

= 1906 Tour de France =

The 1906 Tour de France was the fourth Tour de France , and second to use the point system . Taking place from 4 to 29 July 1906 the total race distance was 4 824 kilometres (2 824 mi) run over 13 stages , with the winner averaging 24 463 kilometres per hour (15 201 mph) . New in this year were the mountain climbs in the Massif Central . Like its predecessors , it still had cheating and sabotage taking place . Four competitors were disqualified for taking trains as a shortcut and spectators threw nails in the road . However , this did not stop René Pottier from taking a big lead in the first stages . Free of tendinitis that plagued his 1905 chances , he dominated the entire race .

= = Changes from the 1905 Tour de France = =

Tour organiser Henri Desgrange had been happy with the increased length of the 1905 Tour de France , and decided to put even more stages in the 1906 version . The introduction of mountain stages had also been successful , so this year not only the Vosges were included , but also the Massif Central .

The increased length made it possible to follow the borders of France , and in 1906 the perimeter was closely followed .

The points system in the 1905 Tour de France had been successful enough in reducing cheating , so the Tour organisers used it again in the 1906 Tour de France , with a few changes : whereas in 1905 , time differences still had some effect on the points distribution , in 1906 time differences were unimportant , and points were only given for the order in which the cyclists finished . The winner of the stage received one point , the second rider two points , et cetera . After the eighth stage , only 16 cyclists were remaining , and the results from the first eight stages were recalculated , with only the remaining cyclists , and the points were redistributed among the remaining riders in accordance with their positions in those stages .

The first stage ended in Lille and the second stage started in Douai ; this was the first time that a stage did not start where the previous stage ended . Also for the first time , the Tour went outside France : in the second stage , Germany (Alsace - Lorraine was then part of Germany) was visited . The 1906 Tour also saw the introduction of the flamme rouge (red flame) , a red flag that indicates that the cyclists only have one kilometre to go .

= = Participants = =

There were 100 cyclists signed up for the race , but only 76 of them came to the start . One of the absentees was Henri Cornet , winner of the 1904 Tour de France . Four cyclists were Belgian , one was Luxembourgian (later winner François Faber) , one was German , and the rest were French . Louis Trousselier , winner of the 1905 Tour de France , was present . The riders were not grouped in teams , but some cyclists had the same sponsor , even though they were not allowed to work together . Before the race started , most was expected from Cadolle , Aucouturier , Georget , Pottier , Trousselier , Dortignac and Petit - Breton .

As in 1905 , the cyclists were divided in two categories , the coureurs de vitesse and the coureurs sur machines poinçonnées , where the riders in the first category were allowed to change bicycles , which could be an advantage in the mountains , where they could use a bicycle with lower gears . In 1905 , sponsors had not been so enthusiastic about entering their cyclists in this category , but in 1906 they had learned that it had a commercial advantage to have cyclists starting in the poinçonnées category , because the average French citizen could identify more with them . In 1906 , more than half of the cyclists started in the poinçonnées category , including Lucien Petit - Breton , one of the pre - favourites .

= = Race details = =

As in previous years , the spectators tried to assist their preferred riders by trying to impede their opponents . On the first stage , nails had been thrown on the road , and all cyclists except Lucien Petit @-@ Breton punctured . This stage was won by Emile Georget in a sprint . In the second stage , René Pottier , who had shown his climbing abilities in the previous edition , aimed for the victory . He was stopped after 175 kilometres (109 mi) with mechanical failure , and he lost 58 minutes . The other main contenders worked together to stay away from Pottier , but Pottier chased them for 200 kilometres (120 mi) , caught them 25 kilometres (16 mi) before the finish , and even left them behind , winning the stage with a margin of 1 ' 30 " on Petit @-@ Breton and more than 9 minutes on the rest . In the third stage , four cyclists (Julien Gabory , Henri Gauban , Gaston Tuvache and Maurice Carrere) were disqualified for taking the train . The Ballon d 'Alsace , which had been the first real mountain in the Tour de France the previous year , was featured again . Just as the year before , it was mounted first by Pottier . The stage was also won by Pottier , more than 45 minutes ahead of the rest .

Pottier also won the fourth stage . In the fifth stage , he was leading by one hour at the halfway point . A cycling legend says that he decided to stop , entered a bar and ordered a bottle of wine , and drank it almost completely . When he saw the first other cyclists passing by , Pottier mounted his bicycle again , went after them , and won the stage .

By this point , Pottier was leading the overall classification firmly . The winner of the 1905 Tour de France , Louis Trousselier , had had a bad first half of the Tour , and was many points behind . Trousselier rediscovered his form in the second half of the race , won the 7th , 9th , 10th and 11th stages , and was challenging the second place of Georges Passerieu . Passerieu defended his position by winning the 12th stage . In the last stage , Pottier showed his strength by winning the stage , after finishing together in Paris with Passerieu .

= = Results = =

= = = Stage results = = =

After the 13th stage , the race was followed by two timed exhibition laps on the Velodrome in Paris , the result of which was not counted for the overall classification . The winner was Emile Georget , who finished the 1 @,@ 332 metres (4 @,@ 370 ft) in 2 : 07 @.@ 20 .

= = = General classification = = =

One hundred cyclists had entered for the 1906 Tour de France ; only 82 of them showed up at the start . Only 49 cyclists finished the first stage , and the number of active cyclists quickly fell to 37 in stage two , 29 in stage three , until 16 after stage eight . At that point , the points given in the first eight stages were redistributed among the remaining riders in accordance with their positions in those stages . At the end of the Tour de France , only 14 cyclists finished . The cyclists were not grouped in teams ; some cyclists had the same sponsor , but they were not allowed to work together .

= = = Other classifications = = =

Lucien Petit @-@ Breton was the winner of the " machines poinçonnées " category .

The organising newspaper l 'Auto named René Pottier the meilleur grimpeur . This unofficial title is the precursor to the mountains classification .

= = Aftermath = =

The Tour organisers did not make many changes the rules or route for the next race , because they had worked in the 1906 Tour de France . The revised points system would be kept in this form until

1911 , only to be changed a little bit in 1912 before being replaced by the time system in 1913 . The flamme rouge that was introduced in 1906 to indicate the final kilometre of a stage was kept and is still in use .

René Pottier would not defend his title in the 1907 Tour de France , because he would commit suicide before , after discovering that his wife had had an affair while he was riding the Tour . Petit @-@ Breton and Georget would start again in the 1907 Tour and duel for the overall victory , which would be won by Petit @-@ Breton .

To honor Pottier 's achievements on the Ballon d 'Alsace , a monument was placed for him on top of that mountain .