

Created by **Robert Baldi**  
 Training Type: **Race Simulation**  
 Working HR Zones: **Zone 3 to Zone 5c**  
 Total Class Length: **60 minutes**



Photo: Col de la Madeleine

### Profile Description

This climb-laden stage may not be a deciding one for the GC and the *maillot jaune* (most likely by this time it's already been decided), but it is perfect for a breakaway. It's going to be a big day for the KOM—any contender for the polka-dot jersey will want to be first over the top of the Col du Glandon and Col de la Madeleine to bag themselves useful points in that classification. On this day, you will have a choice of either going for an early attack on the two big climbs or saving your legs in the peloton until the three smaller climbs. Overall work will be evenly matched whether you're in the breakaway or the chasing pack, so expect this stage to come down to the wire!



**Objective and Intensity**

You can either give a simple choice for your riders or, if you prefer, you can divide them into two groups: breakaways or peloton, attackers or chasers. The breakaway group will attack every section of road, except for the recoveries. This is done at an intensity in Zone 4. In reality, their actual speed and power output will start to wane as the route progresses, but the difficulty rating and perceived exertion would remain the same. The peloton will let the breakaways open a gap while they work at a moderately paced Zone 3 effort on the first two climbs and along the valley to Albertville. However, they will be working harder, at Zone 5a, on the final three climbs, and Zone 5b on the road to the finish line. Mathematically speaking, the breakaways will spend 19 minutes working at 5% more effort than their rivals over the first two climbs and valley road but 15 minutes at 5% less than their rivals over the subsequent three climbs. This lines up for a thrilling showdown in the final 3 minutes, with the chasing peloton trying to “make the catch” before the breakaways reach the finish line...or from the other perspective, the breakaway group trying to stay away just long enough to win the stage!

**Song 1: Introduction and Warm-up****Fever, Stereo MCs, 5:30, 108 rpm**

Use this time to introduce the road ahead and the choice the riders must face: either join the breakaway early on and work at Zone 4 all day, or stay in the safety of the peloton at a moderately hard Zone 3 but have to play “catch-up” later with some intense Zone 5a work. Either way, they’re going to have to work hard—it’s just a choice between steadily hard or moderate-to-extremely hard!

Let your students know that anyone who’s not in the mood to race can treat this as an endurance ride; perhaps they are a rider with an injury, or are ill or fell in a crash, or perhaps has fulfilled his role as a domestique and has permission to take it easy. Today, they simply need to get to the finish line before the cutoff so they may help their team on the final day. Anyone outside the cutoff time will be eliminated and unable to help their team leader on the GC, so it is usual that riders (today, probably the sprinters) will form a “*gruppetto*” or “*autobus*,” a group at the back that sticks together and rides the exact pace necessary to ensure they can ride another day. No more, no less. If nothing else, the Tour organisers are unlikely to eliminate such a sizeable group of riders!

**Song 2 & 3: Col du Glandon & Recovery****God is a DJ, Faithless, 8:01, 65 rpm****To Go Beyond (II), Enya, 3:00**

Decision time: How hard do you feel like working? Is a Zone 4 effort a case of too much too soon? Then stay in the peloton; there’s safety in numbers. Are your legs itching to attack already? Then go with the inevitable breakaway—the King of the Mountains competition will make sure it succeeds at least until the final stretch.

If you’re attacking, this should be a very strong effort to create a sizeable gap between your group and the peloton; otherwise, there’ll be riders who’ll bridge the gap and increase the size of your group, thereby reducing your chances of winning. So, this should feel almost like your best 8-minute effort but without going “into the red.” You can recover when you reach the top, knowing you have a gap that can’t be closed on the descent.

As the instructor, you will have to almost double your commentary for this ride, encouraging the attackers while also making sure the peloton doesn’t fall asleep—after all, they need to keep the gap to a minimum or they may not be able to catch them before the finish line.

**Song 4 & 5: Col de la Madeleine & Recovery****L’Esperanza (DJ Tiesto remix), Airscape, 8:26, 70 rpm****The Celts, Enya, 3:00**

Again, the peloton needs to be at a slightly uncomfortable Zone 3 effort to make sure they retain a modicum of control on the race. If they take their eye off the ball, if the effort is too comfortable, the gap will widen to an extent that no amount of effort later will close it before the finish line.

For the attackers, this is the time to widen the gap further by working at Zone 4 for the entire climb. You know they're going to come after you, so you need that extra margin of safety if you want to win this stage. The breakaway will be working together well by now, with no "newcomers" that bridged the gap and every rider in the group knowing that this may be their day of glory.

### **Song 6: Transitional Flat Road**

#### **Ca Plane Pour Moi, Plastic Bertrand, 3:00**

Attackers, it's the last chance to gain some vital time over the peloton; your team car has told you that behind you the chase is getting organized, with the big teams that want to win beginning to regroup and getting ready to hunt you down!

Peloton, get ready! You've had it easy till now but your team is not represented in the breakaway and your boss desperately wants a win to keep the sponsors happy. Hey, pay the bills—if they're not happy, you're out of a job! So buckle up, because it's about to get intense!

To use the mathematical model, the breakaways have worked 5% harder than the peloton for 19 minutes thus far; you could use this to reflect the size of the gap out on the road and therefore the size of the task at hand for the chasing pack. Obviously, it would not be possible to open a 19-minute gap in 19 minutes of actual riding but, on the real road, this is a likely gap that those breakaways would have over several hours of riding hard.

### **Song 7 & 8: Col de Tamié & Recovery**

#### **Tour de France, Kraftwerk, 5:12, 67 rpm**

#### **Feel the Sun Rise, Banyan Tree, 2:10**

The hunt is on! The chasing peloton begins to step up the pace and is now racing at Zone 5a here, their best 5-minute effort. They must try and use this climb to close some of the gap that the breakaway has created. You won't catch them straight away but, as you have a recovery on the descent, you can afford to go "all-out" here.

Attackers: Don't be tempted to venture into your "red zone"; stick with Zone 4 to minimize your losses. You will lose some ground but, hopefully, you did enough in the first half to ensure that you have a chance of winning on the final stretch.

### **Song 9 & 10: Col de l'Epine & Recovery**

#### **Toca Me (Extended 12" Club Mix), Fragma, 5:47, 69 rpm**

#### **Spirit's Lament, Michael Flatley, 2:01**

Using the mathematical model, the breakaways are still 14 minutes ahead. There's much work yet to be done, so the chasing pack will again be baying for blood with their best 5-minute effort at Zone 5a, while the breakaway group limits their losses at a strong but steady Zone 4. The recovery is short, make sure your students take advantage of it.

### **Song 11: Col de la Croix Fry**

#### **Smack my Bitch Up, Prodigy, 5:43, 68 rpm**

By now, the breakaway will be tired, only capable of a Zone 4 effort and hoping that it will be enough to see them through to the finish line. The chasing pack won't be able to make the catch

on the climb but needs to do whatever it can to close that gap to a handful of minutes by working above threshold once more. This time, however, there won't be much of a break at the summit so it'll feel more intense...but at least they'll be within shooting range of that pesky breakaway group!

### **Song 12: Catch the Breakaways**

#### **Hungarian, Bond, 3:00**

On the road, the gap is down to 4 minutes. It can be closed but it's time for the peloton to give whatever it has left, its best all-out 3-minute effort at Zone 5b, because that breakaway is not going to give up without a fight!

Breakaways: Zone 4 at the very least, but you will get caught before the end, so you'll need to dig deeper into your "suitcase of courage" and find the energy and desire to pick up your effort to Zone 5a.

Have the chasing pack make the catch about a minute from the finish line. However, the breakaways shouldn't give up—the peloton still has to get past them to win the stage. Both groups, maximum effort right to the line, photo finish!

Note that although the road is downhill, it's not very technical or steep into the arrival village and can be worked at quite a high level...not all descents are recoveries! Downhill finishes can be as exciting, if not more so, than mountaintop climbs, as the pace is frenetic and the desperation of all involved is plain to see. Sometimes it works, as Thor Hushovd caught and passed Jeremy Roy on the 13<sup>th</sup> stage of the 2011 Tour de France; sometimes it doesn't, as when David Millar's brave solo breakaway was caught in the last kilometer of stage 6 of the 2009 Tour into Barcelona.

### **Song 13: Cool-down and Stretch**

#### **Easter Song, A Man Called Adam, 5:56**

If you have them split into groups, tell them that the decision has been referred to the *commissaires*, who will analyse the photo to see who won. If you've left them to choose for themselves whether they wanted to be in the breakaway or the peloton (my preferred option), then that individual was the winner, regardless of group—either the breakaway succeeded by the skin of its collective teeth or the peloton only just edged out in front in the last few meters (in both cases, with the individual as the winner, of course!).

The moral of today's story?

There are no easy days in the Tour de France—there's always somebody wanting to win, whether it's time gained for the GC, a stage win, King of the Mountains points, the young rider's competition, the coveted green jersey, etc. Even the last-placed man on the GC, known as the *lantern rouge* (named after the red lantern at the back of the last train carriage), receives a prize and lucrative exhibition rides during the off-season. And, yes, it is well sought-after—a veritable race to the bottom!

**2013 Stage 19 “Should I Stay or Should I Go?” Playlist**

<b>Song Title</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Artist</b>	<b>Album</b>	<b>Source</b>
Fever	5:30	Stereo MCs	The Karma Collection	Amazon.com
God is a DJ	8:01	Faithless	The Best of Faithless	iTunes
To Go Beyond (pt 2)	3:00	Enya	The Celts (remastered)	iTunes
L’Esperanza (DJ Tiesto remix)	8:26	Airscape	L’Esperanza (2009)	iTunes
The Celts	3:00	Enya	The Celts (remastered)	iTunes
Ça Plane Pour Moi	3:00	Plastic Bertrand	Ça Plane Pour moi (Single)	iTunes
Tour de France	5:12	Kraftwerk	Tour de France	iTunes
Feel the Sun Rise	2:10	Banyan Tree	In Search of Sunrise 7	iTunes
Toca Me (extended 12” club mix)	5:47	Fragma	Godskitchen Trance Anthems	iTunes
Spirit’s Lament	2:01	Michael Flatley	Feet of Flames	iTunes
Smack My Bitch Up	5:43	Prodigy	The Fat of the Land	iTunes
Hungarian	3:00	Bond	Classified	iTunes
Easter Song	5:56	A Man Called Adam	Nature Child	iTunes