



Photo by Kevin Koresky
IM ST. George 2011

Meredith Kessler: 40 Ironman Races Completed & Counting

By Kevin Koresky

3rd Transition: Meredith where did you grow up?

MK: I grew up in the Midwest Columbus, Ohio.

3rd Transition: Are you an Ohio State Buckeye fan?

MK: oh God yes. Growing up in Columbus how could you not be.

3rd Transition: Ok, that concludes our interview.

MK: Ha, ha you must be a Michigan Wolverine fan.

3rd Transition: I am I grew up in Michigan.

3rd Transition: What sport did you participate in before starting triathlon?

MK: Growing up I played field hockey and swam on a team. I received a scholarship from Syracuse University to play field hockey. There I also ran track my last two year. I continued swimming in college recreationally and I played soccer.

3rd Transition: When did you start racing Ironman?

MK: I used my graduation [2000] from college to buy a bike, which I got rid of three years ago. It was hard to changes bikes as I raced 30 plus Ironman's on that bike. I signed up for the Mohican Pineman Triathlon, which is a full iron distance triathlon in Perryville, Ohio. I raced this race two weeks later. My swim and run were ok but my bike was around 8 ½ hours.

3rd Transition: So the iron distance was your first triathlon?

MK: Yes it was. I have only race full and half distances. I have never raced anything less than that. No Olympic and no sprint distances. My first 8 triathlons were iron distances.



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3rd Transition: The natural progression to the iron distance, for most triathletes, is to start with a sprint, do Olympic, then half and then Iron. What was it about that distance that made you dive right in?

MK: I think it goes back to growing up, I enjoyed running so I used to run a 10-mile loop in the morning. In the colder months I would run 10 miles on an indoor track that was 100 meters long. [That's 160 laps]. when I heard that they were putting on this race, I figured if I can do 10-15 miles on an indoor track I going to give this a whirl. I may as well start big.

3rd Transition: Do you coach?

MK: Yes I do. I coach up to 10 athletes under the Purple Patch umbrella. I love it; it is so rewarding to watch my athletes achieve their goals. I like to help my athletes focus in the mental side of the sport. I am a believer that this is sport is as much mental as it is physical. We can train our bodies to do just about anything we want it to but if you mind is not engaged then you never achieve your goal.

3rd Transition: Can you tell us what happened earlier in the year at Ironman St. George?

MK: Sure. I came off the bike about one minute down on Heather Wurtele. So I thought to myself sweet I am going to run with heather and try to run towards victory. It only took one mile into the run before I figured out that something was wrong. I tried to push past it and at mile 22 I

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paid for it. I ended up passing out and I woke up in an emergency room. Ironman was to be my 40th Ironman finish but I DNF'd, I have never DNF'd.

MK: *I have a kidney situation, I have always had dehydrated kidneys and I can't take much salt. This has never really been a big issue as I have always been an athlete; I have done 40 Ironman races. Before Ironman St. George I tried to preload on sodium. This was something new to me and yes I know, you are not supposed to do anything new before or on race day. That fact that I was training in 60f weather and St. George was going to being the 90's I thought I better be prepared.*

3rd Transition: What did you do to try and fix the problem?

MK: *After Ironman St. George I trained for five weeks to get ready for Ironman Coeur d'Alene as well*

as I started working with a nutritionist. I wanted to be fully prepared for Ironman Coeur d'Alene because I knew I was going up against Julie Dibens. I know Julie is an amazing athlete and I have a lot of respect for her.

MK: *Ironman Coeur d'Alene did go that well either. After coming out of the swim, I didn't feel that well. I somehow made it to the swim and got onto the bike course. On the bike course I felt my body swelling by the time I got to mile 70 I was feeling really dizzy and I gained over 17 lbs. I wasn't digesting anything and it was off to the hospital. We found out, the hard way, this sodium citrate is poison to my system.*

After Ironman Coeur d'Alene Meredith finished REV 3, Ironman Canada, Wisconsin and the 2011 ITU Long Distance World Championship. Kessler will be racing Ironman Arizona to finish off the 2011 season. Website: www.meredithkessler.com Twitter: www.twitter.com/mbkessler