

TDF 2015 Stage 3: Mur de Huy

Created by **Matt Scheffer**

Training Type: **Threshold/Race Day**

Working HR Zones: **Zone 3 to Zone 5**

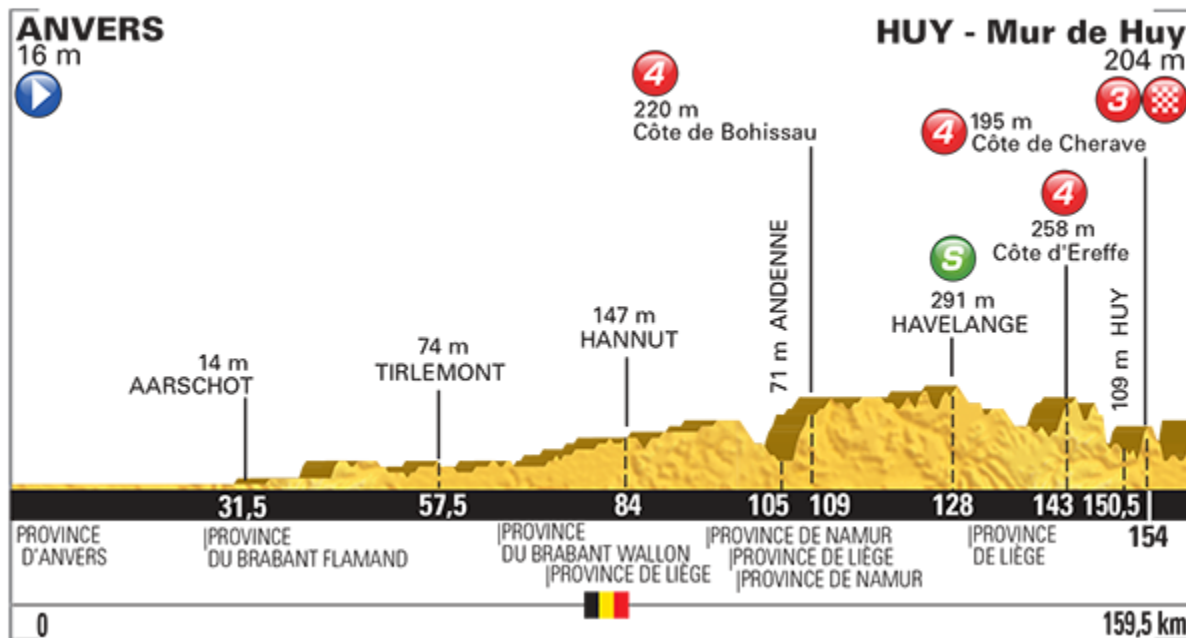
Total Class Length: **60 minutes**

Profile Description

This day of the Tour de France will look more like a one-day classic profile than a normal early stage. It follows much the same route as the one-day Spring Classic race, La Flèche Wallonne, and features what has been called the longest kilometer in racing, the final ascent of the Mur de Huy, with gradients over 20%!

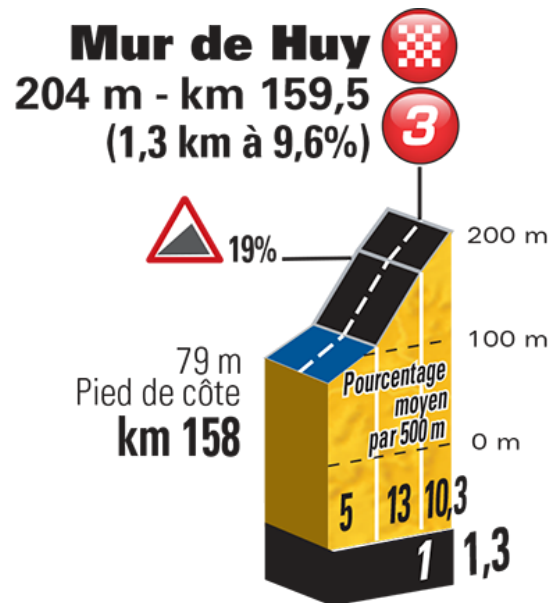
A comment from Tour de France organizer Christian Prudhomme on the stage:

The first finish of the Tour at the top of the Mur de Huy will be noticed on the occasion of the third day of the race. But other than the promising show in the final moments of the stage, the hierarchy that will be established on the line will already give a good idea of the level of form of the top guns. In the same way that Nibali's performance in Sheffield announced the stunning masterpiece of the Italian on the 2014 Tour, the man who will tame the Mur should be one of the main actors...





The Mur de Huy (Wall of Huy)



A profile of the Mur de Huy. Max gradients over 20%!

Objective and Intensity

The stage starts with a long, gradual uphill that we will target to ride at tempo, aiming for Zone 3. Then there is a quick descent and recovery, followed by a number of côtes (hills) that will get gradually harder as the race nears the finish; the first one will be in Zone 3, then the next in Zone 4, and finally the short, steep ascent of the Mur in Zone 5. There will be tempo riding as we approach the final climbs, at Zone 3 intensity.

Background of La Flèche Wallone

This stage continues the recent trend of Tour de France stages that resemble Spring Classics. Stage 4 this year will go over the cobbles of Northern France and resemble a portion of the Paris–Roubaix.

This stage resembles one of the “hilly” Spring Classic races, La Flèche Wallone. The first of two Belgian Ardennes classics, La Flèche Wallonne is today normally held mid-week between the Amstel Gold Race and Liège–Bastogne–Liège.

During the course of La Flèche Wallone, the riders ascend the Mur de Huy three times, but the Tour organizers have decided to be kind to the riders and only have one ascent.

La Flèche Wallone has the distinction of being the only Spring Classic won by two different Americans—Lance Armstrong in 1996, and Evie Stevens in 2013 in the women’s edition of the race.

Defining Feature—The Mur (the Wall)

The city of Huy holds an important place in the history of cycling. Just a kilometer away from the town center, a small promontory is visited in the springtime by thousands of spectators who come to enjoy the most breathtaking battle between *puncheurs* of the season.

The finish of La Flèche Wallonne, since 1984, has been the Chemin des Chapelles, also known as the Mur de Huy. It is a climb that hurts the legs and lungs of the greatest champions, with hill gradients of over 20%—certainly the longest kilometer on the cycling planet.

La Flèche Wallone has typically been dominated by the punchy climbers who can charge up that steep gradient, so look for the likes of Phillipe Gilbert, Joaquim Rodriguez, and Alejandro Valverde to make a run at winning this stage.

Profile

Warm-up

Sympathy for the Devil, Rolling Stones, 7:36

Lead the class through a gradual warm-up, having them add a little resistance every minute.

Today you are going to tackle Stage 3 of the 2015 Tour de France. The day's stage takes many of the same roads as one of the hilly Spring Classic one-day races that are done every spring called La Flèche Wallone.

The route consists of a number of punchy climbs up the côtes of the area. It can be a dangerous day for the GC competitors since they can get caught out on a course like this and nothing is predictable

Our task for today will be to make sure we control the race for our teammate, who has marked this stage on their calendar since it was announced last year. They are the kind of rider that has won La Flèche before and would love to add a tour stage win to their palmarès.

In order to do that, we need to make sure that the initial breakaway consists of the right mix of riders and is not heavy on our rival team's riders. We don't want them up the road to help their teammates later.

We will then make sure we make the race hard for our rivals as we approach and hit the four main climbs of the day, which will be short, but hard.

Finally, on the last climb of the day, the Mur, we will lay down the attack that will hopefully win the stage for us on what has been called the longest kilometer in cycling.

Controlling the Makeup of the Day's Breakaway

19th Nervous Breakdown, Rolling Stones, 4:00

Have the class add a moderate amount of resistance and pick up their cadence. They should be targeting a medium Zone 3 effort.

Now that you have warmed up, the race is truly beginning. The breakaway for the day is trying to get established, but your team has real contender for the stage today. The goal in this section is not to let them get away until the right mix of riders is in it. You don't want your rivals to have lots of help up the road when you get to the sharp end of the stage, so we need to ride a good tempo and control who is able to get away.

Long Gradual Climb

Paradise City, Guns N' Roses, 6:46

Have the class continue the Zone 3 effort on this long gradual climb. Have them add some resistance to replicate a steadily increasing uphill. Have them take turns controlling the pace up

this climb, rotating through every minute, as it is a team effort that will keep the breakaway from getting too far up the road.

Let's keep the Zone 3 effort going as we climb a very gradual ramp for the next 6+ minutes. We are trying to make sure the breakaway does not get too big of a time gap.

The way we do that is by putting out a steady effort and taking turns as teammates to make sure no one gets too worn out too early in the stage.

Descent

Desire, U2, 3:00

Have the class reduce amount of resistance and pick up their cadence. They should still be targeting a Zone 3 effort.

What goes up must come down, right? Reduce the resistance some and pick up the cadence to replicate a descent. Make sure you have enough resistance that you are not bouncing in the saddle. Lots of cadence against no resistance does not work.

Recovery

Where Is My Mind, Pixies, 3:53

Have the class back it down to recovery, to prepare for the first of the côtes coming up. They should be targeting a Zone 2 effort.

Let's take a little break to gather ourselves for the climbs to come. Back it down to Zone 2 and recover your breath and strength for rest of the stage.

You've done a great job so far in keeping the break in check and keeping your leader out of the wind.

Côte de Bohissau

Shake a Leg, AC/DC, 2:51

Have the class add a moderate amount of resistance to reflect the climb. They should be targeting a high Zone 3 effort.

The first côte! The Côte de Bohissau, and now the stage is really beginning. The pace is being kept high by the teams that are eager to win the stage, and the sprinters are just trying to hold on.

Don't blow up here; there are three more climbs to go so we need to meter our effort. Try to climb and keep your HR in Zone 3. I know, easier said than done, but focus on your breath and you can do it.

Riding Tempo Between the Côtes**Even Flow, Pearl Jam, 4:56**

Have the class back it down to a smooth flat road, with a little headwind. They should be targeting a moderate Zone 3 effort.

Again, we are back on that “working flat.” We need to keep the tempo on in between the climbs to start reeling in the break and to ensure we are at the front of the peloton when we hit base of the next climb.

Côte d'Ereffe**Run Home Bulletproof, G4Gorilla (La Roux vs Priestess mashup), 5:06**

Have the class add a moderate amount of resistance to match the climb. They should be targeting a high Zone 3, low Zone 4 effort. This climb is a little harder than the last.

The second côte! The Côte d'Ereffe, and we've almost reeled in the break. The pace is picking up as we get very near the sharp end of the race.

Again, pace yourself up this climb. We are not here to blow up the race yet. This is a stage that will be won on that final climb up the Mur, and our goal is to deliver our team leader, which will be us when we get there, and to “soften up” the legs of our rivals.

Recovery Section (last recovery of class)**Son of a Preacher Man, Dusty Springfield, 2:28**

Have the class let up on the resistance and cadence and bring it back to a Zone 2 recovery effort.

Back it down and take a recovery from that hard effort on the climb. How was it?

This is our last recovery of the ride. After this is all climbs and tempo. The race is truly on now and we need to gather our strength for the final climbs.

Côte de Cherave**God Part II, U2, 3:15**

Have the class add a moderate to high amount of resistance to reflect the climb. They should be targeting a high Zone 4 effort. Add in two or three surges that last about 15 seconds with a 30- to 45-second break (still climbing) in between. This is to simulate the attacks that are bound to come at this point in the stage.

Our second to last climb of the day, the Côte de Cherave. Watch out here! As we have now caught the day's break, the opportunists and stage hunters will try to use this climb as a launching pad and try to sneak away. We can't let that happen, as we need to deliver our leader to the foot of the Mur at the front.

As the opportunists try to get away, we need to keep up with them. We are going add in a couple of surges every 30 seconds or so as we track down those breaks.

Tempo before the Mur!

Dani California, Red Hot Chili Peppers, 4:43

Have the class back it down to a smooth flat road, with a little headwind. They should be targeting a moderate Zone 3 effort.

This section of tempo is quick and leads to our final climb. We need to deliver our team leader to the base of the Mur so they can take care of business!

Mur de Huy!

Unbreakable, Fireflight, 3:26

Have the class add a high amount of resistance. They should be targeting a high Zone 4, low Zone 5 effort. This climb has some sections that rise over 20% gradient. It's like the slowest sprint in the world for these last 3.5 minutes.

Our final climb! Now we are the team leader and we need to deliver the stage win for our team. They've worked so hard for us all day—let's reward that hard work.

Make sure you keep just a little in the tank to finish this off. Right now just stick to your main rival's wheel and don't let them get a gap!

With about 1 minute remaining in the song:

You're still on your rival's wheel and now is the time to finish the job! Come up out of the saddle and bring it home over the Mur! They crowds are huge and they are chanting your name! You glance up and see the finishing flag. Hold on to that pace up what can only be described as a brutal climb!

And as you come over the crest of the climb and cross the line, you've done it!

Cool-down

Wonderwall, Oasis, 4:19

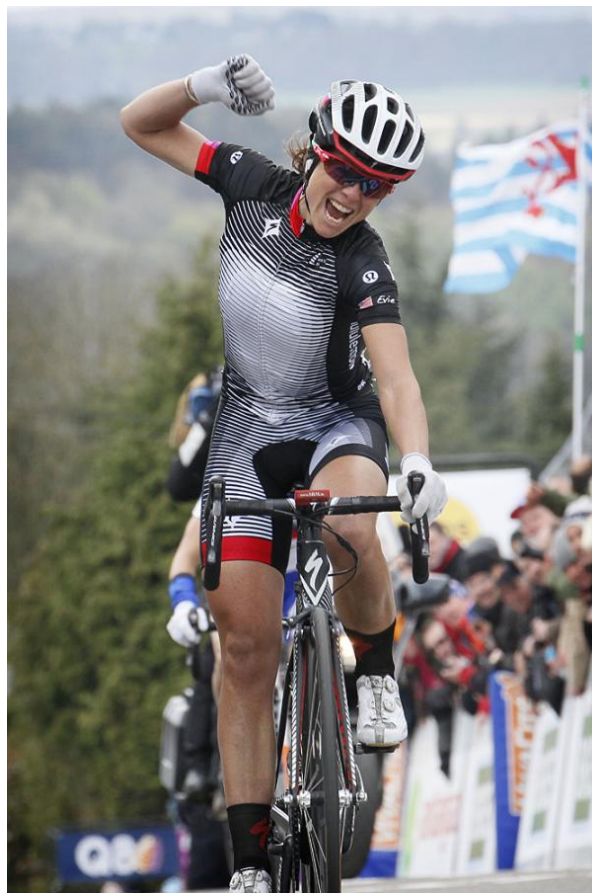
Running to Stand Still, U2, 4:19

Have the class back down their effort, take off the resistance, and cool down.

Incredible effort today! Celebrate your win on top of the "longest kilometer in cycling"!



Joaquim Rodriguez, La Flèche Wallone Champion in 2012



Evie Stevens, La Flèche Wallone Feminine Champion in 2012

After that final climb a lot of riders are so spent that they can't pedal one more stroke.



Philippe Gilbert, La Flèche Wallone Champion in 2011

Even the best racers in the world need help from time to time.



Marianne Vos, La Flèche Wallone Feminine Champion in 2007–09, 11

Finally, you have conquered the Mur de Huy!



Song	Artist	Album	Length	Source
Sympathy for the Devil	Rolling Stones	Beggars Banquet	7:36	eMusic/ iTunes
19 th Nervous Breakdown	Rolling Stones	Hot Rocks 1964–1971	4:00	eMusic/iTunes
Paradise City	Guns N' Roses	Appetite for Destruction	6:46	eMusic/iTunes
Desire	U2	Rattle and Hum	3:00	eMusic/iTunes
Where is My Mind	Pixies	Surfer Rosa	3:53	eMusic/iTunes
Shake a Leg	AC/DC	Back in Black	4:16	eMusic/iTunes
Even Flow	Pearl Jam	Ten	4:56	eMusic/iTunes
Run Home Bulletproof	G4Gorilla La Roux vs Priestess Mashup		3:13	Soundcloud
Son of a Preacher Man	Dusty Springfield	Dusty in Memphis	2:28	eMusic/iTunes
God Part II	U2	Rattle and Hum	3:15	eMusic/iTunes
Dani California	Red Hot Chili Peppers	Stadium Arcadium	4:43	eMusic/iTunes
Unbreakable	Fireflight	Unbreakable	3:26	eMusic/iTunes
Wonderwall	Oasis	(What's the Story) Morning Glory?	4:19	eMusic/iTunes
Running to Stand Still	U2	The Joshua Tree	4:19	eMusic/iTunes