

AT Member of the Month: Glenda Adams

By Tonyia Sullivan

When Glenda Adams joined a gym to support her partner's fitness goals four years ago, she never expected to soon excel in the world of marathons and triathlons.

"I was never athletic growing up, and until about four years ago, I was very overweight. My idea of a workout was going to the kitchen for a snack," Adams said.

Initially, Adams worked out at the gym two or three times a week, and found it to be more work than fun. She began losing weight and monitored her diet. At first she jogged on the treadmill at the gym, but soon progressed to running around an indoor track.

"At some point I just got hooked on running, and it became actually fun to work out," Adams said. She lost 75 pounds that year.

When Adams began running, her partner's teenage daughter moved in with the couple. Rehabilitating from an accident that paralyzed her from the waist down, she was training for a 5K race in her wheelchair to help build her upper body strength. Adams, inspired by her race, entered her first 5K race. She gradually increased her race length and finished her first full marathon at Freescale in 2005.

After completing the marathon, Adams was "a bit beat up and tired of running." She heard about the Danskin Triathlon and the Iron Chicks training program, and was intrigued. While she knew the run would be a breeze, she knew the swim and bike segments would be challenging.

"I had never swum more than from one side of the pool to the other, and had not ridden a bike since I was probably 13. I could not believe that even though I could run 20 miles I couldn't swim more than two laps without having to stop, and it was when the bike salesman took a bike out into the parking lot for me to try that I realized I had not ridden a bike in more than 20 years," Adams said.

After absorbing the initial shock of two new sports, Adams really enjoyed triathlon training.

"I had forgotten how much fun it was to be on a bike, and really loved the feel of the wind rushing over me. Even though swimming was my worst sport, it was cool to see myself make progress and get a little better over time," she said.

Adams also enjoyed the close friendships she made training with Iron Chicks. Making it through bike hill climbing workouts on Highway 360 and finishing challenging swim interval workouts together is a fast way to form close bonds, she explained.

Adams finished Danskin 157th out of 2855 triathletes. She was most nervous about the swim, which she finished 1274th, but she made up for it on the bike and run segments. Since then, she finished the Aquarena and SeaWorld sprint triathlons, as well as the Darnd'st Du in San Marcos, in which she placed fourth in her age group.

The Aquarena Springs Triathlon proved to be Adams biggest challenge. A few miles into the bike course, she turned around to wave at a training partner as she passed him. While she was distracted, she had veered to the edge of the shoulder of the road, and she slid onto the gravel. She tried to get back on the road, but hit a pothole and instantly blew her front tire, totally losing control of her bike. She had never experienced such a crash before.

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(Photo courtesy of Glenda Adams)

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“I was more mad at myself than anything, because I knew I did it to myself by showing off and not concentrating. I think it was being mad that kept me going. I rode the last 16 miles pretty cautiously, but I was determined to finish in spite of doing something stupid,” Adams said.

Adams plans to do a Olympic distance race in the early spring and is considering joining a half ironman training group to do Lubbock’s Buffalo Springs Lake race in June. She says the challenge, variety and competitive nature of triathlons keeps her interested in the races.

“It really gives me a boost. Even though I know I am nowhere near as fast as a lot of triathletes out there, it’s fun to work at improving,” Adams said.

Q&A with Glenda Adams

What’s your training schedule like? What’s your favorite place or way to train?

I train about five or six days a week, with a long run on Saturday morning and a long bike ride on Sunday. I usually train in the morning, before I go to work, but with some of the training groups I will have a night workout during the week. I currently train about seven to 10 hours a week, and only work out once a day, but I know if I start working towards the half ironman I will have to work out twice on some days. I really enjoy training with a group, and plan to do that in the spring. I run and bike around northwest Austin, and swim at my gym.

What is your ultimate tri goal?

Right now my ultimate goal is to finish a half ironman. After that, who knows. I would like to keep working to getting better, and mostly just enjoy doing different events. I would like to be able to try some triathlons in other parts of the country one day too.

What’s your favorite race and why?

So far I think Danskin was my favorite, just because of the atmosphere. It was cool to see so many women out there, and so many people cheering at the end.

What’s your favorite food and why?

Pizza or chocolate. I can eat either one almost any time.

What was your high point of the year?

It is a close tie between finishing my first marathon in February and finishing my first triathlon in June. Both times when I crossed the finish, saw my partner cheering for me it was an amazing feeling.

How are you active in the triathlete community?

I am just starting to try to be a little more active in the community, and participate some in online forums. I would like to volunteer at a race this year, and help out on the other side of the event to see what it is like.

AT Newsletter Contributors

We would like to extend a special thank you to these AT members for their contributions to this month’s AT newsletter:

Dave Calvo
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AT Newsletter Submission Guidelines

This is your newsletter so we would love to hear from YOU!

Austin Triathletes is looking for your triathlon or fitness-related articles, photos, jokes, race reports, or whatever! For those of you who are aspiring authors, please review these guidelines:

- Submit writings using Microsoft Word or text file.
- Try to keep it less than 1500 words.
- Articles written above 1,500 will be returned.
- Photos should be in JPEG, GIF, or TIFF (300+ dpi).
- Submit on or before the 12th of each month.
- Be creative (humor, poems, recipes, photos, etc.).

Articles are written predominantly by members, for members as a great way to share experiences and information. Please contact Robbie Gulledge at robbie.gulledge@austintriathletes.org for information and guidelines about AT club sponsorship if you are interested in promoting your business to AT members.

We reserve the right to edit for structure, content, and length. Articles that require significant revisions will be returned for rewrite.