



The \$400 IOU

Article by Sonni Dyer

.....“Ya know, I figure that you owe me \$400, now.”

Uh-oh, this didn't sound good. I was in the middle of a late March weight-lifting session at our local rec/aquatic-center, resting between sets on the leg-press, when one of our town's newest triathletes approached me with this news.

Standing before me was Brady Linkous.....and a mean, lean Brady Linkous at that.

Some background: Last November, during the annual NC Tri-Series Steering Committee meeting, a need was realized. The NCTS (NC Tri-Series), it was noted, had been **SO** popular and successful in filling up races with participants.....that those new to triathlon often had limited opportunities to get their feet wet, literally, and try a tri. New triathletes simply don't think about signing up for June races in January.

Committee member Ginger Pharr offered up the idea “Why not start a developmental series that is first-timer friendly? A series for the new-comers?” Quickly the committee saw the brilliance of this notion realizing that we couldn't encourage our friends, family, and co-workers to get out and “tri” it.....if, when they went to register for races, those races were full.

This was like saying: “Come on and play!!!.....Ooops, sorry, we're full.”

The very magazine that you hold in your hands, **Endurance Magazine** stepped up in a big-time way to partner with Set-Up, Inc. and be the title sponsor of what is now the “Endurance Developmental Triathlon Series”.

So what does this have to do with Brady Linkous?

Hang with me, here.....and watch for the butterfly effect.

The town I live in, Valdese, NC, has one of the most enthusiastic and ambitious city-managers you'll ever meet. He is, after all, a triathleteand his name is Jeff Morse. Jeff has always wanted to bring triathlon to this great small town. With the advent of the new developmental tri-series, Jeff saw an opportunity.

When I met with Jeff last November, he filled me in on his master plan. Not only did he want to bring a triathlon to Valdese and make it part of this new “novice-friendly” series.....but Jeff had a vision of getting some of the 4000 citizens of Valdese, many who'd never done (or even SEEN) a triathlon intimately involved.

In fact, Jeff was going to make them an offer they couldn't refuse.

By December, the Town of Valdese had done a mailing to each of it's citizens inviting them to participate in their first triathlon. Not only were they invited to the inaugural race in March, but the Town of Valdese was:

- 1)-offering a package-discount rate into the rec/aquatic center membership for those who'd commit to race
- 2)-paying for the race's entry fee of ANY “local” who train to race
- 3)-paying for a coach-led tri clinic that was FREE to “locals”
- 4)-working a deal out so that anyone who wanted to race had use of a bike.....for free.

.....and, oh yeah.....#5)-paying for the coaching-fees for any town citizen willing to train for their first triathlon!!

(Big deal? Ask **your** local municipality to pay for YOUR coaching for a quarter. You'll be lucky if your recycle-bin doesn't end up in a neighbor's yard.)



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The point is, Jeff was systematically eliminating any and every excuse anyone could have for NOT trying their first triathlon. First, the "it's expensive" excuse was eliminated. Next they had a local event to target. Then they had a facility in which to train. They had the coaching info that they needed to prepare. They even had access to equipment thanks to a "loaner" program and a local supporting bike-shop.

They were, literally, *sponsored* by the town they live in.

Ultimately, the 16 novices now known as "Project Valdese", like a band of castaways on a Survivor episode had what we all need.....each other.....and race day was a huge success, a milestone, for them all.

.....Back to Brady Linkouswho was on the "Project Valdese" Team.

So I asked Brady, "***Now how is it that I owe you \$400?***"

He replied, "You see I got this new suit at Christmas, just before we began training for the triathlon. And now, it swallows me and won't fit at all because I've lost so much weight. It just sits there in the closet un-worn. That's a \$400 suit, Sonni!"

With that, he winked at me, smiled, and shook my hand thanking me as he left.

As he walked away I asked, "***What's next for you Brady?***" Without missing a beat he called back "***Riverwood Tri***".....and with that he was gone.

Mission accomplished.

The other day, I got an e-mail from Brady. We'll now be targeting a marathon for him for the Fall.....

.....ensuring that the next suits he'll buy are several sizes smaller than the one that, STILL, hangs un-worn in his closet.

See you out there,

Coach Sonni Dyer

*****For more information on the [Studio7MultiSport](http://www.Studio7MultiSport.com) training programs, you can visit our website at www.Studio7MultiSport.com or email Sonni at Sonni@Studio7multisport.com .