

Renne Richards-Groff Our ALL-AMERICAN Tri Fox

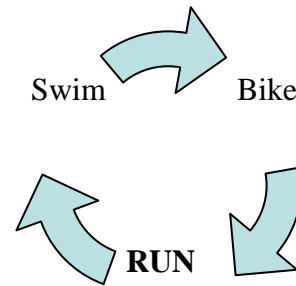
Renne Richards-Groff, a 34 year old medical sales rep, can blame some very simple naivety for her stellar and meteoric rise in our sport of triathlon. While living in Milwaukee and hanging out with Ironman Champion (and honorary TRI FOX) Heather Golnick, Renne caught the bug to move beyond running which was her first real love. She did her first triathlon in Naperville, IL, at the Danskin Women's race...but it was during her first duathlon that her rocket caught fire....."no one was in front of me and no one was behind me...I started crying, thinking I was last!" She took 2nd overall!

Naivety gone forever! Renne is now a member of TEAM USA in duathlon and is a 2 time ALL AMERICAN in duathlon and long distance or 1/2 Ironman distance triathlons. To become an All American, Renne had to place in the top 1% of her age group. Our fellow Tri Fox has done most of our local races including High Cliff, the Green Bay duathlon, Ironman Wisconsin... and in 2008, her long distance challenges include the HALF MAX Championship in Las Vegas, and most likely High Cliff, Muncie, and Door County.

But one does NOT just become an All American..they don't give you that title just because you ask for it...there has to be more....in Renne's case it is obvious...it is the passion and the drive...it is the commitment and the gratitude, along with a nice dose of humility that takes her to the next level of competition. Renne has some pretty interesting philosophies about what she does and how she gets to the finish line and like all things we do, she can trace a lot of it to her youth.....she said she was "super competitive" as a kid, but at that time, being a competitive girl was sometimes frowned upon, so some of her early spirit was channeled then into other directions, including a sense of wonder and exploration--traveling to Indonesia as a high school exchange student...Renee says that was one of the best experiences of her life, sending her on to a degree in International Studies and French at The University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. To this day she remains fluent in Indonesian.

Learning and living in a culture 180 degrees opposite of hers taught Renne some simple humility too....."I am a pretty boring person..get up and swim, go to work, come home, run, and repeat it..I am not talented nor even that good, I just want it more and am very stubborn." And that is probably the key to our All American's huge success as an athlete. Renne is fiercely competitive, but only when the time is right--in races--NEVER in training. Renne LOVES to train with friends of all abilities, not just the super fast people, and she says it never turns into a race..she saves that for the event. Her theory about training is also what separates her from the mere mortals.."training should hurt, training should be hard, it should be humbling." And Renne, knows about hurting and about bouncing

back....it is part of what makes her so appreciative of what she has....back in 2005, her performances started to worsen, she was slowing down, not doing what she thought she was capable of...no explanation, just not doing well in spite of working hard...and then the diagnosis, iron deficiency anemia, a pretty simple thing to treat with vitamins, but in reality, not so simple because her low blood count was caused by a very insidious disease of the digestive system called Celiac Disease....symptoms and problems caused by eating foods with gluten which is found in almost all things in our everyday diets. A disease she will have to endure for her entire life. But once diagnosed, Renne tackled her problem with the same competitive fervor that has led to her winning ways. "I am EXTRA grateful for being able to come back and do this with 100% commitment again---I take NOTHING for granted!" Once you lose something you had, once you have to climb back up again, it is pretty obvious that Renne will NEVER take anything for granted ever again: "Someone will always be faster, smarter, but you need to try...If you have passion and dedication and give it your personal best, regardless of what that is, do it with 100% commitment." That passion, that spirit to fight past her disease has also opened up her eyes to something she hates and something she has learned along the way: "I hate mediocrity..if you try your hardest and come in last, then at the very least you tried...and the biggest lesson learned is that I have let go of outcome related goals..do the training, race your hardest, and the rest will take care of itself!"



And that is what makes Renne Richards-Groff our **ALL AMERICAN TRI FOX!**