked passed the breakaways to take the victory ahead of the encroaching Quintana , who came in second after attacking the chasing general classification group on the Alpe . Quintana gained a margin of eighty seconds over Froome , but it was not enough and had to settle for second place overall .

The final stage in Paris was won by Greipel , his fourth victory of this year 's Tour . Froome finished the race to claim his second Tour de France , becoming the first British rider to win the race on two occasions . He beat second @-@ placed Quintana by seventy @-@ two seconds , with his Movistar Team teammate Alejandro Valverde third . Froome also claimed the mountains classification , the first time a rider had won both since Eddy Merckx in 1970 . Although he failed to win any stages during the race , Sagan won his fourth consecutive points classification with a total of 432 , 66 ahead of Greipel in second . The best young rider was Quintana , followed by Bardet and Giant ? Alpecin 's Warren Barguil , respectively . Movistar Team finished as the winners of the team classification , over fifty @-@ seven minutes ahead of second @-@ placed Team Sky .

= = Classification leadership = =

There were four main individual classifications contested in the 2015 Tour de France , as well as a team competition . The most important was the general classification , which was calculated by adding each rider 's finishing times on each stage . The rider with the least accumulated time is the race leader , identified by the yellow jersey ; the winner of this classification was considered the winner of the Tour . Time bonuses returned to the Tour for the first time since the 2008 edition . For

all stage finishes , excluding the two time trial stages , the three first finishers of stages earned bonuses of 10 , 6 and 4 seconds respectively . Of the reintroduction , race director Christian Prudhomme said : " We want to open up the race , we want the race to be decided on any day of the Tour . " If a crash happened within the final 3 km (1 @. @ 9 mi) of a stage ; this did not include the time trials and summit finishes , the riders involved received the same time as the group they were in when the crash occurred . Rain on the final stage forced the final times of the general classification to be taken on the first crossing of the finish line before the ten laps of the cobbled Champs @- @ Élysées . Riders were required to cross the finish line on the final lap to receive their times .

The points classification leader was identified with a green jersey . Riders received points for finishing among the highest placed in a stage finish , or in intermediate sprints during the stage . The points system was also changed . A stage win was worth 50 points instead of 45 , second place awarded 30 instead of 35 and third 20 instead of 30 . The sprint points rule change aimed to make a stage win more valuable . The points available for each stage finish were determined by the " coefficient " ranking scale . The new system was in effect only on the Tour 's six stages classified as flat (stages 2 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 15 and 21) . On seven stages (the cobble stage and six hillier stages , namely stages 3 , 4 , 8 , 10 , 13 , 14 and 16) the rider who won received 30 points , 25 for the second rider , and so on . For the mountain stages (stages 11 , 12 , 17 , 18 , 19 , 20) and the individual time trial (stage 1) , the winner received 20 points . No points were awarded on stage nine 's team time trial .

No changes were made to the mountains classification , where points were awarded to the riders that reached the top of the most difficult ascents first . The climbs were categorised as either hors catégorie (English : beyond category) , first , second , third , or fourth @- @ category , with more points available for the higher @- @ categorised climbs . The overall leader wore a polka dot jersey . Double points were awarded on the summit finishes on stages 10 , 12 , 17 , 19 and 20 .

The young rider classification , denoted by a white jersey , was calculated the same way as the general classification , but the classification was restricted to riders who were born on or after 1 January 1990 . The team classification was calculated using the finishing times of the best three riders per team on each stage (not the team time @- @ trial) ; the leading team was the team with the lowest cumulative time . The number of stage victories and placings per team determined the outcome of a tie . The riders in the team that lead this classification were identified with yellow number bibs on the back of their jerseys and yellow helmets . In addition , there was a combativity award , given after each stage to the rider considered , by a jury , to have " made the greatest effort and who has demonstrated the best qualities of sportsmanship " . No combativity awards were given for the time trials and the final stage . The winner wore a red number bib the following stage . At the conclusion of the Tour , Romain Bardet won the overall super @- @ combativity award .

A total of ? 2 @, @ 030 @, @ 150 was awarded in cash prizes in the race . The overall winner of the general classification received ? 450 @, @ 000 , with the second and third placed riders getting ? 200 @, @ 000 and ? 100 @, @ 000 respectively ; all finishers of the race were awarded with money . The holders of the classifications benefited on each stage they lead ; the final winners of the points and mountains were given ? 25 @, @ 000 , while the best young rider and most combative rider got ? 20 @, @ 000 . Team prizes were available , with ? 10 @, @ 000 for the team time trial and ? 50 @, @ 000 for the winners of the team classification . ? 8 @, @ 000 was given to the winners of each stage of the race . There were also two special awards each with a prize of ? 5000 , the Souvenir Jacques Goddet , given to the first rider to pass Goddet 's memorial at the summit of the Col du Tourmalet in stage eleven , and the Souvenir Henri Desgrange , given to first rider to pass the summit of the highest climb in the Tour . The Souvenir Henri Desgrange was originally to be on the Col du Galibier in stage twenty , but due to a route change it was replaced with the Col d 'Allos in stage seventeen . Rafa? Majka won the Jacques Goddet and Simon Geschke the Henri Desgrange .

= = Final standings = =

= = UCI World Tour rankings = =

The race was the eighteenth of the twenty @-@ eight events in the UCI World Tour , with riders from the WorldTeams competing individually for points that contributed towards the rankings . Points were awarded to the top twenty finishers in the general classification and to the top five finishers in each stage . The 338 points accrued by Chris Froome moved him up to second in the individual ranking , behind Alejandro Valverde . Despite Movistar Team 's strong showing , Team Sky took over the lead of the team ranking due to Froome 's points . With three riders in the top ten Spain remained the leaders of the nations ranking .