

# Triple Threat Triathlon Club history

## Club founders, presidents, and coaches

The Triple Threat Triathlon club was formed in 1983 as a vehicle to promote triathlon in Manitoba.

Philip Roadley was Triple Threat's founder and first president. The club started with 15 to 20 members.

In 1985, the Triple Threat Triathlon Club evolved into the Manitoba Triathlon Association because triathlon enthusiasts wanted to join the Manitoba Sports Federation, which became Sport Manitoba in 1996.

The Manitoba Triathlon Association was the precursor to Triathlon Manitoba. To start fresh when becoming incorporated in 1989, the name was changed to Triathlon Manitoba.

In autumn 1995, David Markham approached Mitch & Terry Kolbuck, Barry & Pauline Breiter, and Arthur & Suzanne Gzebowski about forming a triathlon club that would deliver a high performance training program to their kids (Corey --13, Kevin -- 15, Dominique -- 14) and other kids, and a lifestyle fitness triathlon program to their parents and other adults. The Triple Threat name was revived for the club. Mitch became President. A constitution was written in October 1997.

Barry Briscoe became the club's President in September 2001, and he re-wrote the club's constitution that same month. It was later amended in October 2003. Karen Armstrong took over as Triple Threat President in October 2004, Kathryn Smandych succeeded her in October 2008, and Kate Okany became President in October 2010.

David Markham was the club's coach in 1996 and 1997. His original Triple Threat youth program became Triathlon Manitoba's Junior Development Team (youth and junior program) from 1997 to 2001. Triple Threat member Philippe Chabot coached the club from 1998 to 2000, and again in 2002 when he was named Triathlon Manitoba's Coach of the Year. The club did not have a coach in 2001 and 2003. Dave Lipchen was hired to coach Triple Threat in 2004. In 2005, he received Triathlon Manitoba's Coach of the Year award. Terri May began coaching Triple Threat in Spring 2008.

## Events

### Tuesday Night Race Series

In 1996, the resurrected Triple Threat Triathlon Club provided support to the Tuesday Night Race series at Birds Hill Park. Prairie Events Group, David Markham's race organization company, had organized that series for many years. Triple Threat provided support again in 1997. In 1998, the Tuesday Night Race series was cancelled because Birds Hill Park's roadways and the East Beach parking lot were being repaved for the 1998 Canadian Triathlon Championships and 1999 Pan Am Games.

### Snowman Triathlon

David Markham organized the Snowman Triathlon for a few years starting in 1987. The distances were a 7K cross country ski from Springhill to Harbour View, a 7K run through Harbour View, and a 7K skate at Harbour View.

David revived the race in February 1993 as a 7K run + 7K ski + 7K skate at Harbour View, and he added a Little Snowman / Kids of Steel event (2K + 2K + 2K). Attendance was a very healthy 70 kids and 105 Snowman Triathletes. Triple Threat took over the race in February 1996 (the year of drastically shortened courses because of 10cm of snow overnight), but David remained as the Race Director. Triple Threat member Cameron Gray took over 1998, the 1999 race was cancelled because of a lack of snow, Monica Godar took over in 2000, and Brent Miller directed the race in 2001 and 2002. Attendance had been steadily declining, so Brent introduced a cross-country run course and an option to do an Icebike rather than ski in 2002, but attendance only increased to 33 from 26 the previous year. After the 2003 race was cancelled on two successive weekends because of cold temperature, Brent and the club shelved the race.

## **Buffalo Point Triathlon & Duathlon**

Triple Threat members Art & Suzanne Gzebowski had a cottage at Buffalo Point in the NW Angle Provincial Forest, which is in the extreme SE corner of Manitoba, 1K from the USA. When the Buffalo Point First Nation paved the road from Highway 12 to the Buffalo Point Resort in the spring of 1996, the Buffalo Point Sprint Triathlon was born. Triple Threat supported the event during its four-year run. In 1997 and 1999, the event served as a Junior Development Team Camp and the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Regional Youth Championships. Ironically, it was the move of the event's date from mid-July to mid-August in 1999 to accommodate the Regional Youth Championships that led to the termination of the race because there wasn't a free weekend in July on Triathlon Manitoba's 2000 Events Calendar for the race to move back to.

## **Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon**

On Sunday, June 9th, 1996, Triple Threat organized the first Triple Threat Duathlon (4K + 24K + 4K) from Birds Hill Park East Beach. There were 36 participants. David Markham was the Race Director. He patterned the event from the Manitoba Duathlon Championships that he had organized in May 1995. The bike course went directly from East Beach to highway 206, looped along rural roads, and then returned directly to East Beach because the park's ring road was in such bad condition that many athletes refused to participate in an event that included it. (In fact, attendance at the Tuesday Night Race series began to stagnate in the mid 1990s for exactly the same reason.)

The 2nd annual Triple Threat Duathlon in 1997 was precisely the same event on the same date with the same attendance.

1998's Triple Threat Duathlon was held on Saturday May 9th, just prior to the beginning of the re-construction in Birds Hill Park. This is the only year that the race hasn't been held on the 2nd weekend in June -- the weekend prior to the Father's Day / Manitoba Marathon weekend. Again, it was exactly the same event as in 1996 and 1997. Attendance increased to 43.

The event was changed to the Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon in 1999 (Saturday June 12th), and became part of Triathlon Manitoba's Grand Prix Series. David Markham was still the Race Director. The bike course was the 1998 Nationals / 1999 Pan Am course -- three 13.3K loops of the park, with each lap starting and ending at East Beach. The weather was 20C and partly cloudy, with a 25KPH SW wind. Attendance was 51.

The 2000 Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon was cancelled one hour after the scheduled race start because of severe thunderstorms.

As part of the Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon on a very hot Saturday, June 9, 2001, the club hosted the Manitoba High School Championships (the last one ever held) and the Canadian Junior Triathlon Championships. The Sprint Triathlon was introduced. Barry Briscoe was the new Race Director. Attendance was 163.

In 2002, the Triple Threat Triathlon Club's major race became a race weekend. The 10-year old Transcona Kids of Steel, which had been directed by club member Philippe Chabot and supported by the club for a few years, moved from the first Saturday in June to the 2nd Saturday, and became the Triple Threat Kids of Steel & Try-a-Tri. It attracted 128 kids even though it was a cool day. The Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon moved from Saturday to Sunday, and encountered brutal weather: 13C, rain/overcast/drizzle, and 30 gusting to 50 KPH NE winds. There were over 100 pre-registrants, but virtually no race-day registrants, and only 68 hardy athletes started the race.

Brent Miller took over the Triple Threat Kids of Steel & Try-a-Tri in 2003. OK weather resulted in 130 participants. The weather for the 2003 Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon was cool (13C), but sunny with a light wind. Attendance rebounded to 159.

Weather in 2004 was again a factor. The Kids of Steel was the Manitoba Games Qualifier for Winnipeg, so it attracted 140 participants, despite very high winds. The Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon endured another poor weather day: 13°C air, 16°C water, showers & cloudy, 22KPH NW wind. Participants: 131.

Beautiful weather resulted in a Kids of Steel record 174 participants for the 2005 Triple Threat Kids of Steel & Try-a-Tri. Jaromir Samek took over as Race Director of the Triple Threat Triathlon & Duathlon from Barry Briscoe. The Sprint Duathlon was introduced. Weather was again poor. The rain stopped just before race start, but it was very windy, the pavement was wet, and the transition zone on the grass turned into a mud bowl. Attendance was 113.

2006 was the second of Jaromir Samek's two years as Race Director. The Tri-a-Tri was moved from the Saturday Kids of Steel race to Sunday, and a Tri-a-Du was introduced. Moderate temperatures and winds on both days resulted in good attendances: 162 for the KoS and 174 for the Triple Threat Triathlon, Duathlon, Tri-a-Tri, & Tri-a-Du.

Karen Armstrong served as Race Director for both the KoS and adult events in 2007. There were 141 participants at the KoS, and a then-record 189 participants on a beautiful day on the Sunday.

Kate Okany took over as race director for the 2008 Triple Threat race weekend – her first of three years leading the club's efforts. The KoS event served as the Winnipeg qualifier for the Manitoba Summer Games triathlon, but there were only 99 participants because it was a cool day with a strong gusting wind, and unfortunately, 15C water resulted in the event changing to a Duathlon on race morning. With a much warmer, calm day on Sunday, race morning walk-up registration was brisk. There were 183 starters. The cold water prompted many participants who don't own a wetsuit (and a few others who have difficulty with cold water) to switch from a triathlon event to a Duathlon event.

In 2009, the Sunday race served as "Teck Cominco National Junior Series race #1 -- Western Canadian Junior Championships". With 63 Junior athletes from across Canada in attendance, it's not surprising that a new attendance record was set, but the number (193) sounds surprisingly low until you factor in a water temperature of 13C ("wetsuits mandatory"). The Tri-a-Tri was cancelled; the few registrants all did the Tri-a-Du. The KoS race was changed to a duathlon for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row --105 participants -- 12C water, 8C air, but thankfully calm.

The 2010 Triple Threat Kids of Steel had a disappointing 87 participants, which was the lowest ever. The weather was nice, although it was heavily overcast and the water was a cool 16C. The Triple Threat Triathlon, Duathlon, Tri-a-Tri, & Tri-a-Du was very smoothly-run and successful event with 180 participants.

Scott Munn is the race director for the 2011 edition of Triple Threat Race Weekend.

28 Jun 2010, Kevin Miller