



NEW ARRIVALS

iLIFE

HOME

NEWS

RACE NEWS

TRAINING

NUTRITION

INSPIRATION

PROFILES

PHOTOS

VIDEOS

July 19th 2018

From Dashed Dreams to a Kona Quest

Share This Article [f](#) [t](#) [8+](#) [p](#) [e](#)



This feisty South African hasn't let her field hockey disappointments hang over her head.

by David Landers

Roxy Coetzee-Turner never dreamed that she would be watching the South African women's field hockey team compete for a medal at the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

She was supposed to be out there, playing.

"For my whole life, my goal, my dream was all hockey. It was playing for the national team. It was being an international player going to the Olympics. I wanted to compete," she says.

Though those youthful hopes didn't pan out, the 30-year-old from Johannesburg will be putting everything she's got into achieving—not watch from afar—her new dream: qualifying for the [IRONMAN World Championship](#). As it turns out, her everything is quite a lot.

Lifelong love...for sport

In 2008, Coetzee-Turner was on top of the world. A young, professional field hockey player, she was added to the South African women's national team and, two years later, picked to play at the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi, India.



Find a Race



IRONMAN Louisville
Louisville, KY
October 13th 2019



IRONMAN Maryland
Cambridge, Maryland
September 28th 2019



IRONMAN Wales
Pembrokeshire, Wales
September 15th 2019



IRONMAN 70.3 Maine
Old Orchard Beach
August 25th 2019



IRONMAN Vineman
Windsor, California

During a training camp prior to the games, Coetzee-Turner was doing leg presses and remembers telling her coach, "Listen, it's not that I can't push this thing. My legs aren't tired, they're not sore. But I can't lean back anymore. I just can't get the range."

A scan showed that one of Coetzee-Turner's discs had slipped and was pinching a nerve: "If I bent over, my fingers would maybe touch my knees. Getting dressed, I had to sit on a bed and put my legs straight." With the promising hockey player's movements limited, her coaches prescribed intensive physiotherapy along with cortisone shots as she prepared for the trip to New Delhi.



At the Commonwealth Games, Coetzee-Turner participated in the team's training and pre-matches. A day before competing in her first major tournament as a professional, the coach called her into his office and explained that the doctors warned that playing risked permanent damage. She was pulled from the line-up. "It was absolutely devastating. I don't think I've ever cried that much," she says.

The disappointment turned to a deep frustration. "I tried to find any excuse to explain why it was happening," she says. "It was everybody else's fault: the coach's fault, the medic's fault, the guy who diagnosed me. Why didn't they do this or that so I could have competed?"

Despite her injury, Coetzee-Turner remained on the national team—traveling abroad, playing on a Holland club, and participating in training camps. "I was trying really hard to stay in hockey and get back into it after my injury, but it wasn't working. I was hitting my head against a rock." By January 2013, Coetzee-Turner had retired.

Willingness...to try new things

Around this time, Coetzee-Turner was approached by a friend about doing an IRONMAN. Though her first triathlon was in 2006 (a sprint distance race completed on a mountain bike) the natural-born athlete was game to try. She and her friend registered for IRONMAN 70.3 South Africa. "It was absolutely brutal," she says. "I cramped from 70k on the bike until I finished the race."

Crossing the finish line, however, the former hockey protégé had never felt as mentally strong, thus expanding her appreciation of what IRONMAN racing does to the mind and body.

"On race day, the mind gets pushed into spaces you've never been before. I had experienced that in hockey, but nothing like in an IRONMAN," she says. "I felt quite emotional and in awe of how mentally I could get through that race. The feeling afterward was spectacular."

Following the sting of being pulled from the Commonwealth Games, IRONMAN allows Coetzee-Turner to enjoy a competitive sport on her own terms. "In triathlon, there is no capacity to blame anybody or find excuses outside what you do and what you physically put in."

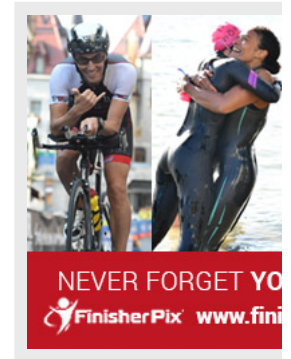
She is able, for example, to pick when and where she will race, instead of waiting for decisions made by team coaches or selection committees.

"Having that part of my life where I blamed everyone else, it really taught me later on with time that things happen for a reason. And sometimes it's not the other person, it's you, your journey and what you have to learn."

Creativity...to adapt to anything

To create a more flexible schedule for IRONMAN training and family (her wife, a retired professional field hockey player who represented South Africa at the London Olympics, delivered their first child last year), Coetzee-Turner now works two part-time jobs—one as a fitness trainer at a health and wellness center owned and operated by her mother.

"It's really special," she says, on working side-by-side with her mother. "We have the same sort of philosophy when it comes to a healthy lifestyle. We're actually best friends."



Latest Articles



3 Ways to Start Your Season
March 1st 2019



3 Secrets to Breathe Easier
February 28th 2019



Goal Setting For A Successful Season
February 27th 2019



Your IRONMAN Race Day Checklist
February 26th 2019



The Monday Round-Up
February 25th 2019

Twitter | Facebook



#IMNZ <https://t.co/ta0ilpdivU>
8 HOURS AGO | Reply | Retweet



Congratulations to your 35th Nutri-Grain IRONMAN New Mike Phillips and Jocelyn...
<https://t.co/ta0ilpdivU>
1 DAY AGO | Reply | Retweet



Andrew Starykowicz set a bl @ventumracing Bike Cour 35th edition of Kellogg...
<https://t.co/MdforVHPuj>
1 DAY AGO | Reply | Retweet

Follow us on Twitter



Coetzee-Turner rounds out her week as the head of the field hockey program at her alma mater, St. Mary's School, Waverley, an all-girls independent school in Johannesburg. After enduring injury to her own back, she knows how important it is to incorporate physical conditioning into her girls' routines.



With the baby and two mothers getting into the family groove, Coetzee-Turner is excited to return to the IRONMAN circuit. She already has a slot for the IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship this year in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and competed at IRONMAN South Africa earlier this year as part of her [Quest for Kona](#) bid.

For the first time since she started playing field hockey, she is taking the year off from her former profession to focus on training and raising her daughter.

"I love the fact that it doesn't have to be just one dream," she says. "I got through the realization that hockey was not going to be it. I was able to change my focus and become good at something else."

Following a successful debut last year, IRONMAN is again presenting [Quest for Kona](#), a television series that documents the highs and lows of 10 athletes attempting to qualify for the 2018 IRONMAN World Championship this October in Hawaii. Tune in to [Quest for Kona](#) to follow Coetzee-Turner's qualification journey.

David Landers is a freelance writer with a passion for endurance sports and travel. He lives in Vancouver, B.C.

TAGS: [Quest for Kona](#), [Age Group Profiles](#), [Kona](#)

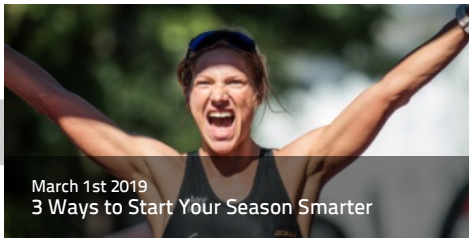
Share This Article [f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [p](#) [e](#)

0 Comments

Sort by [Oldest](#) [+](#)

Add a comment...

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



Races

ALL RACES

[Live Coverage](#)

IRONMAN
IRONMAN 70.3
Championships
Short Course Tri
Cycling
Running
IRONKIDS
MultiSport Tri
North American Transfer Program

LOCATIONS

North America
South America
Europe
Africa

Results

AGE GROUP ATHLETES

Recent Results
Rankings
All World Athletes
Profiles

PRO ATHLETES

Pro Membership
Rankings
Pro Start Lists
Race News

COVERAGE

[Live Now](#)
Past Coverage
Race News

Training

GET STARTED

IRONMAN 101
Rules

REACH YOUR GOALS

Training
Nutrition
Inspiration

News

ALL NEWS

Race News
Training
Nutrition
Inspiration

SOCIAL COMMUNITY

From the Fans
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Pinterest

Triathlon Gear

Official World Championship Gear
Event Gear
Finisher
Training
Sale

Programs

TriClub Program
All World Athlete Program
Kona Legacy Program
Anti-Doping
Women for Tri
Foundation

Get News

Be the first to
in the world of

Signup for



Corporate:

[Partners](#) [Press Information](#) [Jobs](#) [Intellectual Property Usage](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Contact](#) [RSS](#)

Copyright © 2001–2019 World Triathlon Corporation (WTC). All Rights Reserved. IRONMAN®, IRONMAN TRIATHLON®, M-DOT®, IRONMANLIVE.com®, IRONMAN.COM™ and 70.3® are trademarks of WTC. Any use of these marks without the express written consent of WTC is prohibited.