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## Running (and Biking and Swimming) Down a Dream

CPA Randee Roucoulet's journey to the Mont-Tremblant Ironman began in true CPA fashion: with a dream and a spreadsheet.

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## Running (and Biking and Swimming) Down a Dream

### CPA's Road to the Ironman Paved with Spreadsheets

By Caitlin Q. Bailey O'Neill, Assistant Editor

**Randee Roucoulet**, a partner at Simone Macca & Larow's Hamden office and a member of the CTCPA Technology Interest Group, has never backed down from a challenge. So when the longtime biking enthusiast decided she wanted to do an Ironman triathlon in August, she began training with a coach in January.

(Did we mention she does taxes?)

Each day from January through April, Roucoulet woke up at 5 a.m. and headed to the local YMCA for a swim or to the snowy local streets for a run. She'd shower, make the one-hour commute to her office for 9 a.m., do taxes all day, and make the drive home by 10:30 p.m. to do it all again.

Why would anyone want to go through that training, those long days, to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, and finish off the day with a 26.2-mile marathon?

"Why not?" Roucoulet shrugged.

#### Analyzing Her Options

Once she decided to tackle the ultimate physical challenge, Roucoulet put her CPA skills to work on everything from her training regimen to selecting her actual Ironman course.

"I like spreadsheets," Roucoulet laughed. "There are 100 of these Ironman events, so I said, I'll make a list. Is it drivable from here? Is it an ocean swim or a lake swim? You have to look at the elevations [for the bike and run]. You'd think flat would be better, but flat means crosswinds. We're used to hilly in New England. These things all make a difference."

According to her Excel calculations, one Ironman rose to the top: the ski village of Mont-Tremblant, Quebec, Canada. "Mont-Tremblant wants to be a destination for Ironman," Roucoulet recalled, remembering how welcoming the volunteers were. "The signs for this event are up all year long."

A manageable six-hour drive from her Simsbury home? Check.

Lake swim? Check.

Comfortable temperatures in the low 60s, with water temperatures that, at under 80 degrees, would allow for a wetsuit and the added buoyancy that a wetsuit affords? Check.

A scenic route with "perfect" elevations weaving through cobblestoned towns and highways, utilizing out-and-back loops to permit maximum cheerleaders and photo opportunities? Check, check, and check.

It was settled – Roucoulet and her cousin Rachel would both aim to become Mont-Tremblant Ironmen on August 16, 2015 (with the support of their "sherpa" husbands).



## Have you done great things? Share your story!

If you're a CTCPA member who's an Ironman like Randee or you have another cool hobby or story to share, let us know!

Reach out to Assistant Editor Caitlin Bailey O'Neill at [caitlinb@ctcpas.org](mailto:caitlinb@ctcpas.org).

### The Big Day

The "P" in Roucoulet's credentials may as well stand for "prepared."

Each Ironman competitor arrives at the course with five bags, carefully labeled, arranged, and transported by the many volunteers. Three of the bags included the necessities for each leg of the journey, but two bags are "special needs" bags available in the middle of the biking and running legs. Competitors can stock those bags with anything and everything they feel they may need, from nutritional bars to Band-Aids.

"I spent a year making lists," Roucoulet said, researching what other participants had done and sketching out her day to pinpoint her necessities. She opted for an all-liquid diet during the

race, special-ordering water she could customize with the amount of electrolytes, flavor, sodium, etc.

When the sun rose in Quebec on race day, August 16, it welcomed an 88-degree day – considerably hotter than the 60s Roucoulet had planned for.

"I spent the first 13 miles of the run dumping water on myself, so when I got to the special needs bag, my shoes were squishing," she remembered. "But I had packed dry socks in the bag!"

If there was a dark spot in the day (both literal and metaphorical), it hit Roucoulet during the run. "I don't like to run," she admitted. "I'd never done a full marathon."



At the end of the first 13-mile loop, she hit a crossroads, with the enormous finish line arch looming at one side – and the second 13-mile loop beckoning from the other side. Fatigued, running on fumes, and now plodding along in the dark, she thought about quitting.

But with the soundtrack of cheers from the finish line punctuating her steps, Roucoulet kept running. Illuminated by the headlamp she had thought to pack into her special needs bag, she reminded herself that every step would bring her closer to finishing the run.

"It's a mental game," Roucoulet said. "Your body wants to quit, but you can keep going if you put in the work and put your mind to it."

"My goal was to finish and not end up in the medical tent," continued Roucoulet – and she did just that. Starting around mile 18, she began planning how she'd end. One final sprint, a fist pump, and the "voice of Ironman" Mike Reilly booming through the speakers: "Randee Roucoulet, you are an Ironman."

Roucoulet has already signed up for the 2016 Mont-Tremblant Ironman, which her husband (and former sherpa!) Phil will do with her. "I'm over the mental part now. I know I can do it. Now I want to do *better*."



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