



# CHASING DREAMS

JENNIFER JOHNSTON TALKS TO CHRISTOPHE MANCHON

**It goes without saying triathletes must be versatile and adaptable to excel in three endurance disciplines - swimming, cycling and running. The cycling leg is the most time consuming segment of the triathlon, and the reality for each athlete completing in a triathlon is the majority of their race time will be spent on a bike. Fortunately for Christophe Manchon, a 32 year old amateur Brisbane based triathlete, cycling is his favourite discipline and is a driving force for him to wake every morning and continue chasing his dreams.**

Captivated by the science behind endurance sport, Christophe has returned to University to study nutrition and dietetics. His aim once he graduates (at the end of 2015) is to work with elite endurance athletes of all disciplines, helping them understand how to better sustain their body for the demands of this style of racing.

#### ***So why Triathlons and why at this stage of his life?***

Christophe was an athletic kid at school, playing football and a number of other sports. But a groin injury in his mid-twenties halted any ideas of following one of those sports to a higher level. Recuperating from the injury Christophe started riding a bike as part of his rehabilitation. This was where he discovered bike racing and triathlon as an exhilarating form of exercise.

"I've always been a healthy and active person, but training for bike racing and triathlon has taken my fitness to a completely different level," he says. "It feels



good to be strong and to use my body's power to move over these distances."

His motivation for participating in this endurance sport, is not to turn professional. He admits he's left his run too late for that, entering into triathlons at an 'older' age. "I'm not an elite athlete and I don't have the natural talent to be at the top level at this stage of my life, but I enjoy what I do and I strive to be at the top of my game."

He is motivated to compete against himself and to improve on his personal times. But above all, it's the feeling of freedom of being on a bike that motivates him to do what he does. "There is nothing like pushing yourself up a mountain, followed by the fast, daring descent. When I am on my bike in the sun, appreciating nature in all of its beauty, it's my chance to escape from the hustle of life." Down time is so important when faced with a schedule many would shy away from.

### Packed Schedule

Training for multi-discipline sports takes dedication and commitment. While it's all very well to just get out and ride your bike, swimming and running require just as much training time. Christophe trains under Chris Weier of Fitnace Australia (based in East Brisbane) and follows a balanced training program of one to one and a half hour sessions twice a day. In addition to swimming, biking and running, he throws in a couple of gym and yoga/pilates sessions each week. "These are the key to core strength and injury prevention flexibility," Christophe says.

However, it's not only eating well, training and studying he needs to find time for, there is also the need to earn an income. Amateur athletes competing at this level require funds to maintain their high performing equipment, training sessions, physio treatments - a significant investment for a student and part-time worker who is not supplemented by sponsorship. Christophe works part-time, three days a week for the Queensland Government in the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection as a Senior Policy Officer.

Christophe loves cooking and experimenting with different foods and nutrition strategies. His studies in nutrition have provided him with a more enlightened approach to food and its impact on the body and he's intrigued by the concept of maximising sports performance, not only through well planned race nutrition but through a quality diet based on whole foods and a mindful approach to eating. "It's a matter of being aware of what you eat on an every-day basis and the impact it has on recovery and performance," says Christophe.

Concerned with the current generation of kids and their health issues (obesity/diabetes), he's interested in guiding future generations towards a healthier way of living. Christophe is motivated to educate kids about healthy eating and lifestyle choices and to act as a role model to inspire them to live happier, healthier and more active lives.

I could not imagine a better role model.

### Future Goals

Christophe has competed in everything from sprint triathlon to the 70.3 distance and entering his final year of University in 2015, is prioritising his studies as number one. To manage this he will compete predominantly in domestic triathlons and bike races throughout 2015, however has not ruled out a shot at the World Long Course Championships to be held in Sweden in June. Once he graduates he will ramp up his training to qualify for the 70.3 World Championships to be held at Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast in 2016. His long-term goal is to complete an Iron distance event, whether it be a destination race such as challenge Roth, or to qualify for the big dance, the Ironman World Championships in Hawaii.

Christophe has a jam packed schedule - he is a full time student, studying four subjects a semester, working three days a week and training twice a day. But he revels in his fast-paced lifestyle and considers it an extremely worthwhile investment.

He is deeply motivated to help other athletes maximise their performance through nutrition and to inspire others to lead healthier lives by being active and making good dietary choices. Christophe welcomes any opportunity to help fellow athletes by answering questions they may have on nutrition and providing feedback on how a few small changes to their diet might translate to significant improvements in performance.

Christophe Manchon a humble man, planning, exploring, improving, living life and chasing his dreams. 🚴



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CHRISTOPHE MANCHON DURING  
THE RUN LEG OF A TRIATHLON



Jennifer Johnston is a Brisbane based Freelance Writer and Blogger who juggles pursuing her passion for writing with working part-time outside of the writing world and raising three rowdy young men. She is inspired by travel, people, health and well being and writes to share with words her experiences and observations.

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