

Tri Sexual Minorities

Why tri? I'll tell you why

I'm a big fan of cross training for multiple reasons: If exercise weren't convenient, I wouldn't get around to it as often. By combining different activities throughout the week, you work all of your muscles collectively. Tennis Monday, yoga Tuesday and biking Thursday is one example of cross training.

I was busy "cross training" last year, getting my booth together for Pride 2005. When I asked my straight Small Business Administration coach if he would be visiting my booth, he said, "As long as no one touches me." I assured him that he was unattractive, so that wouldn't be a problem. Keep in mind that this comment was coming from a man who was a former figure skater. I'm grateful not to have opened that can of worms. I half expected to see him at Pride this year—in leather.

After Pride last year, I planned on searching for a nonhomophobe business coach, but I met one at my booth! Jackie Wheatley, Portland Area Business Association treasurer and Small Business Development Center coach, originally started doing triathlons because the events included swimming. Competing at more than 300 pounds, she was often the last person to cross the finish line. The event staff got to know her by name. Estimating that she has finished last 15 times through the years, she says, "I'd rather be DFL (dead fucking last) than DNF (did not finish)."

Prior to managing a 120-pound weight loss, the other triathletes rarely spoke to her, but no one can question Wheatley, now entering her 14th season. I wish I could show you a photo of her in action at



Dear Ethel
BY MARIA CALLAHAN

and plans to participate in a full Ironman in August 2007.

Last year, I got to watch my partner, Q Center coordinator Gene de Haan, get clobbered while playing rugby. She's a great player, and the perfect cleat mark bruises look cool, but de Haan's body type isn't exactly suited for regular full-on smashing and I've been slowly pushing that point. De Haan loves to run, but the impact can make her knees hurt, so she recently added biking for cross training. Upon learning that Wheatley and Gibbs were planning to participate in the Blue Lake Sprint Tri, she decided to give it a shot. She finished in just more than an hour and a half, and after the initial exhaustion passed, she said she liked triathlons because "There are less head injuries than rugby." De Haan is planning to participate in a standard distance tri in September.

I'm planning to enter my first sprint tri in September. I'm certain you'll be hearing about it.

DEAR ETHEL:

What are the individual event distances in a triathlon? I run, cycle and swim regularly, but I'm not sure if I can do it all at once! Are there any GLBTQ "tri-clubs" I can train with?

Fun Sprint and "Tri-it" Triathlons are great for a first-timer. Distances in these triathlons can vary, but the Blue Lake Sprint Triathlon was a half-mile swim, a 12-mile bike and a 3.1-mile (five-kilometer) run. The

Blue Lake Olympic Triathlon was a standard distance tri, consisting of a 0.9-mile swim, a 24.8-mile bike and a 6.2-mile run. Ironman consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run. A half Ironman is, well, you figure it out...

Triathlete Debra Lambourn says: "There's a sense of camaraderie in the tri community regardless of who you are as an individual. My being a lesbian has been irrelevant."

Though she knows of none, she adds, "I would love to see a GLBTQ tri-club." Maybe someone will read this column and start one. ☺

Information in this column should not be used in place of advice from a licensed health care professional. If you have a health or fitness question, contact DEAR ETHEL at mariacallahan@gmail.com or visit www.mariacallahan.net.



From left, Gene de Haan, Zan Gibbs and Jackie Wheatley relax before the Blue Lake Sprint Triathlon.

the Blue Lake Sprint Triathlon taking third place in her class, but I've discovered that I have more to learn about shutter speed.

Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center supervisor Zan Gibbs' idea of fun is participating in bike races with inviting names like "The Torture 10,000" (10,000 feet of climbing, all in one day) and "Run Like Hell" (a downtown half marathon). She got into competitive cycling after meeting trans cyclist Molly Cameron, who loaned her a road bike. With a well-defined bike obsession, Gibbs rides one of her four bikes nearly every day, whether commuting to work, training for a race, running an errand or going on a two-week bike tour across Oregon. Already a swimmer and cyclist, Gibbs took up running five years ago to begin training for tris. Now with several seasons of racing in the past, Gibbs trained for June 24th's half Ironman

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