

The Tour de France 2021

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Live on ITV4

Series overview:

ITV will bring viewers comprehensive live coverage of the 108th Tour de France, which begins on Saturday 26 June in Brest.

Presenter Gary Imlach is joined on ITV4 by commentators Ned Boulting and David Millar, reporters Daniel Friebe and Matt Rendell along with former Team Sky rider Peter Kennaugh and racing legend Chis Boardman for expert analysis during the 21-stage race.

Featuring the longest stage of the Tour since 2000, 154 miles between Vierzon and Le Creusot, along with six mountain stages and three finishes at altitude, this

time the world's most famous road cycling race visits the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Morvan and the Massif Central before ending at its traditional home, the Champs-Elysees in Paris, on Sunday July 18.

Originally due to start in July in Copenhagen, the tour was rescheduled to June because of the upcoming Olympic Games. Due to restrictions, the presentation team will again be based at Maidstone Studios this year, with Daniel Friebe on hand in France to capture riders' reactions.

It is the twelfth time ITV4 has screened daily live coverage and extended highlights of the Tour, with more than 85 hours of live cycling to be shown during the event.

As well as daily updates from the men's Tour, ITV4's coverage will include live footage from La Course women's race on June 26, won in 2020 by Britain's Lizzie Deignan.

Last year's Tour winner Tadej Pogačar will go into the race as a strong favourite along with Primož Roglič who he beat to the 2020 title, while British hopes could rest on Ineos Grenadiers duo Geraint Thomas and Tao Geoghegan-Hart, or Simon Yates, who produced a third-placed finish at the Giro, while four-time winner Chris Froome is due to line up for his new team Israel Start-Up Nation.

This is a Vsquared production for ITV4.

Press Pack Interviews

GARY IMLACH

Who do you think will win this year, and why?

"I really don't know, but I've a feeling that if Primoz Roglic doesn't win the Tour this year he may never win it. And after losing the yellow jersey on the penultimate stage last year he'll be hoping to put the result beyond reasonable doubt well before then."

What do you think will be the key stage in this year's Tour, and why?

"After last year's late drama, I think it could once again come down to the final time trial the day before Paris. There are two of them on this year's route, totalling 58km, and for all the spectacle and drama of the mountain stages

they're likely to decide the race."

Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to this time?

"A visit to Mont Ventoux is always a grand occasion and this year, for the first time, the riders will be climbing it twice in a single stage. It should be a great day."

CHRIS BOARDMAN

Who do you think will win this year, and why?

"Roglič is my tip. We forget how consistent he was last year, faltering only once, at the last. He'll be hungrier than anyone in 2021 but as he'll have been race free since the spring, this is a faith-based prediction. He'll have a good team behind him and no one has shone enough to challenge for leadership in his absence so the hierarchy at Jumbo-Visma is clear."

What do you think will be the key stage in this year's Tour, and why?

"With several young riders close on recent form and climbing ability, the time trials will likely shape this edition of the race. Rather than shut it down and make a defensive contest, with so many good time trialists - Thomas, Pogacar and Roglič amongst them - then final rolling TT may provide a platform to steel the jersey - as Pogacar did in 2021 - on the penultimate day."

Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to this time?

"A close race. 2021 feels more open than ever with at least 4 strong favourites (Carapaz, Thomas, Pogacar and Roglič) with half a dozen just behind who could take the prize if the circumstances fall just right. Rain on the descent to Le Grand Bornand or cross winds on the road to Nîmes before the final rest day could change everything."

MATT RENDELL

Who do you think will win this year, and why?

"Richard Carapaz. If he can rediscover the form that won him the 2019 Giro d'Italia, when Primož Roglič was powerless to stop him, he will be unbeatable. And his personal friendship with probably the best pure climber in the sport, the Movistar leader Miguel Ángel López - they share a passion for fishing - could prove key to deciding the Tour."

What do you think will be the key stage in this year's Tour, and why?

"Stage 9, finishing at Tignes, the town that the 2019 Tour never reached. A tough mountain stage, the day before the first rest day. The next 12 days of racing will be a response to whatever happens there."

Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to this time?

"All those astonishing chateaux along the Loire that we will see on stages 6 and 7, including the Château du Clos Lucé where Leonardo da Vinci died in 1519. It stands inside the Val de Loire UNESCO World Heritage site."

DANIEL FRIEBE

Who do you think will win this year, and why?

"I'll err on the side of caution & the force of an apparently époque-defining, possibly sport-redefining talent in Tadej Pogačar. He will be severely tested by INEOS & Roglič, of course, but one thorough Pog-cineration in the mountains will put him out of reach."

What do you think will be the key stage in this year's Tour, and why?

"Grand Tours are now so close (not one has been won by more than three minutes since the 2016 Tour) that the last major stage is almost always decisive. This year that means the Saint-Émilion time-trial, although I'd be astonished & delighted if it was as dramatic as last year's final act at La Planche des Belles Filles."

Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to this time?

"An obvious choice but the battle of the Slovenians will be riveting, not least because, in the eyes of the wider public, last year's heartbreak has transformed Roglič from inscrutable cyborg into the sentimental choice & would-be people's champion."

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