

Canadian MD has right stuff in World Ironman Triathlon

A small-town physician has earned a big-time honour as winner of the Hawaii 2000 Ironman Triathlon in the 35-39 age category.

Dr. Len Gushe, 37, of Mattawa, Ont., a village 3 hours northwest of Ottawa, has been competing in triathlons for 8 years and has entered the world championships in Kona, Hawaii, 8 times. In October he won the gruelling medley of swimming, biking and running competitions in a personal-best time of 9 hours and 25 minutes. His event times were 51 minutes for the 3.8-km swim, 5 hours, 2 minutes for the 180-km bike ride and 3 hours, 29 minutes for the 42-km marathon run. He won even though he tore a knee cartilage in January and again in August; the cartilage was repaired a week after the competition.

Gushe used to think triathlons were “crazy,” but after his first competition in 1992 he was hooked. “I thought I was in good shape, but I was humbled,” he says. “It was unbelievably hard.” Within a year he qualified for his first world competition in Hawaii and placed 1200th out of 1500 competitors. He's entered every year since then, placing 13th for the past 2 years. A GP, Gushe arranges

his clinical practice and hospital shifts around his training. Each week, on average, he swims 15 km, bikes 500 km and runs 70 km. “I don't work as hard as your average doctor,” he says, laughing. Mattawa's 3 other physicians are “very accommodating,” he adds, and he has a regular locum who fills in for the 3 or 4 months each year that he spends travelling. — *Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ*



Dr. Len Gushe in the Hawaii Ironman: 7 hours in, 2 hours and 25 minutes to go