

"But these events have given me insight about another driving force other than my body or mind. That force is my spirit or that part of me that keeps going."

"Reaching the Airport there were fewer than 20 miles left and I began the third leg of the triathlon. Now... to run, if not in the best condition at the time, to do the "survival shuffle" for the remaining 26.2 miles. The changing room for the beginning of the marathon was filled with chattering, dressing, resting, drinking, and eating bodies". "It was here again that I had to muster what I had left and touch once more that part that persists in completing the event in spite of how I felt or what I thought. Shoes on, bananas and plenty of water in my stomach I gave the command "Run" and I did just that."

"Slowly at first and then surprisingly I picked up speed. I saw the miles go by. I stopped and chatted with two women participants walking because of various aches and pains. But walking can be a disaster because your body loses energy and motivation, and refuses to get back into the rhythms of running so I quickly said "See you — gotta keep going," and so I disappeared into the darkness, coldness and the loneliness that I had set out in earlier. Now all I wanted to do was cross the finish line and be with friends."

"Wow I did it. Acknowledging friends, flower lei, T shirt, massage, shave ice and REST.... Never thought I could. But who knows what one can do until one goes for it".

"In 1983 under the new rules triathletes must complete the 2.4 miles swim in under two hours or they will be disqualified. The swim and bike race must be completed in 10½ hours or be eliminated. Finally anyone that is on the course more than 17 hours after the start will not be an official finisher. Concern for the safety of athletes also limits the number of entries. My time in this race was 15 hours 41 minutes."

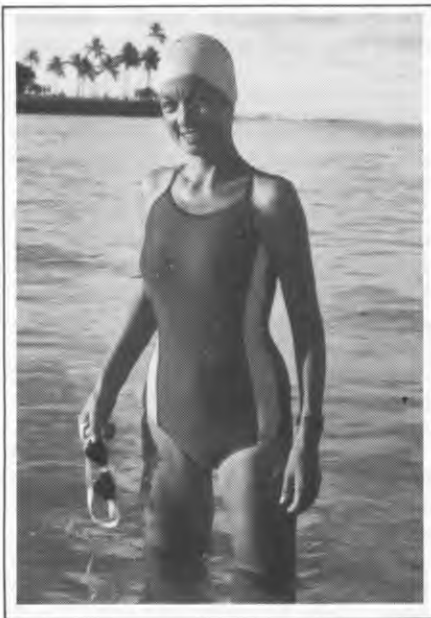
Last year Dave Scott a 30 year old Californian had the winning time of 8 hours 54 minutes and 20 seconds. The women's division was won by Sylviane Puntuos 23 of Montreal Canada with a 10 hour 25 minute and 13 second finish.

Training programme

Alice's intensive training consists of 4 to 7 miles of swimming per week, biking an average of 150 to 200 miles per week, and running an average of 40 to 70 miles per week. Other types of conditioning include weight training and stretching (yoga). Last but not least is a proper diet — high on complex carbohydrates.

"Finally during the race no athlete can do without those volunteers. About 3,000 volunteers all in all" says Alice. Forty nine First Aid Stations are manned by 1400 volunteers. They distribute

cookies, oranges, bananas, sandwiches, coca cola, water and gatorade to about 900 contestants from the start of the race until the race ends at midnight. Some help bag clothes and assist swimmers if they have trouble in the water, and also help in the dressing rooms. Others act as timers, marshals, security staff and help police direct traffic."



The triathlon course

The Ironman course is exactly what the name implies. It is a course for the mentally and physically strong and not to be taken lightly. Intense heat and constant winds can create a course that requires tremendous psychological stamina as well as physical strength. The Ironman was first held on Oahu in 1978 and it was the only endurance race in the world to feature a 2.4 mile bike ride and a marathon in succession. That was difficult enough. But when race director Valerie Silk moved the race to Kailua Kona, Big Island Hawaii, she picked a race route that made the event truly grueling.

Many have never swum in the ocean and were amazed or frightened by the sea life there, schools of tropical fish. One swimmer sighted a shark and others have seen four resident porpoises and two spotted rays and a green turtle.

The bike route looks innocent enough. There is no shade. It's just a long mostly flat road lined with great lava fields. But 12.5 miles out riders meet headwinds. Contestants face unusually difficult conditions with temperatures in the mid 90 degrees, and wind gusts up to 55mph. When the sun sets, the moon will rise and only the white line on the side of the road as a guide. Those contestants on the road contend with a really pitch black unlit highway. But the last mile leading to the finish is the best — the one almost anyone can run.

Alice's motivation

"What motivates me? Why don't I suffer with the burn out syndrome? I want to set an example and a sense of rivalry spurs me on. Not only with those super athletes in my age division, but this includes younger athletes."

Alice reflects, "I think self confidence, discipline and dedication come with growing older. Other women can do what I have done. They just haven't tried yet. Age is no barrier to endurance sport. My problem has never been age but spreading myself too thin. I really concentrate on trying to beat those within the 40-44 age division. I've taken first place in the Kauai Ironman and first place in the Windward Half Triathlon."

Always philosophical Alice believes everyone takes risks in life. "Some of us have gotten to the place, where all we have to do is have a pulse to make money, and be successful in our careers. I was looking for something else too — something even more challenging. The Ironman was my challenge".

When relaxing moments occur, Alice's time is spent helping a fellow worker to train as a triathlete. Her office girl Candice is coached by Alice in cycling and running. As a twosome they train together. Coaching is very relaxing. Her friends can share Alice's positive attitude and strive like her.

"When training five hours a day it does not distract me from my work as Assistant to the Principal. I feel more proficient. The staff here tend to follow my lifestyle, daily exercise and healthy eating habits. Teaching deaf students and deaf-blind students is a very difficult task, to say the least. You need to be creative and positive thinking. The more I work out, the more successful I become. Training has taught me to be more efficient with my life. When I am out riding a bike I'm planning activities. I thoroughly enjoy running. I have not time to socialise, but this doesn't bother me too much. I did a lot of this when I was younger."

"I always look forward to helping my Maori people. I hope that I can continue to set an exemplary model for my people, and my family as I continue my pursuits", says Alice. "I look forward to beginning my Doctorate in Education with Californian Western University".

Alice has certainly found her niche. Her willpower and her "what next" attitude free her to participate against men. It's almost like an obsession. She sets her own standards of excellence. Now Alice has the physiological phenomenon which is referred to as "the training effect", she has become hooked on her continued training, and maybe without knowing it. When you challenge the body — without reasons — and it responds, it grows progressively stronger.