

# Gwinnett Daily Post

## Tour de Georgia makes quick visit through Buford

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BUFORD - When the Tour de Georgia rolled through Buford on Saturday, it was a new and exciting event for local residents - all of whom did their best not to blink when the riders blew past.

"It was quick," said Mack Little of Buford. "We were out here all this time and it lasted 10 seconds, but it was great to be a part of it."

Little said she arrived at 9:30 a.m. Riders made it to where she was seated along Main Street near the Bona Allen Mansion by about 12:13 p.m. and were gone by 12:14.

The riders were preceded by numerous police cars and Tour de Georgia cars, which helped build the anticipation of the riders' arrival. When the cyclists did arrive, they didn't disappoint.

"I've never experienced anything like that," said Victor Carbine of Sugar Hill, who enjoys watching the Tour de France on television. "It didn't last but those 15-20 minutes with the build up to it, but it was awesome seeing those guys fly by like that."

The Tour de Georgia, which is billed as America's premier cycling event and rolling festival, started Stage 6 at Lake Lanier Islands around noon on Saturday before coming to downtown Buford. The cyclists rode 133 miles through Gwinnett, Barrow, Walton, Newton, Rockdale and DeKalb counties and finished the day at Stone Mountain Park about four hours later. The Tour's seventh and final stage will be held in Atlanta on Sunday.

When the riders did reach downtown Buford, they were greeted by the sounds of cheering, cowbells and drum beats.

Event organizers were pleased with the turnout for the race, which was preceded and followed by numerous activities.

"We had a great crowd," said Julia Hall, assistant vice president of Peoples Bank & Trust in Buford. "It was a great thing for the town. It gave us a reason to come together and have a little party."

That little party included businesses filling Buford's downtown amphitheater, a drum and dance circle and a BMX bike trick show, among other events.

The day was a good opportunity for local stores like Mama's Board-n-Bike, which organized the trick show, to have people come by and see their stores.

"What more can a bicycle shop ask for than the Tour going a block away from them?" said Katy Smillie, co-owner of Mama's. "That's some of the best advertising we could have."

It was an event that both businesses and spectators would like to see return to Buford.

"I'd love for it to come back," Little said.