

Coach of the Month **KATHY MILLER**



How long have you been coaching Triathlon and how did you get started?

I have been coaching for a little over two years. I am a 'back of the pack' athlete myself, and I saw a need for coaches who understood how hard that actually is. It is one thing to be a fast, motivated age grouper or elite athlete, but being a slow, determined, but not naturally gifted athlete is a whole different experience and is hard for those who haven't been there to understand. The achievement is personal and huge for these people. It's not about winning, it's about achieving!

What coaching-related qualifications do you have?

I am a Triathlon NZ Level 1 Coach but also have other qualifications, notably a Swimming NZ 'Assistant Coach' award and I have my Certificate in Fitness Instruction from AUT.

What inspires you as a coach?

My athletes and training friends inspire me actually. Coaching and then watching them achieve goals they once thought impossible is the best feeling ever! Then when I am having a tough time with my own training (which we all do from time to time), usually it is one of my own athletes that helps me out with some words of encouragement back. My philosophy is in creating a team environment with my athletes. Training, racing and supporting each other – myself

included! The Fit Goals family of athletes is what makes it work, not just me.

What types of triathletes do you coach?

I coach beginner athletes and weekend warriors mainly. Those that need guidance when starting out in triathlon, and those that need a helping hand to take the leap of faith and tackle something bigger. The main thing is to keep it as fun as possible, even though it is jolly hard work at times!

What is the biggest challenge with coaching triathlon?

Time, money, resource - lots of things. This can be an expensive and time consuming sport for most weekend warrior athletes, especially once the event distances start to creep up. Trying to keep the athletes motivated through winter is tough, but it makes it all worthwhile come summer. Battling for pool space with swim clubs is a challenge, as is the constant rising prices of using such facilities. Trying to provide a service which is good value for money and achieves a goal can also be tough. Sometimes it can be like walking a tightrope. One slight off balance movement and it can all come tumbling down!

What has been your greatest coaching moment?

Watching a client who had been through so much personal growth in his battle to lose

an enormous amount of weight and then finish his first ever triathlon. I was so proud of him and what he had accomplished. Best day of his life, and the best moment of my coaching career so far. Right now he is training for Ironman, and I will cry like a baby when he finishes that! The focus and determination to achieve his goal is amazing!

Who or what has been the greatest influence on your coaching?

Watching the programme Mind Games a few years back and seeing the way Jon Ackland treated the athletes that were training for the Ironman. His whole manner about coaching, his words of wisdom, his breaking it down into manageable pieces, that's how I try and coach. I see the big picture, but for the athlete they just need to focus on one thing at a time so as not to overwhelm themselves.

Mark Watson has been a huge influence too. I try and provide my athletes with a focus at every session, even if it is for just five minutes in an hour. It holds them accountable to their training, and gives them a focus for every session rather than churning out the "junk miles". I love his quotes and sayings and use them often – usually with my own training! Never ever hit the snooze button!

How do triathletes contact you for coaching support?

Either by email info@fitgoals.co.nz or on my mobile 021 0272 0818 ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRI NZ COACHING PROGRAMMES AND COACHES, VISIT WWW.TRIATHLON.ORG.NZ AND CLICK ON COACHING