

## Race with an Olympian

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Olympic silver medalist Lauren Tamayo reacts to the crowd waiting to welcome her home at the Asheville Regional Airport on Aug. 13. Tamayo said she plans to race in the 30th annual Town Mountain Hill Climb on Friday. / Bill Sanders/wsanders@citizen-times.com

Want to race?

What: Ski Country Sports and Team Prestige Subaru and Asheville Women's Cycling Club present the 30th annual Town Mountain Hill Climb Time Trial.

When: First rider off at 6 p.m. Friday. Start times will be posted at 5 p.m. Thursday at [www.ashevillewomenscycling.com](http://www.ashevillewomenscycling.com). Riders assigned start times on a first-to-register, last-to-start basis.

Course: The uphill race takes cyclists on a 5-mile climb from the foot of Town Mountain Road to the crest with one flat section midway.

After crossing the finish line, riders must coast back to the start area.

Entry fee: \$15. USA Cycling license is required. One-day licenses available at registration for \$10.

Registration: Visit [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) by noon Wednesday or on-site race day from 4-5:45 p.m. There is no late fee.

Do the Mountain Dew Challenge: \$500 to male (record set in 2008 by Peter Cannell in 17:01:26) and female (record set in 2010 by Lauren Tamayo in 20:43:71) riders who set a course record.

Information: Email [awcteam@gmail.com](mailto:awcteam@gmail.com) or call Craig Friedrich at Ski Country Sports at 254-2771 or [skicoash@bellsouth.net](mailto:skicoash@bellsouth.net), or visit [www.ashevillewomenscycling.com](http://www.ashevillewomenscycling.com).

ASHEVILLE — Lauren Tamayo's life has been slightly different the past three weeks since she returned home to

West Asheville with a silver medal from the Summer Olympics in London. There is a little less pressure, but it's no less hectic.

She's no longer eating, breathing and sleeping a training schedule for the biggest track race of her life, but Tamayo's days are now consumed with running around after her newest family member — a beagle-shepherd mix puppy from Brother Wolf Animal Rescue.

The bouncing ball of fur's name? London, of course.

"She's been a lot of fun. She's a puppy, only 9 weeks old, so I'm teaching her to walk on a leash, house training, she keeps us busy," Tamayo said of the first dog she's been able to own in the past 10 years, which have been devoted to bike racing.

And Tamayo is already gearing up for another race — the 30th annual Town Mountain Hill Climb, a 5-mile uphill time trial Friday night in downtown Asheville.

“For me, I like to give back to the community for their support and to the local cycling scene,” Tamayo said of the race she has managed to work into her schedule the past few years. “Thankfully, every year it works into my racing calendar. I love Town Mountain. On my easy days of riding and peaceful days of riding, when I want to relax, Town Mountain is always my go-to road.”

Race organizers couldn't be more thrilled. If she weren't going to be running around Friday night like a headless chicken, Patricia Pinner would love the chance to go toe-to-spoke with an Olympic cyclist.

But as a member of Team Prestige Subaru Asheville Women's Cycling Club, which hosts the race with Ski Country sports, Pinner will be helping with the Town Mountain Hill Climb details.

“I just couldn't be prouder to have someone of Lauren's caliber live here in Asheville and to have someone of her caliber come to our races,” said Pinner, a competitive cyclist and triathlete.

“Even if she weren't a nice person, I'd be proud of her, but she's such a nice person, so sweet and down to earth.”

Tamayo, 28, and her USA teammates took the silver medal in the women's 3K team pursuit event at the Summer Olympics in London in early August. Tamayo lives in West Asheville with her husband, Mike Tamayo, and rides for Team Exergy Twenty 12.

While Tamayo said she does not plan to compete in another Olympics, she said she will keep racing. The Olympic race, in which she raced with teammates Dotsie Bausch and Sarah Hammer, was on a 250-meter banked track on fixed gear bikes. The U.S. took silver in 3:19:27, 5 seconds behind gold-medal Great Britain.

### A different biking beast

The Town Mountain Hill Climb is a completely different animal — an uphill, 5-mile road race — but one Tamayo is also adept at dominating.

She has competed in the race for the past five years and is the reigning Town Mountain women's record holder. Her 2010 time of 20 minutes, 43.71 seconds still stands.

“The first half is pretty steep — you have to monitor your effort for the first half, and in second half you can dig a little deeper,” Tamayo said. “It's obviously hard to be motivated after the Olympics — I'm just enjoying riding and doing other things — the past few months have been track specific. But I'm competitive. I'm not sure where my fitness will be on the 7th, but I'm going for it.”

This might be the only chance some intrepid riders looking to beat an Olympian might have against her tired legs. Any woman who breaks Tamayo's record wins the “Do the Mountain Dew Challenge” and \$500 cash, Pinner said.

There is another \$500 prize to the rider who breaks the male record, set in 2008 by Peter Cannell in 17:01:26.

“We might get a pro rider or two because of the prize money — that’s enticing,” Pinner said. “But it’s mostly just local people who come year after year to support it. We lowered the cost to \$15, super reasonable for a race, and hopefully this will entice some people.”

In the race — a time trial — riders go off one at a time in 1-minute intervals. The race is against the clock, rather than a road race where everyone rides together using pack tactics.

“The beauty of a time trial is that it’s such an individual sport. The race is based on your strength, and that’s kind of cool,” Pinner said. “It puts everyone on the same level. It’s a safe venue for people who aren’t used to racing, because you’re not in a pack. But you have to have some fitness.”

Craig Friedrich, owner of Ski Country Sports (a bicycle and ski shop in North Asheville), said the thriving cycling community in Asheville has kept the Town Mountain Hill Climb alive for the past three decades.

“Town Mountain is part of the cycling community,” Friedrich said. “As it’s grown, it obviously has a lot of competition with other time trials and hill climbs, but it’s a unique race, it’s quite challenging, especially in the first mile and a half.”

He hopes Tamayo’s appearance will bring out more riders to not only meet and mingle with a hometown Olympic silver medalist, but to get a chance to compete against her.

Tamayo said she plans to make time after her race Friday to chat with folks.

“I think certainly Lauren adds another dimension to the cycling community, especially in the eyes of the youth,” Friedrich said. “It will mean a lot to the spectators and to the other riders to have her there.”

“Everybody has always supported Lauren, she’s unassuming and humble,” said Melissa Gelineau, an Asheville Women’s Cycling Club member.

“But now she’s been in London, on the podium, and here she is coming back to support us. She’s so awesome.”