

= 2015 Tour de Suisse =

The 2015 Tour de Suisse was the 79th edition of the Tour de Suisse stage race . It took place from 13 to 21 June and was the seventeenth race of the 2015 UCI World Tour . It started in Risch @-@ Rotkreuz and finished in Bern . The race was composed of nine stages including two time trials , a short one on the first day and a long one on the last day . The event covered 1 @, @ 258 km ( 782 mi ) and visited Liechtenstein and Austria on its fifth stage . There was only one mountaintop finish , on the aforementioned stage five .

The winner of the general classification was Slovenian Simon Špilak of Team Katusha , who won the race by a margin of only five seconds from Great Britain 's Geraint Thomas ( Team Sky ) . The ultimate selection was made on the last day 's individual time trial . Tom Dumoulin of the Giant ? Alpecin squad rounded up the podium . The latter won the two individual time trials , on the first and last stage .

The mountains classification was awarded to Austria 's Stefan Denifl ( IAM Cycling ) , who featured in many breakaways to amass his points . The sprints classification was won by Slovakian Peter Sagan ( Tinkoff ? Saxo ) who also was the victor of two stages . Team Sky finished at the head of the team classification with a margin of 11 minutes and 49 seconds .

Other riders who won a stage were Croatian Kristijan Žurasek of Lampre ? Merida , Australian Michael Matthews ( Orica ? GreenEDGE ) , Norwegian Alexander Kristoff ( Team Katusha ) and Kazakh Alexey Lutsenko of Astana . Frenchman Thibaut Pinot grabbed the queen stage to the Rettenbach glacier and held the leader 's jersey for four stages , but had to surrender it on the last day of competition to Špilak .

= = Teams = =

As a UCI World Tour event , the organisation was in an obligation to invite all seventeen UCI WorldTeams , and likewise , all seventeen teams were obligated to send a squad . To complete the field , two UCI Professional Continental teams were invited to join the race . The number of riders allowed per team was eight , so the starting field contained 152 cyclists .

= = Pre @-@ race favorites = =

Rui Costa ( Movistar Team ) won the last three editions of the race , however he was not present at the 2015 event , as he raced in the Critérium du Dauphiné instead . More contenders for the overall classification of the Tour de France opted for the latter race since it was more mountainous . There were two former winners of the Tour de Suisse at the starting line , Trek Factory Racing teammates : Swiss Fabian Cancellara and Luxembourger Fränk Schleck .

Contenders for the general classification were Simon Špilak ( Team Katusha ) , Thibaut Pinot ( FDJ ) , Rafal Majka ( Tinkoff ? Saxo ) , Sergio Henao ( Team Sky ) , Tom Dumoulin ( Giant @-@ Alpecin ) , Michał Kwiatkowski ( Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step ) and Geraint Thomas ( Team Sky ) . Other hopefuls were Jurgen Van den Broeck ( Lotto ? Soudal ) and Sébastien Reichenbach ( IAM Cycling ) . It was AG2R La Mondiale 's Domenico Pozzovivo 's first race after his disastrous crash in the Giro d 'Italia , so his form was predicted as uncertain , but the Italian climber could certainly be a factor if he was in shape .

Peter Sagan ( Tinkoff @-@ Saxo ) was a contender for stage wins . His directeur sportif ( team manager ) said he was the leader of the team and would target the opening prologue . Mark Cavendish of Etixx @-@ Quick Step , who proved his form with twelve stage victories so far in the season , was a favorite for the sprint stages . Other riders contending stage glory were Alexander Kristoff ( Team Katusha ) and John Degenkolb ( Giant ? Alpecin ) . Cancellara , the 2009 winner , was recovering from a crash suffered at the E3 Harelbeke one @-@ day race ; his primary focus was on his recovery .

= = Route = =

An important race in its own right , the 2015 Tour de Suisse was used by some Tour de France riders to perfect their physical conditions , as the well @-@ known French race started on 4 July . The route for the race was announced on 9 March 2015 .

The race did not follow any particular pattern in terms of geographical displacement around the country , but did visit Liechtenstein and Austria on the fifth stage . It was also the longest of the race and may be qualified as the queen stage . It finished near Sölden situated in Austrian territory and featured a mountaintop finish . After that , the race came back in Swiss territory for the remainder of the event . The stages which were likely to be the most important for the general classification were the aforementioned stage five and the individual time trial on the final stage . The race featured a total elevation gain of 15 @,@ 606 m ( 51 @,@ 200 @.@ 8 ft ) .

On 4 June 2015 , it was announced that the town of Brunnen was desisting itself from being the start of stage three because of road damage caused by a rocky landslide , and that the town of Quinto would instead be the starting town . This shortened the stage by 57 @.@ 2 km ( 35 @.@ 5 mi ) .

= = Stages = =

= = = Stage 1 = = =

13 June 2015 ? Risch @-@ Rotkreuz to Risch @-@ Rotkreuz 5 @.@ 1 km ( 3 @.@ 2 mi )

The very short prologue contained three sharp corners . The first two kilometers were slightly uphill , the third one was slightly downhill and the rest was flat .

The best times coming from the first tier of riders have been Matthias Brändle ( IAM Cycling ) with 5 ' 45 " , Greg Van Avermaet ( BMC Racing Team ) a second slower and Cameron Meyer ( Orica @-@ GreenEDGE ) another second in arrears . Thibaut Pinot ( FDJ ) came in with a deficit of twelve seconds on Brändle . Michael Matthews ( Orica ? GreenEDGE ) also realized a good time , four seconds down on the provisional leader . Domenico Pozzovivo ( Ag2r @-@ La Mondiale ) came to the finish with a fifteen @-@ second deficit . Daniele Bennati ( Tinkoff @-@ Saxo ) had the best intermediate time all day , which was calculated with 2 @.@ 1 km ( 1 @.@ 3 mi ) remaining as the riders went through the checkpoint .

Fabian Cancellara ( Trek Factory Racing ) , beat Brändle with a time of 5 ' 43 " . Time trial specialist Adriano Malori ( Movistar Team ) started soon after Cancellara crossed the finish line , but came in at 5 ' 47 " , four seconds slower . Giant @-@ Alpecin rider Tom Dumoulin clocked 5 ' 41 " , 2 seconds better than Cancellara , and would ultimately be the winner of the stage .

BMC Racing Team 's Silvan Dillier crashed as he was on a straight stretch of road . He managed to remount and finish the stage ; his final position was last place , 1 ' 22 " down . Team Sky 's leader Geraint Thomas put in a fast ride , only seven seconds down on the winner . Peter Sagan ( Tinkoff ? Saxo ) came in five seconds in arrears of Dumoulin , missing out on his objective of being the first leader of the race . Robert Gesink ( LottoNL ? Jumbo ) clocked a time 22 seconds slower than Dumoulin , and so did Sergio Henao of Team Sky . Poles Rafa? Majka ( Tinkoff ? Saxo ) and Micha? Kwiatkowski ( Etixx @-@ Quick Step ) were 20 and 21 seconds down respectively .

After the event , Dumoulin said that he prepared at altitude for the race and that he produced a hard physical effort on the uphill section and went less intensely on the flatter parts .

= = = Stage 2 = = =

14 June 2015 ? Risch @-@ Rotkreuz to Risch @-@ Rotkreuz 161 @.@ 1 km ( 100 @.@ 1 mi )

The stage started right away with a Category 2 climb named Dorfstrasse which was 5 @.@ 4 km ( 3 @.@ 4 mi ) long . The riders then rode a loop to tackle the latter climb once more about midway through the stage . Afterward another loop around Risch @-@ Rotkreuz was effectuated to reach a Category 1 affair named Michaelskreuz , 4 km ( 2 @.@ 5 mi ) long . The course came back down

and effectuated another circuit to tackle the climb a second and last time . This last King of the Mountains ( KOM ) checkpoint was situated at 12 km ( 7 @. @ 5 mi ) from the finish . The riders negotiated the descent and ended up once again in Risch @- @ Rotkreuz for the finale .

After 38 km ( 23 @. @ 6 mi ) of racing , Luka Pibernik ( Lampre @- @ Merida ) , Cameron Meyer ( Orica @- @ GreenEDGE ) , Jurgen Roelandts ( Lotto ? Soudal ) and Valerio Agnoli of Astana had an advantage of 1 ' 08 " over chasers Ben King ( Cannondale ? Garmin ) and Simone Antonini of Pro Continental team Wanty ? Groupe Gobert . They also enjoyed a lead of 2 ' 55 " on the peloton . The two chasers soon fell back into the main field . The maximum gap the peloton allowed the escapees to have was 3 ' 20 " . As the main group attacked the climb of Michaelskreuz for the first time , Arnaud Demare ( FDJ ) crashed because of the fight for position .

With 16 km ( 9 @. @ 9 mi ) to go , the riders attacked the climb of Michaelskreuz for the second and last time and caught the remnants of the breakaway on the way up . Astana 's Jakob Fuglsang accelerated close to the summit , with only Geraint Thomas ( Team Sky ) and Simon ?pilak ( Team Katusha ) initially able to follow , while Micha? Kwiatkowski ( Etixx @- @ Quick Step ) lost contact . Geraint Thomas then attacked on the descent and was followed by Fuglsang and ?pilak ( Team Katusha ) . Tom Dumoulin ( Giant @- @ Alpecin ) chased them as he wanted to protect his leader 's jersey . A small group of nine riders formed on the descent .

Close to the final kilometer , Kristijan ?urasek of Lampre ? Merida placed an acceleration and continued to a solo victory on the flat run @- @ in . The group came in four seconds in arrears , with Daniel Moreno ( Team Katusha ) winning the sprint for second place before Arredondo . Overall contenders Thibaut Pinot ( FDJ ) and Simon ?pilak ) were also part of that clique , coming in fourth and sixth respectively . Peter Sagan ( Tinkoff @- @ Saxo ) won the sprint of the following group , coming in tenth at fourteen seconds . Dumoulin kept his leader 's jersey . Pibernik amassed enough mountain points ( 18 ) to earn the mountains classification jersey .

= = = Stage 3 = = =

15 June 2015 ? Quinto to Olivone 117 @. @ 3 km ( 72 @. @ 9 mi )

This was the new version of the stage as the original route was closed due to a landslide . The stage immediately started the 1 @, @ 087 m ( 3 @, @ 566 @. @ 3 ft ) -high ascent of the Hors Category Gotthard Pass , which summit was 18 @. @ 8 km ( 11 @. @ 7 mi ) in . Then came a long false flat until a Category 2 climb , the 5 km ( 3 @. @ 1 mi ) -long Zona Cumiasca . It was immediately followed by a Category 3 named ascent Via Cantonale , which summited 6 km ( 3 @. @ 7 mi ) from the finish . The climb was 3 @. @ 2 km ( 2 @. @ 0 mi ) .

The race got on its way under cloudy but dry conditions . The Tour de Suisse was featuring the Gotthard Pass for the 34th time in its history , and a break formed along its early slopes , which featured cobbles . The two attackers were Stefan Denifl ( IAM Cycling ) and Marco Marcato ( Wanty @- @ Groupe Gobert ) . The pair had a lead of 2 ' 30 " on the main field as Branislau Samoilau ( CCC @- @ Sprandi @- @ Polkowice ) was chasing them . Denifl got to the top of the climb first to rake in twenty points . By the top of the pass , snow was covering the sides of the road and the field was 3 ' 20 " back . The riders put gilets on before the descent , which lasted almost 40 km ( 24 @. @ 9 mi ) . Samoilau succeeded in joining the escape during the downhill .

The competitors replenished their food stock at the feed zone situated shortly after the downhill section . The main field started accelerating , with the team of the leader Tom Dumoulin Giant @- @ Alpecin doing most of the work at the front . Realizing this breakaway was gaining ground , Tinkoff @- @ Saxo came to the fore to help , resulting in the gap going down gradually . There was 30 km ( 18 @. @ 6 mi ) to cover as the gap was hovering around 4 ' 30 " .

At the foot of the Zona Cumiasca climb , with 19 km ( 11 @. @ 8 mi ) remaining , the gap had shrunk significantly . The peloton formed sprint trains to better position their leaders for the ascent . Marcato was soon dropped from the breakaway and Denifl won the mountain points . At that point , Denifl and Samoilau had only a thirty seconds gap over the depleting field . The catch was effectuated with 8 @. @ 7 km ( 5 @. @ 4 mi ) to race . Michael Albasini ( Orica @- @ GreenEDGE ) attacked , soon followed by Jan Bakelants ( Ag2r @- @ La Mondiale ) . With the two escapees

enjoying only a ten @-@ second advantage , Sergio Henao ( Team Sky ) accelerated and passed them . The trio was ultimately reeled in . Rafa? Majka ( Tinkoff @-@ Saxo ) was working at the front of the small leading group to bring back the attackers to give his team leader Peter Sagan a chance at victory . In the last few kilometers , Sagan took over from Majka himself . He followed Daniel Moreno ( Team Katusha ) , who had chased down Esteban Chaves ( Orica @-@ GreenEDGE ) , passing him to take victory .

#### == = Stage 4 = = =

16 June 2015 ? Flims to Schwarzenbach 193 @.@ 2 km ( 120 @.@ 0 mi )

The first 60 km ( 37 @.@ 3 mi ) were flat until the peloton reached Wildhaus Pass , a Category 2 test of 8 @.@ 9 km ( 5 @.@ 5 mi ) . Then there were three Category 3 climbs on offer , which were the 1 @.@ 8 km ( 1 @.@ 1 mi ) -long Kirchberg climb repeated three times as the riders accomplished a loop . There were however a number of uncategorized rises , especially one with about 5 km ( 3 @.@ 1 mi ) to cover , that could play a role in the outcome . The finishing 900 m ( 2 @.@ 952 @.@ 8 ft ) were straight with a consistent incline .

Davide Malacarne ( Astana ) and Thomas De Gendt ( Lotto ? Soudal ) attacked early in the stage . They were joined by a trio of Stijn Devolder ( Trek Factory Racing ) , Alex Howes ( Cannondale ? Garmin ) and Frederik Backaert ( Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert ) . De Gendt crested the Wildhaus Pass first to take eight points in the KOM competition . At the summit , after 66 km ( 41 @.@ 0 mi ) of racing , the gap between the peloton and the breakers was two minutes and fifty seconds .

De Gendt took maximum points atop the Kirchberg climb on the riders ' first passage . The main field got through the KOM line 2 ' 05 " in arrears . The descent was fast and the riders crossed the finish line for the first time of three with about 60 km ( 37 @.@ 3 mi ) to race . The breakaway was caught less than 10 km ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) later . Orica @-@ GreenEDGE marshaled the field as De Gendt attacked again to no avail as he was swiftly swept back . Sprint specialists Arnaud Demare ( FDJ ) , Mark Cavendish ( Etixx @-@ Quick Step ) and Alexander Kristoff ( Team Katusha ) struggled with the high pace at the front set by Orica ? GreenEDGE . As the peloton crossed the line for the last time with 29 @.@ 2 km ( 18 @.@ 1 mi ) to race , there were no escapees .

The last KOM of the day atop the Kirchberg climb was won by Daryl Impey ; it was uncontested and he won because he was riding at the front . Alexey Lutsenko ( Astana ) placed an attack with 16 km ( 9 @.@ 9 mi ) to go . With 10 km ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) to race he had opened up an advantage of 20 seconds . With 6 @.@ 7 km ( 4 @.@ 2 mi ) remaining , Lutsenko was caught . An attack formed immediately including the riders Marco Marcato ( Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert ) , Jan Bakelants ( Ag2r @-@ La Mondiale ) and Sergio Henao ( Team Sky ) ; it failed and they were brought back as ( Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert and ( Orica @-@ GreenEDGE teams worked together to set up a sprint finish . With 300 m ( 984 @.@ 3 ft ) to go , Sagan initiated his sprint first and was followed by Michael Matthews of Orica ? GreenEDGE . Matthews then passed him to claim his first victory at the Tour de Suisse . Sagan took second place and the points classification jersey .

#### == = Stage 5 = = =

17 June 2015 ? Unterterzen to Sölden ( Austria ) 237 @.@ 3 km ( 147 @.@ 5 mi )

This was the queen stage of the 2015 Tour de Suisse and was also the longest stage the race featured in the last twenty years . The first difficulty of the day was the 34 @.@ 4 km ( 21 @.@ 4 mi ) long Hors Category Bielerhöhe Pass which summits at 2 @.@ 071 m ( 6 @.@ 794 @.@ 6 ft ) of altitude and at that point , the riders were already in Austria after a brief visit to Liechtenstein . Following that difficulty , the run @-@ in to Sölden offered a respite until the cyclists reached the town and tackled the stage 's second Hors Category climb to the Rettenbach glacier , which took them to an altitude of 2 @.@ 669 m ( 8 @.@ 756 @.@ 6 ft ) . The competitors rode the Ötztal Glacier Road from Sölden to get to the finish line .

The overall race leader Tom Dumoulin ( Giant @-@ Alpecin ) said before the stage that if he lost less than one minute and a half to the pure climbers , he could still win the Tour by taking that time

back on the final stage 's time trial . The previous stage 's victor Michael Matthews ( Orica @-@ GreenEDGE ) was a non @-@ starter , saying he had gotten what he wanted from the race : a stage win . A breakaway formed in the opening 10 km ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) of the race . They were Gregory Rast ( Trek Factory Racing ) , KOM jersey wearer Stefan Denifl and his teammate Matthias Brändle ( IAM Cycling ) , Ben King ( Cannondale ? Garmin ) , Przemysław Niemiec ( Lampre @-@ Merida ) , Stefan Schumacher ( CCC @-@ Sprandi @-@ Polkowice ) , Thomas De Gendt ( Lotto ? Soudal ) and Mirko Selvaggi ( Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert ) . The best @-@ placed cyclist in the break on the general classification was Selvaggi in 59th place , 18 ' 38 " down on Dumoulin . Denifl amassed maximum points atop the Bielerhöhe Pass , comforting his lead in the mountains classification . Jon Izagirre of the Movistar Team abandoned after the pass .

With 90 km ( 55 @.@ 9 mi ) to go the gap was miscalculated by the race organizers as there were unrealistic fluctuations in the official timing throughout the long stretch of flat road before the final climb . With 82 km ( 51 @.@ 0 mi ) to cover , Astana took control of the peloton for their leader Jakob Fuglsang . FDJ and Team Katusha started helping the chase at the front , since those teams had riders aiming for victory ( Thibaut Pinot and the Daniel Moreno @-@ Simon ?pilak duo , respectively ) . With 30 km ( 18 @.@ 6 mi ) to the start of the big final climb , the gap was around six and a half minutes . The break fractured , just as the peloton did later when they hit the Rettenbach ascent . Dumoulin was dropped almost at the beginning of it but resisted , climbing at his own pace . ?pilak attacked with 8 km ( 5 @.@ 0 mi ) remaining and dangled in front of a select group .

Early breaker Denifl was alone in front and had about two minutes of an advantage with 4 km ( 2 @.@ 5 mi ) to go . Behind , Domenico Pozzovivo placed an acceleration that put the lead group in difficulty , but he was brought back . The time gap rapidly decreased , due to dubious time monitoring again . Pinot launched an attack from the group , but ?pilak had the resources to keep up with him for a while but was ultimately dropped . Pinot passed the passive Denifl before the arch signaling the last kilometer ( flamme rouge ) and took a solo victory . Pozzovivo finished second while ?pilak settled for third . However , it became soon apparent that Dumoulin would not lose much more than the minute and a half that was his objective . He passed the line 1 ' 37 " down on Pinot . " I 'm very happy , it was important for me and the team . We came here to win a stage , and I had good legs today . I 've got a lot of confidence now , that 's important for the Tour de France . And it 's true , racing in Switzerland seems to suit me , " said Pinot . " The objective is to win overall here , but the rouleurs like [ Geraint ] Thomas and [ Tom ] Dumoulin aren 't far back , " he added . " It 'll be a long and difficult time trial [ on stage nine ] . We 'll see what happens on the day . "

== = Stage 6 == =

18 June 2015 ? Wil to Biel 193 @.@ 1 km ( 120 @.@ 0 mi )

This stage contained only one categorized ascent midway through it and was a Category 3 affair named Auensteinstrasse . However , there were numerous uncategorized rises on the course to Biel and the total elevation gain for the stage was 1 @,@ 167 m ( 3 @,@ 828 @.@ 7 ft ) . Two intermediate sprints came before the run into town in the final 40 km ( 24 @.@ 9 mi ) .

As the stage started , there were 145 riders remaining in the race , as only seven entrants had abandoned since the start of the race . The day 's breakers were Axel Domont ( Ag2r @-@ La Mondiale ) , Marek Rutkiewicz ( CCC @-@ Sprandi @-@ Polkowice ) , Matej Mohoric ( Cannondale ? Garmin ) and Jérôme Baugnies ( Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert ) . The riders soon tackled the Eschenmosen , one of the many uncategorized ascents of the day . With 136 km ( 84 @.@ 5 mi ) left , the breakaway 's advantage stood at 4 ' 30 " . The breakers took the points on offer on the only climb of the day , Auensteinstrasse , so Stefan Denifl of IAM Cycling needed not worry about someone taking his mountains classification jersey , as he had 63 points with 30 points of an advantage over his nearest competitor Thomas De Gendt ( Lotto ? Soudal ) . Rutkiewicz won the KOM and amassed the five points that came with it . About midway through , it was calculated that the stage 's average speed was slower than the slowest prediction by the organizers , most likely due to the severity of the previous stage .

With 65 km ( 40 @.@ 4 mi ) to cover , rain began to fall ; the main field was led by FDJ , Etixx @-@

Quick Step , Giant @-@ Alpecin and Team Katusha . Baugnies rode first across an uncontested intermediate sprint with 42 @.@ 7 km ( 26 @.@ 5 mi ) to go . 25 km ( 15 @.@ 5 mi ) from the finish , Adriano Malori and Francisco Ventoso of Movistar Team surprised the peloton by attacking . At the 10 km ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) remaining arch , the break of four still held a lead of forty seconds with the two Movistar Team riders placed between the groups . Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step took matters in their own hands and began forming their sprint train for Mark Cavendish . Tinkoff @-@ Saxo moved to the front in support of their sprint hopeful , Peter Sagan . With 5 km ( 3 @.@ 1 mi ) to cover , the escape had 30 seconds of an advantage . At that point , two Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step riders ( Julien Vermote and Zdenek Stybar ) crashed on the water @-@ logged tarmac before a bend , but the mishap had no consequences on the peloton . The breakers were brought back just before the flamme rouge .

Shortly thereafter , Cavendish lost the wheel of his lead @-@ out man Mark Renshaw after struggling to come back after the crash which hindered his lead @-@ out train . There were two technical turns before the finish line . Peter Sagan was sitting in third wheel of his team 's train ; he negotiated the final 90 degree corner with 200 m to go and profited from an unintentional lead @-@ out by Jurgen Roelandts ( Lotto ? Soudal ) , who had opened his sprint before Sagan outpowered him in the last hundred meters to win the day . It was Sagan 's eleventh victory in Tour de Suisse history , equaling the records of Hugo Koblet and Ferdi Kubler . Because of a split in the peloton , Pinot lost five seconds to general classification rival Geraint Thomas of Team Sky .

= = = Stage 7 = = =

19 June 2015 ? Biel to Düringen 160 km ( 99 @.@ 4 mi )

Stage 7 was a flat stage except for three Category 3 climbs in the second half of the stage . The opening 60 km ( 37 @.@ 3 mi ) were totally flat . After 91 km ( 56 @.@ 5 mi ) , the riders tackled the finishing circuit twice . During that circuit , the first climb was the 1 @.@ 1 km ( 0 @.@ 7 mi ) -long Freiburgstrasse . There was a descent , then the Hauptstrasse climb was covered . During the second circuit , the Freiburgstrasse was attacked again . This last difficulty was situated 19 km ( 11 @.@ 8 mi ) from the finish line . The final 800 m ( 2 @.@ 624 @.@ 7 ft ) were steep .

World road race champion Micha? Kwiatkowski of the Etixx @-@ Quick Step squad made attempts at escaping before the peloton finally let him go 20 km ( 12 @.@ 4 mi ) in to the race . He was joined by Silvan Dillier ( BMC Racing Team ) , Daryl Impey ( Orica @-@ GreenEDGE ) and Axel Domont ( Ag2r @-@ La Mondiale ) . After the break was resolved , the peloton was content in letting the gap increase to 3 ' 15 " with 129 km ( 80 @.@ 2 mi ) of racing remaining . The best placed rider in this quartet was Impey , 29 ' 18 " down on race leader Thibaut Pinot ( FDJ ) . The average speed of the first hour was 47 @.@ 7 km / h ( 29 @.@ 6 mph ) . Tinkoff @-@ Saxo and Giant @-@ Alpecin dictated the pace , pulling back thirty seconds . With 88 km ( 54 @.@ 7 mi ) to go , the race passed through the village of Misery @-@ Courtion , at which point the gap stood at 2 ' 50 " . A crash occurred in the outskirts of Misery @-@ Courtion , involving Ben Hermans and Manuel Senni ( both with BMC Racing Team ) . They were able to remount their bikes and rejoined the main field .

Wanty @-@ Groupe Gobert 's Enrico Gasparotto abandoned two hours into the stage , which were contested at the speed of 44 km / h ( 27 @.@ 3 mph ) . With 55 km ( 34 @.@ 2 mi ) remaining , the escape had a minute lead . Domont took the maximum points atop the first KOM of the day . As they crossed the line for the last time with 37 km ( 23 @.@ 0 mi ) to go , the breakers were resisting as the time difference was still around a minute . On the second lap of the finishing circuit , Domont was dropped from the breakaway and adsorbed in to the peloton . The now three @-@ rider break had a thirty @-@ second advantage with 10 km ( 6 @.@ 2 mi ) remaining . Team Katusha controlled the front of the field in the final kilometers . With 2 km ( 1 @.@ 2 mi ) to go , the peloton almost pulled back the all unyielding breakers , Kwiatkowski decided to go alone . He was caught in sight of the finish line . The uphill sprint was won by Alexander Kristoff of Team Katusha , with Peter Sagan ( Tinkoff @-@ Saxo ) being a close second . Sagan got out of Kristoff 's slipstream to try to out @-@ sprint him in the final meters , but to no avail . This was Kristoff 's eighteenth victory of the season . Through bad positioning , Pinot lost a further five seconds to Geraint Thomas ( Team Sky )

in the overall classification . " It was a hard day , I haven 't felt super in this Tour de Suisse but I did a good sprint today , " said the winner . " I got ahead of Sagan and I was able to go again at the end to hold off his run . "

### == = Stage 8 == =

20 June 2015 ? Bern to Bern 152 @. @ 5 km ( 94 @. @ 8 mi )

The stage was ridden in and around Bern , the first time the Tour de Suisse came to the national capital since 2009 . This was another stage which featured a lot of uncategorized rises . It however contained four Category 3 ascents . The event featured four circuits of 38 @. @ 7 km ( 24 @. @ 0 mi ) around town , on the same course that will be used in the stage nine 's time trial . The two climbs present in the loops gave KOM points on the last two laps only . The riders first took on the 800 m ( 2 @, @ 624 @. @ 7 ft ) -long Category 3 Liebewill . It was the 400 m ( 1 @, @ 312 @. @ 3 ft ) -long Aargauerstalden climb . The stage finished on the flat , a plateau after the latter ascent , which a number of technical turns .

A breakaway of twelve formed at the very start , but was deemed too dangerous and quickly reabsorbed . Citing back problems , Trek Factory Racing rider Jasper Stuyven abandoned the race . The attackers continued to try to form a break and Micha? Kwiatkowski 's ( Etixx @- @ Quick Step ) move finally made it . A break of nineteen riders emerged , containing among others Warren Barguil ( Giant @- @ Alpecin ) , the best placed rider of the move on general classification at 4 ' 52 " . Team Sky , Cannondale ? Garmin and FDJ led the chase . Despite the main field 's effort , the gap grew to two minutes with 87 km ( 54 @. @ 1 mi ) to cover .

With 75 km ( 46 @. @ 6 mi ) to go in the stage , the gap stood at 2 ' 12 " . However , Team Sky , Cannondale ? Garmin and FDJ were still working to keep the escapees in range . The time difference to the escape was remaining stationary with around two minutes at the 40 km ( 24 @. @ 9 mi ) to go marker . As the peloton passed through the finish line to undertake the last lap of the circuit , Jakob Fuglsang of Astana abandoned the race . He confirmed later he quit the race due to stomach problems . The peloton was forming a long single line as the pace was high . Maxime Monfort ( Lotto ? Soudal ) crashed and abandoned , bruising on his shoulder and back .

With 20 km ( 12 @. @ 4 mi ) remaining , Astana 's Alexey Lutsenko attacked the escapees , followed by Jan Bakelants ( Ag2r @- @ La Mondiale ) ; they opened a gap , holding off their former breakaway companions . Bakelants lead for the last few kilometers except under the flamme rouge and Lutsenko outsprinted him to claim the victory . He described the win as the biggest of his career . The main field arrived in small groups , with the first one containing Team Sky 's Geraint Thomas and Tom Dumoulin of Giant ? Alpecin , who made a marginal time gain of three seconds on Thibaut Pinot . The latter remained in the leaders ' jersey .

### == = Stage 9 == =

21 June 2015 ? Bern to Bern 38 @. @ 4 km ( 23 @. @ 9 mi )

The lengthy individual time trial featured a climb in the middle of it , but no KOM points were on offer . The course was technical and featured several turnarounds . It was the same course that was raced four times in stage eight , except that the finish line was not situated at the same place . Midway through the stage , the riders took on the difficulty of the day , the 800 m ( 2 @, @ 624 @. @ 7 ft ) -long Liebewill . There were other small climbs to pepper the course .

The final general classification of the race would definitely be decided on this stage , and a majority of the observers believed that Pinot would lose his lead since he is not a great time trialist , meaning he is not at his best when fighting against the wind on rolling terrain . Geraint Thomas of Team Sky was only 34 seconds down coming into the stage and was among the favorites to take the overall victory . Tom Dumoulin ( Giant @- @ Alpecin ) won the short prologue and was a contender for overall victory too since he is a time trial specialist , but he had 1 ' 24 " to make up for . Another contender for overall win was Simon ?pilak of Team Katusha ( 47 seconds down ) . Fourth @- @ placed Domenico Pozzovivo ( Ag2r @- @ La Mondiale ) was an enigma , as he had mixed

performances in time trials throughout his career . As far as the stage win in itself was concerned , solo effort specialists Fabian Cancellara ( Trek Factory Racing ) and Adriano Malori ( Movistar Team ) were to be considered , but they had no chance of a victory in the general classification since they were too far down in the rankings .

It is to be noted that the riders started in reverse order of the general classification , so Pinot was the last one to start . The riders went off the starting ramp in two minutes increments . Cancellara got on course early , as he was the seventh man to start . He clocked a time of 48 ' 55 " , which would stay a reference for most of the day . He was followed out of the starting area by Matthias Brändle ( IAM Cycling ) who came in 2 ' 28 " after Cancellara , somewhat surprisingly as he is a time trial specialist too . Malori set the best time at the 21 km ( 13 @. @ 0 mi ) intermediate point but faded a little bit in the end , coming to the finish line only 15 seconds off Cancellara 's time . The Swiss would stay as a reference for a while now that some time trial specialists had finished their effort and failed to beat him . Damien Gaudin ( Ag2r @- @ La Mondiale ) clocked in a time of 50 ' 46 " which put him in sixth position .

Cameron Meyer ( Orica ? GreenEDGE ) put in a time of 49 ' 43 " , 48 seconds off Cancellara 's mark . Around that time , general classification hopeful Dumoulin hopped off the starting ramp . Swiss Silvan Dillier ( BMC Racing Team ) provisionally slotted into sixth position with a time of 50 ' 19 " and minutes later , race leader Pinot got off the starting ramp . Jerome Coppel ( IAM Cycling ) crossed the finish line with a rapid time , only 25 seconds off Cancellara 's performance . Meanwhile , in early time splits , Pinot had already lost twelve seconds to Thomas . Last day 's stage winner Alexey Lutsenko of Astana confirmed his good form with a time of 50 ' 32 " .

At the 21 km ( 13 @. @ 0 mi ) marker , Dumoulin beat Malori 's best time by eleven seconds . ?pilak was also doing a fast time trial , being equal to the best time at the 15 @. @ 5 km ( 9 @. @ 6 mi ) mark and passing the 21 km ( 13 @. @ 0 mi ) arch faster than Dumoulin by four tenths of a second . By that time , Pinot had virtually lost his lead . Dumoulin took a very focused corner and he almost slammed into spectators upon exiting it , but no accident occurred . ?pilak needed fourteen seconds over Thomas to get in front of him in the general classification . Dumoulin came in with a time nineteen seconds better than Cancellara 's and won the stage with an average speed of 47 @. @ 407 km / h ( 29 @. @ 5 mph ) . ?pilak came in with a time of 48 ' 54 " and Thomas registered 49 ' 12 " , a difference of 18 seconds . Therefore , ?pilak was declared the official winner of the 2015 Tour de Suisse by five seconds .

" I ? m really happy and want to thank my teammates who helped me too much during the race . This is the biggest win of my career so far , " Spilak said . " The time trial was really hard but I liked it . It was up and down all the way and that helped me . I gave it everything . " It was the Slovenian 's tenth victory in the professional ranks .

= = Classification leadership = =

In the 2015 Tour de Suisse , three different jerseys were awarded . For the general classification , calculated by adding each cyclist 's finishing times on each stage , and the leader received a yellow jersey . This classification was considered the most important of the Tour de Suisse , and the winner of the classification was considered the winner of the race . There was also a mountains classification , the leadership of which was marked by a light blue jersey . In the mountains classification , points were won by reaching the top of a climb before other cyclists , with more points available for the higher @- @ categorised climbs . Hors Category gave 20 points to the first rider crossing ( 20 , 15 , 10 , 6 , 4 ) , a Category 1 was worth 12 points ( 12 , 8 , 6 , 4 , 2 ) , a Category 2 was worth 8 points ( 8 , 6 , 4 , 2 , 1 ) and a Category 3 was worth 5 points ( 5 , 3 , 2 , 1 ) .

The third jersey represented the points classification , marked by a white @- @ and @- @ red jersey . In the points classification , cyclists got points for finishing highly in a stage . A stage victory awarded 10 points , with 8 points for second , 6 for third , 4 for fourth and 2 for fifth . Points could also be earned at intermediate sprints location for finishing in the top three during each stage on a 6 ? 3 ? 1 scale . There was also a classification for teams , in which the times of the best three cyclists per team on each stage were added together ; the leading team at the end of the race was the team



with the lowest total time .

A combativity award was also attributed for the rider who had ridden the most aggressively in the eyes of the judges at the end of every stage . It could have been a rider who featured in breakaways or a cyclist who attacked often .

= = Classification standings = =