

Volunteers Week 1st-7th June

Recognising volunteering in Triathlon

Name: Richie Smith

Volunteer Role: Richmond Triathlon Club Junior coach, Club Chair and Event Organiser. North East Regional Committee Junior Coordinator.

Region: Yorkshire

Favourite Discipline of Triathlon? Swim, Bike or Run? Bike

Favourite Food? Indian Curries

Favourite Holiday Destination? Egypt

How long have you been volunteering in Triathlon? For around three years

Q. What does your volunteering role entail?

For my Club, I have a number of roles, chairman – I oversee the general day to day things within the club, Coach – we have around 30 juniors all with differing needs. I help tailor training to these children to enable them to get the best out of themselves and the sport. As event organiser I coordinate our club's two events, an aquathlon for all which won the accolade of North East Childrens event of the year for 2016 and also a junior triathlon. My role in the NE committee sees me collating results from all our regional junior events and transferring these to a database to find our regional junior champions.

Q. What is most rewarding from your volunteer role?

Seeing children enjoying and participating in a sport which caters for all. The look on children and adults faces when they cross the finish line at our events gives a feeling which nothing can better.

Q. What is your motivation to volunteer in Triathlon?

A desire to see our club and children succeed in the simple things like a childs first time racing, their first time on a road style bike or even finishing their first 2k run make the time and effort of a volunteer worthwhile. I would rather see children enjoying sport with like minded groups rather than them being sat indoors playing on games consoles. Healthy active kids can only be a good thing.

Q. As a volunteer in triathlon, what have you been most pleased with/greatest success?

I have been fortunate to coach a TS3 athlete to the NE IRC team last year. This year he along with one other have made it into the regional academy with the latter going on to gain an AG place in Penticton. We have three children from the club training with our regional development squad all of whom I have coached on their journey to get there. It's not all about the more competitive end though, seeing our younger more inexperienced children achieve little things for the first time is also a success. Winning NE Junior event of the year last year at the first time of organising our Club Aquathlon is possibly my greatest success. It takes a lot of hard work to get these things to run well.

How could a volunteer make a difference to the sport of Triathlon?

A volunteer in any capacity can make triathlon a better sport. Spreading the workload throughout clubs relieves pressure on many individuals. Although I do a lot as a volunteer, it's the assistance of the many other volunteers to help me which makes our club and events run well. The help and support we receive through our regional representatives means that help for us as volunteers is always on hand. The future of the sport starts at grass roots levels with the volunteers. More volunteers gives greater scope to have more junior involvement. More juniors involved means that the chances of finding the next generation of world class athletes is greater.

