

= 2015 Clásica de San Sebastián =

The 2015 Clásica de San Sebastián was a one @-@ day cycling classic that took place in the Basque Country in Spain on 1 August 2015 . It was the 35th edition of the Clásica de San Sebastián and was the nineteenth race of the 2015 UCI World Tour . The defending champion was Alejandro Valverde (Movistar Team) , who won a solo victory in the 2014 race .

The race took place in and around the city of San Sebastián and was 219 kilometres (136 mi) in length . The principal difficulty in the race was the sequence of climbs in the final part of the course . Adam Yates (Orica ? GreenEDGE) attacked on the final climb , the Bordako Tontorra . Greg Van Avermaet (BMC Racing Team) was leading the race at the time , but he was hit by a race motorbike , forcing him out of the race . Yates went on to win a solo victory , 15 seconds ahead of the chasing group , becoming the first British rider to win the race . Valverde came third behind Philippe Gilbert (BMC) .

= = Route = =

The race began in San Sebastián with a 3 @.@ 7 kilometres (2 @.@ 3 mi) neutral zone and left the city to the west , along the coast of the Bay of Biscay . After 22 @.@ 6 kilometres (14 @.@ 0 mi) , in Zarautz , the course turned to the south for another 24 kilometres (15 mi) to come to Azpeitia . Here the route turned to the east and began climbing towards the first categorised climb of the day . The road gradually climbed for over 13 kilometres (8 @.@ 1 mi) , but only the final 3 @.@ 5 kilometres (2 @.@ 2 mi) were categorised . This section of road , the Alto de Iturburu , had an average gradient of 5 % and was a first @-@ category climb . The summit of the climb came after 59 @.@ 5 kilometres (37 @.@ 0 mi) .

After the descent , there was a fairly flat section of the course . This took the riders northeast for approximately 60 kilometres (37 mi) through Hernani , Oiartzun and Lezo before the first of two ascents of the Alto de Jaizkibel . This was also a first @-@ category climb ; it was 7 @.@ 8 kilometres (4 @.@ 8 mi) in length at an average gradient of 5 @.@ 8 % . The summit of the climb came after 125 kilometres (78 mi) , with 94 kilometres (58 mi) to go to the finish . There was then a descent and a fairly flat 20 @-@ kilometre (12 mi) section of road through Irun . The next climb was the second @-@ category Alto Arkale . This was 2 @.@ 7 kilometres (1 @.@ 7 mi) at 6 @.@ 3 % ; the summit came with 71 @.@ 2 kilometres (44 @.@ 2 mi) remaining . The descent took the riders through Oiartzun and then into a second loop through the climbs of the Alto de Jaizkibel and the Alto Arkale . At the second summit of the Alto Arkale , there were 30 @.@ 8 kilometres (19 @.@ 1 mi) remaining to the finish line .

The next section of the course was 20 kilometres (12 mi) of fairly flat roads . During this section of the race , the riders returned to San Sebastián and crossed the finish line ; at this point there were still 16 kilometres (9 @.@ 9 mi) remaining . The riders left the town again to face the final climb of the day , the second @-@ category Bordako Tontorra . This was a 2 @.@ 5 @-@ kilometre (1 @.@ 6 mi) climb at 9 % ; at the summit there were 7 @.@ 1 kilometres (4 @.@ 4 mi) of descent and then flat roads to the finish . The final climb was introduced in the 2014 edition and included gradients up to 20 % ; the lead group was formed on this ascent in the 2014 race , with Alejandro Valverde attacking on the descent and maintaining a gap to the finish line .

= = Teams = =

As the Clásica de San Sebastián is a UCI World Tour event , all seventeen UCI WorldTeams were invited automatically and obliged to send a squad . Two UCI Professional Continental teams , Caja Rural ? Seguros RGA and Cofidis , were given wildcard places to form a nineteen @-@ team peloton . Seventeen teams started the race with eight riders ; Team Sky and LottoNL ? Jumbo started the race with seven men . There were therefore 150 riders in the peloton at the start of the race .

= = Pre @-@ race favourites = =

The Clásica de San Sebastián is the most important one @-@ day race in Spain . It comes a week after the conclusion of the Tour de France . Some riders , including Chris Froome (Team Sky) , the winner of the Tour , chose not to participate in the race . Riders also arrived from the Tour in a variety of conditions : some were in good form , while others were exhausted . Another of the principal riders from the Tour de France , Alberto Contador (Tinkoff ? Saxo) , originally planned to participate but was forced to withdraw because of a fever .

The principal favourite for the race was Alejandro Valverde (Movistar Team) , who was third in the Tour de France . Valverde was the defending champion in the Clásica de San Sebastián , having won the 2014 edition with an attack on the final descent ; he had also won the 2008 race from a small group sprint . As well as his podium place at the Tour , Valverde had also won La Flèche Wallonne and the Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège in 2015 . The other principal favourite was Joaquim Rodríguez (Team Katusha) . Rodríguez won two stages during the Tour and was expected to be in fresh condition , as he did not attempt a high position in the general classification .

Several other riders were considered to have a strong chance of victory . These included Philippe Gilbert (BMC Racing Team) , the winner in 2011 , Mikel Landa (Astana) , who had been third in the Giro d 'Italia , and Julian Alaphilippe (Etixx ? Quick @-@ Step) , who had finished second to Valverde in both La Flèche Wallonne and Liège ? Bastogne ? Liège .

= = Race report = =

A breakaway of eight riders formed in the early part of the race . These were Manuele Boaro (Tinkoff ? Saxo) , Valerio Agnoli (Astana) , Dennis Vanendert (Lotto ? Soudal) , Nathan Haas (Cannondale ? Garmin) , Maarten Wynants (LottoNL ? Jumbo) , Thomas Degand (IAM Cycling) , Lluís Mas (Caja Rural ? Seguros RGA) and Romain Hardy (Cofidis) . These riders stayed together for approximately 160 kilometres (99 mi) ; the Movistar Team controlled the peloton and kept the breakaway 's lead to around three minutes . Boaro attacked the group on the second climb of the Alto de Jaizkibel and opened a gap on the other riders , but he was too far from the finish to make a solo attack last to the finish of the race .

On the final climb of the Alto de Jaizkibel , there were several attacks in the main peloton . These attacks came together on the penultimate climb of the day , the Alto Arkale , to form a sixteen @-@ rider lead group . This group included Warren Barguil (Giant @-@ Alpecin) , Dan Martin (Cannondale @-@ Garmin) , Philippe Gilbert and Greg Van Avermaet (both BMC Racing Team) , Alejandro Valverde (Movistar Team) , Joaquim Rodríguez (Team Katusha) and Adam Yates (Orica ? GreenEDGE) . There was significant confusion on the final climb : the last riders from the early breakaway were being caught and the television coverage failed , so the teams were relying on race radio to follow the riders ' positions .

The first attacks on the final climb came from Barguil and Van Avermaet , followed by Yates , while Rodríguez and Valverde waited in the main group . Yates passed Barguil and was chasing Van Avermaet , who was in the lead of the race . Towards the top of the climb , however , Van Avermaet was hit from behind by one of the motorbikes providing television coverage of the race . He was knocked to the ground and the frame of the bike was broken ; Van Avermaet was unable to finish the race . Yates therefore led the race alone at the top of the final climb as the race descended into San Sebastián . Unlike in the 2014 race , when he had crashed out of the lead group on the final descent , Yates extended his lead to 15 seconds as the road flattened out and was able to keep this advantage to the end of the race . As he crossed the finish line , Yates was unaware that he had won the race , as he believed that the initial breakaway had not been caught . It took some time for the message to come through from his team that he had won . In the group behind , Gilbert sprinted to second place ahead of Valverde .

Yates 's victory was the first WorldTour victory of his career and the first ever victory by a British rider in the Clásica de San Sebastián . Van Avermaet and the BMC team , however , were unhappy with the crash that had eliminated him from the race and issued a statement from Jim Ochowicz ,

the team 's manager , saying that " Greg was robbed and the BMC Racing Team was robbed " and that the team would " explore every legal option " . Simon Yates ? Adam 's brother and his teammate at Orica ? GreenEDGE ? described these comments as " quite disrespectful " ; Van Avermaet later clarified that he considered Yates 's victory well @-@ deserved . The race organisers later wrote to Van Avermaet apologising for the incident ; Van Avermaet was unable to read the letter , however , as it was written in Spanish .

= = Results = =