

## Club Croc Testimonial

### **Peter McDonald**

My “journey” into the wonderful world of Triathlon began with a very small step at the fairly mature age of fifty-one years in 1999. I had been watching my wife, Sue go jogging with her friends and competing in Fun Runs for several years. Primarily out of boredom I entered the 5 klm Walk/Run at the 1999 Noosa Running Festival while Sue was doing the Half Marathon.

I should now digress and provide some background to my athletic history. After leaving school I played football (and drank beers) for a couple of years with my mates. For the next thirty years I excelled in mainly indoor sports of beer drinking, pie eating and watching television. The occasional Corporate Golf Day, with motorised cart and Esky full of beer of course, was my sole contribution to the sporting world.

So back to the 1999 Noosa 5 klm Run. Well, lets just say I finished. But it was not a pretty sight as I huffed, puffed, walked and jogged the longest five klms of my life. My time was an appalling 37m.40 sec. I had sore legs and limped for the next week. This sporting life was definitely not for me.

For some crazy reason I entered the 5 klm Noosa Run again the next year, 2000 and my time improved. Shamed by my wife’s dedication to running I started doing some training. At the start I had very modest goals – to jog non-stop for 1 klm, then 2 klms, then 5 klms. Then I thought if I could just break one hour for a 10 klm Run I would be perfectly happy. It took until 2003 with several health setbacks to achieve this major milestone. I then surprised myself by jogging for a full Half Marathon distance at the Gold Coast in 2004 – time was 2 hrs.15 mins. I was now going faster than my wife, Sue, which was a great boost to the male ego.

About this time I bought the first bike I had owned since I was 14 yrs old. It cost \$30 and I really enjoyed cycling around the block. Some days I did over 20 klms – WOW! I also entered a couple of short Duathlons in 2003 and I was starting to get “sucked in.” I needed a better bike, all the spandex accessories, better shoes, more training, books, athletic magazines etc, etc. At least the kids had a new list of things to buy me for birthdays and Christmas.

There was one small hurdle to completing the “journey” into the Triathlon world – I couldn’t swim! Well I couldn’t run when I first started either. In February 2005 a friend told me to do the Bribie Tri Series because I could float along with the current. In between floating I did a couple of swim strokes and gradually increased the distance I could swim in each race. It took until March 2006 before I could swim 1500m.in a pool.

In early 2008 we found out that the “Worlds” would be in Vancouver, Canada in June of that year. We have a son who lives in Whistler, which is not far from Vancouver. This was a great excuse to combine a trip to visit our son with an international Triathlon. I joined the Club Croc with Brad Beven as the coach. I was most impressed that he were prepared to put in the time with an old “duffer” like me. Despite the freezing conditions I completed the Vancouver “Worlds” Sprint Race even though I was at the tail end of the field – but I was an Australian Representative.

In November 2008, at age 61 yrs, I completed my first Olympic Distance race at Noosa, another personal milestone. My time was 3 hrs,22mins and I came 29<sup>th</sup> out of 33 in my age category. I have since completed four more Olympic Distance Triathlons and again qualified for the 2009 Sprint Race “Worlds” on the Gold Coast in September. I can honestly say I would not have got here without the coaching perseverance of Brad. It is also gratifying to receive support from other Club Croc members even though they are much better athletes. There is no suggestion of “elitism” in the squad.

There are several fine young Triathletes in Club Croc with great potential. There are also top performers in the various male and female age groups. But there are also many members just like me who will never be champions but who get great enjoyment out of the sport while trying to achieve their personal best.

For me there are some personal goals for next season – to run a full Marathon Race, to break 2hrs for a Half Marathon and to break 3 hrs for an Olympic Distance Triathlon. Fairly modest goals by most standards, but not bad for an old “duffer” who couldn’t swim at all, or run 1 klm non-stop, ten years ago.

Peter McDonald