

Welcome to 2003!

When I started this New Year, I was faced with tons of people asking me what my 'resolutions' would be. Honestly, I don't do the resolution 'thing'. But, I do have a big goal for this year, which involves changing my habits a bit. Since I've signed up for Ironman Florida, I've come to the harsh reality that at the end of an ironman, you have to run 26.2 miles. The farthest I've ever run is 7. I avoid running at all costs. So, I've had to promise myself that I will work on my consistency with my run training. Not really a resolution, but a means to an end, right?

The other big thing that has been on my mind in this first part of the year is which races I'm planning on participating in. For some of the newer members, you probably think I'm crazy! But, be warned, most of the popular races will fill up months before they actually take place, especially the very popular Time-out Production races. So, for this month's newsletter, I've asked a bunch of people to give me write up of their favorite races, to help those new to the sport choose which races to sign up for! I know that I would vote that you sign up for Hyannis I and Danskin, but I'll let you read the articles, and make your own decisions!

Finally, and of course, most importantly, you need to look GOOD when racing! Being on Team Envision means you get to wear stunning red and yellow uniforms! This year, we've made a decision to have the bottoms of the uniforms be black, instead of the previous totally see through, red. Well, next month's team meeting is the uniform try on meeting. All members are encouraged to come and try on the uniform so you will have the correct size. I've written up an article, which will help new members choose which uniform may be right for them. So please check that out also.

Have a great month! I'll see you all on February 2nd!

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Preparing for 2003 Race Season

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Some Tips for an Enjoyable First Triathlon

By Jason Goodman, MS, CSCS and Will Kirousis, BS, CSCS

Training. Your goal in training for your first triathlon should be to comfortably be able to complete the triathlon. The following guidelines should help you to chart your course in preparation for your first triathlon:

Give yourself some time to prepare. As a general rule, if you are starting from a relatively active lifestyle, then 3 months should be enough time.

Exercise + Rest = Success. Doing more or harder training will not get you better results. The key is to do just enough work in each training session and to then allow yourself to rest. It is during rest that you grow stronger from your workouts. So start slow, maybe working out every other day, and gradually increase your training as your body adapts. Practice your skills. Your first triathlon will be much more enjoyable if you have developed some of the basic skills. Instructors at your local pool are a good source for basic swimming skill information. Ask the folks at your local bike shop for tips on riding.

Nutrition. Your daily nutrition as you train for a triathlon should rely primarily on the simple basics of good nutrition. Here are some guidelines to help you:

Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat all varieties of lean meats and fish. Eat all kinds of nuts and seeds such as almonds, cashews, and sunflower seeds. Aim for variety from meal to meal and day to day.

Drink water throughout the day. Its best not sip on small amounts all throughout the day. Keep water nearby and handy by keeping a glass on your desk, in the kitchen while you cook, or in your car when you commute.

A Bike. The main piece of equipment you will need for your first triathlon is a bike. Any bike will do and it can be of the road or mountain variety. Here are two things to make sure you have right before you hop into your first triathlon:

Make sure your bike is in good working order. A trip to your local bike shop for what most shops call a “tune up” will ensure that your wheels, brakes, shifting mechanisms, and other important parts of your bike in are in working order.

Make sure your bike is a good fit for you. An experienced friend, or again the professionals at your local bike shop, can help you with this. A good fit and bike set up will assure you comfort, safety, and efficient pedaling. With the help of an expert, getting fit to a bike usually only involves a few minor adjustments to your seat and/or handlebars.

Other Equipment. Simple is the way to go with your other equipment. Running and swimming require very little equipment. Here are some equipment tips for training and racing:

Run training. Comfortable exercise clothing and simple running shoes are all you need for your run training.

Swim training. A swimsuit and goggles are all you need for swim training. Many people also prefer to use a swim cap to cover their hair with. Both goggles and swim caps can be purchased for under 10 dollars, sometimes 5. With goggles, choose comfort over appeal or any fancy design. Try on many pairs and see what feel best on your face.

Enhancing the Fun. Here are a few tips to help make your first triathlon experience even more fun:

Hook up with others. Performing some of your training with others who share common interests and common goals can be great. Training with others is fun, provides a support system, and is also a great way to learn from each other.

Add lots of variety to your training. Run and bike new routes each week. Explore roads and trails you have never been on.

Race Day. When race day comes, the training is all done. Now it is time to go out and enjoy your fitness. Here are a few tips:

Eat breakfast. Eating a solid breakfast 2-3 hours before the start of you race is important. Eat foods that you are used to eating.

Don't do anything new. Stick with the equipment, paces, and food that has worked for you day to day in your training. Race day is not the day to try anything new.

The swim. The swim causes by far the most anxiety in first time triathletes. There are a few things you can do to help make your swim fun and reduce the anxiety. Realistically estimate your approximate swimming ability. Then you can get yourself in position to start the swim portion of the triathlon with swimmers who will go a similar pace as you. This will reduce commotion around you when you swim. You can also choose to start more off to the side than right in the middle of the other swimmers. This will assure you a little more space around you. Both of these "tricks" will help to make your first triathlon swim a bit less scary as you become more familiar with the environment. It also helps to do some practicing in a local lake before your race. Most of your swimming will most likely be in a pool, so familiarizing yourself with swimming in open water will help you a lot. Lastly, try your best to relax. The more relaxed you can become and stay, the less anxious you will become with other swimmers around you.

Recovery. Completing a successful race day means taking appropriate measures to help you recovery from the hard effort of your race. Start by drinking fluids (water or sports drink) immediately after the race. Take it easy, talk to your friends, and the other triathletes while sipping on more fluids. As soon as you feel ready to eat some solid food (may take 30 minutes to an hour or more), you should try to have a small meal of wholesome foods. The rest of the day, try to relax as much as possible. Stay off your feet when you can. You may benefit from a real gentle massage. Continue to eat small, wholesome meals and snacks every 3-4 hours throughout the day to replenish all the

energy you expended. Then hit the bed early for a good night's sleep and you are well on your way to a successful recovery.

Have fun! Commit yourself to having as much possible in your preparations and in your first race. You have just begun an adventure that will take you to great friends, great fitness, and personal challenge.

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The Team Envision Uniform: Picking the Right One for you!

By Cece Buchanan

Before you read this article, go to the TE website, and check out the uniforms. http://www.teamenvision.com/membership_uniforms.asp Also, go to the [Louis Garneau](#) website, which has sizing info. Note that this year, the bottoms will be black not red. (Hooray! No more public nudity!)

Now, I think there are four key things to think about when getting your uniform. Chafing, style, comfort and fit.

Chafing: What is this, you ask? It is the horrible thing that occurs to skin when skin rubs against skin or fabric. This used to happen to me often, as I would be silly and wear cotton. As the saying goes, "Cotton kills!". Thankfully, Louis Garneau has already taken that into account – there is no cotton on our uniforms. But – there are places that your skin may rub. Be aware of that while picking out your uniform, and for sure, use liberal amount of body glide. I pretty much use it everywhere!

Style and Comfort: What types of racing do you do? That will help to decide which uniform is right for you. Last year, I did mostly swimming races. So I bought the one piece. I also had a few sprint races towards the end of the season, so I got the skinsuit. Keep in mind which style will be most comfortable for the racing that you do.

Fit: Be sure that your uniform fits. Come to the fitting meeting on Feb 2nd, so you can try on the different styles and sizes. And, once you buy your uniform, give it a 'road test'. Run in it. Go for a swim and then jump on your bike. Be sure you know how it feels, so you are 100% race ready!

Without further ado, I give you the uniform descriptions, and some feedback from the coordinators committee!

PLEASE NOTE: A lot of the 'see through' issues will be taken care of with us changing the bottom half of the uniforms from red to black!

First, a general review from a coordinator with almost every piece of uniform!

"I own almost every piece of uniform, apart from the top and the bikini type. I'm very happy with all of them. The shorts and the skinsuit caused some chafing in my inner thighs the first time I raced with them, but I learnt the lesson and using tons of bodyglide has helped. The tri top, I had to take off the inner bra and use my own top to be comfortable. I highly recommend getting the jersey and the jacket, great buys!"

Tri Top and Tri Short (Tank top and shorts)

- I have minimal chaffing with both (I have chaffing issues, but almost nothing to do with the uni's!)
- I love the tri top for sprints. I'll wear a pair of shorts below and I find that it is great. Last year, I did a race in which I did not wear a wetsuit and did not experience any drag from the pocket in back (an issue I know several people question). I also have little chaffing issues with this. Note: because I am large breasted, and must wear a real bra underneath, I cut out the shelf bra - I found it too constricting and find the garment far more comfortable without it. BE CAREFUL - no one but you is responsible if you cut and make a mistake!
- I don't like the tri shorts. They are too short for my taste, and don't enjoy the way the grippers cut into my thighs and make them look, well, incredibly fat. Consequently, I have a pair that I have only worn once.
- I didn't experience any chaffing.... however, the legs were a little tight on the shorts but with a couple wears it stretched out okay (either that or my legs got thinner - highly doubtful!)
- Another observation, when I was very wet (from sweating or water), the Terry leather bike seat ran onto the red part of my shorts... it never quite came out - okay, so maybe that isn't useful but it sure is funny :)
- I wear the one-piece swimsuit during the swim then pull on the bike shorts for the bike and run. I have always been comfortable with both parts of the uniform and don't have problems with chafing or anything. For me, the built in bra in the swimsuit is supportive enough and I like the shorts- often wear them just to train in (well, if nothing else is clean...)
- I have the two-piece "full coverage" tri uniform. I'm also small chested and short so take my opinion with a grain of salt. I only have two issues: slight chaffing around the arms and the tendency for the legs to ride up. It's not confining and the although the pad in the shorts seems a lot smaller than the normal bike shorts, the soreness was not there even after my longest of rides.
- I chose the 2 – piece over the skinsuit b/c I have to use the facilities so much before the race (you can't always go in your suit if you know what I mean...) that if I had a skinsuit, I would probably break the darn thing by my second race...

besides it's easier to just pull down your pants versus unzipping, taking off the upper part, pulling down the pants

One Piece TriSuit (This is the bathing suit looking suit)

- I love my one-piece tri-suit. For those of you who are not familiar with it, it is a one-piece bathing suit, with a bike pad in it. Many people wonder if it is comfortable and if I feel like an exhibitionist in it.
- I wore this for my entire first season. Now, I'm not a small gal – a size 14 – and still I had no compunction strutting around in my bathing suit on the bike. I do however, put on a pair of shorts to run in, I'm just not that confident, yet! :). I also rode as long as 30 miles in this suit with no problem, it is quite comfortable. I didn't have any abnormal chaffing issues. Normal chaffing issues are the ones you get under the arms - which I experience no matter what I wear, and which go away with liberal application of BodyGlide or your lube of choice.
- Yes - it is very comfortable. I did a half-iron in one and it is fine on a bike. I actually prefer it because I am one of those rare people who chafe in bike shorts.
- Exhibitionism - I don't feel uncomfortable in it at all. Of course I am from Southern California and grew up walking around in my bathing suit and nothing else,.....but look around you in the race. Many people are wearing less. At least we don't have to wear a speedo!
- The one suggestion I would make is regarding extra support. If you are at all "busty" I would recommend wearing a bra underneath. This particular suit does not have one and I find it more comfortable to wear one.

Skinsuit (sleeveless full body suit, kind of like the tri top and bottoms stuck together)

- Ah, the skin suit.... well, it's comfortable, but yes, see-through. I wear tri shorts (de soto sports) on top and a jog bra underneath and it works just fine and is actually quite comfortable.
- I really like the freedom of being able to wear one garment the entire race. Also, this covers better than most of the other garments to protect against sun damage. I wore this garment through an entire half ironman and was comfy throughout - it can go the distance. I have had issues with this chaffing my belly button :), as this is where the zipper ends. The other issue we have had is that this garment is made for men - so if you have a vast expanse following behind you (like me) you may find that the fabric is a little thin back there, and consequently, a little less opaque than you'd like. We hope to address this issue this year by getting black bottoms, but still - be aware.
- I have the skinsuit... I'm a rather well endowed woman, and once you get over any body images issues you may have – this is a very comfortable uniform. Only problem I had is that I needed to wear a jog bra underneath.
- If you are shaped more like a man than like a woman (i.e. longer torso, slimmer hips and thighs), this is an extremely comfortable piece of clothing. If you tend to be fuller in the hips and thighs, this uniform simply does not offer the styling that is more comfortable on that body type. The advantages are that it stays put – no riding up or bunching that can sometimes happen with a two-piece suit, and easily

goes from swim to bike to run. I personally really like my skinsuit. It is definitely necessary to wear a jog bra underneath, as well.

- I like the concept of a one piece. Having the jog bra shelf built in like the tri top would have been nice. Instead – I had to buy a red jog bra – you know me – I need to match! I did not like that it was see through and the zipper would stick often. Other than that I liked it

Seasons

By Candace Miller

Over the holidays I shared a thought-provoking conversation with an old friend about seasons. He talked about how people often forget to enjoy the cycle of life so visible and obvious in nature. The cold crisp mornings of January are ever different than the steamy hot days of August. We acknowledge the differences in the weather from season to season but sometimes forget to enjoy the beauty and the purpose of those changes.

Our conversation then turned to the seasons of life – the inevitable ups and downs that life takes and the cycle of learning, growing, changing and even dying. I couldn't help but focus on the last five months of my life. A few short weeks after PR'ing in the Ironman USA, I was blessed with a new pregnancy. And while I had always been warned it would take months to conceive, we hit that egg on the head in the first go' round! There wasn't much time to adjust from Ironman competitor and avid triathlete to an exhausted woman whose body requires vast amounts of energy to grow a new baby.

My passion for racing began about five years ago. I had rarely gone weeks without registering for my next race. In fact, July 30, 2002 the day after Ironman USA, was the first time in more than two years that I was not registered for an upcoming race. My life had been exuberantly filled with training and competition for years – my past season filled with PR's from the sprint to the Ironman. Wow, was I in for a change of seasons!

Everything you read describes the differences from woman to woman during pregnancy, so my experiences may be unique. I was hoping to write about staying fit while pregnant, since I have had a lifetime of dedicated training. I had always considered myself blessed with determination and drive, plus an overwhelming love of motion and sports. Instead, my story is about appreciating the seasons of change and the contrasts between being an avid triathlete and growing and nourishing a baby. There is quite a contrast:

Triathlete	Pregnant Woman
Small neat breasts that fit easily into any sports bra and don't interfere with sports	Whose are these? What are these? No one told me nipples grow after 30!
A keen body awareness and ability to fit into tight spots	Whoa! Where <i>does</i> my backside end?
Ability to sprint up any stairway	Heart rate 20% higher than usual,

– at airports, malls, etc	soon to be 50% higher
Muscular, supple, even hard body	Round, soft curves – can you say fluid retention?
How about a 20 miler?	How about 3 miles? Could we walk?
Deep, concave belly button – unobtrusive	My God! Where is it going?
Extreme flexibility	Can't Quite Reach My, uh, Shoes!
Sharp, quick intellect	Huh? Could you repeat that?
Joy of cycling and running in every season, every type of weather	Oh sweet sofa, how I love thee! And when I part from the bed, what sweet sorrow...
Hunger and thirst for nutrients to fuel competition	Mama loves Tacos!

**Some of the more graphic changes have been omitted so that future mothers will not be deterred from procreating.*

There seems to be a change in appearance each time I look in the mirror. Frankly, some days I am amazed and some days bewildered. I had been on a journey that entailed becoming stronger season by season, now my journey includes avoiding too many pickles and chicken wings and the heartburn that might ensue. And yes, I had been vegan for many years. Ten marathons, five half-Irons, two Iron distances, countless century rides, mountain climbing, a master's degree, part of a doctoral degree, and international exploration – all on veggies -- and a 10.5 inch, 12 ounce fetus demands spicy chicken!

As my friend and I finished our conversation that day, my baby began to twirl and poke around as enthusiastically as I have laced up my running shoes for the last fifteen years. I felt her motion and strength exploring the space my body has created. Somehow the seasons began to make so much sense. I gazed out the window at a flowing stream, green fields and leafless trees. The spring will bring a new season of races, a landscape of flowers and leaves, and God-willing, a healthy baby. On the way, my challenge is to soak in the beauty and gifts of this season, however different they are from the last. And so it goes, “to everything, there is a season and a time to every purpose (*under heaven*).”

Team With A Vision 5K Run & Walk

By Jini Fairley

On October 5th, the Carroll Center for the Blind participated in the Team With A Vision 5K Run & Walk. This was not only a fundraising event, it was also a great community

event. The diversity of the participants from young to elderly, from walkers to elite runners, from sighted to blind was tremendous. It was a lot of fun for walkers, runners, and volunteers alike. There were about 500 participants, representing 6 organizations that serve the blind and visually-impaired community, collaborating to make a very visible presence. Overall the event raised \$40,000. Carroll Center staff, alumni, family and friends were very busy, working at the registration table, giving out goodie bags and t-shirts, cooking and serving food, fielding questions at our info table, and of course, walking, running and collecting pledges. It was a beautiful setting along the Charles River. Here's a few thoughts from Jini Fairley, recent alumna and volunteer for this event:

“The early morning weather was a little rainy and murky but by 8 o'clock the sky was brightening and the sun soon appeared. More and more people came out and the t-shirt and goodie bag table was hopping. Before I knew it my running partner and guide, Megan, was announcing that it was 9:45 and we needed to get to the start line.

Megan had contacted Joe Quintanilla, Special Events Director at MAB, in response to the article on CoolRunning.com, requesting runners to train with and guide blind runners for this 5K race. Joe hooked me up with Megan and we went running at my local high school outdoor track several times in September. When she couldn't make a training session, Joe sent me Audrey and Frances. I had never run in a race before and I was out of shape having recently gotten off crutches for a fractured femur. I also broke my knee and had two surgeries in the past two years. So this was a challenge for me, to run at all, but also to run with low vision. I couldn't have done it without Megan's constant encouragement, friendship, and excellent guiding skills.

Back to the race, I hung back in the pack, knowing my pace was slower than most of the runners. It was an incredibly warm and humid October day. I had to slow down for a drink of water at the one and two mile marks. Before I was even half way around the course, the winners in the men and women divisions, both blind, had crossed the finish line. I was able to follow the white line along side the right edge of the road when the sun was not blinding me. Megan guided me around potholes, road kill, and other runners, effortlessly. We had a string tied to a finger on each of our hands, my left index finger and her right index finger, so she could pull me over towards her instantly, although most of the time verbal cues were enough to keep me on the straight and narrow. I think some of the 5K walkers were faster than me, but I did finally finish. If I had been a minute faster I would have been awarded third place in my division. Not bad for a 56-year old! I feel very proud of my accomplishment and very thankful to Megan and Joe for making it all possible. I was also very fortunate to have my children and friends to share this moment with me. And I didn't go home empty-handed. I won a prize for raising the third highest amount of pledges, thanks to many of my Carroll Center friends.”

A Healthy and Happy New Year

By Rebecca Marks-Rudy

You train year-round—perhaps twice daily—and this month you may have declared a New Year’s Resolution to modify your training plan in hopes of reaching a PR come the 2003 racing season. Sure, you are fit, healthy, and strong. But why not resolve to become *healthier*, especially when the cold and flu season is once again upon us?

Whether newbie or veteran, a triathlete generally enjoys above average fitness. However, as an athlete you may actually endure more frequent upper respiratory tract infections (URTI), such as colds and sore throats. Epidemiological data and limited intervention studies support this trend. Periods of intense training, compared with moderate exercise (e.g. brisk walking), may slightly impair one’s immune system. As a result, an athlete may be more susceptible to URTI.

By no means do the data suggest that you should can your goals for your highest fitness and personal bests. And the good news is that URTI is a relatively minor illness and it is the frequency—not the severity—that increases in athletes. Still, be mindful of the conditions in which your immune system might be compromised and the measures you can take to promote optimal health.

Endurance athletes, such as long-distance runners more frequently report URTI within two weeks of marathons or ultra marathons. Risk for onset of infection may be elevated between two and six times as compared with non-runners. Athletes who practice shorter bouts of high intensity training (e.g. during multiple-day training camps or periods of increased volume) and/or those who partake in intense competition may also have elevated risk of URTI.

Immune suppression is most likely a result of more than one mechanism. The effect on the immune system by a bout of exercise is intensified when an athlete trains daily or more than once per day. Chronic suppression of the immune system may result, as certain stress hormones are released during exercise. Additionally, the psychological stress of intense training and competition may combine with the physiological effects and increase the impact on the immune system.

No one likes to be ill, especially when trying to stick with a training plan, so take the following actions to lower your risk of URTI, to reduce discomfort of symptoms, and to boost recovery:

- **Avoid overtraining** (excessive training without proper recovery). The syndrome, a stress response, is characterized by subnormal performance, constant fatigue, altered moods, poor sleep, irritability, and depression. This state can make you more susceptible to infection. Therefore, make sure to rest well between training sessions and after intense competition.
- **Keep a training log.** By tracking training sessions along with levels of fatigue, stress, sleep, and soreness, an athlete and/or coach can better assess health and fitness status. This may be helpful in recognizing symptoms of illness and may also help monitor the road to recovery.

- **Practice stress management** and establish a regular and adequate sleep schedule.
- **Follow proper nutrition.** Dietitians usually recommend a sports nutrition plan with about 60 percent of calories from carbohydrates, about 15-20 percent from protein, and about 20-25 percent from fat. Include fruits and vegetables, and consume adequate intakes of vitamins and minerals (preferably from food, but can be met through supplementation).
- **Eat your C-food!** While Vitamin C can not prevent the onset of infection, such as a cold, it may help you feel better faster because of antihistamine effects, as Vitamin C exists in high concentration within infection-fighting white blood cells. Daily you should aim for about 200mg of Vitamin C, but during URTI you may wish to increase the amount up to 600mg. Some foods high in Vitamin C include oranges, brussel sprouts, papayas, strawberries, kiwis, grapefruits, red peppers, green peppers, tomato juice, and broccoli.

With these tips in mind, train hard and train smart. Most of all, enjoy these winter months and make it a *healthy* and happy New Year!

Choosing your Races

By Megan Gurly

Choosing races is neither rocket science, nor should it be really scary.

There are several factors you should take into account when choosing your first race and/or setting up your season:

1. What is your goal? This seems like inane advice, I know: Um, my goal is to race. But, you should answer the following questions to narrow down how you want to race: do you simply want to race to finish? Do you want to do one race, to test the waters and see if you like the sport? Do you want to set a series of increasingly challenging objectives culminating in one big race? Do you dream of racing a big race such as an Olympic or Half Ironman distance event?
2. What are your strengths? And, you can't answer nothing! If you if you feel weak within the sport – you have the most import quality that is necessary for success – courage. You joined the team, right? So far, you are doing great.
3. When do you want to race? June, July, September?
4. Is where you race important? If this is your first race, in addition to your TE teammates, do you want friends and family to come? Would you rather race in anonymity? Do you like to travel to race?

Okay, that seems like a lot to think about, I know. But, with anecdotes, all can be explained rather easily (I'm hoping!). Based on my experience, and the experience of a friend, I'll illustrate the do's and don'ts of race selection.

The Do's.

Last year I introduced a friend to the sport. Since I wanted her to fall in love with the sport in the same way that I had, I labored over which races to start her off with. My friend (whom I'll call K) and I talked about her goals for the season. K wanted to do several races that ended with a final challenge. (All told, K did 6 races which is a lot for anyone, especially a rookie.)

Now, K is a gifted athlete who comes to the sport with very strong running skills – having completed several marathons. Therefore, I was not terribly worried about her on land – she has adapted to the bike quite well. However the swim was her weakspot.

K was excited to begin, and wanted to start her season as soon as possible, and she was not concerned about where she raced. Since, the swim was as source of anxiety, we started with a duathlon to get used to multisport, the idea of transition, and to learn what it feels like to run after the bike in a race. Because you can practice bricks all you want – but believe me when I tell you - it hurts more in a race ☐. There are several local early season duathlons, which are a lot of fun.

For her first triathlon, we wanted to find a race that would play to her strengths and minimize her weakness. Last year the Old Colony Tri was a sprint (this year it is an Olympic distance) and the quarter mile swim, 12 mile flat bike and 3 mile flat run suited K just fine (she placed in her age group!) We looked for a few more races with short lake swims and after two more races, we decided to have a go at an ocean swim. For land lovers – the Firm's Kennebunk race is wonderful – it has a long 19 mile bike that gives strong cyclist time to make up for a weaker swim. K had a go at that race, and enjoyed her first ocean swim. She ended her season with a challenging Olympic distance – Granite Ledges. But, she was well prepared and did well, and she only panicked a little on the swim ☐.

The Don'ts – Megan's first season.

Anything you could do wrong, I did – so learn from my mistakes, and don't make them!

Goal setting, what is that? I decided that I wanted to do triathlon, I have no idea why. So, I picked a race, for no reason, other than it was decent timing, it was TimeOut Productions' Hyannis Sprint 1. Back in those days (gads, it was 1999!!!) you could wait until nearly the last minute to enter, so naturally, I did. I was traveling for work the two weeks prior, so I called to ensure that I could get in – some woman on the phone said it wouldn't be a problem – she lied, or I remembered wrong, whatever. The end result is that when I showed up for the race - late (not an uncommon occurrence - I'm always late) I was told I couldn't enter, that the race was closed. So, the friends who had planned a

weekend trip to the cape to hang out with me took me home and got me ice cream – which I ate, at 7am.

The next Monday, determined to race, I went online and looked for a race within the next two weeks. The next race I could find was the FIRM's Ashland Lions. It was a little longer (almost double at 1 mile swim, ~26 mile bike and 6 mile run) nevertheless, I entered. Since I'd rallied my posse to join me the previous weekend, no one was available to come and watch me – I had to go and do my first race alone! I was terrified. In addition, since I am perpetually late – I showed up about a half-hour before the race was due to start, and in my nervousness get going I left the hatch of my truck open, nice! (I am now nearly an hour early for every race).

I will spare you a sad, sad race report. While this race did play to one of my strengths – swimming, it is a very challenging and hilly course that I was ill prepared for. Further, it did little to set up a season for me. I went from this race on to do a sprint, and then I attempted a very challenging race consisting of a 1 mile swim, 40 mile bike and 9 mile run. I was totally unprepared but thought it looked like fun. However, I hit a table while on the bike which took me out of the race, and permanently dented my thigh (my bike was fine, phew!) – it is a great story which both my orthopedic doctor and physical therapist love to tell, but it was a hard lesson to learn! (It is, however, a great way to get guys to feel my leg on dates!)

Moral of these two stories – do as I say, not as I do! No, seriously, I'm hoping that I have illustrated the importance of setting goals, determining your priorities and choosing the right race.

For the newbies to the sport – there are three main organizers who do multiple events, and two races that are sponsored by independents. Our race coordinators do a fantastic job of keeping our calendar up to date with all of the races that are available to us.

Here is an overview of these organizations:

Keith Jordan – Timberman and Granite Ledges. Without a doubt, Keith's races are some of the best-organized events I've ever been a part of. However, they are also some of the toughest courses. All of his events take place in NH – they are scenic, but hilly. If you are up to the challenge, go for it!

www.timbermantri.com

TimeOut Productions – Rich Havens is the organizer, and he too does a wonderful job of organizing races. He has a dedicated volunteer crew who are at all of his races. These races sell out quickly, so if you are interested in any of them, you should consider entering soon – like by Feb/Mar LATEST for the June races. I know that sounds extreme, but they are awfully popular.

www.timeoutproductions.com

FIRM – Wendy and Bill Fiske – all of these races are done for local charities. They are more relaxed than the others are, and you can nearly always show up race morning and register. They have established a grand-prix series of races to encourage participation. In this series the local teams get points for placement. At the end of the season, we get cash prizes that coincide with the points we win. Since Wendy and Bill are often desperate for volunteers, we also get points for volunteering!

www.firm-racing.com

The two independent races are the Cranberry Country Triathlon, which is organized by the Baystate Triathlon Team (Olympic distance), and the Hannaford Lobsterman Triathlon in Maine, which is also an Olympic distance race. Both of these races can be found by searching www.active.com.

Training and Reflection

By Monique Lappas

I think that there are times for reflection in everyone's life.

Hours on a bike and out running have allowed me a time for reflection recently. Facing the deaths and sicknesses of family and friends in the last year prompted me to focus on what I considered to be important in my life. From this, I would like to share two ideas, the first is about gratitude and the second is about balance.

I believe that my ability to complete my ironman will not only be about my individual performance or success on the day. While I hope that my hard work and determination will pay off, I would never have been able to commit to the goal of completing an Ironman without the support of my husband, friends and teammates. These people, who stand and cheer, listen to me in times of doubt or are just there for advice when I need them, will receive no applause as I run down the finishing chute, but I couldn't be there without them.

I like to approach my Ironman and many other aspects of my life with the philosophy that the end result will be a product of the love, dedication and support that was shown to me by a myriad of people along the way, and it is important that I thank them for it.

It is common sense that a good performance is based on a balance of a good training program, proper recovery, a healthy diet, and the right mental attitude. This needed balance for optimal performance is true of life itself. It is important that our physical, mental, social and spiritual sides are all maintained; otherwise there will be an imbalance and our lives will not reach their true potential.

I feel that all of this reflection actually reinforces the idea that we all need to go out and live life to its fullest. We need to be engaged in the pursuit of exceptional lives,

exceptional and balanced in every respect. We need to go and suck the marrow out of life and make sure that we have no regrets. After all, life is too short to be somewhere where that you don't want to be.

Good First Timer Races!

By Jen Lyons and Cece Buchanan

The Hyannis Sprint I and II races are ideal for first timers. Held in Hyannis, Mass. in Cape Cod, the race offers a flat, scenic course with plenty of crowd support over the 25-mile ocean swim, 10-mile bike, and 3.5-mile course. The first event in June is a great way to begin the season, while the last one in September makes a nice cap to a summer of training. First timers should be aware that ocean swimming is a little more challenging than swimming in either the pool or a nice, calm lake- try to get in some open-water swim practice ahead of time if possible! Race applications will be available in February- sign up early as the race always fills up quickly! Hyannis I will be held June 14, while Hyannis II will be held Sept. 6. For more information visit www.timeoutproductions.com.

The Wild Dog Triathlon put on by F.I.R.M. is another first-timer friendly race. Typically held the first weekend in August (race date is unconfirmed at the moment), the Wild Dog is a flat, fun course held in North Kingston, RI. The .25-mile ocean swim is held in a protected cove so it feels more like lake swimming than ocean swimming (almost no waves but it is salt water!). The 10-mile out-and-back bike course is mostly flat, while the 3-mile run is held on a loop with very few hills. F.I.R.M. races are always well attended but typically don't sell out ahead of time so you can usually do race-day registration. For more information visit www.firm-racing.com.

Another good FIRM race that never fills up is the Danskin race. This is an all woman triathlon that is booked as a race that anyone can finish! The course is set to hold over 1700 women, and last year, 1200 signed up. It is held in the end of July, which gives you plenty of time to train in good weather! And it is a fun, warm and fuzzy race. All the women cheer each other on, and there are lots of 'angels' to help you out. They call each volunteer and angel. On the swim, there are 'swim angels' who are all over the swim course, bike angels will help you set up transition, and fix any bike issues, and lots of water stops!

Have fun this season! And remember; sign up for your races early!

-Jen