

# Matt Russell - Professional Triathlete

## A Triathletes of Utah Interview



Picture courtesy of Matt Russell ©

**Professional Triathlete Matt Russell decided recently to move his family back to the western United States and relocate to St. George, UT. We got the chance to talk with him and ask a few questions.**

**Matt, thanks for taking the time to talk with us. For those that may not be familiar with you and your racing career, can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your racing background?**

Born and raised on a small farm in northern New York. Ran on a scholarship at University of New Hampshire. Raced duathlons from 2007-2009 and won a couple duathlon national titles. Learned how to swim and started racing half and full Ironmans in 2010. I've raced Ironman World Championships eight times with 6th place being my best finish. I've won a number of half and full Ironmans. I've had 35 top 5 finishes with 22 of them being on the podium in Ironman/Challenge races.

**You've lived out here in the west before, what made you decide to move back, and specifically to Utah?**

I lived out West from 2004-2016 and I've just really missed what the mountains have to offer. Hiking, cycling, camping, exploring, National Parks, etc. I've lived in SLC before but I wanted to move to a place where there were mountains and didn't snow much. St. George, Utah seems to offer everything on my checklist.

**You've raced IRONMAN St. George in the past, will you be toeing the line there in 2021 for the 70.3 or 70.3 World championship?**

I certainly plan on racing both! If you know me, you know I love to race a lot.



Picture courtesy of Matt Russell

**What is, or was your favorite triathlon to race?**

I have a lot of great memories in Lake Placid, NY. From running racing, cycling, hiking, camping. My first mini triathlon as a teenager was there. I volunteered at IMLP when I was in high school with my buddies. My first professional race and my first full Ironman was in Lake Placid. In 2019 I won IMLP which marked my 10th year anniversary racing as a professional in the sport.

**After smashing the competition at a big race what is your favorite food or dessert to indulge?**

I like a nice pint of Ben & Jerry's!

**You have a strong running background, is running your best discipline? What is your favorite discipline?**

Running was my first love. I really love the simplicity of running. All you need is running shoes and you can practically run anywhere! I actually think I'm a stronger cyclist now than a runner. While I love the simplicity of running, I do enjoy mixing it up with all disciplines.



Picture courtesy of Matt Russell

**When you first started doing triathlons, who was your biggest idol or role model within the triathlon world?**

I believe I did my first triathlon in 2001. Then I took nearly a decade off because I didn't know how to swim. Back then I didn't know many triathletes. In 2007 I moved to Boulder, Colorado and spent time training with Simon Lessing who I certainly looked up to. He accomplished a lot in the sport of triathlon back then.

**Besides racing professionally, you also offer coaching services. Will you be continuing that after your move and will you offer personal coaching for those in the St George area?**

I do coach some athletes. I enjoy helping others reach their goals. I will still continue to coach and can certainly coach athletes in the St George area. It would be nice to set up a training camp for those who don't live in the area as well.

**What's one piece of advice would you pass along to those who are just getting into the sport?**

I think the most important thing is to keep the sport fun. This year might have been tough for everyone because half of the fun is training with others and racing. With that said, mix things up a little and try new things like doing some fun long running or cycling adventures. I also think it's important to have goals and to know your purpose. Remember it's not a destination of crossing a finish line but it's a journey. If you're not having fun, then mix things up a bit.

**Well thanks for telling us all about yourself Matt, we're excited to have you become a part of the triathlon community here in Utah.**

Thank you.

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