

# Skye Moench - Professional Triathlete

## A Triathletes of Utah Interview



Picture credit Tablot Cox ©

**Professional Triathlete Skye Moench, a long time resident of Utah and one of the top US Female long course athletes, takes a minute to chat with us.**

**Skye, thanks for taking the time to talk with us. Will you tell us about yourself, where you grew up, school, hobbies etc?**

I was born and half-raised in Canada (Lethbridge, Alberta to be exact). My parents got divorced and I moved to the USA with my mom when I was 12 to be closer to her side of the family. We made our way to Utah when I was in 9th grade.

I went to Lehi High School and then attended Brigham Young University where I got my bachelor's degree in accounting and master's degree in tax accounting. I really love numbers, math, business, finance, etc. and that all came together for me through accounting. Turns out I didn't love it quite as much as I thought ;), but accounting was a really great education and career, and is still a form of income for me today.

I met my husband (Matt) in Salt Lake City. We were both finished with all of our schooling and were both working full-time in our careers. I went part-time at my job to chase triathlon dreams while I was dating Matt in 2015, so he has been very supportive and a big part of the pro triathlon journey from the beginning. And no, he is not a triathlete!

It's funny you ask me what my hobbies are... I think that's obvious, swim/bike/run haha. But really, I remember being on a date back in the day, and the guy asked me "so, what do you like to do, besides swim, bike, and run?" Ha! That was our only date.

I can say I DO enjoy things outside of swim/bike/run. I really enjoy cooking and baking and trying new recipes. I love spending time with Matt and our dog (Winston) at home, and some of our best quality time has been working on our home, whether renovating our basement or working on our yard. Matt and I also enjoy playing games of all kinds together - board games, video games, darts, etc. I personally love a good vacation (or trination/racecation) anywhere warm, and a nice beach on site is preferred.

**You didn't have a big athletic career in high school or college, what brought you to triathlon and kept you coming back?**

I didn't have a big athletic career in terms of being a formal athlete, but I was fully addicted to the runner's high in my teens. I ran track and cross country on and off all growing up, but I wasn't the star athlete by any means. I ran my first marathon at 16 and that's where my full-on addiction to endorphins and exercise really started. Running and exercise just turned into such a good outlet for me physically and mentally. I really, truly enjoy it.

I learned about triathlon in high school, and actually wrote my senior paper on training for a triathlon and what that would look like. I wanted to do a triathlon, but I didn't have a bike. I eventually did my first triathlon in 2009 while I was in college on a friend's borrowed bike, after he encouraged me to give triathlon a go. After my first triathlon, I knew I wanted to do more, but it wasn't until after an internship at EY in 2010 that I was able to afford a road bike, wetsuit, etc. I basically went to a bike shop, spent all afternoon there, and eventually walked out with a triathlon package deal - all basic starter stuff, but everything I needed to race triathlon. That day meant a lot to me, and I can still remember it all quite vividly!

I think what kept me coming back is that I loved being able to compete and see how my love for running and exercise translated on the road course and against other people. I was pretty competitive at the local level from the beginning, so I really enjoyed it.

**You've lived in Utah quite a while, you graduated from BYU and have your home here, what do you enjoy most about Utah?**

There are a few things I enjoy that have kept me here, but the biggest thing that comes to mind is the mountains and the hot summers. I absolutely love training here in the summer - climbing the canyons in Salt Lake City just never gets old. There are times when I think it would be fun to move, but then I think about not having the mountains, and I'm not sure I could live without them!

Outside of the training, Matt and I both have family here, so it's nice to be able to see family fairly often.

**Is there anything you feel that is unique about training here?**

Having the mountains, altitude, AND the heat in the summer is the perfect combination for training. You can kind of get it all here depending on what you like to do - road run, trail run, mountain bike, open water swim - nothing is too far away! And you can do it all in the heat.

We can't ignore winter, either. I've started doing more skate skiing in the winter, so it's nice to be able to appreciate what winter has to offer instead of spending so much time indoors. I do love indoor riding and training, though, so no complaints from me!



Picture courtesy of Skye Moench

**What is your strongest discipline, and is it your favorite or do you train hard to make it your strongest?**

I don't view any of the disciplines as my strongest or weakest - I just work really hard at all three to try to be as strong as possible! You have to be the package deal to be competitive these days, so every day I tell myself that I have to get stronger at all three. With that said, I always move up on the bike and/or run, so on paper, one of those is my strength. I think because the bike and run are less technical than the swim, I came into triathlon already pretty strong at those and I've only become stronger as I've developed. If I had to pick one discipline to do the rest of my life, I would choose running, but I genuinely enjoy and look forward to the training for all three disciplines, and you have to in order to dedicate your life to becoming a great triathlete.

**What has been your favorite race so far in your career? Additionally, do you have a race that you really want to participate in that you haven't raced yet?**

Ironman 70.3 Rapperswil-Jona (outside of Zurich, Switzerland) in 2018 holds a special place in my heart. It was my first race in Europe, my first time traveling to Europe, and my first podium - one I shared with Daniela Ryf! I saw and felt big improvements in my performance at that race, and that gave me confidence and hope that I could continue to improve and perform at the top level. Additionally, Switzerland is an incredibly beautiful country and the sport of triathlon is well-supported there, so the race experience itself was amazing. I have raced it twice now, and hope to race it again!

I would really like to race Kona!!! I qualified for the Ironman World Championship in 2019 and then had a really bad bike accident 2.5 weeks before the race, so I was out. 2020 obviously didn't happen. I'm qualified for 2021, so let's see what the year brings!

**Do you have a favorite local race?**

Salem Spring Sprint is a favorite! Is it still around?! I hope so. (Authors edit: yes, the Salem Springs race put on by RaceTri is still around, the 2021 date is TBD) That was one of my first triathlons. Outside of that, I did get to go to Spudman in 2019 (that counts as local, right?), and it was so much fun! I plan to go back this year.

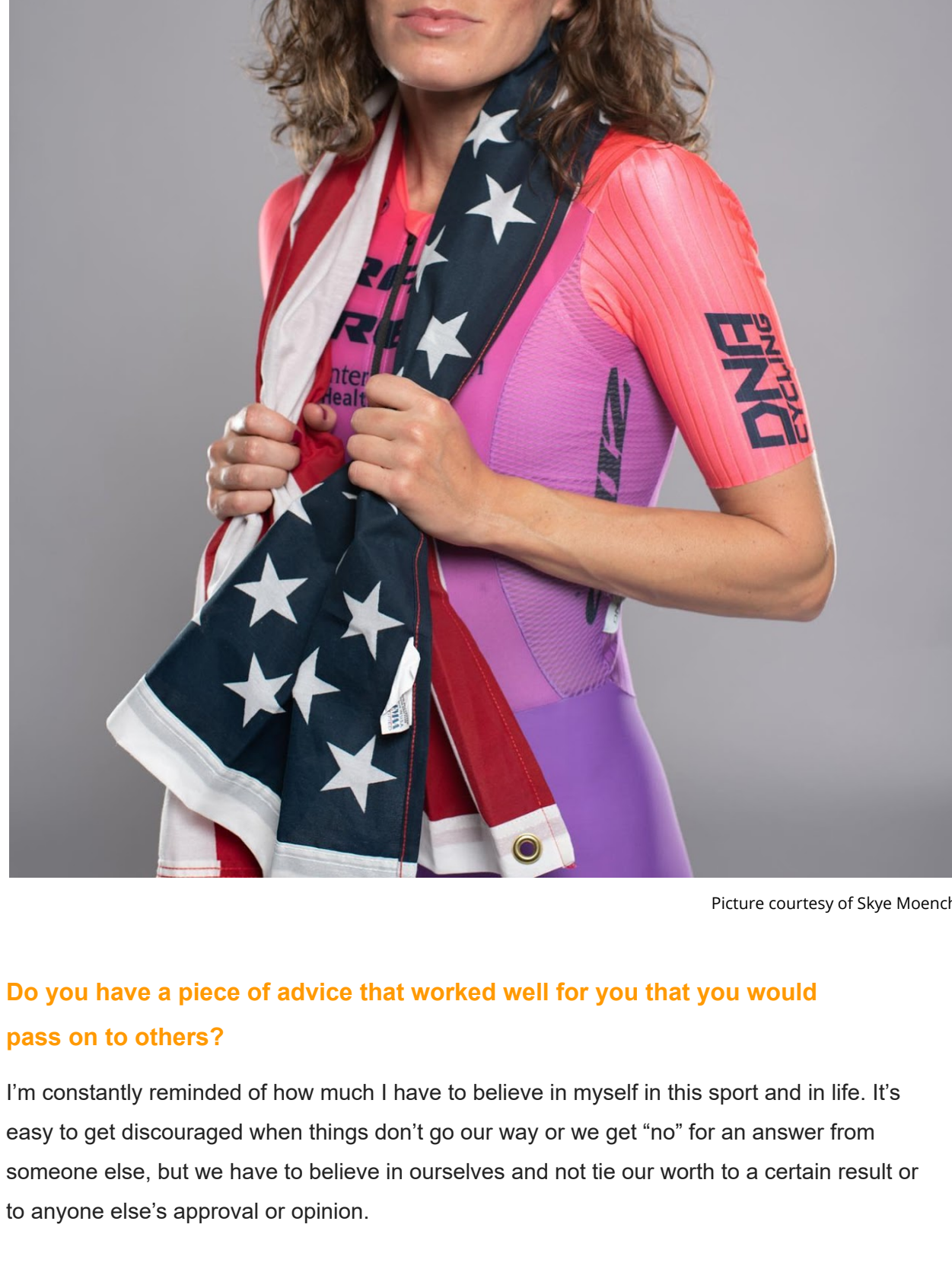
**You have a number of podium spots and wins in the 70.3 distance. Will you be racing IRONMAN St George 70.3 again this May or 70.3 Worlds in September?**

Yes! I plan to race both of those events. It would be awesome to get to race in St. George twice in one year, so I am really hoping we get to!

**What kept you motivated and training during 2020? Was Challenge Daytona the ultimate goal or were you planning other races?**

I found other things to keep me occupied while races got cancelled. I told myself I wasn't going to race at all in 2020, just so I wouldn't be disappointed. In terms of training, I got it done everyday and then tried to enjoy other things in life that I don't get to enjoy as much of when I'm training and traveling so much. Things like baking, making 15+ different home-made ice cream flavors, lying in my hammock listening to a book, brunch on the weekend with Matt, etc. At one point I took on more accounting work to stay busy and make my brain work harder!

The PTO Championship at Challenge Daytona wasn't really on my mind until mid-September when I was 99% sure it was going to happen. That's also when I thought Ironman Florida would happen, so my coach and I really focused on Ironman training and put in a big block to prepare me for Ironman Florida, and then we recovered and focused in on Daytona.



Picture courtesy of Skye Moench

**Do you have a piece of advice that worked well for you that you would pass on to others?**

I'm constantly reminded of how much I have to believe in myself in this sport and in life. It's easy to get discouraged when things don't go our way or we get "no" for an answer from someone else, but we have to believe in ourselves and not tie our worth to a certain result or to anyone else's approval or opinion.

**Any big non triathlon goals that you have for this year?**

I want to figure out a way to give back more, and in a way that I'm passionate about. I feel very grateful for everything I get to do and know that helping others live their best life is the best thing I can ultimately do.

**Thanks again Skye for your time. We look forward to seeing you in action this year and cheering you on!**

Thank you.

Follow Skye Moench on:

