

**The authors . . . take you through every detail
of this great event.** From the Foreword by Lance Armstrong, 6-time Tour de France Winner

Tour de France **FOR** **DUMMIES®**

Phil Liggett

Broadcast Journalist and Tour de France Expert

James Raia

Syndicated Columnist and Cycling Journalist

Sammarye Lewis

Author and Tour de France Photojournalist



A Reference for the Rest of Us!®

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**by Phil Liggett, James
Raia, Sammarye Lewis**

Foreword by Lance Armstrong



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About the Authors

Phil Liggett, a former competitive amateur cyclist, has attended every Tour de France since 1973 and is universally known as “the Voice of Cycling.” A television commentator since 1978, Liggett has also covered six Summer Olympics and four Winter Olympics. He has been recognized throughout his career with several international broadcasting awards and was nominated for an Emmy in 2003 as Outstanding Sports Personality.

Trained as a journalist in his native Great Britain, Phil worked for *Cycling* magazine for four years. He has held freelance positions with *The Guardian* and *The Observer* and currently writes for the *Daily Telegraph* in London. He has reported for BBC World Service radio, and in recent years has covered the Tour de France for the Outdoor Life Network. Phil is author and coauthor of several other books, including *The Tour de France 1988 and 1989*, *The Complete Book of Performance Cycling*, and *The Fastest Man on Two Wheels: In Pursuit of Chris Boardman*.

Phil has been married since 1971 to Pat Tipper, a 1968 Olympic speedskater. A masseuse, Pat has worked on five Tours de France for women and managed British teams at World championships and other major races. She currently works as a university lecturer in dance science. The Liggetts live outside of London.

James Raia has been a journalist since 1978. He has worked as a staff writer and columnist for three daily newspapers and has been a fulltime freelance writer since 1987. While traveling to more than a dozen countries on assignment, James has contributed sports, business, travel, and lifestyle articles to numerous newspapers, magazines, news services, and Web sites, including *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *USA Today*, *Golf Magazine*, and *The Miami Herald*.

James first reported on cycling in 1980 and has covered many domestic and international races, including four World Champion-ships and every Tour de France since 1997. He also publishes two electronic newsletters, *Endurance Sports News* and *Tour de France Times*, and a car review column *The Weekly Driver*, all available on his Web site: www.ByJamesRaia.com. He has provided Tour de France radio commentary for several networks, including National Public Radio. A long-distance runner who lives in Sacramento, California, James has completed more than 75 marathons and ultramarathons.

Sammarye Lewis has many roles in the cycling world, including photojournalist, cycling fan, and event management consultant. Reporting from the Tour for four years as Velogal, she writes a daily online Tour de France journal for Paceline.com, the Web site for Lance Armstrong and his team. She has contributed to Active.com, Athletic Insight.com, CyclingNews.com, and the Daily Peloton.com as well as several print publications. Sammarye is author of the book *The Podium Girl Gone Bad — Twisted Tales from the Tour de France*. She also created and markets Podium Girl Gone Bad apparel and works in race management and coordinator capacity for the U.S. Pro Cycling Tour.

Sammmarye is Web master for the Unofficial Lance Armstrong Fan Club and Discovery Pro Cycling Team Fans Web sites as well as www.velogal.smugmug.com and www.velogal.blogspot.com.

Authors' Dedications and Acknowledgments

To Trish, my long-suffering wife, who has never seen me in July since 1972, and to David Saunders, a television commentator and journalist who invited me to be his driver on the Tour de France in 1973 and who died in a car crash in 1978.

— Phil Liggett

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— James Raia

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— Sammarye Lewis

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Foreword

Since 1993, when I rode and for 12 days in my first attempt at the Tour de France, the annual July event has become my sporting life. Until 1996, I had finished the three-week race to Paris only once, and when I was diagnosed with cancer, the Tour de France became a memory. A much harder battle — that for life itself — began. Life since that black period has taken on a new meaning to me, and the Tour de France has been my target every year since. I returned to racing in 1998, and by 1999, as a fitter and mentally different rider, I returned to the Tour, racing for almost a month in any kind of weather, over any type of terrain. I had around me the best team of riders any Tour leader could wish for (you'll understand what I mean by that as you read this book).

I am often asked why, as the overall winner, I do not win the last stage into Paris. But as you find out in *Tour de France For Dummies*, it doesn't always work that way. Instead, those who feel they can win the Tour go in search of gaining time on the specialist stages, like the time trials or the grueling legs through the mountains. These are the stages where the race is won and lost. Winning the final stage would just be the icing on the cake.

When you look at your television screen and see these stages, where a pack of riders all appear to be pedaling along together, you may wonder where the excitement is. But the truth is, the Tour de France is a happening bigger than any other annual sporting event. Millions of roadside spectators derive pleasure from watching us sweat it out in the heat of a French summer. In fact, for more than 100 years, the race has stopped France in its tracks each July. Elections have even been moved to another date, because the public has wanted to hear only about the race's progress. During the Tour, France is inundated by a media army numbering more than a 1,000 and an entourage of more than 5,000, all of whom follow the daily events as we journey around France and its neighboring countries. Meanwhile, the 198 starters in the race are gradually reduced to perhaps 100 by the finish in Paris.

In this book, you come to understand an event that appears complex, but is, in the end, pretty simple: The rider who gets back to Paris in the fastest overall time is the winner. British cycling expert Phil Liggett and Americans James Raia and Sammarye Lewis have covered 44 Tours as writers, and Phil has not missed a wheel turning since 1973. Together, they take you through every detail of this great event; after you read it, your next step is to turn up in France and catch that most infectious enthusiasm known as Tour Fever.

— Lance Armstrong

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Introduction

Maybe Lance Armstrong's recovery from cancer and his subsequent Tour de France titles piqued your curiosity. Perhaps a television video clip of a massive group of cyclists sprinting furiously on the cobblestone streets of Paris caught your attention.

That's the way the Tour de France works. A fleeting glimpse of the race triggers an interest. All of a sudden, you want to know more. You're a fan. Then you're hooked on everything about the race. You can't get enough and want to find out all you can. *Tour de France For Dummies* can help. It provides race strategies, details riders' skills, examines rules and regulations, and explains nuances of the three-week race and its more than 100-year history.

About This Book

Many available Tour de France books highlight its history and champions. From early years, when the race almost ended two years into its tenure, to the legacies of great riders, volumes detail the Tour's more than 100 years. This book covers that same information, but it's not only about specific race information. In this book, you also find out about the people and places around the event. Here, you find all the information you need to

watch the race in person, view it on television, or surf the Internet for results and rider profiles.

In this book, we also examine the intricacies of bikes and how race equipment has evolved through the years. There's a century of personalities, technology, history, and legend sprinkled throughout this book — the Tour's famous icons, infamous characters, and fleeting moments that stand as epic testaments to the great race.

Conventions Used in This Book

The Tour de France resonates with the lexicon of France. As such, French words and phrases used throughout this book are printed in italics. We also help you pronounce them, in case you want to sound like a cycling guru to your friends.

The most critical term to know is *peloton* (*pell-oh-tawn*), a French term that means the main pack of riders. This term appears many times throughout this book.

In gray boxes throughout the book, you also find sidebars — short clips of information about interesting cyclists or other Tour information. Skip these if you're short on time, or head right for them if you want a colorful lowdown on the Tour.

As a global sport, the Tour is followed by millions of fans via the Internet. So, all Web sites listed in *Tour de France For Dummies* are printed in a special font, like this. In some instances, Internet addresses listed may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type it exactly the way you see it in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

What You're Not to Read

Technically speaking, the Tour de France is not easy to follow. So, throughout this book, text preceded by a Technical Stuff icon designates specific areas of technical overload. You don't have to examine technical sections to understand the subject it represents, so feel free to skip these, if you want.

Foolish Assumptions

We make only one assumption about you, dear reader: You have an interest in one of the world's most enduring and popular sporting events: the Tour de France. You may have watched the race on the Outdoor Life Network or on one of the Tour's many international television network outlets. Or, you may have seen riders swiftly

cruise past an avenue of a French city you were visiting. However you caught the Tour de France bug, this book explains event basics to you (if you're a newcomer) and also provides additional details about the people, places, and equipment associated with this race (if you already have some familiarity with the event).

How This Book Is Organized

Like all *For Dummies* books, information in *Tour de France For Dummies* is divided into five parts. Each part of the book contains several chapters, as follows.

Part I: A Bicycle Race Unlike Any Other

The Tour de France is the world's most popular and prestigious bicycle race. In this part, you find out the event's history, traditions, and basic elements as a team sport.

In Chapter 1, we discuss how the Tour began and how the race is conducted as a team event — that is, individual riders competing within teams. All details necessary to follow the event, whether you're watching from the sidelines in France or sitting comfortably on your living room couch, are also featured in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, specifics are highlighted: from how the race route is chosen each year to the varied unique subcategories of competitions within the overall race.

The Tour is replete with tradition, and in Chapter 3, you get the scoop on race jerseys and find out why certain riders wear jerseys like no one else in the race. You also discover the meaning and nuances of the podium and its awards and honors. Finally, you get a look at other race specialties, like the honor of being in last place and how racers manage to please their sponsors.