Colorado Classic doubles down on support for women’s racing, even as 2020 edition gets cancelled

DENVER, CO (July 17, 2020) — Despite its fierce commitment to creating a safe live racing model and advancing the sport of professional women’s cycling, the Colorado Classic® presented by VF Corporation today announced that their four-day race will not take place this year, citing COVID safety concerns.

Instead, the race organizers are doubling down on championing support of women’s racing under their #WeRide umbrella, and are proud to announce the #WeRide for Women fundraiser and virtual ride. This campaign is intended to financially support the teams who would have attended the Colorado Classic, many of whom rely on competition and prize money to support their livelihoods. For the next two weeks, fans, industry, and sponsors will have the opportunity to donate to the #WeRide Team Development fund — which will be directly distributed to women’s race teams — and join the teams on a Zwift ride on July 29th.

For months, the organizers behind America’s premier women’s event worked tirelessly with State, County and City organizations, health authorities, and the sports governing bodies to create protocols and processes that ensure the health and safety for everyone.

The resulting COVID mitigation plan and new race format — one that eliminated crowd gathering, amplified their innovative live streaming model and prioritized health and safety — would have made live professional racing possible, in a context similar to other professional sports that have re-started competition. But as new COVID-19 cases are on the rise in Colorado, and throughout the nation, the decision was taken in consultation with teams, riders and all race partners that canceling the race and eliminating all risk of contributing to the COVID spread was the correct path forward.

“We had great confidence in the COVID-19 mitigation plan we had developed for the race, and we were well on our way to becoming the first professional women’s bike race to be held in the U.S. since the onset of the COVID pandemic," said Lucy Diaz, CEO of RPM Events Group LLC.

“However, as the pandemic appears to be spiking again across the U.S., and after discussion with our various stakeholders, we feel it is the most prudent decision to cancel the race for 2020. We would only hold the race if we thought it was a safe, healthy environment for the
athletes and that all stakeholders felt fully comfortable to move forward. At this time we do not have full confidence from all stakeholders, so we will pivot our energy and efforts to continue to support the women’s peloton through our other initiatives.”

Since reimagining its entire business model in 2018 by foregoing its men’s race and focusing 100 percent on women, the Colorado Classic recognized that a four-day event alone wouldn’t be enough to bring about social change and have a lasting impact on the sport of cycling.

Instead, they developed a platform that celebrates the sport and athletes while creating meaningful connections in the community and business worlds. Built on the fundamental pillars of creating opportunity, fostering empowerment and demonstrating equity, the Colorado Classic launched a host of initiatives to amplify women’s voices, foster corporate dialogue among partners and the community, and bring world-wide exposure to women athletes through storytelling.

These initiatives included an ongoing Business in Sport Webinar Series to educate and inform female athletes of all disciplines about matters like branding, marketing, sponsorship and media training, and a collection of conversations with leaders in both sports and business through the Breakaway Dialogue Series. VF Corporation, together with the Colorado Women’s Chamber of Commerce, hosted the first one on Wednesday, July 15th and this series will continue with partners FirstBank and Gates Corporation throughout the summer.

Even without the four days of racing, Colorado Classic’s sponsors remain committed to the event and its mission. FirstBank committed the initial funds of $10,000 to make the Team Development Fund a possibility and will continue their commitment despite the cancellation.

The #WeRide for Women fundraiser will run between now and August 1, and the campaign culminates in a virtual community ride on Zwift on July 29th. Led by retired Olympic Silver Medalist and World Champion, Mari Holden, this virtual ride is open to the public and will include riders from each of the 2020 Colorado Classic invited teams. Donations are optional but encouraged. All funds will be divvied out to the teams in August.

“This was an incredibly hard decision, but it was the right one to make. We are so grateful for all of our partners who have supported us this year and continued to believe in our mission. It has been an extraordinary year, with extraordinary challenges, and it has taken a complete effort from everyone to find a way forward,” said Ken Gart, Chairman of RPM Events Group.

Learn more about the #WeRide for Women campaign at https://www.coloradoclassic.com/zwift And stay up to speed on all things related to the Colorado Classic at www.coloradoclassic.com and via social media: @coloradoclassicpro on Instagram and Facebook.

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About the Colorado Classic: The Colorado Classic® presented by VF Corporation is America's premier all-women’s professional road cycling race taking place on August 27-30, 2020. Our goal is to be the best women’s race in the world while developing a year-round platform that celebrates and empowers female athletes. We are more than a race, we are a movement that is changing the world through the power of women’s sport.

About WeRide: We realize it’s not enough to just provide four days of competition, we have to develop a platform that celebrates the sport and athletes while creating meaningful connections in the community and business worlds. Building on our fundamental pillars of exposure, opportunity, and storytelling, we’re creating a platform that reaches beyond the roads we race on and stretches into the boardrooms of the world.

About the #WeRide Development Fund: A fund that supports the infrastructure around the women’s peloton. Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, all cycling competitions around the world were suspended and athletes are missing out on critical opportunities to earn incomes while also finding themselves with less opportunity, and some teams are having to fold because of lost sponsorship, resources and support. For 2020, all money raised will be distributed among the teams that attend this year’s event.

About RPM Events Group: RPM Events Group LLC is a Colorado-based company committed to reimagining professional cycling events while providing meaningful social and economic impact. The company owns and organizes the Colorado Classic® presented by VF Corporation — a world-class women's pro road race coming August 27-30, 2020. www.rpmevents.com