

# Women cyclists to roll into Tahoe in a big way



Alison Tetrick is eager to participate in next month's races based in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Sam Wiebe

**By Susan Wood**

Move over boys.

Title IX aside, pro cyclist Alison Tetrick knows in order for women's sports to receive the recognition the big boys get in their respective events, the girls need all the help they can get – sometimes from a few angels on the shoulders.

And so it goes with the Amgen Tour of California Women's Race, which will have two legs starting and ending at Heavenly Mountain Resort on May 8-9. Fourteen teams representing 84 of the top professional women cyclists are expected to roar from

the California Base Lodge parking lot each day. The first stage goes around the lake and is 74.5 miles, the second goes into Meyers and is 49.7 miles. This is the largest women's race ever in the United States.

An army of volunteers and spectators will be on hand. The receptiveness from the town and in particular Heavenly as a host is something Tetrick told *Lake Tahoe News* she immensely appreciates.

"That's huge that they place such a high value on supporting women's cycling. It's exciting that Tahoe utilizes this race as well. It creates more fans and inspires other women riders as well. And Tahoe is all about recreation," Tetrick, 30, said while on tour. "It's nice to see the steady growth (in interest)."

Tetrick is an advisor to the Women's Cycling Association. The pro cyclist of five years grew up in Redding, played tennis in college in Abilene, Texas, and became serious about cycling while living in Petaluma – where the rolling Wine Country hills beckon.

She's inspired by her 84-year-old grandfather who still rides to this day in Evergreen, Colo.

"He's a tough guy. I try to ride with him whenever I see him," she said.

She has a message for young girls wanting to become something in the recreation world.

"Find what you're most passionate about. Then, get out and active and meet your goals – whatever they are. And, be bold. You'll be ahead of the game," she said, adding, "Education is important" to getting the support they need.

That's precisely why Heavenly wanted to take part, said John Wagon, director of marketing of Vail Resorts' three Tahoe

properties. The longtime marketer, who served on the California Tourism Commission and now is on Nevada's, understands the importance of promoting women's sports and being the business to provide the kick-start in giving them a leg up where many companies have been noticeably absent in a man's world.

"We want to support women's pro sports. They struggle to get visitors and don't get the level of sponsorships (the men do), but (women's sports) are growing in popularity," he said.

Granted, the sport is more commonplace and supported in Europe. But the prospect of growth in the United States through visibility is what the competitors and sponsors are seeking.

Wagnon recalled how South Shore executives reached out to the Amgen organizers many years ago. When the men's race was scheduled through town in 2011, it got snowed out. Fingers are crossed that's not a problem this year.

"After that, we remained in contact with the folks at Amgen and worked to continue efforts to get the race back. We were very interested," Wagnon said, speaking on behalf of Heavenly and through conversations with Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority Executive Director Carol Chaplin.

"Seeing the athletes in our community builds the enthusiasm for hosting the event as well as the sport," Chaplin said in a statement. She also mentioned this year's signature sunny weather as "good for training" opposed to snow and rain hampering the event.

This time, the women are on center stage.

Motorists are advised to allow for extra time in getting around the South Shore on that Friday and Saturday. Riders will start from Heavenly at 11am Friday and finish about 2:15pm. The next day, they'll begin the ride at 10:30am

and end at approximately 12:30pm. A festival opens both days' event at 10am.

"This is going to be awesome," said Mike Frye, who runs LTVA events.

Frye noted he's beyond excited about this event because of its importance to the women like Tetrick who have fought and clawed for recognition despite multiple wins.

Tetrick rides for Optum Pro Cycling presented by Kelly Benefit Strategies and an ambassador for Amgen's Breakaway from Cancer. Tetrick has represented the United States at the Pan American Games and around the world racing for the national team.

Tetrick received a bronze medal at the World Championships in the Team Time Trial for Astana BePink in 2014, and placed second at Chrono des Nations in 2012, 2013, and 2014. She won the overall at the Merco Cycling Classic and the Valley of the Sun Stage Race and won stages at the Sea Otter Cycling Classic, Nature Valley Grand Prix, Mt. Hood Cycling Classic and most recently at the Tour Femenino de San Luis in Argentina.

Not only does she spend countless hours training and racing, Tetrick is in graduate school for neuropsychology. She believes it is important to raise awareness of resources available for those affected by cancer and thinks teamwork is a necessity.

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## **Notes:**

- There are two sites where people may stream the event live. Here is the first and the second.
- May 8, 11am start at Heavenly's Cal Lodge.
- May 9, 10:30am start at Heavenly's Cal Lodge.

- For more info, go online.