

YALETOWN GRAND PRIX CYCLING

Avoid others: Goldstein

Leah Goldstein's key to defending her women's pro title in Friday's second annual Yaletown Grand Prix bike race is simple: Avoid contact with the other riders.

"We're in a one-kilometre circuit going 40-plus km per hour, less than an inch away from each other in the corners," says the 36-year-old who is dominating Pacific Northwest racing in 2005.

"If one person does one move, it's like a domino effect, we all go down.

It's scary, it's definitely nerve wracking, you definitely have to have good bike handling skills and not everybody does."

The Yaletown Grand Prix's slate of six races begins at 1:30 p.m. on a counter-clockwise street loop that runs along Mainland, Davie, Pacific, Cambie and Nelson. Elite women race at 5 p.m., followed by the top men



- Bob Mackin, special to 24 hours

Leah Goldstein is preparing for the tight course in Yaletown which puts a premium on poise.

at 6 p.m.

Goldstein, who specializes in long, steep time trials and stage races,

won the women's pro division of the inaugural Westside Cycling Classic in Point Grey on June 19.

The Yaletown Grand Prix, sponsored by her Trek/Red Truck team, is a key tune-up for the July 15-24 B.C. Superweek, which includes races in White Rock, Delta and Gastown.

A year ago, Goldstein's hopes of representing Israel in the Athens Olympics were dashed when she broke her right wrist in a Pennsylvania race.

Though born in Vancouver, Goldstein spent a decade in Israel serving as a soldier and undercover agent.

That unusual career gave her the mental strength to compete in cycling.

"Over here, you don't realize how lucky you are and how good you have it here," she says.

"The stresses of cycling are nothing compared to some of the stresses I had to go through back there."

- Bob Mackin, 24 hours