



Catriona to scale Himalayas

PIERS FULLER Last updated 09:55 22/05/2013

Inspirational Wairarapa achiever Catriona Williams is leading a team to ride over the roof of the world all in the name of cycling so others can walk again.

CatWalk Spinal Injury Trust has put together a 15-person team to complete The Big Cycle next month where they will undertake the gruelling challenge of climbing 10 Himalayan passes, but there are several unknowns which could throw a spanner into the spokes. Catriona says she is excited about the adventure but she is also apprehensive, especially about the effects of altitude. Five of the mountain passes are over 5000 metres high introducing the very real possibility of altitude sickness, which can strike anyone no matter how fit they are. Another hazard could be the weather. Because Sam and Catriona Williams run a horse stud they need to be back for foaling which means the team is going while the Himalayan region is still in monsoon season so there could be torrential rain and mudslides to deal with.

To achieve their goal, team members have committed a year of their lives to an intensive training schedule and fundraising challenge. They have even used special altitude simulation machines to prepare their bodies for the intense exercise in those rarefied climes.

Three C6-7 tetraplegics, Catriona Williams, Neil Cudby and Rob Creagh, have stepped up to the challenge to complete the ride on a handcycle. The trio are accompanied by several people including: CatWalk Ambassador, Penny Barnett; CatWalk trustee, Scott Malcolm; Catriona's husband Sam Williams; Spinal Cord Injury Trust CEO, Stephanie Williams, and CatWalk supporters Michael Weston, Kris Male, Jack Holmes and Stuart Laughton. The team doctor is Piotr Szawarski and there will be three carers along to assist.

Catriona says the "tetras" will need special assistance with accessibility in some places.

The Big Cycle begins on June 14 and they get back on July 11.

Donations to the CatWalk Spinal Injury Trust can be made through the website catwalk.org.nz

- **Wairarapa News**