

Club Croc Testimonial

Sara Finch

I've always been active and a given most sports a go - after years of trial and error I can confidently say that bat and ball sports aren't my thing, nor is gymnastics, ballet (stop smiling :)) and high jump. And I'm a commuter from way back - I've ridden to primary school, high school, sport training, music lessons, part time jobs, the shops, uni and now work and everything in between. Running was never my thing and although I was a member of a swim squad when I was quite young most of my memories are of trying very hard .. and being told I'd tried very hard!

I grew up in Adelaide and when I finished school I moved to Melbourne doing odd jobs for a while and then travelled. When I ran out of money I got a job in Switzerland as a kitchen hand. I got back to Australia and took up an apprenticeship in Melbourne. After a few years I moved to Cairns working in a restaurant for a while before starting up my own bakery at the local market. That entailed starting work at midnight and baking through the night and then selling at the market the next day. Being a chef is not particularly compatible with exercise - the hours are horrendous and it is compulsory to have a few vinos at the end of every shift. To keep vaguely fit and healthy I used to ride and run on my days off and swim in my shift breaks and I did manage to do a couple of local tris for fun and fitness.

I wouldn't exactly say I "competed". I had a sort of false start with triathlon as I was planning to start up with a squad in Cairns but I went to a couple of the swim sessions and thought these guys are crazy - triathletes can be pretty intense and back then I was way too relaxed to train that often and that hard.

I moved back to my home town of Adelaide in around 1996 and signed up at uni and graduated with a law/behavioural science degree in around 2001. I ended up with pretty good hill climbing ability after riding to and from uni and part time cooking jobs up and down the Adelaide Hills. I did the odd local tri every now and then.

Triathlon is the sort of sport where you can train and compete for health and fitness and reap the rewards or you can step up to try and become competitive in your age group if you have the time and the inclination.

I used to do the odd tri for fun as swimming, riding and running were my fitness/lifestyle activities (no catching, throwing or hitting involved) and I was always drawn to the sport. Yep - I used to read the triathlon magazines when Brad Beven was on the front cover. Then it was back to Melbourne to start a 'real job' in July 2001 and simultaneously start training with a squad (well .. once it warmed up a little).

In my first race I remember swimming great guns and looking up and seeing that I'd swum diagonally across a lake - all good except that the swim course was a straight line. Never mind. I did Noosa that year and finished around 20th. I was wrapped .. and hooked.

I was loving it right up until winter rolled around the next year. I thought there is no way I can train in winter. I wasn't particularly loving my new desk job and combined with the cold Melbourne

winters I decided on a fresh start in Brisbane and moved up in late 2002. Ahhh the training I thought will be magnificent!

I arrived in Brisbane just before Xmas and before you know it there's a few social years and no triathlon action going on. I lined up for again Noosa 4 years later in 2005 doing a 2.34 and then again in 2006 with a 2.45. I can testify to the fact that OD triathlons are really hard with a 4-6 week self made "training" lead in!

Just before the 2006 Noosa I saw a flyer for Club Croc and Brad Beven's Squad which was just starting up and was pretty excited and went along to a Ride Inside session to check it out and see what the squad was like. It felt right from the first session and I haven't looked back since.

I'm loving the training and the lifestyle and seeing the improvement in my races is very rewarding. I'm now trying to run a flat 40mins 10km off the bike whereas my goal used to be to get under 50. I'm racing in the 40-44 age group now (with the wily old birds) and I've got to have my wits about me and stay one step ahead. Ok ok so I haven't done it yet but you gotta aim high.

Brad's bike sessions have improved my bike leg and kept me safe and dry and I'm a slow learner but I'm working on that damn swim! The key to this sport I think is balance, consistency and enjoyment. Those things just happen with Brad and it's fantastic to train and race with such a great group of people.