

Mike Chairez

Well this tale starts 12 years ago when a friend invited me to go out on a three mile run.... I couldn't do one. Oh yeah, at the time I weighed in at 240. The very next day I started training for a local 10K and after that and couple of 1/2 marathons.

At some point after that I came across an ad for a triathlon/training course at Glendale Community College. The first day of the course I found out that I really couldn't swim. I trained for 49 straight days in the pool, right up to the day of my first sprint distance triathlon, the Mountain Man in Flagstaff. After that day, I was hooked.

From there it was Alcatraz and then my first iron distance race, the California Ironman. I didn't know how to train for this distance, but I did what I thought I needed to do and after 14 brutal hours on my now 220lb body, I finished my first and last Ironman! Well at the time it was true.

I continued to do smaller triathlons until I met Joel Clapick at ASU's master swim program. He talked me into doing some longer races again. After a near DNF at the California half, it was off to do the inaugural AZ Ironman in 2005 and now I would get to train and race with a group of friends.

I continued racing but still wanted to improve my results so it was time to drop more weight. That summer I biked daily, laying over 1200 miles in a five week period and doing two things in the process. One, I dropped another 30 lbs and two, I discovered that I can climb on the bike.

After a couple more Ironman races in Arizona, I headed to Ironman Austria with none other PTC members including Joel Clapick, Brian Kochert, Brad Hendron and Eric Chebi to name a few. What a great time we had. The race was great and the crowds were a hoot. When you were climbing the steep hills, they would yell Supa and Bravo. Hence my new nickname, Supa.

This year, in the process of training with Joel for Ironman Switzerland, I had a brain seizure. An MRI revealed an angionoma sandwiched between my brain and the brain covering. I had the brain surgery a week later. I recovered from the surgery very quickly, but because of the seizure, state law prohibited my driving for three months. I found out quickly how many friends I have and how blessed I am to have them. My friends and fellow PTC members drove me anywhere and everywhere. I will never forget the generosity and kindness given to me. Three months later Joel and I were able to make the trip to Switzerland where I set a new personal ironman record. In fact, three days later, I still had the legs to bike the famed Alpe d Huez in France.

Triathlon introduced me to a healthier and more adventurous lifestyle. But more importantly a tremendous group of friends that were there when I needed them. I am forever indebted to my fellow PTC members. Thank you all and keep on TRI'n!!!

Mike "SUPA' Chairez