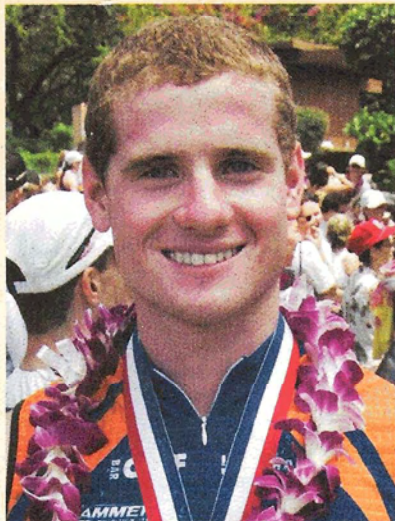


usat members **IN THE NEWS**



BEN COLLINS: What started out as a hobby has become a full-time pursuit for Ben Collins. And it hasn't taken long for the 21-

year-old to make a name for himself on the age group triathlon scene. In just his 10th triathlon and fourth at the Olympic distance, the Haleiwa, Hawaii resident grabbed a second-place overall finish and won the men's 20-24 category at the 2006 Age Group National Championships at Smithville Lake in July.

After opening his career with four events in 2005, Collins's 2006 season has been nothing but stellar, including a third overall at Lavaman in April and a first overall title at the Honolulu Triathlon age group race in May. He also tried his hand at the half-Ironman distance, winning his age group and finishing 24th overall at the Honu 70.3 in June.

A three-time All-Ivy League swimmer, who holds the Columbia University record in four events, Collins has his sights set on a World Championship in Lausanne and a good result in Kona later this year. Further down the

road, he is hoping to move to ITU-style events and to make a name for himself at the international level.

"I love competing," says Collins. "Most of all, however, what got me hooked on triathlon over any other sport I tried is that triathletes are a wonderful, caring, supportive, and fun group of people. Socializing with my peers before and after and even during a race is a focal point to my memories of every triathlon I've done so far. I mean, where else do you see people waiting around the finish line for an 85 year old man to finish a race, nearly three hours after the leaders?"

In addition to training and racing, Collins works full time in robotics engineering. He also enjoys coaching a triathlon clinic for Team Jet Honolulu and taking advantage of all that his "tropical island playground" has to offer, including surfing, dirt bike riding, and kite boarding, and checking out Honolulu's concerts and festivals.



JENNIFER GARRISON: Susan Williams and Karen Smyers have done it. Now add Jennifer Garrison to the list. A little over a year after giving birth to her first child, Garrison has returned to the competitive

triathlon scene in style. The 27-year-old from Naperville, Ill., won her first national title and was the top female finisher at the Age Group National Championships in July.

Garrison is not new to the sport, having completed close to 40 races, with her first coming at Danskin in 1997. She earned three-straight Team USA spots in 1999, 2000, and 2001, before stepping away from competition in 2003. "I really needed a break from the sport," she says. "I wasn't sure if I wanted to race again."

But Garrison continued to run – even throughout her pregnancy – and after her son Noah was born last May, the itch to compete returned and she started to race on the local level. In January she began training with Barb Lindquist and everything has since fallen into place. Through nationals, she had recorded four firsts and two seconds in her six races of the season. Though she went into nationals with high expectations, she says the win was a great surprise.

"I don't think I was ready for the

She owes her family for keeping her grounded and has learned to maximize her time when her son is sleeping. "My husband is training for Ironman Wisconsin, so we have to take turns with mornings. If anything, it keeps me from doing too much."

A former high school swimmer, who also participated in crew at Purdue University, Garrison took to triathlon for the competition and to stay in shape. Today, she says the friendships she has formed within the triathlon community also keep her in the sport.

What's next for Garrison? Well, she says she has a tendency to get overwhelmed by long-term goals, so she keeps it simple. "I want to always keep it fun and balanced. I don't want it to become my number one priority."

She does want to race well at Worlds, but knows she has to work on her swim and run speed before then. In the meantime, she's just enjoying playing with her son.

Your face could be here! Send us some information about your latest exploits – both multi-sport related and not. Be sure to include a high-resolution head shot. You can e-mail the information to communications@usatriathlon.org or mail it via the U.S. Postal Service to *USA Triathlon Life Magazine*, 1365 Garden of the Gods Road, Suite 250, Colorado Springs, CO 80907.