

## ***Meredith Kessler wins Ironman Canada***



Three years ago an amateur triathlete walked into my cycling studio and very graciously introduced herself, spurring a continuous string of ‘thank you for your time’ and ‘so sorry for taking up your time’ quotes. It took me five or ten minutes to even get her to tell me what she wanted! I could immediately tell that she was a lovely girl, with appealing mannerisms, but all I knew after ten minutes was that she was a triathlete who wanted help. Over the next thirty minutes or so I managed to pull enough information from this girl to understand she had already completed many (well, 17 to be precise) Ironman races, while leading a very busy life full of work, family and social commitments. My final question was to ask her what she wanted to achieve in the sport, to which she managed to answer, with great apologies again, ‘I want to win an Ironman’. This is how I met Meredith Kessler.

In her 17 Ironman races she had completed she was yet to break into the Top 5 in her age group, with her best performance around 11 hours and 20 minutes. My first reaction was skepticism, but something about her demeanor and style called for me to have another look. I invited Meredith on a ride with a few of my athletes who were busy preparing for an upcoming Ironman. Meredith arrived with her 1980’s Quintana Roo and a big smile, and on the ride she managed to hang tough, barely hanging onto my wheel as the other riders pulled away into the distance. It was an interesting experience as, although she got dropped during the ride, there were flashes of brilliance in her riding, as well as a gritty determination that was only hidden by her broad smile. I got home and sat at my computer. This girl is going to go places - she has something special.

Over the next years Meredith and I laid out a plan that I felt could lead her toward her evolution as an athlete, from mid-pack age group to age group winner, from age group winner to overall amateur winner, then amateur to professional. From there, we did not know the journey. The most satisfying part of her evolution was that she was willing to *follow the plan*, and have patience in her development. Even though she *could have* turned professional in 2009, she was willing to wait a year, to continue her growth, with the aim of turning professional in 2010 and actually making an impact. She recorded a great season on amateur performances in 2009, winning many of the major North American races, and was now set to move into the professional ranks.

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As we laid out 2010 both Meredith and I knew the goal for the season; we wanted to win an Ironman in her first professional season. This is obviously not an easy task, but while Meredith was not known to many in the triathlon world, I have seen enough to know it was possible. What has followed might be the greatest rookie professional season I have ever seen (OK, Chrissie Wellington's first year win at the Hawaii Ironman World Championships was not bad either!), with a solid 4th place finish at Ironman New Orleans 70.3, 2nd place at Ironman St George and another 2nd place at Ironman Coeur d'Alene (to fellow purplepatch athlete - Linsey Corbin).

This weekend she crowned this amazing year by becoming 2010 Ironman Canada Champion! A 49 minute swim, 5 hour and 9 minute bike and 3 hour and 10 minute marathon, on a cold and windy day above the border, took her to a brilliant 9 hour and 13 minute Ironman victory. It makes the 17 other Ironman races feel very far away!

Meredith's win is a massive vindication to her dedication to the plan, commitment for improvement and willingness to build a program that is right for her. She has achieved all this while maintaining her 60 hour a week job, continuing her busy social life, remaining a committed partner to her husband Aaron, and still being the *most* supportive person I know. She might only train 14 or 15 hours a week, but she makes them count. She was willing to learn, willing to plan, and willing to be smart. She arrived fit and fresh - and came out as an Ironman Champion.

The journey continues.....

Well done sis, roll on purplepatch. Fit and Fresh - Logic, not Emotion.

*Cheers, Matt*



Matt Dixon, MSc is the owner of *purplepatch fitness*, a professional coaching company that assists individuals, group and companies achieve optimal performance in fitness and life. As an exercise physiologist, former professional triathlete and elite coach, Matt coaches some of the best professional triathletes in the world, including multiple Ironman Champions, as well as many executives of leading worldwide companies. His unique coaching philosophy combines latest scientific research, with extensive athletic and coaching experience, which is tailored to all levels of athlete and fitness enthusiast.

More information at [www.purplepatchfitness.com](http://www.purplepatchfitness.com)