

Course Description



Verbier-Nendaz

Between Verbier (1'500m) and Grimentz (1'570m), the route will now extend for a distance of 125km and attain an altitude of 5'000m. The start, at dawn, in the centre of Verbier is always a spectacular and emotional event. From the first hundred meters, in ascent, the group stretches out. New to this route: the ascent of Ruinettes (2'200m) with the crossing of La Planie in the direction of Croix-de-Coeur (2'170m) with a nicely lit tunnel to go through. The return to Nendaz (1'350 m) takes in a single-track forest road where caution is required.

Nendaz-Veysonnaz-Les Collons

Competitors in the 93 km race depart from Nendaz, a new starting point since the 2010 race. From the heart of the resort, riders quickly reach the original route of the race with an easy start in the direction of Saclentse, heading uphill towards Veysonnaz with some very steep climbs. The addition of these ascents is very tough on the legs and, at the end of the day, we feel the effect! After passing Veysonnaz (1'350m), another ascent is necessary in order to reach Collons (1'850m). Some of the single-track sections present a beautifully inclined route. Riders who aim to be placed must position themselves well. These are favourable areas for attacks. The descent to Hérémente (1'240m) remains relatively easy.

Hérémente-Mandelon-Evolène

Hérémente is the starting point of the third section, with a distance of 68 km. Always very lively, this section is nice for the riders coming from Verbier or Nendaz. From Hérémente, a steep climb begins towards Cerise. With the sun beginning to set and many kilometres ridden, competitors begin to feel tired. The rise to Mandelon (2'500m) is one of the more interesting sections. On the high mountain pasture, riders find themselves on a stony single-track which is difficult to negotiate. It is a route for dare-devils. The area is magnificent. The view towards Pas-de-Lona or Dent-Blanche is lovely. The descent to Evolène (1'400m) allows you to recharge, while remaining alert for the challenge of the main section of the day: the ascent towards Pas-de-Lona.

Evolène–Eison-L’A Vieille

Evolène, the location for the start of the shortest section of the race (37km). This typical Valaisian mountain village offers competitors a fantastic, festive atmosphere. Enough to recharge the batteries before taking on the ascent of Pas-de-Lona. From Evolène, competitors head towards Eison (1'650m). From this charming hamlet, the ascent continues to l’A Vieille (2'380m), a high mountain pasture with Valaisian charm and aromas.

L’A Vieille–Pas-de-Lona

This ascent is incredible. It contributes much to the reputation of the Grand Raid. The riders stretch out along the climb: a magnificent sight. A demanding climb. It takes great energy to complete this route at an altitude of 2'787m. It is also very demanding on a psychological level. Hundreds of people wait here to encourage the competitors to reach the top.

Pas-de-Lona – Basset de Lona

Once Pas de Lona is crossed, a single-track leads the competitors in the direction of the ascent towards Basset de Lona, the peak (2'792 m) of this incredible ride. This final ascent once again demands a great deal of energy. After the ascent of Pas-de-Lona, you must search deep inside to find the strength to attack this final climb.

Basset de Lona–Barrage de Moiry–Grimentz

After all that, "only" the descent remains. Easy, one might think! No. It is difficult, demanding and technical. Tiredness that has increased throughout the day becomes the worst enemy in this final section. The Barrage de Moiry (2'250m) presents a different environment. Each rider must remain vigilant to avoid falls and other mishaps. In rocky parts, concentration is required. These are highly technical sections to be mastered very carefully. After the wooden bridge is the end! At last we see the straight leading to the finish. Relaxing, satisfying, emotional.