

Tour de France

start: Lüttich (July 3th)
finish: Paris (July 25th)
number of riders: 189 (21 teams of 9)
individual time trail: stage 19
team time trail: stage 4
mountain time trail: stage 16
total length: 3395 km
highest point: 2000 m

- ▲ mountain stages
- flat stages
- time trail



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Figure 1: Tour de France route 2004

stages of no particular difficulty - 'flat stages' (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 20), two of medium difficulty - 'medium mountain' (11, 18), five long stages of particular difficulty - 'high mountain' (10, 12, 13, 15, 17), two individual (16, 19) and one team (4) time trials. The final winner is decided on the general individual time ranking which is built up by adding together the individual stage and prologue times, including time bonuses and penalties.

In 2004 21 teams of 9 riders each participated, making a total of 189 competitors. Some of them gave up during the race - due to injury, poor performance or because of doping offences - so that their individual stage times are not representative and have been disregarded. We concentrate on the 147 riders who on July 25th 2004 actually crossed the finish line on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Each of them had successfully completed all stages of the race. Every year the organisers design a new course composed of stages of different degrees of difficulty. In 2004 there was a prologue and 20 other stages: