

Aurora trail system a haven for ASHoF inductee Allan

By Jake Courtepatte

Competing in Ironman competitions across North America ? from Wisconsin, to Lake Placid, to the athlete haven known as Kona, Hawaii, Paolina Allan now finds herself training on the extensive trails system that winds through Aurora.

One of Canada's most successful female triathletes and Ironman competitors, the Aurora resident has landed in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame's Class of 2018.

"I love to run on these," said Ms. Allan. "Sheppard's Bush trail will take you all the way up to Fairy Lake.

"You can run walk , cycle? I have tried bring my cross country into the trail system."

A member of the Aurora Family Leisure Complex since moving to Aurora in 2005, Ms. Allan saw opportunity in working with the Aurora Ducks swimming program both as part of her training and as a leader and mentor.

"I was on deck at the pool as the tri swim coach for a few years," said Ms. Allan. "Since I have moved to Aurora I was always seeing the younger swimmers in the gym and would often talk to (Ducks founder Reg Chappell)."

She made the transition to work with the youth program in September of 2016.

"I absolutely love teaming up with the younger swimmers. Their energy is intoxicating. I work with them in the gym. Here we have a one year training plan designed for the swimmers which incorporates their races."

It is only fitting that Ms. Allan was on her way to train with the Aurora Ducks when she received the phone call about her induction.

"I was absolutely floored, shocked, and laughed," said Ms. Allan. "I wasn't quite sure they had the right person. It felt very surreal."

Consisting of a 3.8 kilometre swim, followed by a 180 kilometre cycle and a full marathon run, one would think a lifelong commitment to the sport would be necessary for success.

Ms. Allan, however, picked up the sport in 1999, transforming from regular gym-goer to super athlete.

The 48-year old competed in a number of Ironman competitions from 2005 to 2012, finishing second in the 2005 event. A three-time Ironman World Championship qualifier, Ms. Allan is a former Triathlon Canada and Triathlon Ontario Triathlete of the Year, as well as the winner of the 2014 Centurion Cycling Canada C100.

Despite her long list of accomplishments, the humble athlete still said she didn't feel "worthy" of such an honour.

"However the community felt I was worth it, so this will give me a chance to thank them, honour them and to show them that I will continue to help build and work in Aurora with our youth."

Ms. Allan is one of two athletes inducted into this year's Aurora Sports Hall of Fame class, alongside one member each into the "Coach" and "Builder" categories.

Joining Ms. Allan is ex-PGA Tour golfer David Morland IV, former NHL linesman Loring Doolittle, and longtime York University men's basketball coach Robert Bain.

The Auroran will highlight the career of Mr. Morland in next week's edition.

Held annually at St. Andrew's College, the ASHoF Induction dinner is one of the most spectacular nights of the year in the Aurora sports community. This year's dinner will be held on November 8, and more information can be found at www.aurorashof.ca.