

Mississauga triathlete hopes to compete at Worlds

Being competitive at the upcoming World Triathlon Championships is the least of Mississauga's Linda Preston MacKenzie's concerns.

Getting there is the time-consuming issue for the 34-year-old teacher, who has trained for the opportunity the past six years.

An illness kept Preston on the sideline when Canada hosted the World championship last year in Muskoka, and now that Preston is healthy and qualified at last month's Canadian National championships in Montreal, the venue for this year's event has been moved to Wellington, New Zealand.

"In '92 I totaled by bike and totaled my face which kept me three weeks away from training and in '93 I had mononucleosis for six weeks."

Although Preston wedded Brian MacKenzie earlier this summer, she decided to give the Worlds one more shot.

"I told him I could only take two weeks off to get married and have our honeymoon, but then I had to return for the Canadian championships.

"It was a long road, but worth the wait."

But with athletes having to pay their own way, Preston is of the realization she may be doing all that swimming, biking and running without having the world stage to perform on.

This past summer while competing in the 1.5 kilometre swim, followed by a 40 kilometre bicycle ride and a 10 kilometre run,

Preston MacKenzie was second at the Guelph Sprint, second at the CNE Toronto International, fourth in Orillia, and seventh at the Provincial and National championships.

While temperatures were less than ideal in Montreal September 11 with the water temperature falling to 60

degrees Fahrenheit, chances are temperatures in New Zealand will be similar.

"I've heard New Zealand gets as cold as 14 degrees Celsius and its windy as well. My goal is to get out of the water alive," Preston added with only half a smile.

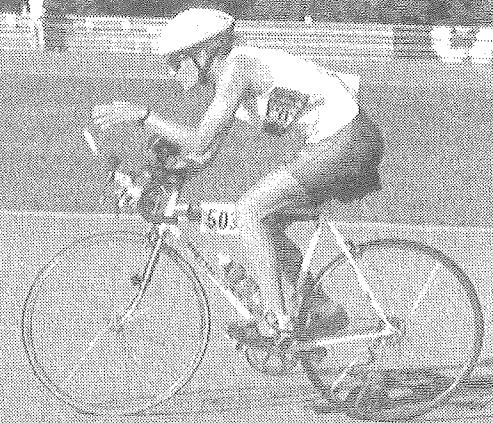
Still, Preston would like the chance to compete.

Anyone wishing to help sponsor Preston can call 278-0807.



LINDA PRESTON

Mississauga's Linda Preston MacKenzie hopes to come up with the funds to compete at the World Triathlon Championships in Wellington, New Zealand.



Linda Preston MacKenzie's strength is her running, but the 34-year-old teacher has worked hard on improving her bicycling and swimming skills.