

## **Fast Learning, Fast Times for Triathlete Anderson**

By Adam Hodges  
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"I still have a lot to learn in the sport," says Beth Anderson, the latest talent to come through the CU triathlon program.

Anderson says this after a season that took her from the purchase of her first road bike to a third place finish in the Collegiate Triathlon Championships and a fourth place finish in the 20-24 age group at the Hawaii Ironman World Championships.

A serious swimmer growing up in northern California, Anderson reached the point of burn out by the end of high school. She passed up the opportunity to swim at Cal-Poly and instead came to Boulder to study environmental science and Spanish.

As an alternative to swimming, Anderson started running. By her junior year at CU, she was ready for some competition again when her older brother convinced her to try a triathlon. She participated in a few sprint distance triathlons on her mountain bike and joined the CU triathlon team by her senior year. That's when she bought her first road bike and headed out to last year's Wildflower Triathlon—the Collegiate Triathlon Championships—with no expectations.

The results? A third place finish in the women's race—the first Olympic distance (1.5 kilometer swim, 40k bike, 10k run) triathlon of her career.

Most triathletes new to the sport would tend to stick with the shorter distances for a while. However, Anderson was lured by the challenge of going farther and she headed down to Lubbock, Texas at the end of June to do her first half-ironman (1.2 mile swim, 56 mile bike, 13.1 mile run.) Again, she went into the race with no expectations.

The results? A first place finish in her age group in a time of five hours and twenty-one seconds which earned her a spot in the Hawaii Ironman World Championships.

Ask any triathlete what they would do if offered a coveted spot in the Hawaii Ironman and they would reply, "Take it!" So Anderson spent the rest of her summer logging the longer miles needed to take on the 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike, 26.2 mile run in Kona.

Her Ironman dreams were nearly derailed five weeks before the event, however, when a car hit her during a training ride near Erie. ER doctors put twenty-seven stitches across her left glute while joking about her not seeing a bike for a while. Anderson wasn't amused, but she was determined to still make the starting line in Kailua Bay.

She resumed running two weeks after the accident and was soon back on the bike. Successfully completing a few key workouts gave her a glimmer of confidence before Ironman.

The results? A fourth place finish in the 20-24 age group with a phenomenal time of 10:46. Her desire to finish before the sun set and "avoid the glow stick parade" prodded her to struggle through the marathon run without walking. Not bad for a rookie.

It is safe to say that Beth Anderson has successfully graduated from rookie status.

She has also graduated with a BA in environmental science and Spanish and is now pursuing a degree in elementary education. Not only does that make her eligible for another shot at the women's title at Wildflower as part of the CU squad; it makes for a hectic schedule with training and work.

Anderson swims three mornings a week with the Masters swim team at East Boulder Rec Center, bikes four times a week including one long session and one speed workout, and runs five days a week. She fits in most of her workouts in the morning before heading to classes in the afternoon.

This semester, she has also spent four hours a week working with students at Whittier Elementary School who speak English as a second language. The experience has given her a chance to relate an interest in foreign language to her teaching goals.

As for Anderson's long term triathlon goals, she is taking a wait and see attitude. "I just want to see how this season goes," says Anderson. The challenge of the Ironman lingers in her mind, though. "I'd love to race again at Hawaii," she says.

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