

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

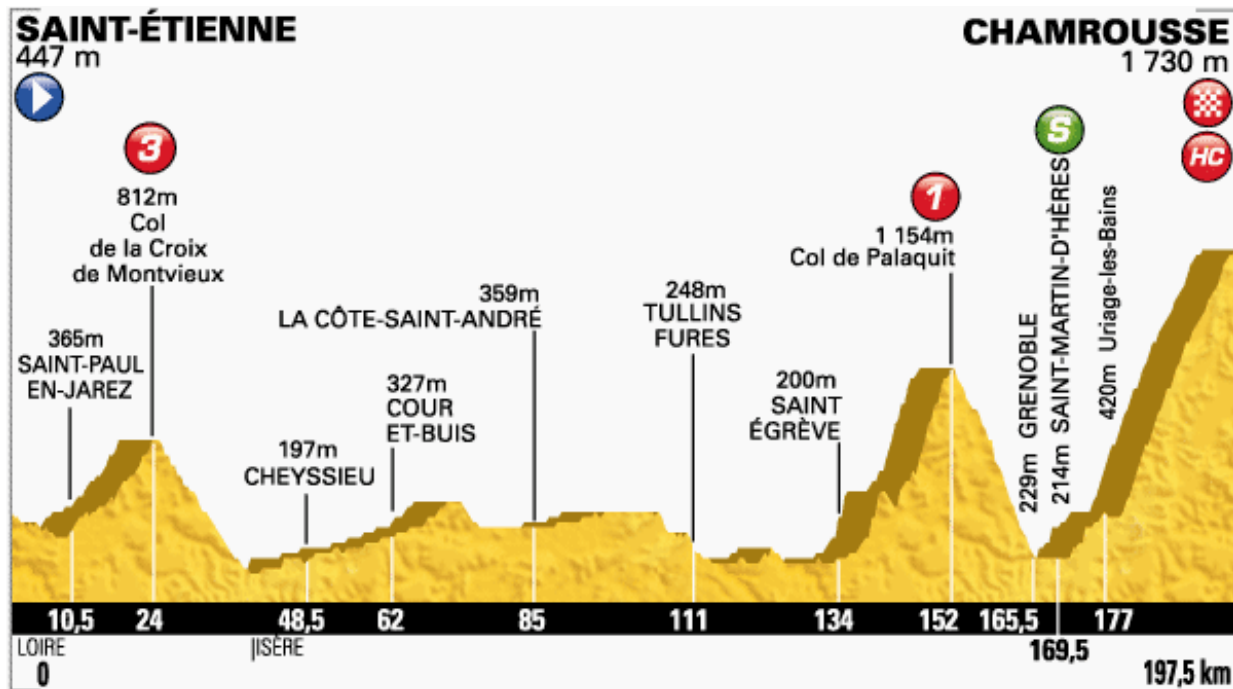


Profile Overview

Most stages of the Tour de France are not ridden all-out—at least for these elite athletes. Many of us would pegged at our limit just trying to keep up with the peloton as it “cruised” along at tempo. My interpretation of this stage attempts to give the riders in our class a chance to experience the different moods and intensities one could experience during a 197.5 km (123 mi) day in the saddle.

This stage seems to have it all, with three climbs (two of which are super steep), rolling terrain at tempo, descents, a sprint, and a mountaintop finish.

Now that I’m excited...Let’s get this race on the road!



Profile Objective and Intensity

All the big action starts at 134 kilometers (83 miles), or for our purposes, at the 24-minute mark. That doesn't mean we just sit around sipping espresso for the better part of half an hour waiting to get tossed into the fire. No, we still need to race, but also learn to manage our intensity and resources. Before the first category 1 climb begins, we should target Zone 3 with a short foray into Zone 4 on the category 3 Col de la Croix de Montvieux. The second half of the race will be a battle between Zone 4 and Zone 5 with Zone 4 being the overall loser in the end. The only reprieve available once we hit the big mountains is the short descent leading to the intermediate sprint (km 169). Since this stage ends in a mountaintop finish, you better save some for the final assault at the summit.

So what are the challenges?

As riders are approaching the end of the second week, they already have 2,159.5 kilometers (1,342 mi) in their legs. Even though they are professional athletes, this is most certainly taking a toll on their strength and stamina. Although there is no way to simulate this level of wear and tear on your riders (with good conscience), you can at least give them perspective. The obvious challenge is the mountains and the predicted violent finish. However, we can gloss over what it takes [out of us] to get to the base of the category 1 Col de Palaquit. There is a fair amount of intensity and resource management involved. Let's not forget the sprint between the two beasts. You may need to help your riders decide if the intermediate sprint should be included in their objective. If climbing is their primary goal, then skipping the sprint will be a wise option. Encourage them to choose their punishment wisely.

The Basic Storyline

At this point in the Grand Tour, two things are rising from the ashes: first, the overall leaders (GC, or general classification) are becoming known, and second, the battle for the King of the Mountains is heating up. My guess is the additional battle for the green sprinter's jersey will not be a prominent feature in this stage since the intermediate sprint is directly after a category climb. Since the sprinters will be customarily dropped on the climb, their chances of making it back to the leaders on the descent is slim to none.

At the beginning of the stage, the first climb will be business as usual with the peloton staying together. Since the climbers and GC contenders want to ensure a strong, unhindered finish, their team domestiques will maintain a steady tempo over the rolling terrain.

If you want to spice things up, you can always throw in an attempted breakaway or two.

This leaves the highlight of the day for the end. Combining the last two climbs and everything in between, riders will be pushed to sustain Zone 4 and Zone 5 for 33 minutes. Even though both mountains are quite abusive, the biggest battles will occur on the “beyond category” (HC) final climb up the Montée de Chamrousse (13 minutes).

Warm-Up / Neutral

Bad Stone, The Crystal Method, 5:12, 90 rpm

The race has not begun “officially” but the riders are rolling toward kilometer 0. This is considered a neutral start. It is a great opportunity for us to give our riders the rundown on what they can expect.

As you begin (or continue) to warm up, you are rolling through the town of Saint Etienne. Hopefully your breakfast included some apples and blueberries, as these are the region's specialties. It is also home to the oldest tramway in France (created in 1881), so that could be an option for getting home if your legs fail you.

Although the race profile immediately draws our attention to the final category 1 and beyond category (HC) climbs, we still have the challenge of making it there with fuel in the tank. The first 24 minutes will be a test of maturity and discipline. The early minutes still include a category 3 climb up the Col de la Croix de Montvieux. If we push too hard on this early climb, we may leave ourselves wanting when the attacks begin in the high mountains.

Continue to warm up, but there is no need to drive the heart rate high just yet. The race starts on a slight downhill, providing additional time to spin the legs before the first challenge arrives.

Start / Slight Downhill**Brick, S-X, 4:02, 70 rpm**

At kilometer 0 the race officially starts and the tempo picks up over time. No one is in a big rush to pound the pavement just yet. There are many miles (and minutes) ahead with the demands on the body and spirit great. Although it seems odd that the tempo of the music is so slow (70 rpm), on a slight downhill, riders would not be spinning their legs very fast and may even coast some of the time as they are carried along by the peloton.

Even though we have just crossed kilometer 0, no one should be pedal-to-the-metal yet. There is much to do and we have the threat of the high mountains at the end.

Let's pick up the intensity slowly and progressively to Zone 2 (or low Zone 3) as we approach the base of the Col de la Croix de Montvieux.

The category 3 climb is 812 meters (2,664 feet) high, with an average grade of 4.1% over 8 kilometers (5 miles). For our purposes, this is a moderate climb lasting 6 and a half minutes.

Remember, the goal is not to crush the climb. Even if you are shooting for King of the Mountain points, the big payout is on the upcoming category 1 and beyond category climbs at the end. You want to have something left in reserve for them.

Col de la Croix de Montvieux / 812 m (2,664 ft) / 8 km / 4.1%—Cat. 3**Voodoo People, The Prodigy, 6:27, 75 rpm**

After 9 minutes of steady, progressive riding, the first mountain of the stage arrives. Threshold (Zone 4) management is the name of the game. If riders push too hard into Zone 5, they risk a sorry finish. The music tempo is faster as climbs go (75 rpm) to potentially save the legs yet still tax the cardiovascular system. This is also a good time to wake up the legs and see what they've got to give.

It is time to say hello to our legs as the Col de la Croix de Montvieux greets you.

This climb should be challenging, wake up the leg muscles, but not throw you over the edge just yet. Keep the ENTIRE profile in your head. The end justifies the means.

Just like the riders in the Tour, you may be using this initial climb to continue warming up. Very little pressure has been placed on the legs thus far. This can also be a test of the psyche. If your legs are feeling good as you settle into the climb, you may be thinking, "Oh yeah, I've got this." If, on the other hand, your legs are already throwing a flag on the play, you may be tempted to write the day off. Either temptation may mislead you. Keep it steady and let the climb play out before making any grand assumptions on your ability for the day.

As you approach the top, there is a decision to make. If you are interested in capturing some King of the Mountain (climbing) points, you will need to accelerate or surge during the last 30–45 seconds. If you are content letting some of the other riders have a go at this smaller KOM, don't accelerate, but hold a strong, steady tempo over the top.

Descent

Rock Ya Body (NBA Live 2006 Beat), Da Riffs, 1:03, 108 rpm

A short climb provides a short descent. Fortunately the descent dumps us on a rolling road for some steady riding.

Nice job on the climb. I noticed some great decisions and efforts. This is going to be an exciting race.

Take the next minute to spin out the legs and grab a drink. Once we hit the bottom, the peloton will regroup for some tempo riding.

Enjoying Time in the Peloton

Around, Arrived, Chris Zippel, 7:11, 89 rpm

This rolling section encompasses approximately 100 kilometers (62 miles) of road in real life. We are going to cover it in basically 7 minutes. At an average speed of 25 mph, this would take over 2 hours. We are hitting warp speed of 530+ mph to accomplish this in 7 minutes.

Obviously, a little joking is involved. None of this race day is designed to exactly simulate what would be experienced on the road. This rolling section is no exception.

The overall goal is to hold a steady Zone 3 effort (which is still not easy) and maintain a consistent 85–90 rpm cadence regardless of whether on a flat road or rolling hill.

The next 7 minutes will resemble a steady-state effort. Although the terrain will roll, our goal is to maintain a consistent intensity targeting Zone 3.

We are obviously not emphasizing this aspect of the stage, as it would by itself encompass a 2.5-hour stretch of road. Consider this a taste of tempo riding in the peloton.

Rolling terrain means there will be a number of small hills to ride over en route to the big climbs. Since we will be sustaining a steady intensity and cadence, you can choose to climb the hills standing or seated. Regardless of whether you decide to remain seated or come out of the saddle, your leg speed must remain the same.

The tempo of this stretch is 85–90 rpm. Standing at this leg speed will cause your heart rate to rise. How much your heart rate increases on these small hills will depend on how relaxed you remain. If you become tense and fight with form, your heart rate will increase more drastically. Stay relaxed and flow with the rhythm of the peloton.

At 3:45 the rhythm fades and the female narrator talks about “going forth to the fields, into the vineyards...blossoms have opened...” This is a good time to allow your riders to distract themselves with the beautiful scenery of France. The fields, flowers, and vineyards.

Col de Palaquit / 1,154 m (3,786 ft) / 14.1 km / 6.1%—Cat. 1

Alidade (Wizzy Noise Remix), Blue Planet Corporation, 9:19, 70 rpm

We have arrived at the high mountains of this stage. The next 33 minutes will push your class to their limit multiple times and in multiple ways. Residual fatigue is starting to show its ugly head and will soon show itself in our legs, lungs, and, if we let it, our soul. This climb will remain steady in Zone 4, with a possible Zone 5 effort within the last 30–60 seconds depending on whether riders attack the summit for KOM points.

I hope you conserved some energy during the opening of the stage. It is now time to put our climbing legs in full gear.

Unlike the first climb, which witnessed a calm peloton, this 9-minute category 1 mammoth will pull the best riders to the front and the best ride from your legs.

Your director sportif has commanded you to ride an aggressive tempo to the top. This aggressive threshold effort will do much to dwarf random accelerations and rogue attacks. The goal is to maintain control until the final kilometer (last 60 seconds), where we make our move to gobble up climbing points to retain our domination of the polka-dot jersey.

How long can you stay on the edge? If you are a climbing domestique or lieutenant (2nd in charge), you know your job may be done once you reach the top. You will still need to climb to the final summit, but the pressure to set tempo and attacks will be off. If you are the team leader, and the sole hope for victory in Paris, you still need to have a bit more to give for the final climb of the day.

(1 minute to the top)

You can feel the energy. Every rider at the front is conscious of each other and knows exactly where each person is without looking. It is an innate sense. Are you ready for a throw-down? Ready or not, it is time to show those around you who has the legs and who deserves the climber's jersey!

Descent / (Mentally) Prepare for the Sprint

This Was Then, This Is Now, Andy Timmons, 3:43, 109 rpm

This is not a time to recover. Consider this a fast-paced descent leading to the only intermediate sprint of the stage. Even though the sprinters are still in the process of having their legs tweaked, the opportunity is available for possibly some unknown rider to snag some glory under the green banner.

Yes, the legs will get a break from the pounding pavement of the Col de Palaquit, but the tension is high and the descent fast, so keep your wheels under you.

Since we can't carve through the hairpin corners on a mere millimeter of rubber like the Tour riders will do, we will simulate the excitement by maintaining a fast leg speed to the bottom.

If you are able, try to maintain a 100–110 rpm cadence for the next 3 minutes as we dive to the valley floor.

Keep in mind that once the flat road greets us, so will an increase in intensity as the riders fight to regroup for a chance at the sprint.

The Sprint—Seeing Green!

Crew Race 1: Urban Assault, Trevor Morris, 3:20, 96 rpm

As the intensity of the music builds, encourage your riders to slowly raise their own intensity until they are holding a steady Zone 4 effort. The music will have multiple waves of energy, or as they are called in the music world, crescendos. Each crescendo should reinvigorate your riders' effort until the final swell of energy at 3:13.

We are back on the flat road. This is not flat easy, but flat out!

Add some resistance, come out of the saddle, and accelerate until you find yourself once again on the edge. This is the green welcome mat of our intermediate sprint.

Every time the energy of the music swells, a rider next to you is accelerating. You only have one choice—to match or better their acceleration.

You've got 45 seconds to make your first notable appearance at the Tour de France. Your first opportunity to put your name on the list of sprinters in this year's race.

20 seconds to go! It is now or never! Don't look back. Just see green!

Time to Breathe...Sort of

Ghosts of the Past, Trevor Morris, 1:50, ~67 rpm

For better or worse, this merely 2-minute segment will barely smother the fire that has erupted in your riders' lungs. Regardless of how they feel, there is only one objective that is worthy of their focus—the mountaintop finish.

Put the sprint behind you. Put the last 42 minutes behind you. All that matters now is the next 13 minutes and your victory on the Montée de Chamrousse.

Take a deep breath in. Command your legs to submit to the task. Take possibly your last drink and prepare yourself to achieve a new personal record.

Montée de Chamrousse / 1,730 m (5,675 ft) / 18.2 km / 7.3%—HC**BVD BOY – Original Mix, BMNDZ, 3:20, 70 rpm****Ignant, The Reef, 5:34, 64 rpm****Crew Race: Sounding Streets, Trevor Morris, 4:02, 64 rpm**

This final climb is divided into three sections, represented by each of the three songs. The first section sets the stage for an aggressive ascent that separates the leaders from everyone else. The second section takes riders up a steep section ranging from a 9.9% to 10.5% grade. The final section is the battle for the stage win. It starts at the steepest segment of the climb at 11.7% with 3 km to go. Although the pitch of the road lessens to 5.4% at the summit, the intensity of the riders builds as each shows why they deserve to win.

(First section)

It is show time! If you are a climber, this is your glory land. If you are not, prepare to fall prostrate over your handlebars in prayer for the suffering to end!

Whatever pace you choose will remain until the finish. This is not a time for reason, but raw courage.

Add resistance to simulate the second-steepest section of road for the day. Set your mind now, because THE steepest piece of pavement of the stage is minutes away.

Steady and strong is the body! Determined and unstoppable are the mind and soul.

Only 9 riders remain. You are among them.

(Second section)

Nine riders is too many and thus the accelerations begin. Every 30 seconds a rider will surge for 10 seconds. You need to be able to match each surge. Or, if you are feeling spunky, throw in a surge of your own.

*Every acceleration, surge, or slight change in tempo runs the risk of tossing you deep into unsustainable frenzy. This is not a time to think about what your body can or cannot do. This is just a **time to do**.*

Don't look down. Don't look back. Look into the eyes of your opponents with a maniacal grin on your face and ride harder.

(Final section)

Only 4 riders remain.

It is a free-for-all. Anything goes as long as it goes uphill—and fast.

Attack...Surge...Accelerate.

Your desire to win is determined by the extent you are willing to suffer and push your body.

You could wait until within the last 60 seconds to attack, but that is too predictable. There are only 2 minutes separating you and a victory salute. Go now!

Go into your pain locker and come out on fire!

This will be the best 2 minutes of your life!

Cool-Down (Stretch or Chat)

Final (Live Edit), Hol Baumann, 5:24, 80 rpm

There is usually so much excitement (and exhaustion) after a ride like this that I like to leave riders the freedom to talk, yell, or just hang over their handlebars. Leave them with something encouraging and remind them of what they just did.

What you displayed and accomplished in the last 33 minutes was monumental.

Your unexpected assault during the last 2 minutes of that final climb set the crowds on Montée de Chamrousse into a rage!

Enjoy your victory. Eat, drink (sports drinks), and be merry, because tomorrow two category 1 climbs and the legendary beyond category Col d'Izoard wait patiently.

Do encourage everyone to take time to stretch after class, to eat, and continue to stay hydrated. For me, I'm looking for a café to sit back and enjoy a nice French press.

Stage 13 Playlist

Section	Music	BPM	Time
Warm-Up / Neutral	Bad Stone The Crystal Method	90	5:12
Start / Slight Downhill	Bricks S-X	70	4:02
Col del la Croix de Montvieux	Voodoo People The Prodigy	75	6:27
Descent	Rock Ya Body (NBA Live 2008 Beat) Da Riffs	108	1:03
Rolling Road	Around, Arrived Chris Zippel	89	7:11
Col de Palaquit	Alidade (Wizzy Noise Remix) Blue Planet Corporation	70	9:19
Descent	That Was Then, This Is Now Andy Timmons	109	3:43
Sprint / Seeing Green!	Crew Race 1: Urban Assault Trevor Morris	86	3:20
Time to Breathe...	Ghosts of the Past Trevor Morris	~67	1:50
Montée de Chamrousse (13min)	BVD BOY DMNDZ	70	3:20
	Ignant The Reef	64	5:34
	Crew Race 3: Sounding Streets Trevor Morris	64	4:02
Cool-Down / Stretch	Final – live edit Hol Baumann	80	5:24