

## Member Profile: Brad Hendron

Hi, my name is Brad and I'm an endorphinaholic. I grew up and lived much of my adult life in Colorado. I know what you're thinking, "Wow! Colorado, triathlon Mecca!" Well, to be honest, I never even thought of triathlon while I lived there, except, of course, when watching the annual broadcast of the Hawaii Ironman. I had one semester of swimming in high school, did some mountain biking, and ran occasionally, but that was it.



I grew up participating in many sports, including baseball, football, and Wrestling (Wrestling is capitalized for a reason). But, in the few years before my move to Phoenix, I spent most of my time working, studying, fly-fishing, playing pool, and hitting the bars. I moved to Phoenix in the summer of 2002 and proceeded to continue my less-than-healthy lifestyle. I actually went to In-N-Out burger twice in one day (we didn't have In-N-Out in Colorado). One day in October of 2002, I got out of the shower, looked in the mirror, and didn't recognize myself. I got on the scale and it read 178 lbs. That's 15 lbs heavier than was stated on my driver's license and 28 lbs heavier than I weighed at my high school graduation.

I decided it was time to turn things around. I started running, just one or two miles at a time every other day. Although I had done several 10k races in my life, I was way out of shape and it hurt. I did the New Times 5k with my Dad that November. Then, I lost my mind and signed-up for the Lost Dutchman 1/2 Marathon, which would be my longest run ever, and only two months away. I trained for the race and ran the whole distance, but it wasn't pretty. I thought I might try a marathon next, but my knees were hurting a lot. I wonder why... I realized I just couldn't run enough to meet my fitness goals. Which, evidently, were to get into amazing shape immediately. Sometimes you just have to wonder about your motivations.

One evening I was considering my problem, and I remembered watching the Ironman on TV as a kid. I remembered being fascinated, amazed, and shocked by the magnitude of the event and the men and women who participated. Yeah..., I thought, triathlon...I could do three different sports and take some strain off my knees! I wondered if there were events shorter than the Ironman and went immediately to my computer to do some research. I didn't know a single person who had ever done a triathlon, so it was all new to me. I found out that there are several standardized distances for triathlon and began to search for one near me. I found the Tempe Multisport Challenge that was to take place in May, just over three months away. The event offered sprint and olympic distance races, but I couldn't do the sprint, no sir, I just had to do the olympic.

I had to learn to swim and did my best to teach myself. I started bike training on my mountain bike, but I wanted a road bike for the race. I found a used one on ebay and, as

luck would have it, the owner lived in town. I met with him, and while were talking, he mentioned the Phoenix Triathlon Club. The club interested me, so I went to the next meeting and joined the month after. I finished my first event and thought it was the coolest thing in the world. After the race, I pulled on my PTC t-shirt for the first time, feeling like an honest-to-goodness member of the triathlete tribe.

Since then, I've done many triathlons including four Ironmans of my own. I still can't believe it. Through triathlon and the PTC, I've met some amazing people and great friends. Triathlon has taken me to beautiful destinations, including my first trip to Europe, and given me confidence and a sense of accomplishment that I carry with me everyday. Triathlon, in its purest form, has much to do with self-reliance, doing it on your own, your own work. You get out of it what you put into it, as they say. And out there on the course, there's no one to lean on, blame, or pass the buck to. You only have your wits and your guts to battle the course, the clock, and the elements. And I love it.

P.S. I hover around 150 lbs these days and was below 145 before IMAZ this year. Swim, bike, run works.