



Press Release: Tarah Cole joins Team Rwanda Cycling as first women's specific cycling coach

Team Rwanda Cycling is pleased to announce the addition of American, Tarah Cole, as our first women's specific cycling coach. Team Rwanda Cycling and Africa Rising Women's Cycling have hired Ms. Cole to scout, identify and train women cyclists from Rwanda to eventually move to an all African women's professional team currently being formed.

Tarah Cole was a collegiate runner who entered the sport of cycling after suffering chronic running related injuries. She spent two seasons racing locally in her home state of Ohio where she honed her skills and learned the tactics of the sport. In 2017, Ms. Cole raced for Hagens Berman I Supermint, a top women's professional team based in the US.

Jono Coulter, the current Director Sportif of Hagens Berman, stated "It is a true honor to have Hagens Berman I Supermint athlete, Tarah Cole work with the Team Rwanda Cycling Program on the Africa Rising Women's Cycling program. Sarah is an exceptional athlete and person, & she will bring a high level of commitment and excellence to this program. I have been a long time follower of the work done by Team Rwanda Cycling. They have a landmark template, and this expansion of the program to be a platform for African Women is a much-needed boost for the global expansion of cycling for women. I am looking forwards to watching the impact Tarah and this program will have on Women's Cycling in Africa, as a precursor to this becoming truly a world sport.

As with most professional women cyclists, Ms. Cole was faced with racing and working to support herself and her racing career. "After grad school, I started a career but also started to really love the bike. Trying to pursue cycling while supporting yourself isn't easy. It's a delicate balance. A lot of women come into the sport late and have careers and families to consider. It's no secret that there's not much money in cycling regardless of gender!" Ms. Cole's passion for the bike carried over into wanting to help develop Rwandan female cyclists. She felt the need to ride for more than just herself.

Rwandan Cycling Federation President Aimable Bayingana lent his support stating, “Rwanda has a strong history of supporting the advancement of women in government and business, sports should be no different. Having a coach to solely focus on developing our women’s cycling program is paramount to our success as an organization and to the opportunities given to these female cyclists.”

Ms. Cole arrived in Rwanda on August 22nd and has already been involved in a training camp. Her first testing/training camp for women will begin on August 29th with the camp running September 4 -8th. Her main focus from now until February 2018, will be scouting, testing, training and developing a full women’s team, both juniors and elite, for the Rwanda hosted 2018 African Continental Championships. Rwanda’s goal is to increase their medal count in this home hosted event. To date, there has only been one medal won by Jeanne d’arc Girubuntu in 2015 in Morocco.

When asked about the potential challenges she faces, Ms. Cole responded, “The language barrier is challenging. I want to know what the women are thinking. I want them to know when I think they did a good job. I'm trying to learn Kinyarwanda because being in tune with your riders is key as a coach.”

The long-term focus of this female cyclist development in Rwanda is to launch these women on to our all-African women’s team, which is currently in development.

Further information on Team Rwanda Cycling and/or Africa Rising Women’s Cycling can be found here: <https://teamafricarising.org>

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