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"Cyclists See Top Training Days Ahead"
By Glen Rosales

A bead of sweat rolled off the nose of bicyclist Lara Kroepsch as she pushed her bike and her body through a stress test designed to check her heart rate.

"You could do that all day," said a doctor at the Presbyterian Health Group, where the stress test and other tests were administered.

"Not now," Kroepsch said. "Maybe in May."

Kroepsch is part of the TEAm Lipton women's professional bicycle racing team that is in Albuquerque for several weeks as part of the pre-season training program. It's joined by members of the Navigator's Insurance men's team, as well as the amateur, Belgium-based Cycling Center.

The riders will be introduced Saturday as part of the 2007 Albuquerque Bike Show & Expo at the Anderson-Abruzzo International Balloon Museum. The event runs from noon to 3 p.m.

"I'm excited to see what Albuquerque has to offer," she said.
"I've only been through Albuquerque. I've never had a chance to stay here."

Kroepsch, a sprinting specialist, helped her Lipton teammate Kristin Armstrong win the grueling Tour of the Gila in and around Silver City last year. Armstrong, who is the reigning world time trial champion, also is in town, but she won't have much of a chance to ride because she is recovering from recent arthroscopic knee surgery.

"I've ridden other parts of New Mexico and it's been wonderful," Kroepsch said.

The team chose to come to Albuquerque because of the favorable climate- both the weather and the attitude toward cycling, said Bernard Moerman of the Cycling Center. He first discovered Albuquerque as an ideal training destination several years ago and after joining a partnership with Navigator's, encouraged that team to investigate the city as well.

"The weather is great," he said. "It's great for bicycling. The city is very bicycle friendly. The people at the city have been so helpful. They're even cleaning the streets for us. I don't know of any other city that would do that for us."

Although the teams had just arrived on the weekend, Ed Beamon, manager for Navigator's and Lipton, said he was encouraged by what he had seen so far.

"Everything that we have done has gone even better than expected," he said. "We're getting good, quality care here (Presbyterian) and that's important. I can see up coming back to Albuquerque for our training camp in the future."

It might even be easier to attract similar bicycle teams to Albuquerque as an ongoing project to build a veldodrome with a banked, oval track for road bikes, and a state-of-the-art training center continues.

The first phase of the projected \$17 million project is already completed- a covered, BMX-only dirt track that is one of only two like it in the country. The track has already played host to one national-level meet and another one is planned for May.