

KAREN SISSONS



Karen Sissons has always been a swimmer but she married a cyclist so they both picked up new hobbies.

She biked for him. He swam for her. And they both ran for exercise.

Sissons admits she was blind to the next natural step until her husband signed her up for a triathlon in 2010.

“I knew some people who had done triathlons, but I thought, ‘I could never do that,’” Sissons said. “But, I did it kind of nonchalantly and then I found out I qualified for nationals. I couldn’t believe it. It really opened my eyes.”

Nine years later, Sissons has raced in nearly 90 triathlons -- including last year’s Senior Games in El Reno -- finished her first Iron Man and competed in numerous events with team U.S.A.

It hasn’t been an easy journey for the 56-year-old Chouteau resident. Six surgeries in the past 15 years has caused more than a few setbacks for the determined athlete. Her recovering knees, ankle, foot, and hip aren’t what they used to be, but her determination is stronger than her joints.

“We all hurt but if I don’t exercise I’m still going to hurt so I’m just going to keep going until I can’t keep going anymore,” Sissons said.

Eight years in the Air Force as a mechanic and a career as a chemical engineer working in the cement industry have made her tough. She spent most of her life in a man’s world proving herself. Competition comes naturally.

And Sissons is sharing her passion and strength. She’s helped a group of women prepare for a mini triathlon in Guthrie last summer.

“I remember during the Iron Man, I was crying after the bike portion but wow, what a feeling of accomplishment,” Sissons said. “When you cross the finish line, there’s nothing like it in the world and I want others to feel that.”

Sissons is worked to ensure her ankle is recovered from surgery in time for last summer’s National Senior Games in Albuquerque where she placed 14th in the triathlon. She also hopes to complete one more Iron Man in her future, before her joints won’t allow it.

Oklahoma Senior Games competitions occur annually in September and October. This year, competitions will be held in in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Shawnee, Norman, Yukon and Warr Acres.

Events include three-on-three basketball, track and field, golf, swimming, water walking, 5K and 10K runs, 5K power walk, 5K race walk, bowling, tennis, table tennis, golf croquet, shuffleboard, cycling, cornhole, badminton, archery, pickleball, racquetball, softball and triathlon. Participants age 50 and older will compete in categories by age and gender.

Oklahoma Senior Games qualifies athletes for National Senior Games competition held every two years. About 300 athletes who qualify in 2020 will represent Oklahoma in the National Senior Games competition November 5-18, 2021 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

For more information visit www.okseniorgames.com or call (405) 821-1500.