

Maple Valley Sports: Resident Spotlight

By Kendall Lamb

Maple Valley is hosting its first ever IRONMAN 70.3 on September 20th, which is estimated to bring in over 2,700 competing athletes from all over the United States and the world. This prestigious race is a huge feather in our cap and a big win for the city of Maple Valley!

I thought it would be fun to feature two local athletes, Laura Philpot, and Jeff McCann, who will both be competing in the race. Get to know more about Laura and Jeff from their question-and-answer session. After the race we will do a follow-up letting you know how they did.

Laura Philpot:

Q: How long have you lived in Maple Valley?

A: We have lived in Maple Valley for 18 years.

Q: What is your job/career?

A: I have been the City Manager for the City of Maple Valley for the past five years.

Q: How and when did you start competing in Half IRONMAN Competitions?

A: I had run several marathons and was looking for something different to mix it up. A good friend suggested I try a Half IRONMAN (70.3 miles distance) and so I gave it a try and fell in love with the sport!

Q: What other races/competitions have you done?

A: I've done many running races ranging from 5K's to Marathons and everything in between. I have also done many triathlons ranging in distance. As far as IRONMAN branded events/distances I have done the following:

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| Lake Stevens IRONMAN 70.3 | IRONMAN Louisville (140.6) |
| Boise IRONMAN 70.3 | IRONMAN Santa Rosa (140.6) |
| Augusta IRONMAN 70.3 | Texas IRONMAN 70.3 |
| Victoria IRONMAN 70.3 | Coeur d'Alene IRONMAN 70.3 |
| IRONMAN Chattanooga (140.6) | Indian Wells - La Quinta |
| IRONMAN Canada (140.6) | IRONMAN 70.3 |
| IRONMAN Arizona (140.6) | IRONMAN Coeur d'Alene (140.6) |



Q: What makes you most excited about having this event in Maple Valley?

A: Southeast King County is where I do most of my training. Our roads and our trail systems are amazing! I am most excited about sharing the local beauty of this awesome location with athletes from all over the United States and the world!

Q: Do you have advice for anyone who may want to get started in IRONMAN Competitions?

A: Find a local triathlon club to get involved with! They will provide so much information and support to anyone who is ready to embark on the journey! It is an amazing feeling to cross that finish line!

To read more about Laura's races visit her blog at <https://trigal.sport.blog/>

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Jeff McCann:

Q: How long have you lived in Maple Valley?

A: I first moved to Maple Valley in 1999, when I built a home along the Cedar River Trail in one of the housing communities I developed with my father. My family had purchased about 800-acres of land between Maple Valley, Selleck, and Enumclaw. I picked one of the parcels near the Cedar River as an ideal place to start a family.

Q: What is your job/career?

A: After completing the developments with my father, I started my own real estate consulting business and also work as a broker. A lot of my consulting work entails helping individuals and developers work through the complexities of permitting and development of properties. This year I'll also be teaching at the University of Washington in their graduate and undergraduate real estate programs.

Q: How and when did you start competing in Half IRONMAN Competitions?

A: I recall watching Julie Moss heroically crawl to finish the Hawaii IRONMAN in 1982, and wondered if someday I could finish one. I did my sprint triathlon in 1993 (it was a semi-disaster, but incredibly fun), my first half IRONMAN in 1996, and then a full IRONMAN in 1999. Later, I took several years off from racing while busy with work and raising kids. I've only done two sprint distance triathlons in the last 17 years, but when I saw the half IRONMAN coming to Maple Valley, I knew I couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Q: What other races/competitions have you done?

A: Over my lifetime I've mostly been a runner and have completed 20+ marathons and ultra's. I've also been lucky enough to captain a US team to a top 20 finish in what was dubbed 'the World's Toughest Race,' completing Eco Challenge Fiji in 9 days and 13 hours. Pre-COVID, I did the Mt. Baker 55-mile ultra-marathon where the turnaround point was touching the summit of Mt. Baker. I was getting ready to run Rim-to-Rim-to-Rim (back and forth across the Grand Canyon) last year with a friend, but COVID closed the park and halted that plan. That's still on our bucket list, but I've been battling some injuries so I'm trying to train smart and stay healthy for this event.

Q: What makes you most excited about having this event in Maple Valley?

A: I'm very excited to compete in this 'backyard' event and will try to focus on enjoying the day. We have the most beautiful trails, which I know will be a great way to finish the event during the run and will highlight the community to other participants too. I also plan to have fun with the race. While I haven't figured out what costume I'll compete in yet, I dressed up as a shark and Batman for my last two triathlons. Maybe, I'll feel like being an Avenger that day.

Q: Advice for anyone who may want to get started in IRONMAN Competitions.

A: Find a sprint triathlon, sign-up, and then workout the logistics later. Don't get too worried about what event you may not be strong at or what gear you lack. There are several very supportive local groups you can find on Facebook, such as Raise the Bar and Cedar River Runners, that can be a big help. I didn't know any triathletes when I started out and did my first couple triathlons with a poorly fitting, borrowed wetsuit and rusty mountain bike. From there, it took me about four years until my first half IRONMAN event. People in the triathlon community are so supportive, they'll help you get to the starting line.



Good luck Laura and Jeff. Maple Valley is rooting for you!

Amy & Chloe Events

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A photograph of two women, Amy and Chloe, walking together outdoors. They are both smiling and wearing light-colored jackets. One is carrying a large brown bag.

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