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CONTACT:

David Myers
General Manager
Ann Arbor, MI
Phone: (734) 604-5580
Email: david@quickrelease.com
Website: www.quickrelease.com

Ford Mountain Bike Team Announces 2004 Roster

(Dearborn, MI- January 27, 2003) Ford – America's #1 Selling Brand of cars, trucks and SUVs -- announces the new lineup of its professional women's mountain bike team for 2004. Continuing to grow since its conception in 2000 as a grass roots initiative, Ford will be fielding a team focused on the top professional events in 2004.

"*Team Ford*", is excited to announce the addition of Dara Marks-Marino, of Flagstaff, Arizona, to the 2004 lineup. Returning members include Lisa Matlock of Golden, Colorado and Melanie McQuaid, of Victoria, British Columbia.

"The Women of the Ford Team are the flagship of Ford's commitment to cycling as a sport and recreation – which includes Regional road and MTB support for Cat I, Junior and Women's development teams, and trail support. In their dedication to the sport they really represent the strengths of the Ford Brand" said Jack Palazzolo, Director of Ford's Regional Marketing. "They are determined and seasoned pros who put everything into their racing, yet they still make the time to give back to the cycling community, and the sport in general, by being mentors and teachers to up and coming female cyclists. Their "go anywhere do anything" attitude is what defines our brand.

Racing is the top priority for Team Ford in 2004, with members vying for top spots on the NORBA circuit, as well as looking to compete for a spot at the Olympics in Athens, Greece. Ambassadorship and an active role in the community are equally important; team athletes are chosen based on their ability to be positive role models as well as on cycling ability. Team members have participated in speaking engagements, clinics, charity rides, trail maintenance and young athlete mentoring, and this community involvement continues to be a high priority for the team.

Team Ford will kick off the season in Waco, Texas at the first NORBA event, and then travel to Scottsdale Arizona for a team camp and photo shoot. The next events will include the NOVA Stage Race, Redlands Stage Race and the Sea Otter Classic in Monterey, California. The team will be at all NORBA National Off-road events, as well as Tour of the Gila, World Cups, and select road races throughout the 2004 season.

Marks-Marino, 29, joins the team after a successful season seeing her take fifth overall in the NORBA Short Track Series, sixth overall in the NORBA XC Series and earning herself a spot on the US National Team travelling to the World

Championships in Austria. Dara is well known for her winning personality and has been writing for online journals, leading groups in Arizona as well as shaping the minds of the racers of tomorrow – as a schoolteacher. She and Lisa Matlock will be leading “Preride with the Pros” clinics at the NORBA events across the country to allow developing or aspiring pro riders to get some time to ride with these experienced professionals as they prepare to race. Marks-Marino will be competing for the overall title in NORBA Short Track and Cross-Country, at select road stage races, and the North American World Cups.

McQuaid, 30, returns to the team after winning the 2003 Xterra Off –Road Triathlon World Championships, and taking second overall in the series. Highlights from 2003 include podium finishes at the Sea Otter Classic and NORBA Virginia. For 2004, McQuaid will be racing the World Cup Circuit in Europe and North America and defending her title at the Xterra events, and will join the team at Sea Otter, Redlands and Tour of the Gila. McQuaid host clinics at each Xterra event introducing racing and training for women, and will be holding a clinic at the Nova Stage Race with the entire team.

Matlock, 29, a two-time Collegiate All American for Cyclocross, returns to the team with a resume including 13th overall in the 2002 Norba National Series and 13th overall in the 2003 Cascade Classic. The NORBA Nationals and road stage racing will be the focus for her 2004 season. Matlock holds a Masters of Art and has a mural painting and faux finish business called Fresh Paint Murals (www.freshpaintmurals.com).

With Ford returning for the fourth season of title sponsorship, Team Ford will also be supported by K2 bikes, Compex Technologies, Shimano (components, wheels, shoes and pedals), Descente, Giro, Deuter, Saris, Cyclops and Maxxis. Team members will be riding custom painted K2 Razorback SL mountain bikes (Shimano XTR, Rock Shox SID World Cup and Shimano XTR Wheels) and K2 Mod 5.0 road bikes (Dura-Ace with Shimano Wheelset).

For information on the Ford team and sponsorship information, contact David Myers at (734) 604-5580 or email david@quickrelease.com

ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Melanie McQuaid
319-948 Esquimalt Road
Victoria, BC, V9A 6V3
Phone: (250) 595-6802
Email: mcquaidmel@aol.com