

# Chris Froome wins third Tour de France of his career

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(Photo: Christophe Ena, AP)

PARIS — Sharing beer and champagne with teammates, Chris Froome celebrated his third Tour de France title in four years on Sunday.

The Kenyan-born British rider finished safely at the back of the main pack in the final stage, arm-in-arm with his teammates during the mostly ceremonial leg ending on the Champs-Elysees.

“Thanks for your kindness in these difficult times. You have the most beautiful race in the world. Vive le Tour, Vive la France,” Froome told the crowd in French during the trophy ceremony, referring to the recent attacks in Paris and Nice.

Immediately after finishing, Froome was greeted by his wife and infant son, who he took in his arms.

“To Michelle my wife and my son Kellan, your love and support make everything possible. Kellan, I dedicate this victory to you,” Froome said in a speech he read from the winner’s podium, also thanking his teammates and coaches.

Andre Greipel of Germany won the 21st leg in a sprint finish.

At the start of the stage, Froome dropped back to his Team Sky car to collect bottles of beer and distributed them to each of his eight teammates for a celebratory round.

Then it was time for the traditional flute of champagne.

Froome rode a yellow bike to go with his yellow jersey, helmet, gloves and shoes. His teammates had yellow stripes on their jerseys and yellow handlebars on their bikes.

Froome also still had bandages on his right knee and elbow, the result of a downhill crash two days ago.

Having begun the stage with more than a four-minute advantage over Romain Bardet of France, Froome and his teammates dropped back just before the finish and he lost some of his margin.

Froome ended up 2 minutes, 52 seconds ahead of Bardet, while Nairo Quintana of Colombia finished third overall, 3:08 back.

Froome, who also won the Tour in 2013 and 2015, became the first rider to defend the title since Miguel Indurain won the last of his five straight in 1995. Lance Armstrong was stripped of his seven consecutive titles for doping.

The 21st stage got off to a picture-postcard start as the peloton rode by the perfectly manicured gardens of the Chateau de Chantilly.

The mostly flat 113-kilometer (70-mile) stage concluded with eight laps of a circuit in downtown Paris, finishing on the cobblestones below the Arc de Triomphe.

Greipel narrowly edged world champion Peter Sagan, who was coming on with a late charge.

Alexander Kristoff of Norway crossed third.

It was Greipel’s first stage win in this Tour. The rider nicknamed ‘The Gorilla’ won four stages last year.

“I’ve raced for three weeks for that,” Greipel said. “It cannot get better than winning on the Champs-Elysees.”

It was a difficult stage for the Etixx-Quick Step team. First, three-time time trial world champion Tony Martin abandoned the race due to a left-knee injury, then Marcel Kittel, the sprinter who won Stage 4, had a mechanical problem and dropped behind as he was forced to change bikes.

Kittel slammed a wheel to the ground in frustration as he waited for the change. He eventually caught up to the peloton but wasn’t a factor in the sprint.

Mark Cavendish, the British sprinter who won four stages in this Tour, abandoned the race before the Alps.