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**Introducing The Cyclists’ Alliance: an collective voice for women cyclists**

Today, The Cyclists’ Alliance is pleased to announce its official launch.

Formed and backed by some of women’s cycling’s biggest names, the new international cycling union aims to be a resource and a cohesive voice for professional cyclists in order to promote and protect athlete safety and enhance professionalism within the sport.

“We will work as a partner with the UCI and the UCI-registered women's teams to help them form the first women's teams association in global cycling,” says founder Iris Slappendel.

“The Alliance is here to represent and protect riders; enabling fairness and equality, economic guidance, and dispute resolution.”

The Alliance was formed after two rider surveys showed a tremendous need for riders to have a representative to voice their concerns and protect their collective interests when it comes to contracts, wages, disputes and rider safety.

“We sent out the surveys in February and April to get a sense of the biggest concerns and issues riders face, and if there was any interest or demand for a riders’ union,” explains Slappendel.

“The response rate was incredible. Riders from every UCI-registered team participated, and we garnered well over 200 unique responses. The overwhelming message from the women’s peloton was clear: change needs to happen for the sport to grow, and the time is now.”

The data (http://cyclistsalliance.org/2017/12/the-cyclists-alliance-rider-survey) was presented to UCI Road and Women’s WorldTour commissions in April, and showed a dire need for better contract negotiations and better pay.

46.9% of riders reportedly earn 5000 Euro or less per year, 17.5% of whom don’t get paid at all. And a revealing 90% of riders said they signed a contract with a UCI-registered team without any legal assistance.

“This needs to change. An association of women’s professional cyclists will be an important catalyst to push the women’s teams, the UCI, and the race organizers, to unify under the umbrella objectives of building a stronger sport, with a new narrative, broader appeal to fans, with greater economic and career opportunities,” said co-founder Gracie Elvin.

“Without an association, the economics of the sport will remain small, in control of the hands of just a few key people, and limit the opportunities for all of us. So we ask our fellow cyclists to join us so we can leverage our strength to negotiate a better future with our teams, our partners in the UCI, new business supporters, and fans across the world.”

In addition to founders Iris Slappendel, Gracie Elvin and Carmen Small, an Advisory Board has been established of a wide range legal, financial and humanitarian professionals.

The Alliance's first steps includes official recognition by the UCI by the time of the Innsbruck 2018 World Championships in order to enter into negotiations to create the first Joint Agreement for a minimum wage and a standard contract that fall.

Along the way, the Alliance will be working to provide career advice, contract negation help, dispute resolutions and even insurance packages for riders who are currently under-insured in the peloton today.

“I truly believe that women’s professional cycling is on the verge of becoming one of the fastest growing and most commercially-lucrative professional women’s sports,” says co-founder Carmen Small.

“Men’s professional cycling developed slowly over nearly 100 years of traditions which, over time, have been reinforced by political rivalries and economic decisions which have limited the sport's opportunities. Women’s professional cycling can, and must be, a sport which forges a new path that does not follow the template of the men’s sport. The women’s sport can accomplish this by uniting the interests of its labor force – namely, the women athletes who are the lifeblood of every competition — and the image that the sport portrays to the greater public.”

Current UCI riders can join at http://cyclistsalliance.org/join-us

For more information on the Alliance and our objectives, please visit http://cyclistsalliance.org

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