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SPORTS & LEISURE

Triathletes push limits of endurance

Physical conditioning a pivotal part of sport's allure

By **STEPHEN BROWN**
Special to *The Mirror*

They are truly men of iron. And Malcolm Eade, 37, and Jose Rocafort, 43, have to be made of strong stuff in order to be called triathletes.

Like its name suggests, the triathlon consists of three sports — cycling, swimming and running — and includes the famous Ironman competitions.

Eade, a North York resident, said he's competed in three of those gruelling contests, in which the participant is required to swim four kilometres, bicycle 180km and end with a 42-km run with no rest between the events.

In comparison, in an Olympic-style triathlon, the competitor swims 1.5km, bikes 40km and runs only 10km.

"An Ironman is the hardest thing I've ever done," said Eade, a former university football player. "Football has a different sense of hardness. But to struggle through 12 hours of solitary confinement is the hardest thing I've ever done. You have mental gymnastics going on in your head all

day like you wouldn't believe. Someone in my office said to me she wouldn't do something she enjoys that long."

Rocafort, a North York businessman, has competed in 15 triathlons, five, which were Ironman competitions, since he took up the sport five years ago.

He became a triathlete, he said, after he quit smoking and decided "to do some sports" as part of a lifestyle change.

"It's been a little more interesting, more exciting," he said of his choosing the triathlon over other sports. "It's a rounder form of fitness. It also prevents injury by not overdoing one particular sport. You stay healthier."

Rocafort likes all three events involved in the triathlon, but finds swimming the easiest, since he comes from a swimming background. The hardest of the three, he says, is the run, since it comes last in the competition.

Eade, on the other hand, finds the swim the most difficult event since he only learned the sport five years ago. But like Rocafort, the North York triathlete, who has competed in 40 triathlons in the last four years, says he also

took up the sport for health reasons, wanting, in his case, to lose weight.

"I haven't felt this good in my entire life," he said. "I handle stress the best I ever have in my life. I have a lot of energy. The people I hang around with in the sport are very positive. I generally feel great."

Both Eade and Rocafort train at the Willowdale Club Fitness Institute with fellow triathletes Kim Chetwynd, Gerrard Gervais and Diane Hindman.

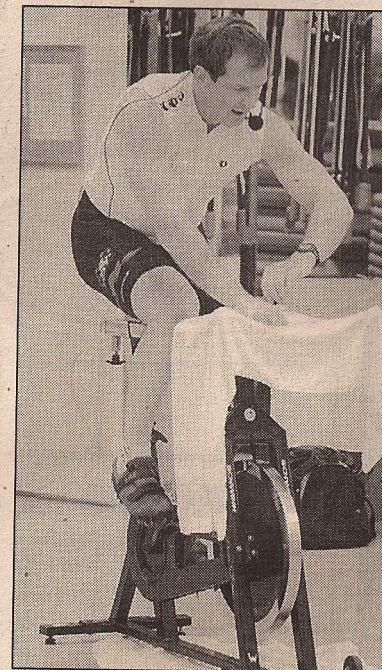
Both men said they may train 20 hours or more per week for competitions, but reduce the number of hours in the off-season.

Their training also sees them doing each of the three sports three times a week.

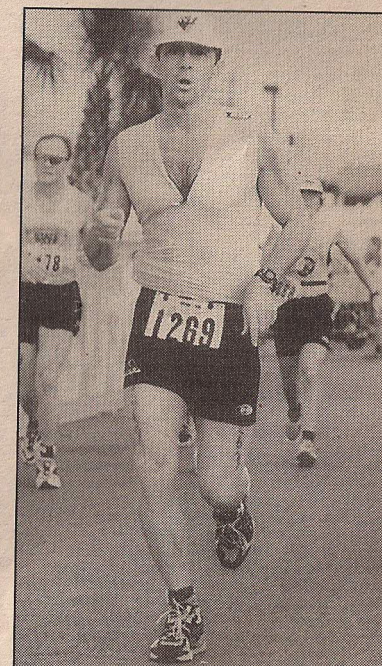
"It's not a job, so it's pretty easy to do, really," Rocafort said. "It's sounds like work, but it's not. It's relaxation."

Both Rocafort and Eade describe their participation in the triathlon as a great experience and highly recommend it to people of all ages.

"You have to live it," Rocafort said. "Older people can improve their quality of life. They can get



Mirror photo/IRVIN MINTZ



Mirror photo

Triathletes Malcolm Eade (L) and Jose Rocafort, seen here participating in an Ironman Florida race in November, are just two of several athletes who train at the Willowdale Club Fitness Institute for future competitions.

fit and extend their lives."

Eade said people should do it for fun and for exercise.

"You don't have to sell your

soul to do it. You'll really get into great shape without knowing it and you'll have a hell of a lot of fun."