

# AT Member of the Month: Glenn Mortland

By Tonyia Sullivan

Glenn Mortland is Austin Triathlete's member of the month. Glenn spent the last 9 months training for his first Ironman - Ironman New Zealand. Upon his return from Ironman New Zealand, he took some time to share his experiences and background with us.

## Q&A with Glenn Mortland

*How did you become interested in triathlons? What's your athletic background?*

I have been cycling for 20 years and I had many friends that had crossed into multisport/triathlons. I was reluctant since I am 6 ft 5 inch, 265 pound cyclist, as I didn't think that Triathlons would be a good sport for me. I was a lifeguard so I could swim, but I was not a distance swimmer, and I had no running ability. In fact, I absolutely hated running. I was between startup jobs, and my friends talked me into volunteering for the Danskin, so I became the finish line coordinator for Austin Danskin 2003 and had a great first triathlon experience.

*When did you begin participating in triathlons?*

My first triathlon was Splash 2003. I trained from June 2003 until September 2003 by basically swimming laps at the YMCA, and attempting to run some laps at Town Lake with an overall training goal of not drowning and avoiding embarrassment. The swim at Splash was challenging, I mostly sidestroked, the bike was no problem, and the run was mostly a walk. I was getting bored with cycling and volleyball, triathlons represented a new sporting challenge, and I like a sport with beer at the finish line, so I was hooked.

*Which events have you participated in?*

Splash 2003, 2004, 2005      St. Croix 2004, 2005  
Dilloman 2004, 2005      Cleveland Triathlon, 2005  
Ironman New Zealand, 2006

*What was your proudest moment?*

My proudest moment during a triathlon to date was finishing the St. Croix half Ironman in 2004. This was my second triathlon and I signed up because I was told the scuba diving, beaches, and the rum were great. Nobody told me that this was one of the hardest half Ironmans. I self-trained by swimming laps at the YMCA, and I was not at all prepared for a half Ironman. I can still remember the feeling I had when I looked out over the swim course for the first time and saw the buoys trailing out into the ocean. I had the distinct feeling that I didn't belong there, and wondered how I would ever finish that swim course. I finished the swim in an hour and 10 minutes, and I could barely pull myself out of the water. I was 10 minutes over the swim cutoff, but nobody stopped me, so I got on my bike. I walked up the Beast and walked most of the run, but I kept going. I finished in 9 hours and 20 minutes, and received a police escort with flashing lights to the finish line to keep me from getting run over by the cars. I was the last athlete that year to get a finishing time, they literally rolled up the timing mat as I crossed over. Even though I was way over the cutoff of 8 hours, it's an "island friendly race" so I got a finisher medal. I have never had a police escort to the finish line since.

*What was the biggest challenge you've faced while training or racing? How did you overcome it?*

In the 2003/2004 years, swimming was the biggest challenge as I was not a lap swimmer. So I took multiple swimming classes with Texas Iron and they turned me into a swimmer, and I can now come out of the water with energy.



(Photo courtesy of Glenn Mortland)

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In the 2005/2006 years, I focused on running. I can now comfortably run a half marathon. I am not fast and I still have not found a reason to like running, but I have endurance.

After three years of training and racing, I have become balanced in that I am an average swimmer, cyclist and runner in most Clydesdale competitions. I think I am a competent half Ironman distance triathlete, but am clearly outclassed by the triathletes that show up for full Ironmans. I still need to make improvements in my swim speed and energy expended. I need to move my cycling back to my strength, and expand on my ability as a slow but reliable half marathoner. My biggest challenge is executing my nutrition plan during the event to keep ahead of my energy output as I change distances and start racing the full Ironman events. This has become more of a driver of my race results than my abilities in the three individual sports.

*What event are you planning to participate in next? When and where is it?*  
St. Croix half Ironman, scheduled for May 7, 2006.

*What do you like about triathlons that brings you back to it?*  
The challenge of getting better, and I have lots of room for improvement.

*What's your training schedule like? How often, what do you do, where do you do it?*  
Presently I am taking some time off after training hard for IMNZ all winter, so I will be doing some light swimming and cycling in March and April 2006. I work downtown so I like to alternate swimming laps at the downtown YMCA and running the Town Lake run path. I typically swim laps for 50 minutes or run the four-mile loop on weekdays. I spend Saturdays on ACA rides or cycling with training partners and run a longer run at Town Lake on Sundays. I have taken multiple swim classes and the marathon training course from Jamie Cleveland and Andrea Fisher at Texas Iron, and I credit them for my improvements in the sport.

*What is your ultimate tri goal? What do you hope to achieve along the way to achieving this goal?*  
To get in better shape, I want to be competitive at the full Ironman distance, and win a short distance event as a Clydesdale.

*What's your favorite race and why?*  
My favorite race so far is the St. Croix half Ironman, as it was my first distance triathlon. Every time I look at that swim course, I remember how it looked during my rookie 2004 season; this race has become my measuring stick. My St. Croix 2004 finish was nine hours and 20 minutes, 2005 was seven hours and 50 minutes, and I plan to do better than seven hours and 30 minutes in 2006.

*What's your favorite food and why?*  
During the race it's Clif Bars and Hammergel, after the race, lots of beer.

*What was your high point of the year?*  
I was hoping the answer would have been completing my first full Ironman distance at Ironman New Zealand on March 4, 2006. Unfortunately, the weather on race day closed the swim course and forced a race delay, which resulted in only a half bike and half swim. I completed the shortened IMNZ 2006 course, but I trained hard all winter for the full Ironman distance and was not able to race that distance. Ironman North America has opened up some slots for the IMNZ 2006 athletes, and I just found out that I will be racing at Ironman Florida 2006 in November.

*Are you active in the triathlete community at all?*  
I am a member of Austin Triathletes and train with Texas Iron. I have been the finish line coordinator for the Austin Danskin race since 2003 and plan to continue participating in that race in the future. I plan, build and manage the finish line each year at the Austin Danskin race; I always have a great experience at Danskin while giving something back to the sport.



*(Photo courtesy of Glenn Mortland)*