



April 13th 2022: Sex-based rights groups offer to save prestigious women's cycling race

Sex Matters and Fair Play for Women, two groups campaigning for sex-based rights, have today stepped in with a formal offer to sponsor the prestigious 6th Women's CiCLE Classic, part of the British Cycling Women's National Road Series.

The race is planned to take place in Rutland on Sunday 19 June. Previous winners include Tokyo Olympic gold medallist Katie Archibald and silver medallist Neah Evans.

The women's race has been put into peril when a longstanding sponsor Peter Stanton, withdrew their personal financial support to the race in protest at British Cycling's decision to suspend its Transgender and Non-binary Policy.

The policy allowed male riders who identify as women or as non-binary to ride competitively against female riders, provided they made a solemn declaration regarding their gender identity, and had testosterone levels below five nanomoles per litre for a 12-month period prior to competition.

Sex Matters and Fair Play for Women, together with sports scientists and many athletes, have argued that these rules are unfair to female riders. Studies have shown that testosterone suppression in adult males results in only small reductions in muscle strength, and no change in underlying skeletal structure.

The UK Sports Councils last year issued guidance warning sports governing bodies that exclusion of all males from women's sports is necessary to provide fairness and safety for female participants.

British Cycling suspended its policy after Emily Bridges, a cyclist who had competed on the men's circuit until February was stopped from competing in the women's event at the British National Omnium Championships by the international cycling governing body the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI).

The decision was made due to a difference in the policies between British Cycling and the

UCI, which British Cycling said was "unfair on all women riders and poses a challenge to the integrity of racing".

Dr Emma Hilton, a Director of Sex Matters, said:

“Fairness in sports is integral, and female cyclists need their own races that exclude males. This event has previously showcased our best female cyclists, and we are keen to play a part in securing the right for these brilliant women to race fairly and competitively.”

Dr Nicola Williams, Director of Fair Play for Women, said

“We know how important this race is for women in cycling. Support for women’s sport should not be conditional on the inclusion of some males, no matter how they identify. We believe there should be a place for everyone in sport, but fair competition for women depends on keeping it female-only.”

Victoria Hood, manager of the Jadan Vive le Velo women’s race team said

“The Cicle classic is one of a kind. It is the only race that offers the different terrain often seen on the continent. It has the atmosphere of a Belgium classic and is one of the stand out events of the women’s calendar, my riders will be excited to be on the start line come June. It was imperative to save this exceptional race and ensure fairness for females.”

CiCLE Classics Race Director, Colin Clews, acknowledged the bid and said "we have been overwhelmed by messages of support for women's cycling". He said "we will consider all offers of sponsorship to deliver the race in 2022 and support its future development”.

Notes for editors

British Cycling is the national governing body for recreational and competitive cycle sports in Great Britain.

The women’s CiCLE Classic is part of the British Cycling Women’s National Road Series. The 105km race starts and finishes in Melton Mowbray and takes place on roads and farm tracks across Rutland and East Leicestershire. The winner takes home £1000 and a pork pie.

Sex Matters

[Sex Matters](#) is a human rights organisation campaigning for clarity about sex in law, policy and language.

It is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting human rights and equality, particularly concerning the protected characteristic of sex (as recognised in the UK Equality Act 2010). It advocates for sporting bodies to have clear sex-based rules for participation in female sports and provided technical feedback to British Cycling on its policy.

Fair Play For Women

[Fair Play For Women](#) is a campaigning and consultancy group which raises awareness, provides evidence and analysis, and works to protect the rights of women and girls in the UK.

It has earned a reputation amongst the general public, policy-makers, politicians and the media for our rational, fact-based approach and good-faith debate. It engages directly with national and international sport governing bodies to ensure women and girls are centered in discussions and policy-making on female sport.

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