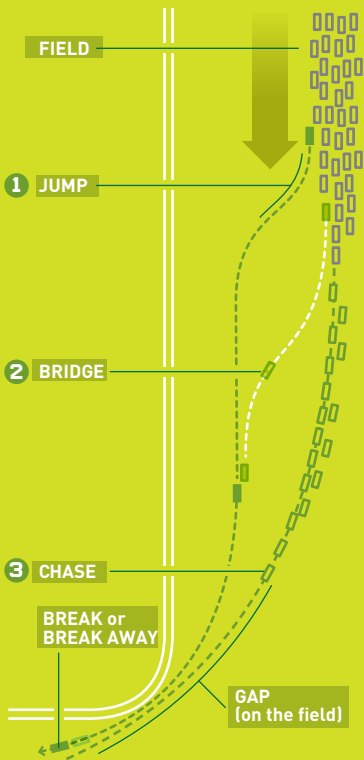


ANATOMY OF A CRITERIUM

The most common form of American racing, **THE "CRIT"**, is a type of bicycle race held on a short course (typically about one mile), often run on closed-off city streets. The duration (typically one hour) is shorter than that of a traditional road race while the average speed ranges from 25 to 35 miles per hour, making intensity appreciably higher.

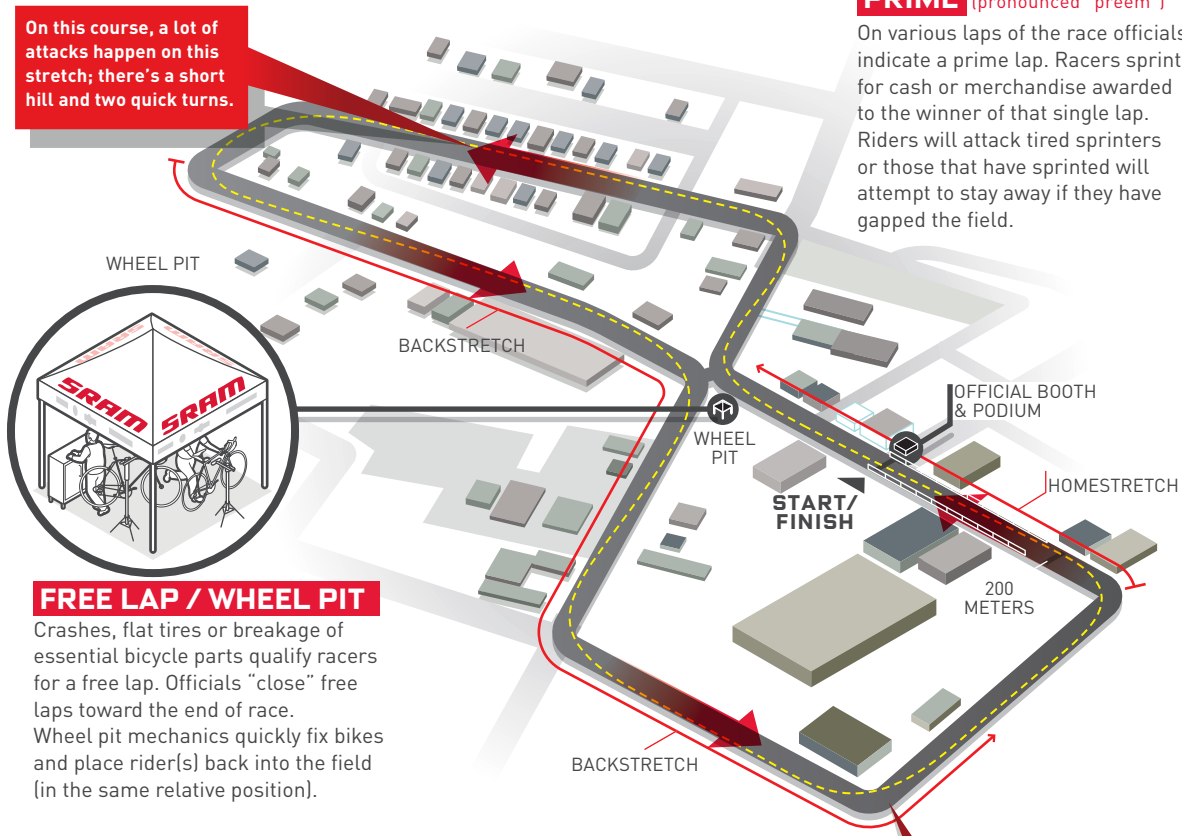
ATTACK

Attacks are efforts to break away from the field in strategic places on the course, like a hill or before a series of turns, where a single racer can quickly create a gap on the field.



Common team tactic is to have a domestique "take a flyer" to force other teams to chase. As soon as the break is caught, they send another and repeat the process to wear down the competition.

On this course, a lot of attacks happen on this stretch; there's a short hill and two quick turns.



FREE LAP / WHEEL PIT

Crashes, flat tires or breakage of essential bicycle parts qualify racers for a free lap. Officials "close" free laps toward the end of race. Wheel pit mechanics quickly fix bikes and place rider(s) back into the field (in the same relative position).

SKILLS / CORNERING

Success in criteriums requires a mix of good technical skills: the ability to corner sharply (and fast!), riding safely in a large group on a short circuit, exceptional fitness to attack other riders and repeatedly accelerate hard from corners.



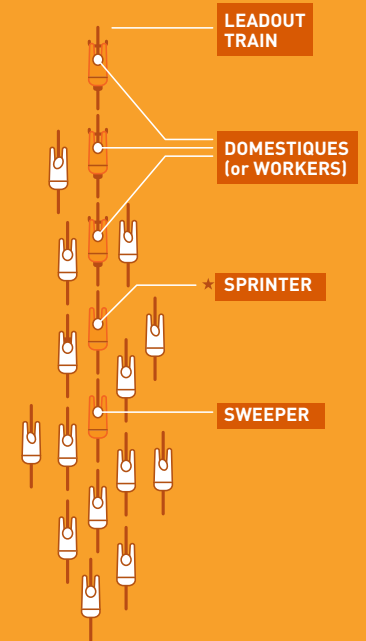
PRIME (pronounced "preem")

On various laps of the race officials indicate a prime lap. Racers sprint for cash or merchandise awarded to the winner of that single lap. Riders will attack tired sprinters or those that have sprinted will attempt to stay away if they have gapped the field.

In the final lap, leadouts will be shooting to hit this corner first and the sprint actually begins before the last turn.

LEADOUT

In the final laps teams organize into a FAST pace-line, creating a "train" designed to maneuver its best sprinter into good position to win the race. It takes several leadout people to keep the speed up: for example, the first person goes as hard as they can for half a lap, then they pull off and the next person goes as hard as they can for half a lap until the sprinter surges out at 200 meters left to go.



Because everyone wants the wheel of a good sprinter, some teams have a "sweeper" who aggressively holds a position on the sprinter's wheel and makes sure nobody else is on it. Often a good sweeper can take 2nd or 3rd place in a race.



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