

SLT to host 2 legs of women's Amgen bike race

By Kathryn Reed

Half of the women's 2017 Amgen bike race will be in South Lake Tahoe.

Officials announced today that the women will be returning to the area May 11-12.

Day 1 the cyclists will ride the 72 miles around the lake, finishing at Heavenly Mountain Resort. This will be the third year the women **have ridden this route.**

Officially called Amgen Breakaway from Heart Disease Women's Race Empowered with SRAM, this race is one of the most prestigious in the United States.

““The Amgen Tour of California's women's race will return to Lake Tahoe for the third time in as many years and we like to think that these elite athletes have come to call this home. The women's event is such a good fit for this destination and we enjoy being part of the effort to elevate the status of cycling here, particularly for the women, who are so engaged with the community,” Carol Chaplin, executive director of Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Women cyclists will return to Lake Tahoe in May 2017. Photo Copyright 2016 Lisa J. Tolda

Day 2's route won't be disclosed until early next year. All officials will say is that "riders will face summits in excess of 7,300 feet." That eliminates the 7,146-foot Spooner Summit. Plus, the women will have climbed it the day before.

Luther Pass is 7,740 feet. The men pedaled up it when they finished stage 5 this year. Kingsbury Grade, aka Daggett Summit, is 7,344 feet and Echo Summit is 7,382.

A common circuit for serious local roadies is to go up, over, and down Kingsbury and Luther passes. This would make for a challenging loop no matter which pass they would do first.

Lake Tahoe has always provided Tour of California riders with interesting weather. Even though it didn't snow this year, high winds were a concern at the start of the women's race.

While it's too soon to know the exact teams and rosters, 2016 winner Megan Guarnier has committed to race here next year.

The women's third stage will be in Elk Grove on May 13, with the final leg in Sacramento on May 14.

The men start their 600-mile race on May 14 in Sacramento, finishing May 20 in Pasadena. The 2017 race will mark the first year the men's race has been elevated to Union Cycliste Internationale World Tour status, making it the only stage race in North America to receive this classification.