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British Golden Girls to Race Across America

By BikeRadar



The challenge of a lifetime (BikeRadar)

At the sort of age when many women are tackling nothing more strenuous than a walk in the park with the grandkids, five London ladies are setting their sights on the ultimate cycling endurance challenge.

The Race Across America crosses the US from the Pacific to Atlantic to coasts and five members of the Serpentine Triathlon Club – average age 60 – will spend nine days in June riding the 3009 miles in relay. The team's aim is to complete the distance in 188 hours, a target which will require each of the four riding members to rack up 100 miles per day.

The team, calling itself the Serpentine Golden Girls, comprises Margaret Sills, 57; Hilary Webber, 60; Hilary Walker, 55; Eddie Brocklesby, 65 and Ros Young, 64 who is the reserve rider and team manager.

Each an accomplished athlete in her own right, between them they have clocked up 27 World and European Championship Medals, 182 marathons, 172 half and full distance Ironman and Ultra races and have represented Great Britain both as elite athletes and in their age groups 80 times. If they finish the race within their target time they will set a new female 50+ record, beating a record made by a team on average 10 years younger.

The ladies are undertaking this daunting challenge with two aims: to help older women understand the importance of sport and to raise money for charities close to their hearts.

Even with such a depth of silver-haired athletic talent in the team, completion of the Race Across America is far from guaranteed. The Golden Girls will have to ride day and night, coping with all types of weather conditions, road traffic, route navigation and terrain, including strength-sapping ascents and perilous descents. To this must be added the constant danger of crashes

through exhaustion and loss of concentration and the pressure of knowing they have cut off times to beat and miles to complete.

Ros Young, the team manger and one of the older team members at 64, says: “All the team members are committed to this challenge because we want to inspire other older women to take on their own personal challenges. We have been competing for many years so have built up to this ambitious challenge but all women can set their own challenges. We are no different from many other women out there and we want to see everyone benefit from becoming more active. Whether it be a daily walk, a 5k run or a swimming session, exercise has helped all of us in the team to improve the quality of our lives and cope with the aging process.”

The race takes place in June 2008 and the team is looking for corporate sponsors to help them raise the entry fee and expenses. You can read more about the individual team members, their motivation and aims at www.sggdoraam.org.uk