

Success Story- Mandi Harris



I have participated in sports, dance, and lived a generally fitness-related lifestyle since a young age. After completing the half marathon in Atlanta on Thanksgiving in 2005, I was tired of solely running. I needed a new challenge. I needed a new "hobby." I turned my focus to something I'd never attempted before- triathlons. As I began training in early 2006 for my first triathlon, I knew I was starting something that I would love.

Having swam in competitive swim leagues and in school since age 6, I returned to the pool for the first time in almost 10 years. I cut back on my running plan, focusing on being able to run after swimming and cycling, ha! I occasionally trained on a mountain bike and also began taking spin classes at a local gym. I didn't put a lot of focus on cycling- I knew how to ride a bike.

I made the Acworth Women's Triathlon in August of 2006 my first triathlon. I was comfortable with my training and knew completing the triathlon would not be the issue, but rather doing well enough to please myself would be the challenge. About 3 weeks before the Acworth Triathlon, I purchased a beginner Felt road bike. I quickly saw the advantages of having a "good" bike, compared to riding my old mountain bike. I completed Acworth in 1:27:09 with a bike time of 44:36, placing 12th in my age group. I participated in four more triathlons in 2006, even taking home a 3rd place AG at Cohutta Springs in October. I was happy with my performances, but wanted more. I wanted to become a stronger athlete, as well as a more competitive triathlete.

I was introduced to Coach Will's cycling classes by a friend and fellow triathlete of mine, and current student of Coach Will. My husband, now interested in duathlons after watching me, and I enrolled in Coach Will's cycling classes in early 2007. Despite only attending class once per week for twelve weeks, I saw a difference in my cycling strength, endurance, technique, and overall performance.

I completed St. Anthony's in April 2007 and noticed the positive effects of Coach Will's training. Since taking Coach Will's cycling classes, I took home three 3rd place AG, and a 1st AG and 4th overall in six triathlons in 2007 alone. My cycling times have tremendously improved, and additionally, in part to proper training and competitive cycling techniques, my run times have improved simultaneously. I returned to the Acworth tri in August of 2007 with a bike time of 40:15 (13 miles), more than 4 minutes faster from the previous year.

I am confident that cycling is my strongest leg in competition. With Coach Will's cycling classes and general training advice, I confidently pedal past my competition during competition. Even more, it's great to see Coach Will at events. I'm proud to cycle by him, standing on the sidewalk cheering on students such as myself during competition, showing him I've taken his advice to heart and put my training into motion. I look forward to training with Coach Will for many years to come and more importantly becoming a better triathlete who makes my coach proud.
