

## CYCLING GLOSSARY

**Abandon** - When a rider quits during a race.

**Attack**- A sudden acceleration to move ahead of another rider or group of riders.

**Big Ringing It** - The chain on the big chain ring, going for maximum speed.

**Bonk** - Total exhaustion caused by lack of sufficient food during a long race or ride.

**Bonus Sprints** - On each stage, race organizers designate several intermediate points along the route where bonus points are given to the first three riders that cross the line. These sprints are a "race within a race" during each stage.

**Break/Breakaway** - A rider or group of riders that has left the main group behind.

**Caravan/Race Caravan** - The official and support vehicles in a race.

**Circuit Race** - A one-day race that laps around a circuitous route.

**Classic Race** - A one-day race in which the route travels between two separate points, instead of a circuitous route.

**Criterium** - A multi-lap, one-day race on a closed, short course, typically one mile or less.

**DNF** - Short for Did Not Finish.

**Domestique** - A team rider who will sacrifice his individual performance to help a designated teammate. Duties can include giving up one's bike for another rider, supplying refreshments to teammates, and catching breakaway riders. French for "servant."

**Draft** - To ride closely behind another racer, saving energy by using that racer as a wind break. Riding in front is very strenuous but affords a great energy-saving advantage to the rider behind.

**Drop/Dropped** - When a rider has been passed by another, or left behind.

**Echelon** - A staggered, long line of riders, each downwind of the rider ahead, allowing them to move considerably faster than a solo rider or small group of riders. In windy sections where there are crosswinds, a large peloton will form into echelons.

**Feed Zone** - A designated area along the route where riders can grab "musette bags" filled with food and drinks as they ride by. There is an unwritten rule in the peloton that riders should not attack the field while the riders are going through the feed zone.

**Field Sprint** - A mass sprint at the finish among the main group of riders in a road race.

**Gap** - The amount of time or distance between a rider or group of riders and another rider or group of riders.

**General Classification (G.C.)** - The overall leader board in the race, representing each rider's total cumulative time in the race. The rider with the lowest time is number one on the G.C.

**Grand Tour** - Refers to three-week major cycling stage races: Tour de France, Giro d'Italia (Tour of Italy), and Vuelta a Espana (Tour of Spain).

**Hammer** - To ride hard. Also, to "put the hammer down."

**Jump** - A quick acceleration, which usually develops into a sprint.

**KOM** - King of the Mountain. Award for the Best Climber.

**Lead Out** - To intentionally sacrifice one's chances in order to create a windbreak and creating an opening for a rider behind. A racing tactic whereby one rider races at high speed to give a head start to the rider on his/her wheel.

**Mechanical** - Slang for a mechanical problem with the bicycle. "He had a mechanical."

**Mountain Climb Classifications** - Large mountain climbs are normally classified according to their difficulty. Category 4 is the easiest, followed by Categories 3, 2, 1, and the Hors-Categorie (which is the hardest). Mountain climbs are classified according to their length and the average gradient of the road's incline.

**Off the Back** - When a rider or riders cannot keep pace with the main group and lag behind.

**Off the Front** - When a rider takes part in a breakaway.

**Paceline** - A string of riders that moves at high speed with each individual taking turns setting the pace and riding in the draft of the others. See also Train.

**Peloton** - The main field, or pack, of riders in the race. Peloton is French for a group moving forward.

**Prologue** - One type of beginning for a stage race, which is a relatively short time trial.

**Popped** - Blown. Had it. Knackered. Stuffed. Lots of words to describe the legs just going all weak. Loss of power.

**Puncture** - Flat tire.

**Road Rash** - Skin abrasions resulting from a fall or crash onto the road.

**Saddle** - The bike seat.

**Sitting up** - When the rider is no longer tucked, or riding in the most aerodynamic fashion.

**Slipstream** - The area of least wind resistance behind a rider.

**Stage Race** - A bike race held over successive days, with a different course each day. Stage races can last anywhere from three to 25 days. The rider with the lowest total time (or accumulated points) after completion of all the stages wins the overall race.

**Team Leader** - The rider for whom the team rides in order for the leader to win a stage or race.

**Time Cut** - Mostly applicable to the Grand Tours. On each stage all riders must finish within a certain percentage of the winner's time to remain in the race. Those who are unable to make the cut are disqualified from the race.

**Time Trial** - A race in which riders start individually and race against the clock. The fastest over a set distance is the winner. Riders can pass each other on the course but they are not allowed to draft off of each other. Also known as the "race of truth."

**Train** - A fast moving paceline of riders.

**UCI** - Union Cycliste Internationale, the international governing body of cycling.

**Wheel Sucker/Wheelsucking** - Someone who sticks to a rear wheel ahead of him or her and refuses to go to the front.

**USA Cycling** - America's governing body of cycling. USA Cycling supervises the activities of all cycling disciplines (road, mountain, track, cyclo-cross), and establishes criteria for the US Olympic Cycling Team.

**Velo** - French word for bicycle.

Thank you to [www.dailypeloton.com](http://www.dailypeloton.com) for contributing to this glossary.