

Busy administrator enthusiastically adds 'iron' to diet

By Leilana McKindra
The NCAA News

It is clear that Russell Sage College's Candice Poiss loves a good challenge.

As if balancing her dual role as director of athletics and recreation and head women's tennis coach isn't enough, Poiss is a veteran runner with four marathons and numerous road races to her credit.

She also has been a key member of a women's ice hockey team for five years and was a former member of the U.S. Flatwater Kayaking Junior National Team that made an appearance in the 1987 World Championship in Yugoslavia.

Last July, Poiss took on one of her biggest challenges yet when she completed her first Ironman triathlon, the Ironman U.S. Championship in Lake Placid, New York, after a mere seven months of training. More impressive still, Poiss' finish qualified her for the 2004 Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Kona, Hawaii.

Ironman competitions are the longest triathlons in distance, requiring participants to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run 26.2 miles. Poiss was initially introduced to the sport by her fiancé.

"He did an Ironman in Lake Placid in 2002 and wanted to do another one. He wanted a training buddy and we make good training partners so he convinced me to do it," she said.

Poiss started training last January with the goal of entering the Lake Placid event in July. The transition into training was fairly smooth for Poiss, who is regularly active. Running was already a big part of her routine and she added biking and swimming to the mix. The biggest challenge in training for her newest endeavor was the amount of time required.

"The thing you have to commit to when you're trying to train for something like this is the time commitment. It is enormous. For instance, when you might be doing all kinds of other stuff, you spend seven hours training on a bike," she said.

On a typical Saturday, Poiss completed a long bike ride, and on Sundays she took a long run. During the week, she swam moderate distances. In addition, she contin-

ued her daily routine of running during her lunch hour at work. Because she lived just two hours away from Lake Placid, Poiss also was able to familiarize herself with the course before the event.

Her thorough preparation included competing in a half Ironman — 1.2 miles of swimming, 56 miles of biking and 13.1 miles of running — just one month before her Ironman debut. However, despite her hard work, Poiss admits to being nervous before the actual event.

"That half Ironman was a good training and a good way to estimate how I would do, how I would feel and what it was like," Poiss said. "I wanted to finish the Ironman and be an official finisher. To be an official finisher you had to finish in under 17 hours. That I knew I could do. Based on my half Iron time, I was hoping for a 15-hour finish."

The first-timer did much better than that, turning in a time of 13:37.03.

"I can guarantee if I could have trained more I would have done better," she said. "There's definitely room for improvement. But, for my first Ironman, I am thrilled with 13:37."

Poiss did more than meet her personal goals by competing and finishing the race in Lake Placid. She also grabbed a spot in one of the most grueling of all Ironman events, the Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Hawaii.

There are two ways to earn entry into the Hawaii Ironman — by

qualifying at sanctioned Ironman events or by lottery. In April, Poiss was notified she'd been chosen as one of the 150 American and 50 international competitors picked through the lottery system.

"I know people who have been in the lottery for five years straight and never got in. It was just pure luck that I got in," Poiss said.

While luck may have paved the way into the prestigious race, Poiss had to work to keep the slot. In order to participate in the Hawaii Ironman, she was required to finish a half or full Ironman within the calendar year to qualify for the world championship. Competing in Lake Placid sealed Poiss' spot in Hawaii.

Motivated by her performance in Lake Placid, Poiss set her sights on Hawaii. Ultimately, however, she was unable to participate because of the cost.

"It was an extraordinarily difficult decision to make," she said. "It was simply finances. If I could have gone, I would have gone in a heartbeat."

However disappointed she may have been at not being able to compete in Hawaii, it has not dampened Poiss' newfound enthusiasm for the sport. She has definite plans to continue this particular challenge.

"We didn't enter Lake Placid for next year, but that's not to say we won't enter another one, other than Lake Placid. We just haven't planned it yet," Poiss said. "But, we will continue to do crazy things like an Ironman."



Candice Poiss, director of athletics and recreation and head women's tennis coach at Russell Sage College, competed in her first Ironman triathlon event, the Ironman U.S. Championship, in Lake Placid, New York, in July, after just sev-

en months of training in the sport. Ironman competitions are the longest triathlons in distance, and require participants to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles and run 26.2 miles. Poiss qualified for the Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Hawaii.

On deck in the News

NCAA Convention coverage

From the January 8 opening business session to the adjournment of the Executive Committee meeting January 10, The NCAA News documents the proceedings of the 99th annual NCAA Convention in Dallas. Results of voting on proposed legislation by Divisions II and III will be included. □



Brett Wilhelm/NCAA Photos

Professional-development model

A new initiative designed to advance coaching opportunities identifies characteristics of already successful coaches to help others progress in the profession.



The evolution of college skiing

Since the first intercollegiate ski competition between Dartmouth University and McGill University in 1913, the sport of skiing at the collegiate level has carved a deep trail.