

Speed cyclist wins 12th title

By Carol Sowers

CAROL SOWERS/ANTONIA REPUBLIC.COM

SCOTTSDALE — Scottsdale speed cyclist Terry Roach, 55, won her 12th World Championship in recent competition at Sydney, Australia, four years after a serious neck injury kept her off the circuit.

In Sydney on Oct. 21, she set two world records in the grueling 500-meter time trial and the 2,000 meter individual pursuit in the 55-plus age category.

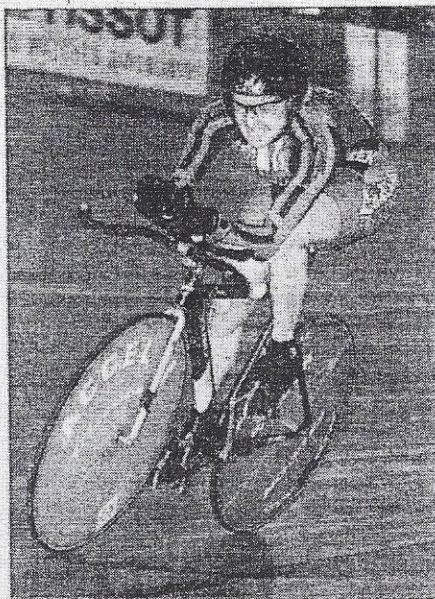
Roach now holds records in all 40 and over age categories in track cycling.

"This was the year to come back," she said.

Her return to track racing was long and painful.

In 2003, six years after she joined the elite racing circuit, Roach slammed her head into a rock on a recreational mountain bike ride in McDowell Mountain Park, near Fountain Hills.

The crash, one of many, fused three vertebrae in her neck, and forced existing bone spurs into her nerves.



COURTESY OF WORLDS

Terry Roach won her 12th World Championship in Sydney, Australia.

"I had no feeling in my arms," she said.

She continued to ride recreationally, but racing seemed impossible.

"I didn't think I could tolerate it," she said.

Track racers bend deep into their

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Speed cyclist overcomes injury

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handlebars to lower their profiles, a position that makes it difficult to look up.

"I couldn't do that with my fused neck," she said.

But she found a solution, reconfiguring her track bicycle into a higher position.

"I'm not as low as I used to be," she said, but the change hasn't slowed her down.

At the World Cycling Championship in Sydney, Roach swept through the 2,000-meters in 2:49.467 to claim the gold medal in the 55-59-age group. Behind her was favorite Shirley Amy, of Australia, who lost to Roach by three-tenths of a second.

"I looked back and she was right behind me," Roach said.

The 500-meter time trial was also a squeaker. Roach won the event in 41.729 seconds, .219 of a second ahead of American Linda Miller.

Roach, who founded Body Stabilization Training in Scottsdale in 1991 after a back injury, uses her own training techniques to recover from her long list of injuries. The idea, she said, is to let uninjured muscles carry the work-

load so distressed muscles can heal.

Six years later, she was a time trialer.

She had been a marathoner and tennis player in the 1970s and 1980s. She later turned to triathlons and discovered the bicycle.

She rode in community fund-raising events, finishing at the head of the pack.

The late cycling coach John Serra noticed her.

"He was the driving force that got me into the pro circuit and into track racing," she said.

She went to her first world-level competition in 1997.

Roach was on track for a gold medal in the 500. But she lost her back wheel in the final nanosecond of the race and finished second.

Roach said her force on the pedals when the gun went off was enough to loosen her wheel as she pulled away from the rack that steadies bikes at the start.

"The 500 is all about the start," she said.

Now, in the off-season, Roach plans to do some recreational riding and concentrate on her business. She can use a break.

"Track training," she said, "is just so intense."