



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

Stroll along the sandy shores of D.T. Fleming Beach on Sunday, November 1, 2015, and you'll see hundreds upon hundreds of the fittest people on the planet, each with their own unique number tattooed on their arm.

For the pros, the number represents where they finished at last year's race. The reigning XTERRA World Champion Ruben Ruzafa will don No. 1; and last year's women's winner Flora Duffy will wear No. 61. For the amateurs, their race number is indicative of what age division they're in. For example, No. 103 is Heather Horton, the youngest woman in the field at 15-years-old, and No. 896 is Ron Hill, the senior statesman of XTERRA at 78.

For timing purposes, the numbers are identifiers, a way to track how fast No. 218 can swim, bike, and run. Of course, there's more to No. 218 than her bike split. No. 218 is Alissa Magrum, and here is her story, in her words...

### No. 218 - Alissa Magrum, 40-44, Austin, Texas

*Why do I race XTERRA?* There is a laundry list of reasons that range from a sheer love of competition to an equal love for all three sports; open water swimming, mountain biking and trail running, to a desire to show my 10-year-old daughter, Ella how strong her Mom is, to a reason that makes my motivation a little different than most XTERRA athletes...their names are Colin, Zachary, Averie, Connor, Joshua, Christian, Stewie, Ken and the list could go on and on. Each one of those names is a child or a friend who drowned. My motivation is bigger than me and more powerful than me. I race as an Athlete Ambassador to Prevent Drowning. I race to raise water safety awareness and to tell people that drowning is the NUMBER 1 CAUSE of accidental death for children under 5, yet it is preventable. I race to have conversations in the transition area and at the waters edge and on the bike and on the run. I share the stories of those who have lost their lives to a fatal drowning and those who survived a non-fatal drowning. I raise funds (\$1200 so far this year) for Colin's Hope--the drowning prevention non-profit organization I run. I race to help race directors elevate the water safety standards on the swim portion of the tri. Learn more about Colin's Hope at <http://www.colinshope.org>.

I also race XTERRA because I love the people and the camaraderie and the genuine caring of the XTERRA

community. I am motivated to combine my passion to make a difference in the world with my athletic talents. I carry a positive attitude with me into every event, even when things do not go my way. I am a competitor but I am rooted in kindness and an authentic desire to share the XTERRA course with fellow competitors from around the globe--each of us speaking different languages and motivated by different reasons yet coming together to kill it on the swim, bike and run. Being part of the XTERRA family is truly a special gift.



### No. 684 – Roy McBeth, 45-49, B.C., Canada

I am a 45-year-old husband, father, police officer, XTERRA athlete, and recent organ recipient. On January 14, 2015 I received a living donor kidney transplant from my boss, Inspector Kevin Wright of the Abbotsford Police Department in British Columbia, Canada.

Prior to my transplant I suffered from a genetic kidney disease called Polycystic Kidney disease. Despite declining kidney function I was able to compete in Maui in 2012 and 2013. I also competed in Guam and Saipan in March of 2014 and again qualified for Maui, however due to rapidly declining health I was unable to attend. I was facing complete kidney failure requiring dialysis in the near future. It is through the gift of Organ Donation that I am able to continue with work, travel, family and sport.

I have been blessed to date with a remarkable recovery and this season I have been able to participate in a number of events including MTB races, a number of Olympic distance triathlons, and XTERRA Victoria. I have even managed a couple podium finishes within 6-months of transplant.

Most recently I competed in the Challenge Penticton Half



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



### No. 220 Deanna McCurdy, 40-44, Littleton, CO

Everyone has a story. Over the years I have learned that usually the most successful people are those who overcame insurmountable odds and pressed onward to accomplish a dream. Our family has a dream, one that some believe is just a fantasy in our heads. You see, we have a daughter with a rare genetic disorder called Angelman Syndrome. She cannot speak, has balance and coordination issues which makes simple skills like walking up and down stairs or even standing on uneven surfaces challenging. She suffers a seizure disorder, a sleep disorder, and has global developmental and cognitive delays. This sweet 7-year-old, however, has a smile that will light up a room, has never met a stranger, and has the most joyous spirit of any child I have ever met. We truly believe that one day, our daughter will have the ability to talk with her own voice, play with her sister and friends like other children, and run her own race in life.

Ironman where I rode the bike for a relay Team "Donate Life" which included my donor and his wife. Through our participation we were able to raise awareness for Organ Donation and register several new organ donors. One in ten individuals suffers from some form of Kidney Disease and I embrace the opportunity to educate other athletes about the Organ Donor process and the difference it can make.

I am looking forward to a return to the island with my family this year and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to once again line up on the beach at D.T. Fleming. I love racing XTERRA and have enjoyed many beautiful venues while participating. My favorite memories, however, have been watching my wife cross the 10k trail run finish line in Maui and my son crossing the kids' race line with the Canada Flag overhead. A trip to XTERRA Worlds in Maui is truly an amazing family experience.

I was given the opportunity at XTERRA Victoria to address athletes and share some of my story. It is my passion and goal to convey the importance of Organ Donation and the impact it can have on an individual and their families. I have been striving to set an example of what is possible through Organ Donation and have embodied the "Live More" attitude #livelifepassiton.

After her birth and diagnosis at 16-months-old, I spent hours and hours running on the trails, trying to process what her condition would mean to us, how much our hopes and dreams for the future would change, and even if we would ever be able to do things we always wished to do as a family like hiking, camping, and taking trips to explore new places. Never did I imagine that those hours of running on the trails, learning how to keep going after sleepless nights, hospitalizations and doctor visits, and meeting others in this new-to-me special needs world would take us on the most incredibly amazing adventure of our lives.

We discovered XTERRA two years ago when I entered a Dirty Spokes Productions XTERRA Trail race in Georgia, our home state. It was the last race of the series, but served as the introduction to the most encouraging, positive, passionate group of people I have ever met. After doing well at that race, Dayton Morinaga, writer for XTERRA trail run news, encouraged me to sign up and come out to Utah for the National Trail Race. Dayton shared with the XTERRA community our story. When we arrived in Utah, we were embraced as part of the XTERRA family. How can you not have a great race when you are loved and encouraged by people you have just met? I remember standing along the shore the day before our race, watching the US Off-road Triathlon Championship race take off, thinking to myself, there is no way I could ever do that! Fast forward 2 years, a move from Georgia to Colorado, entering my first XTERRA mountain triathlon here in Colorado this past summer, then



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



more years we can travel and race with our daughter, but I do know one thing... dreams do come true if you believe passionately and work hard for them. This is why I love XTERRA- it is so much more than a race. It is a philosophy that each athlete, staff member and volunteer embodies on how to embrace life and truly LIVE MORE!

- Deanna McCurdy, Mom to Hailey (age 10) and Hayden Grace (age 7, Angelman Syndrome), 2015 Age Group National Champion, Founder of Team Miles for Smiles

### No. 643 - Scott Bierman, 45-49, Frisco, CO

I have been racing XTERRA for 15 years and have finally qualified for Maui – which has been a dream of mine since I got hooked in Big Sky Montana!

My first experience with XTERRA is one that will live me for the rest of my life and was truly the turning point in my athletic career. I had always been an avid mountain biker but definitely wasn't breaking any records out there. I was living in Jackson Hole at the time and I saw this flyer for an XTERRA race in the local bike shop, I had heard a few people talking about this race up in Big Sky and I thought "what the hell", let's give it a shot. Man, was I in for a surprise. I did some research on triathlon training and scraped together as much as I could find on these XTERRA races. It was May and the race wasn't until late July so I had plenty of time – right?



another and another, only to find myself standing on that same shoreline, my Georgia-raised blood chilled to the bone and tingling with anticipation, ready to attempt the Championship race with my husband alongside.

While not the perfect race from "rookie" mistakes like misplacing my bike in transition, breaking a chain during the climb up to Sardine Peak which made me lose precious minutes of time, I was able to pull from the deeper level of strength –something that my daughter taught me I had, to come back in the race. As Josiah Middaugh says, "You swim with your arms, you bike with your legs, and you run with your heart." My legs and heart worked extra hard that day, and maybe my daughter will never understand how I did at that race, but that is okay with me. Her unconditional love and ability to find joy in the smallest of things, such as a tiny leaf or puddle on the ground, reminds me that what we do truly is a gift. Both of my daughters and my husband will be waiting for me at the finish line in Maui and no matter how I do, their smiles and hugs will be the best finisher award this mom could ever receive.

Through our adventures with running and triathlon over the past few years, we have watched so many other parents and family members of special needs children get out the door, defy the limitations of the life they have been given, and cross their own finish lines. I never realized we could make an impact on others through our own struggles and victories. I don't know what our future holds, how many



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

I spent the next months training and thought to myself, damn I'm in great shape, this is going to be a piece of cake. I bought a wetsuit online and all the gear I thought I would need and the wife and I jumped in the car and drive the 3 hours up north. This was my first tri ever and I really had no idea what I was doing but thankfully there were many other seasoned veterans to give me a hand getting set up. We walked down to the lake, which was more like a high mountain pond that couldn't have been even 60 degrees in the middle of the summer. After what seemed like an eternity, I finally made it out of the water and started the trek back to transition. By the time I got to T1 there were only 2 bikes on the racks, making it easy to find the rest of my gear. Finally, I got out of my wetsuit and jumped on my bike for the 2 laps around the trails of Moonlight basin – after the first lap, I thought to myself, am I going to be able to finish this thing? The miles ticked by and I found my groove on the second lap and made my way back in for T2. Things looked a lot different this time; all the racks were totally full! After shoeing up and getting some liquids in me, I headed out for the 2 lap run. It was extremely steep to start and I had to do two of these things.....I found some encouragement on the trail as everyone passing me on their second lap were telling me to keep it up and giving me some "pats" as they zipped by. The laps both came close to the finish so I could see everyone sitting on the deck drinking beer and having a great time – I was really suffering now but told myself, that I had already done one lap and I could for sure complete the second. Another 40 minutes went by and I could hear the announcer saying that there was still an athlete on the course. This gave me a well needed boost and then I could see the finish coming into sight. Then the entire group of XTERRA competitors and family members all stood up and said "Here he comes"! This was an awesome feeling to finish my first XTERRA ever and to have that type of support was incredible. I knew then that I had found my athletic community and couldn't wait to come back next year. The following year I went from "DFL" to middle of the pack and I was awarded with the "Most Improved Athlete" award and left with some really cool XTERRA Swag.

I have continued to compete year after year and have managed to grab some Age Group Podiums along the way. This year I finished 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the Mountain Division for Men 45-49 and competed in XTERRA Nationals in Ogden (which was Awesome BTW). I find inspiration everyday as I pound the trails of Summit County Colorado in preparation for Maui as crossing that finish line will be the ultimate

reward for my efforts. I also find inspiration as I am racing for my Dad who is battling cancer right now; he has always been there for me on my XTERRA journey. When I told him that I qualified for Hawaii, he couldn't have been more proud and he is always chatting me up to the nurses. My Nationals T-shirt has become his favorite and always has it on when I visit. This one is for you POP!

XTERRA is truly a world class community of incredible athletes and I can't wait to hear that cannon go off.



### No. 178 - Kristy Jennings, 35-39, Wanaka, New Zealand

I have always been terrified of open water so... why not enter an XTERRA event?!!!

Now when I say terrified I really mean it, even objects in the swimming pool scared me and laying in water that was only up to my knees scared me to the point of panic! After about a year of gradually learning how to swim properly in the pool, with much trepidation I decided it was time to try a swim in the lake with a local group of open water swimmers. I lasted about 5 minutes in the shallows before panicking and heading for shore. I was terrified but forced myself to try again and again gradually gaining confidence with each swim. I decided that there was only one way to push my boundaries to reach my goal of completing an XTERRA event and that was to enter my first ever triathlon in January this year. I did it and absolutely hated the chaotic swim but



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

knew that it could only get better for me. So as XTERRA Mototapu approached my nerves increased to a level that I thought that I couldn't do it but knew how disappointed I would be with myself if I did not complete my goal or at least try. I had always been a reasonably strong mountain biker and an OK runner so all I had to do was survive the swim.

Race day (March 7<sup>th</sup>) came with bucket loads of rain but no wind and therefore a calm lake. Wow what a day I had! I loved it, even the swim and to top it all off I won my age group and was 4<sup>th</sup> woman overall behind three pros! My next challenge therefore comes at the World Championships with my first ever ocean swim – watch this space!

I believe that challenging yourself can be one of the most rewarding things in life and I encourage anyone to face their fears like I did and prove to themselves that they can achieve anything they put their mind to.



### No. 390 - Thomas Kerner, 25-29, Bayer, Germany

Sometimes it's more than a medal, a certification or a title you take home from the races. Sometimes you win without winning. Sometimes you walk out of each experience with new or stronger relationships - this is why we, the athletes, love XTERRA so much. Building new and lasting relationships and the sense of accomplishment, can be achieved by anyone who is passionate about their sport - this is what makes XTERRA so great. For example, Florian

Badoux (BEL) embodied the strength and support of the XTERRA community when he gave me his repair kit during his fight for the AG win at XTERRA Germany, just so I could finish the race. These gestures show the great respect XTERRA athletes have for each other, we compete but support each other. Bringing together these relationships, the support and sportsmanship within the XTERRA community is one thing why I'm really looking forward racing in Maui and makes me proud being part of the XTERRA tribe.

### No. 139 - Gabrielle Chaizy, 30-34, Royat, France

I am not a triathlete and I am still wondering how I am ending up doing XTERRA worlds in just a few weeks.

I have always been swimming. I like mountain biking and I hardly find any pleasure in running but I find the combination of all three quite an incredible challenge. I did an attempt at XTERRA light Switzerland in 2010. But that's it, until this year.

I live mostly in Africa and my job takes me all year round from one country to the other. Therefore I am always looking for swimming pools with decent size and shape and with roughly clean water in order to keep training. I rarely get to travel with my bicycle and running can be limited by heat and insecurity forcing me to use treadmills.

After a difficult year in 2014 with very limited sport opportunities, I found myself lucky enough to be able to swim and cycle several times a week in January 2015. I always find it easier to train when I have a goal so at the end of January, I registered for the French master swimming championship taking place end of June. It is only because XTERRA France was taking place the following weekend and not too far from the swimming championship that I decided to give it a try and see if I'd be able to finish a XTERRA. Only after registering did I realize that XTERRA France is one of the most difficult in Europe!

XTERRA France was HARD and I am only able to attend XTERRA Worlds because 2 persons ahead of me could not want to go. I restarted training as much as I could early August but during this last month prior to the race, I have been facing challenges finding a pool, I have no bicycle and I run on flat tarmac road, painful for my knees.

Will I be ready for this major event? Not by any standard. But lining up and racing XTERRA Worlds with all those incredible athletes will be the reward.



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



**No. 328 – Tate Haugen, 15-19, Fort St. John, B.C., CAN**

Making it to the XTERRA World Championships has been my goal for four years. I saw an XTERRA race on TV when I was 11-years-old and decided that I really wanted to do one, so I did my first XTERRA race that summer alongside my mom in Canmore. I've done the Canmore XTERRA four years in a row now, and it has become the race that I look forward to the most each summer. I love swimming, mountain biking and trail running so to be able to put them all together in one race is awesome! Since I am 14-years-old this year (turning 15 on November 23rd), I was finally able to race the full-distance XTERRA this past summer and qualify for the World Championships by winning the 15-19 year old category. My favorite XTERRA memory was definitely coming out of the water 3rd in the men's category this past summer in Canmore! It was exciting to be heading out onto the bike course with the fast guys.

I live in a small town in northern British Columbia where XTERRA isn't very well known, but I'm hoping I can encourage other kids to get involved in off-road triathlons by having fun and racing well in Maui. I have been a competitive swimmer since the age of 6, I did my first trail half-marathon with my mom at the age of 8, and started racing mountain bikes at the age of 11...but my favorite thing to compete in is XTERRA. My parents, brother and sister are all into biking and running too so our holidays are often spent travelling to

traces all over the place which is pretty fun. My dream is to become a professional off-road triathlete one day, it's what I love to do and I hope to race for many years to come. I am making sure that I get good grades at school too though! I can't wait for the World Championships in Maui!!

**No. 233 - Christena Ward, 40-44, Dillon, CO**

XTERRA is many things to me but most of all it is about a community of racer families and friends. That community was cheering me on at the finish line of the recent 2015 XTERRA Triathlon National Championships in Ogden, Utah. Earlier, I told myself "it's ok if you puke at the finish line, as long as you stay ahead of your competitor." I was running at a sprint with every bit of energy I had (and on the verge of puking) as I approached the finish line. The cheering crowd was lined up on either side of the finish shoot and I heard someone gasp "Oh my God! I thought the crowd was awestruck by my remarkable sprint to the finish. It turns out, they were alarmed and concerned by the blood running down my face – the blood starting somewhere behind my sunglasses. After crossing the finish line I was abruptly escorted to the Medical Tent without even given time to catch my breath.



With the blood streaming down my face I think people expected me to say I crashed into a tree racing my bike while traveling at breathtaking speeds. But no, I was running. I was stupid-tired, and I caught my toe on a rock and face planted onto the trail. I was given three stitches at the



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

race finish and now a few weeks later you can barely tell anything happened. I'll always have a story to tell, but my experience with XTERRA over the last two seasons isn't about three little stitches. XTERRA to me is about humility, family, and perseverance. Oh, and having fun!

XTERRA is humbling, no one can argue that. There is always someone faster, sometimes a lot faster. Everyone racing has some kind of challenge to overcome either at home or during the race. I'm not the only one with a story for this race. One of my competitors broke her chain and still finished first. My other competitor crashed her bike, bruised some ribs and finished in third place. I finished in second place and I'm sure I would have come in third if she hadn't crashed. But these are the small trials and tribulations. We each have our own personal hardship. It's the hardships outside of racing that gives XTERRA racers perseverance to finish the race when the going gets tough. This perseverance is humbling to me.

XTERRA creates a strong bond among racer families and friends. It takes a village to be an XTERRA racer. Family members sacrifice hours for training and traveling to races. Then on race day the family becomes bigger. Friends are made on the race course with racers encouraging each other as they pass, exchanging names as they go but challenging each other at the same time. At the finish, racers give each other high fives and hugs, swapping battle stories. This is XTERRA Family.

The XTERRA challenge is what motivates us. It is the XTERRA family that makes racing a blast and keeps us coming back.

### No. 883 – Craig Schilling, 65-69, Northbrook, Illinois

Well, they say what goes around comes around. Fifteen years ago I discovered XTERRA after a bout with mono at age 50 left me pretty much a wreck. It was my motivation to get in shape and get going. Little did I know I'd be hooked after the first race? Following that first experience, I did over 50 races from 2000 to 2010 including the World Championship in 2000, 2005 and 2010. I participated in the XTERRA Training Camp on Molokai, raced in Saipan, Puerto Rico, Canada and the US. Was a 3x regional champion, a Team member, participated in the US Championships –finishing 3rd in my age group one year. The World Championship in Maui in 2010 was to have celebrated by 60th birthday as well as 10th anniversary in the sport.

What happened in 2010 has been my motivation for returning to race Maui ever since. That year I had a great swim and was off to a good start on the mountain bike. About five miles into bike I was completely short of breath. I made the decision to stop and returned to the medical tent where the staff said they thought I had an irregular heartbeat. So I packed up my stuff and drove myself to the hospital where I was admitted and spent the next two days. The medical staff was correct - I had Afib.

In the spring of 2011 I had cardiac ablation surgery to fix the Afib, hired a coach and was determined to get back into shape to compete. Family issues along with a couple relapses just prevented that from happening. And that is how it has been the last five years until now. In February, I got the OK to train again. In May my Mom passed away the very same week as the Oak Mountain regional – I raced, I finished and I qualified for Maui. It was a very emotional moment for me – a win for me and my Mom. Since, then I have been training hard "to finish" the Maui race.

I have no great expectations – I am doing Maui because I love the sport. Nothing about racing this race has been easy. In July I broke two ribs training on my mountain bike. In May I lost my Mom. A couple weeks after the race I am having some foot surgery. And, on top of all that, I'm five years older and a few pounds heavier. You ask me what is special about XTERRA – it's *"that you don't have to be the best to enjoy it, you just have to do your best."*





## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



### No. 745 - Andy Deunow, 50-54, Anchorage, AK

I didn't find XTERRA... XTERRA found me!

After doing triathlons for a few years, my friend and I thought Alaska needed a new breed of triathlon... with a lake swim, mtn bike and trail run! So, in 2001, we put on the first Hammerman triathlon in Anchorage, AK.

That winter, I got a call from a group called "XTERRA" (who?)... and they wanted to know if we'd like to be a part of the XTERRA race series. After a bit of checking, we said "cool"!

2015 was our 15th Hammerman... 14 under the banner of XTERRA Hammerman!

And since that day, I've been not just directing the race, but traveling and competing in XTERRA racing!

I race XTERRA because the format with off road biking and running is SO much more fun and challenging than road triathlon. I especially love seeing the XTERRA family I've met and become friends with when I travel to races.

My personal motivation comes from seeing new places, meeting new friends, and still working hard to try and get that top step on the podium at Worlds! I've been so close, and I know it's within my grasp. Maybe this year?!

I have lots of great XTERRA memories... but a true favorite

was when the AK boys came together on Razor Ridge in 2012 (see attached photo, that's me 3rd wheel!), and we were able to work and push together for much of the bike leg! Go AK!!

### No. 188 - Allison Moore, 35-39, Boise, Idaho

*Why do I race XTERRA?* It's given me an outlet to "Live More" in so many ways. I love that each race is unique, challenging and a ton of fun! XTERRA also gives me an excuse to travel and see parts of the world I have only dreamed about visiting. The XTERRA crew, athletes and volunteers are truly an Ohana and support each other no matter where we are in the world. This love and support is very unique to XTERRA!

*My personal motivation?* I race for all of those who cannot.... My mother and several close friends have MS. Many of them were amazing athletes but due to complications with the disease are no longer able to be as active as they once were. The 'Live More' lifestyle and motto is something that they do every day and have showed me how important it is to live my life with the same attitude.

*Favorite XTERRA memory?* There are so many amazing XTERRA memories.... Getting to ride in a police car with GL Brown up to the top of Mt. Tapochau in Saipana instead of taking the "super highway" with my Dad, Erin, Chuck and Roy. The looks on their faces were priceless as we drove by. I think they may have been tired of climbing. GL and I actually found the officer and he gave us another ride to the top again this year.





## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

### No. 484 - Marcus Dudoit, 35-39, Lafayette, LA

After several years of on-road triathlon racing, I began to lose interest in the monotony and overall direction that many in the sport seem to be heading in. Over-crowded courses, excessive cost, and the growing non-friendly, hyper-competitive attitudes among a lot of triathletes. I admit, I found myself getting caught up in these things and it concerned me. I decided to take a step back from it all and re-focus on what was important to me. I literally sat down and wrote the following list:

- Family
- Health
- Adventure

As I reflected on my list, I had the following thoughts:

*Family.* This one trumps them all. I have a wife and two young kids. They mean everything to me and it's important to me that I have their buy-in to my decision to live the triathlon lifestyle. I don't want to participate in a sport that excessively alienates me from my family (I'm looking at you Ironman).

*Health.* This was the original motivator for me taking up the sport of triathlon. I want to set a good example – for my kids and others – of living an active, healthy lifestyle. I'm 100% convinced that adequate exercise is the best medicine available; as either a cure or prevention for nearly every ailment.

*Adventure.* One of my favorite quotes is by Andre Gide: “*It is only in adventure that some people succeed in knowing themselves*”. Camping, hiking, nature and travel are all activities that my family and I have always loved, even pre-triathlon.

If only I could find a way to make those interests intersect with my athletic pursuits, I wondered. Enter XTERRA...

It didn't take long for me to conclude that I didn't have to quit the sport of triathlon. There was another option that I hadn't taken full advantage of. I could keep participating in a sport that I loved, keep my family included, stay healthy, and have all the adventure we could stand! Off-road triathlon, really sums up who I am as a person, not just an athlete. After immersing myself in the XTERRA tribe, I have been delighted to find out that there are lots of people out there just like me. I've also witnessed some of the most remarkable acts of kindness – equipment assistance, knowledge sharing, words of encouragement – among

competitors, on a scale that I've never seen outside of XTERRA.

2015 was the first year I made an attempt at racing some of the larger, championship races. I have to admit I've been blown away. The XTERRA brand does a remarkable job of knowing their customers and ensuring that the race experience of both participants and spectators is unmatched. So far, my favorite memory has been participating in the XTERRA National Championship race. That race, in that location, at that time of year is nothing short of stunning. I will be back!



### No. 174 - Sara Gorges, 35-39, Heidelberg/Germany

*My favorite XTERRA Memory?* I only have ONE memory of XTERRA, because the XTERRA Germany/Zittau 2015 was my first one. It was one of my greatest experiences ever. I had so much fun, that I got totally high off it and it was partly so hard, that I thought I had to give up. But of course I didn't and so I won my age-Group.

*Why XTERRA?* I love to ride mountain bike races and marathons. Before XTERRA Germany I only did triathlon for cross training and better fitness, until a friend of mine told me, that there is a triathlon, where I can ride my mountain bike as well. Because I love to make new experiences and find new adventures I spontaneously registered for the XTERRA Germany without thinking about it, just to see how it feels. Now, the surprisingly possibility to take part at the World Championship is the biggest adventure of my life.

*My personal motivation?* My motivation is the love of doing sports. In that moment I can feel my breath, my body and I can feel the purest energy of life. It's a passion. I love the moment of happiness and proudness, when I cross the finish line, it's like a drug. To share with others at the end of the day makes me happy.



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

### No. 437 - Tom Morwood, 30-34, Sydney, Australia

My XTERRA story is simple: I race XTERRA because it's so hard, but so good!

I used to be a pure "road" triathlete. And one day about 6 years ago I was riding and got hit by a motorbike. I was taken to hospital and scans revealed a cracked spine. After doing a few tests to determine the damage, would you believe I walk out of the emergency room that very day (well, I hobbled out). After a few months of recovery I started to get back into training again, however ever since I've made the switch off road:

On the trails its ME in full control. On the road at the mercy of other drivers.

Lucky for me XTERRA came to Australia a few years later, which was perfect!

I've done 5 XTERRA events in the past 2 years. This my wife and I have done Rotorua, Asia Pacific Champs, and Canada (Victoria). So Hawaii will make it 4 races in 4 countries. Oh yeah that sounds so sweet!

We are so lucky to be able to travel the world and live the ultimate adventure lifestyle: travel and race at XTERRA events! Over the next few years I'd love to be able to say I've raced XTERRA and every continent! We are eyeing off XTERRA France, Japan and South America as the next adventures.

My wife was dragged into XTERRA due to my passion, and she's done amazingly, wiping the floor with my results actually. She's podiumed at every race she's done, and won the AUS/NZ double.

She's pregnant now, so at Hawaii she'll be my water boy.

We are both heavily involved in our local triathlon club in Sydney Australia, and we organize Mtb clinic for newbie to the off road world and arrange for our club to go to off road races. We love it, and and we love bringing new people to the XTERRA tribe.

Can't wait to get over there and hit the trails! If I get a top 5, I'm allowed to get an XTERRA tattoo hahaha.



### No. 697 – Douglas Piil, 45-49, San Clemente, CA

During an extensive 10-month backpacking trip in Africa, where I was discovering just how fortunate I was to have grown up in Canada, and seeing some of the most amazing things that this planet has to offer, I knew that my fast approaching 30th birthday was going to have to include some significant lifestyle changes. I had grown up competing in a variety of sports, but somewhere between my teens and that trip, my life had fallen into a substance using haze. Watching the sun rise at the summit of Kilimanjaro became the start of this next chapter.

I had done well to graduate from University, found work (paid play) with Club Med in St Lucia, and many other destinations around the world, but the "play" was rapidly destroying this former athlete. Africa was a whim, a conversation over a beer, but it offered the ultimate adventure. During hours on the road, with plenty of time to think, I realized that I was not happy with who I had become. It started with a few push-ups and sit ups, then a short 15 minute run, then 4 AM wake ups to do my 2 hours of calisthenics before spending the day landscaping, to a half marathon, to a sprint triathlon on a borrowed bike to a return to the Caribbean and ocean swims, to the moment that I finally grew up.

9-11, is a day no one forgets. Our personal 9-11 occurred just a few months prior when my younger brother suffered a devastating head injury that had him in ICU for a month and in hospital for a year. The catch to the tragedy was he was in Perth, Australia, literally 1/2 way around the world from his family. With elderly parents unsure of what to do, I volunteered to go. We were never that close, but seeing him with tubes and machines keeping him alive, put life in



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

perspective. He had a road bike which I was now inheriting and could use as my means of transportation for 2 months of trips back and forth to the hospital. The quiet of the evenings became times for mind clearing runs along river-side parks, and slowly, I found the urge to compete again.

As many were inspired by the Dave Scott's and the Mark Allen's crushing lava fields of the Big Island, I too wanted to test myself against the Ultimate physical challenge. My training in Australia became focused, and my return to Canada with a disabled brother, was to be punctuated with a Half Ironman in Peterborough. I survived, barely, but now had the bug, the addiction and I wanted more.

With my brother settled in with my parents in Toronto, life brought me to California, to be reunited with my dream girl and my dream job. My commute was used as a 11 mile training platform for biking and running, with swims beforehand all to concur the IRONMAN. A few races later the hours of training were detracting from family time. A wife, 2 young kids and a growing career, didn't leave much time for 6 hour bike rides.

The career ultimately landed us on Maui at The Ritz-Carlton Kapalua. I could commute by bike or run, had the best swimming pool ever off of the beaches, but no triathlons on Island and not nearly enough time to train. Fate intervened, when this "different" type of triathlon landed on my doorstep, it was called XTERRA and was so much more than Ironman. "Why don't you try us out" was all that was needed to be asked and my life once again changed forever. A borrowed mountain bike helped me experience the joy of a 4-year-old child riding for the first time. No longer was riding a head down, gearing mashing, exhaust sucking chore, it was a fresh air breathing, stump jumping, dirt spitting, wheel spinning good time, that was so very addictive. The Worlds of 2012 have defined my athletic life for the past three years, and despite the rigors of career and family, my addiction gets quenched, now on the trails of San Clemente, California and the wonderful XTERRA races that I have the privilege of competing in.

I race for me, my kids, my wife, my brother, my parents, my friends, my co-workers, any and all who want to learn how to lead a better life. XTERRA does this for me and so many more. XTERRA is adventure, athletics, adrenaline, and awesomeness all in one...and I LOVE IT!



**No. 316 - Libby Harrow, 65-69, Fruita, CO**

After racing in road triathlons for 16 years, I entered my first XTERRA points race in Miami where I met Andrew Marsh. Later that season, I went on a mountain biking road trip and stopped at Keystone and raced the mountain championship. Andrew was there, recognized me (really?), which floored me, and introduced me to Janet Clark. I qualified for World's at that race and was hooked!

Unlike road triathlons, where you could predict your finishing place, before the start of the race, it wasn't just the other competitors that came into play, but the course itself. Anything could happen, like the herd of bulls that blocked my way, in Spearfish, or my seat rails breaking, from the rough course in Miami.

XTERRA is family to me, especially, since I don't have my own. Every time I compete in a race, I see my friends, and meet new ones. The venues are beautiful and the races are very well organized. In the days before Facebook, communication was by email and the forum at [Xterra.com](http://Xterra.com). Now, I follow the activities of my Xterra friends, daily, on Facebook.

It has been an amazing experience watching the series grow worldwide and of course my dream would be to travel the world and race XTERRAS everywhere along the way!



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



### No. 124 – Maria Espinosa, 25-29, Morelia, Mexico

My story, I think is a bit funny. I did my first triathlon four months ago because a friend of mine bet me. I simply loved it. I trained two months and did my first XTERRA...and won! So, I qualified for the World Championship on Maui and decided to go. I think it is easier for me because I used to race mountain bikes three years ago, and was the U23 national champion. Also I've gone to 2 different Pan American Championships so I'm enjoying being back in races.

My motivation is to be the World Champion, enjoy the event and meet more athletes from all over the world that love the same sport.

### No. 546 – Anton Bergs, 40-44, Atiamuri, New Zealand

My XTERRA story started in 2006 when I competed in XTERRA New Zealand and qualified to race at World Champs. We came to Maui to do the race and have a family holiday with the kids. I raced in the 30/34 age group back then. Since then I have raced XTERRA NZ several times as well as doing Ironman and ultra marathons.

This year my son Brendon Bergs decided he wanted to do XTERRA NZ so we both raced, had good races and got qualifying slots to race at Maui. So now we are both racing at XTERRA Worlds this year, Brendon (No. 323) in the 15-19 age group and me in the 40-44 age group.

I think it is pretty special to be able to race my son in the biggest XTERRA race in the world, not sure if I will beat him he is getting faster all the time. We are looking forward to the challenge as we know it is a hard race. My wife and daughter will also be there as support so it's great we can have a holiday as well.

### No. 201 - Alexandra Borrelly-Lebrun, 40-44, France

I discovered XTERRA race because of my husband, Nicolas Lebrun, and I had no choice to do my first XTERRA at Las Vegas in 2009. That year Nico and I stayed for six months in the U.S. and went around to do all the America Tour races. I came from classic triathlon progress and even though I didn't ride a lot of mountain bikes before I still fell in love with this sport.

I like triathlon but I love XTERRA! First because it's off-road. Biking and running on the trails is magic. Second, we discovered so many beautiful places in different countries, and finally, because we met so many people who are friends now. The ambience is more friendly than any other race. My best memory, and I have so many, was in 2009 when we did 12 XTERRA races in the U.S. and around. This trip with Nico made it a beautiful year!

This photo touch me everytime I look at, Maui 2009. Nico gets 2nd, very close to the win, and we can see it in his eyes, happy but...





## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



**No. 617 - Fred Schuth, 40-44, Littleton, CO**

My wife Lisa and I are now XTERRA athletes. We are originally from Illinois and we moved to Colorado 18 years ago...but our story does not start there. Back up about 18 months before the move to Colorado and right after we got married. We honeymooned on the island of Maui just a few weeks before the first Aquaterra (XTERRA). Man Oh Man! If we only knew what the future would bring. Fast forward a few months. We had recently moved to the beautiful state of Colorado and I was really into powerlifting...like reeeeeeeally into it. My wonderful wife kept telling me that I needed to do some cardio and so we went to a trail where she could run and I would hike. It wasn't long before I started running too, but it took some convincing that I needed to buy some trail running shoes. Finally, when I got my shoes there was no turning back. Training and racing in local trail races became a huge focus for us.

Then 9 years ago, right after our first son was born there was this off-road run/bike/run duathlon nearby in Lory State Park and I thought what the heck...this might be fun. With no training and minimal experience riding bikes I road my solid frame no suspension 16 year old bike and I had a blast. It was not XTERRA, but man it was fun. Note: this is now called XTERRA Lory. It was around the same time-frame that Lisa bought me a punch card for the local master's swim team as my first Father's Day gift. Again there was no turning back. Lisa knew that I really wanted to learn to swim better...at the time I could barely swim 25 yards.

Shortly thereafter we moved into the foothills of Littleton where we have over 6000 acres of private trails and everyone that I met rode a mountain bike...except for me. Then I bought my first real mountain bike and a few months later I entered XTERRA Buffalo Creek. It was there that I did my first ever open water swim...the water was 52 degrees! Since then I have managed to do a few every year and I have even convinced Lisa that she would enjoy XTERRA and she does. In fact a few years ago, after Lisa qualified for US Nationals, that we said that we were going to Maui for our 20th wedding anniversary and we are going to do XTERRA Worlds. Well... here we are celebrating two 20th anniversaries and we are going to have fun!!!

**No. 514 - Philip Myers, 35-39, Paia, Maui**

For me, training for triathlons gives me passion and fuel to be the best I can be. I am a very competitive person. After high school football I was not able to compete at the next level because I was never given the opportunity. It really messed with my head and I became pretty depressed. It was hard for me to watch other people play and get a shot at the NFL.

My life after high school was boring. I never thought I would attend college nor had the desire to. I became stuck in my small town working the typical 9 - 5 with the local street department and just living the same life over each day with no stimulation or passion. Drinking beer and watching T.V. was the only excitement.

One day I went to the public library to see if I could find something interesting just to get away from the bar. It was the best decision of my young life as I discovered Hawaii and motivation to make a change. I learned of a college that I could attend so I rapidly started to apply and go through the process. Before I knew it I was on my way to paradise and a better way of life filled with adventure and pleasure.

Hawaii has forever changed my life in so many different ways. But it was Maui where I discovered triathlons. I competed in my first triathlon at the XTERRA Adventure Fest Kapalua Maui. I am forever addicted. I cannot put into words the joy and adrenaline it gave me. It was very profound! I found a way to compete again! Now at 37 years old I feel like I'm 21 again! Along my journey as a triathlete I also found love, better health, and a new career as a Personal Chef. I have so much to credit to triathlons as it has forever changed my life in such a positive way.



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



**No. 544 - Doug Barkema, 40-44, Littleton, CO**

I race to be salt and light in the endurance community. My goal is to serve as I race in any way that I can - whether it is lending some encouragement, helping someone out in transition pre-race, and fellowshiping after the race. I race XTERRA because of the joy of being in God's creation. Each race is spectacular and show cases the Creator. I raced two XTERRA races last year, and 6 or 7 XTERRAS so far this year. My favorite memory is the sunrise over Lory State Park, or what is the woods at the Southeast Regional Championship. Maybe it was the fall colors and crisp air at the USA Championship. No, the mountain back drop at Buffalo Creek in Colorado. Each and every XTERRA race showcases nature. Faith, family, friends, and post-race fun.

**No. 360 – Charles Pietzman, 20-24, Troy, Missouri**

I am Master At Arms Second Class Petty Officer Charles Pietzman. I am originally from Troy Missouri, raised by my father John Pietzman Sr and my step mother Gail Miller. One year ago a really close friend of mine competed in the Guam XTERRA International Qualifier, he had tried to get me involved yet I declined. This year I decided to compete in his absence and spent four months training in an attempt to qualify for the championship. On race day I persevered and finished 1st in my age group and 43 out of 137 people and qualified for Maui. I am honored and privileged to be a part of something so special and want to truly be a light for my God and my Father who is the biggest role

model in my life. I am racing for my country and my father. My motivation is my baby boy that will be born only two months after I compete in Maui. I want him to grow up and see the things I have accomplished and to know that he has the potential to do anything he sets his sites on. That with hard work and determination he can become everything he wants to be and that God has planned for him. I would like to thank my father for giving me the Determination and work ethic to focus my energy on what I set out to do. I would Like to thank my mother Diane Pietzman for the compassion for others she instilled in me and my step mother Gail Miller for her stern parenting and the positive effect it has had on my moral character. I would like to thank Alexis high for always being there and Emile Enos for her awesome friendship.

**No. 277 Martha Hanright, 50-54, Templeton, MA & No. 232 Erin VanTuyl, 40-44, Westminster, MA**

Meet Team ME (Martha, Erin). We met at Wachusett Mountain Ski Area in 2011. Martha (53) brings experience, patience, and athleticism. Erin (40) brings humor, exuberance, and athleticism. We truly are a dynamic duo. We are outgoing, adventurous, strong willed, determined, and very competitive.

XTERRA gives us a goal to work towards and then we achieve that goal. We feel that it's not about doing well, it's just about completing the race, because we might not be able to tomorrow. We hope to inspire women to get out there and compete. We push each other to complete bigger and better challenges every year. Our first race experience with XTERRA was called Stoaked in Vermont. We were exhausted after the race and said, "Never again" but when the next race season came we said, "Why not?"



**Pietzman**



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



We were super excited when XTERRA French River came into the region. We had the most fun on the mountain bike course in Richmond, VA during the East Championships. That was by far the best course we've raced on! We qualified for Utah Nationals in 2013 and 2014. We competed at Nationals in 2014 and made it our goal to qualify for Hawaii Worlds 2015. We are looking forward to Hawaii to see what challenges XTERRA brings!

realizing it, I was on the start line of the XTERRA World Championship in Maui, Hawaii!

This is now my 9th season and I can tell you I wish it would never end. I live in Brisighella, Romagna County, in the middle north of Italy, and an important part of my preparation takes place on the mountain bike. I have a dense network of trails where I train, and that is my gym where I can put into practice the technique and the theory of workouts.

I ride about 750km/month, on bike, winter and summer, always outdoors, and I do not use rollers power in the gym only bike and ride, only air, rain, cold, heat and sun, in perfect XTERRA!

I'm an age-group triathlete, and that I'll stay as long as I have the strength to slip the wetsuit, shake hands with my teammates and get on the water for the fun of swimming, biking and running. I can not ask for more, no more .. I taste the essence of this sport, and it satisfies my passion.

"You love sport and do it with passion, and as shown by Einstein, the most beautiful feeling that one can try is the sense of mystery, is the source of all true art."



**No. 601 – Samuel Peroni, 40-44, Brisighella, Italy**

I was struck by a photo, which I found in a magazine in 2006, of my friend and champion Jamie Whitmore while she was racing XTERRA in Sardinia. I wondered what this race could be, and my curiosity had a short life. I was already a mountain biker, and then I started to swim and run, and in 2007 raced my first XTERRA. The next year, almost without



**No. 68 – Carina Wasle, PRO, Kundl, Austria**

XTERRA is for me like a big family. Great people, races at fantastic locations, travelling around the world, get to know different cultures, making new friends, adventures, always new challenges, lot's of fun....

It all started in 2005 at my first XTERRA Austria at



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

Achensee. It was the first time I heard about this sport and thought this might be so cool to be part of this event. I couldn't really handle my bike on technical things, had to go off at every single root and just thought this people are so crazy. How can they ride with the mtb down this skiing track? But I could run and swim and came 3rd at my first XTERRA race. After the race I met and got to talk with two crazy american, Jamie and Courtney. They were so funny and they told me about some European races. From that moment I knew I want to race like Jamie. At my 2nd XTERRA race in Titisee, I was still new in XTERRA. The bike course was just a hell of a climb, perfect for me and so I surprised me and everybody with the win at XTERRA Germany. That was a feeling I'll never forget. I have found my passion, to be in the nature and do the sport what I love.

Now I raced so many XTERRA Worldtour races in more than 20 countries around the world and still love it. Lots of adventures like XTERRA Brasil in Manaus which was in the middle of the jungle, the waterfall at XTERRA Guam, the cave at XTERRA Saipan or just the amazing landscape at XTERRA Southafrica. Every single race is something special for me and has its own story. Thanks to XTERRA for all the great memories.



**No. 836 – Tom Monica, 55-59, Thousand Oaks, CA**

This will be my 10th Maui in 13 years of racing (I missed three different years due to injuries). I've been on the podium eight times and won four times. Maui is pretty

special for me. It's really the hardest race on the calendar because it's so hot, long, with the most racers and the most on the line. It is a race like no other. I remember the details of every race here, and always look forward to next year. The islands are magical in themselves, but adding the intensity of the race, and the large number of people that I only see when I race, the weekends in October (or now November) are like Xmas to me. What more can I say? I will be on the beach that Sunday, praying for big waves, not-too wet trails, and the island energy to race hard and give my best to the race.



**No. 123 - Christy Drever, 25-29, Hardisty, Alberta, CAN**

I started racing XTERRA last year, and I started racing triathlon in 2001 at the young age of 13 after Simon Whitfield won the gold medal at the Olympics for Canada. I was hooked after my first race. Being from a rural farming community, I spent my youth training on gravel roads, often running through the pastureland. I developed a love for racing and two years ago my triathlon coach got me on a mountain bike and I was instantly hooked. She told me to consider an XTERRA race and I did my first off-road race last year in Canmore. I fell in love with off-road racing and knew this was the direction I wanted to turn my triathlon focus to. My personal motivation is consistently found in everything and everyone around me: I often race for those who are unable and am inspired by those pushing the limits daily. I feel so blessed to race in such an incredible sport and I am thankful daily for my health and to push my body's physical and mental limits. My favorite XTERRA memory thus far has been qualifying for my first World Championship race here in Maui. I hope to continue to get faster and stronger and just want to enjoy this experience to



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

the highest potential, as it's not every day a small town girl gets to race on her bike in beautiful Maui. Below is a photo of me racing in my first XTERRA race and as you can see, I have been all smiles from the beginning. Cheers to making lifelong memories.



### No. 891 – GL Brown, 70-74, Ada, MI

Racing XTERRA has been so many things to me, racing with my pro son Pat, traveling around the world, seeing and meeting wonderful people with different backgrounds. The XTERRA family is truly a family of people, regardless of age that share a common set of life style values. Every race either large or small brings you into contact with great volunteers, racers and organizers. I can't say enough about the dedication of the XTERRA leadership, providing World Class events for us to participate in, thank you very much!

### No. 284 - Anne-Mette Mortensen, 50-54, Denmark

My first XTERRA race was in Denmark 2007, and I was hooked right away. It motivates me to be outdoor and challenge myself in the elements of the nature – the best sport area in the world. You have to be aware of what you are doing all the time. There is no autopilot on the trails. XTERRA combines my favorite sports in one, and I have the possibility to compete with people at my age. The training never gets boring, because of the different disciplines and things to focus on. The people around XTERRA are fantastic – athletes, crew and supporters makes the sport the best I know.



### No. 577 - Dale Hemley, 40-44, Torquay, Australia

My XTERRA story is as follows. I've come from a triathlon background, having competed in Ironman and 70.3 events mostly over the last 10 years. I've been so fortunate in racing in Kona on three occasions, and have competed in 9 Ironman races in total.

Unfortunately due to injury restrictions, my Ironman career had to change. That's where I found 'off-road' triathlon and XTERRA. I've raced XTERRA in Australia and other off-road triathlon events over the past 3 years. These are challenging, but so much fun!! I race XTERRA because I love to challenge myself. Quite simple.

My wife and I also run a Health, Fitness and Sport Development business particularly focused on junior sport development. We love to be active ourselves and set the best example we can for our business families.

Finding a new sport of off-road triathlon has allowed me to re-discover a new and exciting sport and passion that allows me to blend fun, fitness and wellbeing, personal challenge and most importantly, to not only provide a source of motivation for others to enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle but also by racing XTERRA and other related sports such as bike riding, running or swimming I can use this as a means to 'bless others' by fundraising initiatives that help to provide a better life to those less fortunate. This to me, is the most important benefit of having the wonderful opportunity to train and race XTERRA.

Favorite XTERRA memory was my qualifying race in Calalla Beach, NSW, Australia where I managed to qualify for the XTERRA world championship event.



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



### No. 235 - Beata Wronska, 40-44, Boynton Beach, FL

My story began in 2008 when I was just a girl with a 37-pound mountain bike wanting to race in just one triathlon. I was not a swimmer, not a biker and not a runner, I was just an ordinary girl sitting behind a desk who wanted something more from life.

I searched and searched and by an amazing miracle I found this incredible race just an hour away from my home, XTERRA Miami. No matter how many times I went to the park to practice my biking skills I would come home sore, bruised up but with one thing that never changed. I was going to do the race and I was going to finish it. I was somehow magnetically attracted to it and there was no stopping me now.

Finally, I raced beside everyone around me telling me otherwise. I had the most fun and toughest time in my entire life. I was exhausted and drenched by the sweat but the smile on my face never diminished. My goals were simple, have fun, stay brave, finish the race and try not to be last. I still remember getting out of the water almost last, raising my hands as a victory of part one of three of this race, to my surprise everyone clapped and cheered. It was a victorious moment for me since I did overcome my fears and something I never did before and I was on the way to finish my first triathlon. To my surprise I placed 2nd in my Age Group and never looked back. This one single local race moved me to a different world with different goals, new friends, and new ways of living...

Today 7 years later thanks to my first XTERRA experience I am who I am. I become an accomplished Mountain Biker and competitive XTERRA Triathlete. Under my name I have victories like the Sea Otter Classic and runner up in the Mountain Biking Marathon Nationals as well as my National Champion Title in Cross Triathlon in my Age Group. Also 9th and 8th place finishes in XTERRA World Championships in 2012 and 2014.

For certain my best XTERRA memory is crossing the Line in XTERRA Worlds in 2012 and completely tearing up on the Finish. It was a very emotional moment and culmination of my hard work and proof that dreams do come true.

Next one was the final sprint to the Finish of the Cross Triathlon Nationals to grab my title. I can't describe the feeling one has knowing you are just steps away from becoming a National Champion. Everyone cheered and my body was just covered with goosebumps. It is the best race I ever had, I gave there more that was in me, it will be always in my most treasured memory.

Today my home is filled with bikes, my husband an engineer become a superb bike mechanic and my incredible Pit Crew. My calendar is filled not with holidays but rather with race events. Our lives have changed and for the better. We both love to travel, we are grateful for our new incredible friends and experiences that XTERRA brings us.

If you asked me few years back that I will be putting a story together for the 20th Anniversary of XTERRA World Championships, I would not have believed you! I dreamed about being part of this amazing event and part of this family for so long. I watched those who were lucky enough to participate and I could only hope that one day I would be able to also. And here I AM!

I feel XTERRA is such a beautiful sport that brings the best people you can find together. I would not have met any of you if not for this sport! This besides the love for nature, biking, adventure and constant joy of playing outdoors is the main motivation that keeps me wanting more...

XTERRA changes LIVES!



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



**No. 795 - Mark Waaijbergen, 50-54, Netherlands**

There are many reasons I race XTERRA. And they still add up. When I was planning my 2014-season I decided that would be the year for the off-road triathlons. In the Netherlands we have a competition of nine off road races, but unfortunately none of them is a XTERRA race (we used to have a XTERRA race, but that's several years ago). So I planned these nine races to get experienced in off road triathlon and choose one international XTERRA race at the end of the season to participate. This would be the grand final of my season. And it was. I was immediately hooked. And what's more: working towards the Xterra race I became addicted to the Xterra videos on Vimeo and Youtube, so I could dream the races. And dreamed of them.

Planning my 2015-season was easy: this had to be the season of XTERRA races all around Europe, participating in the European Tour. Why? Because I love to race in beautiful places, in nature parks, in cities I've never been, on tracks that are challenging, to meet athletes with the same passion, to hear the stories of past races, of the history of XTERRA. And to feel part of a group of likeminded. XTERRA would say: to be part of the family.

Looking to the XTERRA World Championship I'm a proud father to race with my sixteen year old son (No. 337 Quirijn Waaijbergen) What can be more motivating? We train a lot together and spend hours running through forests, cycling on Dutch mud and sand and looking forward to our next race in mountainous places. And of course the XTERRA

World Championship is like a crown on this year's races. Especially when you race it together with your son.

What's makes my XTERRA races one of my favourite memories is that my family travels with me. In this way it becomes more than race. I would say: a family XTERRA experience. And the moment the race starts, is the moment I learn about myself and the way you sometimes have to struggle, in the race and in your life. I remember XTERRA Spain as the race that seemed endlessly, and XTERRA Germany that I feared because of the rain and cold the previous year (but this year the conditions were quiet different), and XTERRA England that was really muddy and made me feel like home in Holland. And I'm always looking forward to see familiar faces and old acquaintances.



**No. 872 - Doug Usher, 60-64, Upton, MA**

My wife and I began racing XTERRA in 2002 at Sky High XTERRA in Grafton Lakes, New York. From then on I was addicted to the challenge that XTERRA provides. Riding a mountain bike through the woods over rocks, roots, snow and ice gives me a real sense of accomplishment. Being off road allows me to enjoy nature, even if it means being attacked by a hawk!

My personal motivation is to stay healthy and fit. I enjoy teaching my grandchildren what XTERRA has taught me. This summer they did their first off-road triathlon and loved it!



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE

Probably my most memorable XTERRA moment was last spring when I won my division at the XTERRA Southeast Regional Championships in Alabama which also doubled as the USA Triathlon National Championships.



### No. 317 - Linda Usher, 65-69, Upton, MA

My husband and I started doing XTERRA in 2002. I have been a regional champion for 12 years. I do XTERRA for many reasons. It provides a challenge that other sports would have a hard time competing with. I enjoy the aspect of off-road biking and the technical skills it takes to be able to do it. And of course, the camaraderie of the XTERRA Family is the best!

I am motivated by what XTERRA does for me. It gives me a great sense of accomplishment and empowerment. XTERRA helps me to stay fit, strong and healthy. It doesn't get better than that!

I guess my favorite XTERRA memory would be from last year when I won my age division at Worlds in Maui. For me, racing in rough water, on mountains and in heat is nothing I am used to. So I was very thankful to do as well as I did. I am looking forward to returning this year to race again and to see all my XTERRA friends!

### No. 517 - Paralisi Lefteris, 35-39, Athens, Greece

It all started about 3 years ago when my best friend Christos told me: "Lefteris, why don't we go to a triathlon race?"

"Triathlon? What is this?" I replied. I was never the type of person, who exercised regularly, nor had I a body that seemed to have special athletic abilities. I am however the type of person that has no boundaries. I like new challenges and with good company I can go far. Therefore, I said yes to Christos and I did my first triathlon sprint. Difficult, but also unique experience. It did not compare to any of the other sports that I was doing until then (e.g. ski, river kayaking).

Even though in that first race I came last out of the water, when I arrived at the transition zone and realized that only my bike was left, I got so furious that I started cycling frantically and ended up overtaking at least 25 people. It was the moment that I promised to myself that I had to start working more and more systematically until the next race, since I had already decided that this would be my new sport. Perhaps, the only individual/team sport that reaches you to your limits, but you quickly realize that it is still not enough and you raise the bar even higher. While looking on the internet, I came across a mountain triathlon race at Lake Plastiras- XTERRA Greece.

It seemed like a great idea, since as a child I grew up on a bmx and later on a mountain bike. So XTERRA Greece could not be missing from next year's racing calendar. A world-class event with professional athletes from around the world, in a magnificent location. The first attempt was the sprint distance because I still was not 100% ready for something bigger. But, as is usually the case after each race, and this one was no exception, there was only one thought in my mind after the end of that race; I must come back here and do even better. Without even realizing it, the next year's new target was set and it was very clear: "Participation in the XTERRA Greece" in order to qualify for the XTERRA World Championship in Maui. Things get serious and my life takes a new turn. The training program becomes more demanding, it is accompanied by a strict nutrition plan and in fact no day passes without having on my mind the one and only target. I admit that eight months of preparation were not easy.

Vassilis Krommidas (coach) became more and more demanding, Ioannis Drymonakos (swimming coach) made our swim workouts longer and George Hanoumis (bike coach) would be worried, if we would miss any of our mountain bike trainings. This is how we reached this year's XTERRA Greece, in order to pursue our dream. The emotions I've got every time that I find myself at the starting line are mixed. 'What am I doing now?' 'Am I going to make it?'



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



No. 602 – Francis Perry, 40-44, Vosges, France

By hazard a friend told me that XTERRA was the toughest race he's ever done, and I have a pleasure to suffer ;-). Suffering is kind of my motivation, but even better is the pleasure to meet nice people from different cultures. Last year in Maui was my first attempt, and I finished hand in hand with my best friend.



But, in a magical way all negative thoughts disappear after the first 5 minutes and the body does everything in order to follow the mind. This year's Xterra Greece race was once again unique. Although the weather was not by our side throughout the whole race, the event was perfect and nothing could change that. The race ended and my total time was good at a personal level, yet not good enough to secure qualification at the world championship. I had to wait for about a month in order for the slots to be allocated and finally the dream came true. I got a call from Costas Koumarialis (organiser), telling me that I managed to qualify. There were in fact only three months of preparation left. I felt so satisfied that I would be able to take part in the World Championship together with the 850 best athletes of the world. That's why I promised myself that I would make another big sacrifice for the coming months and that I would prepare myself in the best possible way.

I actually had to make a lot of sacrifices. I had to get up at 6:30am in order to train before work, I followed a strict diet, worked out twice a day and of course I had no time for personal life. It is difficult to say no to drinks with friends, because the next day you have another workout, but when you have real friends and a supportive wife, anything is possible. The time has come and we are just a few days away from the trip to Maui. I hope everything goes well, and that I come back full of beautiful memories, full of racing experiences, and of course with the participation medal in my suitcase.



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



### No. 422 - Christos Geitonas, 30-34, Athens, Greece

I am an educator, an entrepreneur and an outdoor sports enthusiast. Today I am leading CGS, one of the largest private schools in Greece with 1,300 students.

On the 29th of June of 2013 I got married to Maria, the girl I was in love since high school. A few weeks after our wedding we went off to Peru for our honeymoon with a friendly couple. What happened during the first week of our honeymoon changed our lives forever.

We had just landed at Cusco, Peru when I started feeling dizzy and very tired. We initially thought that these were symptoms of the altitude sickness, but it wasn't long before I suddenly collapsed and was carried to the ER at a local clinic. I was under extreme pain and could not breathe. I was diagnosed with an hemolytic crisis and my vital organs were gradually shutting down because of lack of oxygen. The doctors informed my wife that the combination of high altitude (3,400m) and sickle cell trait could be fatal. I was immediately put into a hyperbaric chamber in order to try to 'push' oxygen into my body. After a very agonizing night, I was immediately transferred to a hospital at Lima at sea level. I was there diagnosed with a spleen infarction and was hospitalized there for nearly a month. During the incident I lost around 15% of my body weight and went through intolerable amount of pain. My wife stood by me night and day; her courage and determination finally got us back home once I was fit to travel. Nevertheless, the

feedback from the first doctors' visit was a huge blow: 'We strongly recommend to you to stop any intense sport activity. Forget skiing, free diving, spearfishing and endurance sports. Its time for you Christos to have three children and relax.'

I was thankful to be alive at the time so I promised my wife that I would follow the doctors' advice. I really tried. The first thing that hit me was insomnia. I could not sleep anymore. After several weeks I was on the verge of depression. I was healthy all right, but I was not happy anymore. I just could not let go. I started visiting other doctors and hematologists in the country. Same advice everywhere. Finally I decided to travel to Houston, to get examined at the Baylor College of Medicine by a doctor who has done a lot of research on SCT. I still remember his words after the exams: 'As long as you remain hydrated and do not exercise at high altitude you can go back to your previous habits.'

It was not long before I competed in my first triathlon race after the incident. I cannot describe my feelings when I crossed the finish line. I was given a second chance to live my life at its fullest.

Months later I found out that other SCT carriers from Greece were not that lucky and paid the visit to Cusco with their lives. My adventure and others would have been avoided if there was an organised and updated travel medicine national agency to provide the absolutely crucial pre-travel consultation. Greece is a country with a reported 10% SCT carriers out of the total population. That means that one out of ten Greek international travelers is in great danger of sudden death should they travel at high altitude due to lack of information. Crazy right?

A year after the incident I decided to do something crazy about it. I decided that I would compete at Xterra Greece and aim for the slot for the World Championship at Maui. I could not think of a better way to raise awareness on SCT and its associated complications other than my personal story. That wishful thinking is now reality and I will make sure that my story is told and shared. I feel blessed to be healthy and able to compete at such a level. On the 1st of November my students will be watching the race live through the internet while I will be trying to teach them one valuable lesson I learned: 'Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it.'



## MORE THAN JUST A NUMBER ... MEET THE XTERRA TRIBE



tumors are growing again. We cancel the trip to Costa Rica and begin chemotherapy.

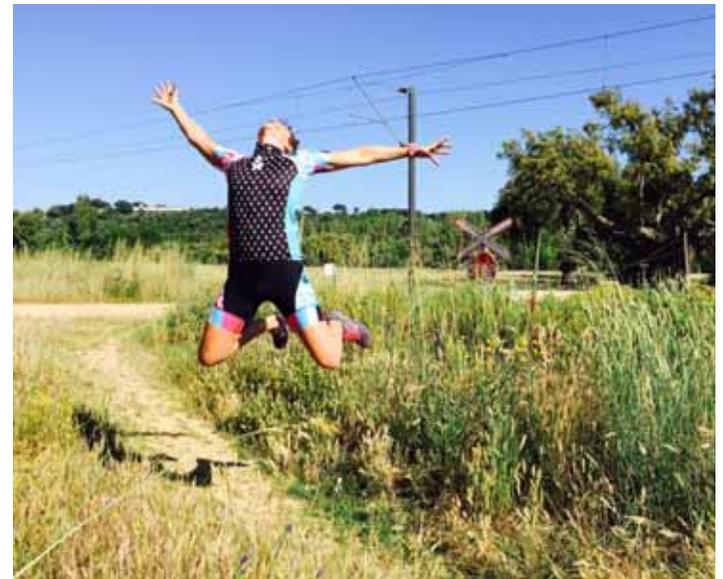
March and April 2015 are a mess, I have a terrible reaction to chemo, lose 30lbs and can't move without severe pain. Summer 2015: another surgery to remove tumors (I now have over 300 stitches from different surgeries). August 2015: the combo of surgery and chemo works - no progression of cancer in August!!!

October 2015: trying to gain weight, get stronger and be INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL to be able to stick my toes in the surf at D.T. Fleming beach on morning of November 1st.

My favorite XTERRA memory was laying in the medical tent, receiving an IV, at last year's Worlds and hearing the announcer say: Rachael DeSantis is sprinting to the finish in her first XTERRA Worlds!

### No. 224 - Nadja Mueller Schmid, 40-44, Switzerland

To me, XTERRA represents the joyful feeling as if I was a child playing happily & carefree out in nature. A feeling of true freedom.



### No. 743 - Dave DeSantis, 50-54, Milton, MA

XTERRA is a BLAST. It keeps me motivated, healthy and happy. I love traveling to races & meeting new friends.

I was diagnosed with stage 3C melanoma in the summer of 2013. In the fall of 2013, after two surgeries, the doctors give me 9-12 months to live. The winter of 2014 is spent trying every available option, remedy and medication. Doctors sequence my DNA and put me on two medications that start to shrink the tumors, the tumors shrink from the size of a grapefruit to non-existent by the fall of 2014.

Thanks to XTERRA, I get to race at Worlds in 2014 with my niece Rachael! The winter of 2015 I continue to train, get stronger and gain weight. My wife and I travel to the Philippines, have a blast and qualify for Maui. We plan on traveling to XTERRA Costa Rica in March 2015. The next CT scan shows the medication is no longer working, the

Live More®



**XTEERRA®**

T W E N T Y   Y E A R S