

## Member Profile- Heather Freeman



I was born in Alberta, Canada and at age 4 my father's career took us to Saudi Arabia, where we spent the next fourteen years. I guess you could say that was where I got my first "taste" of triathlon. I had developed a love for swimming at a very young age and joined a team when I was 7 yrs old. When I was 11, my father talked me into signing up for my first triathlon. That day, as in most triathlons that I have done since, my swimming background gave me an advantage. I was able to get a huge lead in the swim and ended up finishing as the 2<sup>nd</sup> female overall. It was very obvious that my success was not due to the bike or run leg! (Most PTC members who know me know I am not much of a runner or a cyclist). So, I continued to work on my swimming. I swam on my high school team and went on to swim for Northern Arizona University, where I received my undergraduate degree. But, for some reason, I kept thinking about that first triathlon. So, once I had finished swimming for NAU, I decided to try another one. I did the Mountain Man sprint triathlon in

Flagstaff in 1997. I left with 1<sup>st</sup> in my age group and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall female. That was it! That was when I knew I was going to be doing this for a while.

In 2001 I moved to Mesa, AZ for graduate school and did a few triathlons here and there. Since graduating in 2003, my career as a Physician Assistant has kept me in the Phoenix area. In 2004, I joined the PTC on a whim. A couple of my friends were signing up and I said "why not". To this day, I think that was one of the best decisions that I could have made. I have been a member for 3 yrs now and have made some great friends along the way. I have had my share of obstacles to overcome in the past few years, and I wouldn't be where I am now without the support of my PTC family. Since joining I have achieved goals that I never would have attempted if it weren't for the encouragement from club members. I did my first Ironman distance event in 2006, IMAZ, after recovering from Achilles surgery and the 2<sup>nd</sup>, IMAZ 2007, 6 weeks after a cycling accident. Going into both of these events, I was tempted to back out, but I knew I would see all those red jerseys out there and we would be cheering each other on. And that's what made the difference. And of course, it's always comforting to have people around that understand you when you say, time after time, "Why are we doing this?" and "I am never doing one of these again!" They know statements like these are just something that we triathletes say, but we never mean it. We are constantly willing to torture ourselves again. It comes with the territory.