

**Header:** UCI Women Road World Cup: who is NOT in Vargarda for the weekend?

**Crosshead:** With only ten days to go until the end of UCI Women Road World Cup, we are off to Sweden for not one, but two races, round 8 and 9.

The city of Vårgårda in the south of Sweden will host a team time trial on Friday and a road race on Sunday. The team time trial will open the show on Friday with 15 teams participating, followed on the Sunday by a 133.5-km road race.

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Armitstead still leads the UCI Women Road World Cup rankings 35 points ahead of Eliza Longo Borghini (Wiggle Honda) with Anna van der Breggen (Rabo Liv Women Cycling Team) 4 points further down. The top spot in the young rider classification is still safe in the hands of promising 20-year-old Polish rider Katarzyna Niewiadoma (Rabo Liv Women Cycling Team).

**Crosshead:** A Team Time Trial to kick off the show

The 42.5-km team time trial's trickiest feature are the cross winds between Vargarda and Herrljunga. The first out and back stretch will catch out even the most seasoned of time trialists. The course then turns onto the same trickier road race circuit the teams will be racing on Sunday, before finishing where it started downtown Vargarda.

A Velocio SRAM team victory would be a safe bet, having won this test three times as Specialized-Lululemon from 2012 to 2014. The team's biggest asset is World Time Trial Champion Lisa Brennauer and she could make this race harder even for her own team mates.

This season however, Evelyn Stevens, crowned World Team Time Trial Champion with Specialized-Lululemon, have come to support Lizzie Armitstead as part of the Boels Dolmans Cycling Team, just like Ellen van Dijk did the previous year. This will definitely strengthen the chance for a team victory and extent Armitstead's gap at the top of the UCI Women Road World Cup Rankings.

**Crosshead:** Emma Johansson racing on home turf

Round 9's 133.5-km road race should be fast and if the previous editions are anything to go by, aggressive with attacks from the off. The weather conditions should be better than last year which will make for even more offensive and explosive racing. Dry roads will make this very technical circuit harder than ever.

The course has been revised for this year's edition which will start with 56.5-km lap, including a 2.5-km stretch of gravel road. The bunch will then move on to a 11-km circuit they will have to tackle seven times including a climb in the middle.

Sweden's time trial and road champion Emma Johansson (Orica AIS) is set to impress this year. Having featured on the podium three times since 2009, she will skip the team time trial to better her chances for a win on Sunday.

Last week's Route de France winner Eliza Longo Borghini's (Wiggle Honda) exceptional form is undeniable. Second in the UCI Women's World Cup rankings, she will look at strengthening or even upgrading her position. Backed by Swedish rider Emilia Fahlin racing at home, Jolien d'Hoore, Giorgia Bronzini, Annette Edmonson and Audrey Cordon, she should be well protected. And if anything should go wrong, Wiggle Honda's tactics will always prevail as we have seen so far this season.

Lizzie Armitstead and the Boels Dolmans Cycling team always race from the front of the bunch. With super domestiques such as Luxembourg champion Christine Majerus and Chantal Blaak never letting anyone get away, Armitstead should be in for a chance.

**Crosshead:** Sufferfest lovers eat your heart out!

Not one but two [SufferPrizes](#) will be up for grabs this weekend. Who will be the toughest rider out there? Who will come out as the grittiest, feistiester racer? The Sufferfest will reward once again the best asset to the Sufferlandrian community.

For more information on the Crescent Women World Cup of Vargarda, visit the official website at:

<http://www.worldcupvargarda.se/>

For UCI Women Road World Cup standings, visit <http://www.uci.ch/>

