



Swim, Bike and Run; yes in that order. These are the components to a Triathlon. The distances vary on the type of Triathlon you want to conquer. The longest, being the Iron Man which is for the ultimate triathlete. The Coronado Extreme Triathlon is not quite as long and is for the beginner athlete. It is in fact the oldest Triathlon in Panama, the first event dating back more than 13 years ago.

So, why do they call it the Extreme Triathlon? The triathlon is hosted in Coronado, where the far from easy field conditions have earned the event its 'Extreme' name. The 750 meter swim takes place in the unpredictable and often tumultuous Pacific Ocean in front of the Coronado Beach Club, just off Roberto Eisenmann road. Next, a challenging 20 kilometer bike ride, on the bumpy, rocky roads of Coronado, keeps riders vigilant and needing to react quickly. The last leg of the event is a 5 kilometer run, which finishes on the beach, where the Extreme Event started.

The event is used as a training goal for both beginners and amateur athletes alike. Last year, Steve Jorgensen, a Canadian living in Coronado entered his very first athletic event at the age of 63. Even though triathlon rules allow for relay teams, Steve entered for all three events himself. At the age of 58 Steve suffered a heart attack, which was instrumental in changing the way he lived. He became active, paid closer attention to what he was eating and drinking. Encouraged by his recovery to health and with help from athletic friends, Steve began training to enter The Coronado Extreme Triathlon in 2010. He finished in 2.37 hours. This year, Steve is training to enter again. His aim is to shave 23 minutes off last year's time.

While Steve took on a lofty goal in 2010, triathlon rules allow for relay teams of 2 – 3 people. This makes room for beginners to set training goals to complete 1 or 2 out of 3 events. Last year there were several teams made up of beginners and seasoned athletes who made teams

to enter the competition. There were swimmers, bikers and runners of all levels working together. Some were competing for the first time, for a sense of accomplishment; others joined teams for the joy of participation. Their energy created a sense of energy and excitement through the months of training culminating in personal best victories at the big event.

This year at the Coronado Extreme Triathlon, on September 25th ,we expect to see some familiar faces returning to push their goals. Tom Larroquette, 35, father of 2 will be completing his first Triathlon. Larroquette is not unfamiliar to sporting competition. He played soccer in school and is also a natural swimmer. Tom has also competed in lifeguard swimming competitions in his adult life and enjoys setting athletic goals. Tom's best event is the swim. Last year he finished the 750 meter swim in 15 minutes, seconds behind the first place finish. He also enjoys his bike, but he is definitely not looking forward to the run, which is his weakest event. Steve Jorgensen and Tom have ramped up their training to a daily regime and have been training together several times a week.

Karyn Saunders, 41 may be the only expat female from the area attempting the full triathlon. A triathlete from Toronto, Karyn is quite familiar with athletic competition. She has run in several marathons in Panama, including the 42.2 K Panama International Marathon. With a passion for individual sporting bests, Karyn was the motivating force behind many of last year's new entries from the expat community. In fact, she also helped plan and organize a road race in the Pacific Beach areas called "Carrera Vista Mar Run". This year she is teaching kids to swim. Karyn's strength is in the water, she enjoys running and finds the bike her biggest challenge. "If I can get through the 20k on the bike, I can hit the ground running and finish my first Triathlon here in Panama".

For many of the expats who move to Panama, the adventure never stops. People like Steve, Tom and Karyn have become an inspiration to the whole community. Retirement is about getting out there and seeking new challenges and trying things people didn't have time to think about back in their home countries. Steve has proven that anything and everything is possible at any age. Jorgenson not only lost weight, but he is healthier and is in better shape than he has been for years.

On September 25th at 7am, Coronado Extreme Triathlon will hit the water. It is a Sunday morning and the participants both from the area and Panama City can use all the support they can get. You never know, next year you may find yourself training with Jorgenson, Larroquette and Saunders as we all know the Adventure never stops in Panama.

To register for the Coronado Extreme Triathlon, stop in at the Tri Store off Calle 50.

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