

WOMEN WARRIORS

COLORADO'S

Meet 10 Rocky Mountain ladies whose energy and enthusiasm will inspire you

By Casie Zalud

When it comes to places where cool women are doing cool things in the sports and outdoors realm, Colorado is king, or shall we say, queen? Meet 10 women from the royal Rocky Mountain court who are making a positive and influential mark as athletes, business owners and leaders in their sport(s).



THE Shop Owner

KIM WALKER

Shopping for women-specific gear can sometimes be time consuming and downright frustrating. Just ask Kim Walker, co-founder and co-owner of Outdoor Divas, a women-specific gear shop in Boulder. Walker describes her shopping frustrations of the past. "I was living in one of the premier ski destinations in the country and I would have to go to four stores to find a ski boot that fit me, she recalls." This led Walker to take things in her own hands and create a store where women can find all types of gear that are designed just for them. Other colleagues in the gear business thought Walker and her business partner were crazy because the store model cut the market in half by just serving women. The opposition was incorrect: Outdoor Divas will have a second store opening in Cherry Creek North this fall. "Women can do anything they want no matter what the industry. If you stick with it and are determined and passionate, you can do whatever you want," says Walker. To find out more about Outdoor Divas, visit www.outdoordivas.com.



THE Guide

LESLIE ROSS

When Leslie Ross obtained a degree in Art Therapy, she knew teaching was in her blood. Ross is founder and owner of Babes in the Backcountry, an organization that provides adventure and education to women with a focus on helping them become more in tune with the balance of nature. Ross discovered the backcountry in college while on a two-week winter camping course. She liked it so much that she moved to Colorado and became the "break-in" girl for a local ski shop, testing their new telemark equipment. She was also a competitive tele ski racer. Today, Ross has shifted to full-time teacher, leading telemark ski courses as well as guiding women into the backcountry on introductory avalanche courses in winter and mountain biking tours in summer. "Highlights of my life are being there and helping other women achieve their goals," reminisces Ross. Check out upcoming events at www.babesinthebackcountry.com.

THE Fundraiser

MARSHA MARO

On July 8 and 9, Marsha Maro rode the MS 150 Bike Tour, just as she has the past 20 years. Maro started riding the MS 150 Bike Tour for fun, but over



time it has grown into something special. When Maro first did the tour she worked with an intern, Kelly, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. From there Team Sugarbees (above photo) was born. What began as a team of six cyclists—Maro, her friends and some of Kelly's family mem-

bers—now averages 100 riders each year. The team is known for raising the most money of any team for multiple sclerosis and for their prize-winning jersey designs. Last year the Sugarbees raised over \$100,000 in pledges. "The thing that is special about our team is it is not a corporation," says Maro, "it is a person-to-person thing which makes it harder work." To find out more about the MS 150, ride visit www.nationalsociety.org.



THE Survivor

LAURA KUPPERMAN

When diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003, Laura Kupperman a healthy, non-smoking, vegetarian yoga instructor was shocked and frustrated. She felt her body was betraying her so she quickly redirected her energy. "Instead of thinking that cancer is going to get in the way of my yoga, I thought that yoga is going to help me get through my cancer," describes Kupperman. After recovering from her own battle with cancer and experiencing the positive results of yoga, Kupperman began offering classes to cancer patients and survivors. "My students are very inspirational; when I see them come in initially, some are worn out from [chemo] treatment and some are looking to get their fitness level back, to seek the camaraderie of others in a similar situation, or to just experience a form of relaxation. It's wonderful to see in three months, six months, a year how much stronger they are after yoga and how much better they feel. Seeing how much they have changed at different levels is wonderful." For a schedule of her classes, visit www.laurakuppermanyoga.com.



THE Entrepreneur

NICOLE DEBOOM

The life of a professional athlete is very similar to an entrepreneur. You have to be persistent, goal-driven, focused and never take "no" for an answer. Nicole DeBoom is a pro athlete gone entrepreneur. Now on hiatus from racing triathlons, DeBoom spends time balancing her workouts in between business meetings. DeBoom launched SkirtSports Inc. in 2004, and its TRIKS line of sassy fitness clothing—including fun sport skirts—hit the shelves in April 2005. DeBoom learned the importance of goals and focus at an early age. She qualified for the Olympic Trials in 1988, competed in college swimming and got into racing triathlons after college. "I am a very goal-oriented person. I use goals every day, and after college swimming I needed some direction so I thought I'd try triathlons," DeBoom says. She went on to be the Women's National Triathlete Long Course Champion in 2005. "Everyone starts with something and you just have to take the step forward and put one foot in front of the other," advises DeBoom. Check out www.skirtsports.com for more on DeBoom's fun workout wear.

THE Trail Runner

NANCY HOBBS

Once a professional athlete, then race promoter and now administrator, Nancy Hobbs lives, eats and breathes trail running. Hobbs has taken her passion for the sport from competition—she's won the Aspen Gold Leaf Half Marathon and finished top 10 at the Pikes Peak Marathon—to leading positions for various trail running associations and councils, such as the All American Trail Running Association, which she founded and is the executive director for. Hobbs is also an author; she co-authored



The Ultimate Guide to Trail Running.

"Reach your goal, that is what it is all about," says Hobbs. Her passion as an athlete translates perfectly to the multiple administrative roles she now performs. Her most rewarding part of the job(s) was starting the Teva U.S. Mountain Running Team and creating the National Women's Mountain Running Program. Hobbs was one of the first team members in 1995 when the team finished low in the ranks. Nine years later, Hobbs managed the team to a bronze medal.



THE Environmentalist

ALISON GANNETT

She is a World Cup Freeskiing Champion and a world-class environmentalist. When she is not tearing up the slopes, Alison Gannett is educating the residents and leaders of Gunnison County how to be green. With a degree in Environmental Studies, Gannett started Sunseekers Design, a consulting firm for solar and energy-efficient building. Involvement in local politics came with the business and Gannett quickly realized she had bigger goals. She dreamed of reaching more people, and with the help of a handful of others she set up the non-profit Office for Resource Efficiency (ORE) in Crested Butte. ORE focuses on alternative energy and energy-efficient building. Gannett says, "Figures show that Gunnison County spends over \$57 million dollars on energy each year, with the majority of that money leaving our communities. Each dollar that a home or business saves with energy efficiency moves towards sustainability, improves economic development and reduces greenhouse gasses." For a complete look at Gannett's green resume, visit www.alisongannett.com.

Top Trainer

THE
WENDY MCCLURE



A single mother of two, co-owner of a business and one of *Men's Journal's* Top 100 trainers two years in a row (of the 100 trainers listed in *Men's Journal*, only six were women) meet a woman who is at the top of her male-dominated industry—Wendy McClure. Eight years ago, McClure and business partner, Lindsay Ross, opened Body Dynamics, an integrative

health and fitness studio in Boulder. After working at different health clubs and then training people at their homes, McClure discovered the need for an alternative, non-intimidating place for people to work out. She wanted to create an environment different than the traditional gym setting. Body Dynamics is unique because of the team of different practitioners who share knowledge and skills. "I think this is what elevated my training to another level, working with other practitioners in such a close environment and sharing our knowledge base," says McClure. To find out more about Body Dynamics, visit www.bodydynamics.net.

Motivator

THE
NANCY STEVENS



"All of the women who guide me and train with me are inspiring in their own right," says Nancy Stevens, a blind athlete who holds the world record for disabled athletes in the short course triathlon. Stevens, who was blind at birth, grew up in

Michigan swimming, but had never heard of disabled people competing in sports. That is until she moved to Winter Park in 1984 to be a ski bum. Stevens worked with the National Sports Center for the Disabled and began competing in downhill skiing. Being the only blind competitor got old quick and Stevens started to focus on cross-country skiing. The Olympics became part of Stevens's life in 1998 when she traveled to Nagano with the U.S. Disabled Cross-Country Ski Team. Stevens's advice to succeed in sports: "I think it is always hard getting started. Keep it simple to start, so that you will like it and stick to it." Visit www.nancyspeaks.com to learn about Stevens' motivational speaking.

Never Too Old Athlete

JANA HLAVATY



She is 64 years old and has the drive and physical capabilities of a healthy 40-year-old woman. "I really keep in shape; I try to do something every day. Slowly I have to be accepting of my aging process," explains Jana Hlavaty, Keystone Resort's summer recreation manager and winter Nordic director. Hlavaty moved to the U.S. from Prague after spending a summer vacation here and falling in love with her late husband. She grew up competing in sports in the Czech Republic and competed for the U.S. in cross-country skiing at the 1976 Olympics. Sports continue to be a big part of Hlavaty's life. Hiking is her favorite activity, but you might also find her on her road bike, mountain

bike or the slopes. "I am trying to decide if my next bike is going to be titanium or if I am going to have titanium in my hip. I'd rather have it in my bike," laughs Hlavaty. To visit Keystone Resort and hike or ski with Hlavaty, visit www.keystoneressort.com.

Casie Zalud is a Boulder-based freelance writer and a sporty gal in her own right.