

In 1986 a cyclist made history. He became the first American to win the Tour de France. Greg LeMond rode faster than the 200 other riders who had entered the race. Since then, many Americans have become more interested in cycling and the Tour de France.

Beginning in 1913, cycling teams from all over the world have traveled to France for the Tour de France. For twenty-four days, riders attempt to maintain a 30 mile-per-hour pace over 2,500 miles of French mountains and countryside.

The Tour de France is a stage race. The same riders compete each day in a series of events called stage races. Usually these are either road races or time trials. Road races are events over long distances, often over 100 miles. Shorter, faster races are called time trials. In time trials, individual racers attempt to "beat the clock. When the last stage of the race is over, the rider with the best total time is the winner of the Tour de France.

The mountain stages of the Tour are the most dangerous. Often the roads are in poor condition. Steep, bumpy roads and speeds up to 60 miles per hour often force riders to brake too hard. If the brakes constantly rub the tires, the rims become burning hot. Cyclists who have used their brakes too much run the risk of crashing. In case of an accident, each team has support vehicles that carry spare bicycles and bike parts.

During the race, riders are recognized for their victories in each stage of the race and for overall performance. On each day, the rider who has the best overall time is given the yellow jersey to wear. The rider who is the fastest over a mountain stage of the race gets to wear

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the red polka-dotted jersey. The white jersey is presented to the best 306
young rider in the race. 311