



*Source AMR - Anne-Marie Rouchon (left) with the late Jean-Claude Cauchois, who "was like an older brother" to her, and Sophie Auboiroux at Embrun in 1993. Anne-Marie will become the '93 European Long Distance Champion shortly after in this glorious site.*

Anne-Marie Rouchon: "Come see us, we're athletes from the first waves and we're still in one piece"

A former high level athlete in two sports, she's a two time Open Water Swimming (with flippers) World Champion (1980), the 1993 European Long Distance Triathlon Champion and a member of the runner-up French team at the 1995 World Long Distance Triathlon Team Championships. Today, Anne-Marie helps sports associations develop their projects. She answers our questionnaire

What have you been doing since you stopped your triathlon career?

"First of all, I would like to say how happy I am to have ended my career the way I did. I went to the Nice Long Distance World Championships at the end of '95 without feeling any pressure, which was very unlike me at many other races. I knew it was my last, that I would become the Deputy National Technical Director of the French Triathlon Federation two days after the race. I was relaxed and I was able to totally express myself, give it all, finish at the fifth place, the first French triathlete, and our team took the second place in the team classification. In the run, the three medalists ran the thirty kilometers in two hours, I did it in one more minute, I fought, I suffered and fell after crossing the finish line. So, I have no regret at all. It was the end of eighteen years at the high level in my sports, ten in triathlon, I was ready for what was to come."

What came next?

"During five years, I worked with Laurent Massias towards the development of the training of our coaches. Laurent, with whom I wrote a book on coaching triathlon, is now a Deputy National Technical Director specialized in the territorial development of triathlon. In September, 2000, I left the Federation, my son Simon was born the year before and I wanted to raise him far from Paris. On the professional plan, I also wanted to do something else and I caught the opportunity of become the Deputy Director of the Franche-Comté (1) Regional Center for Physical Education and Sport, CREPS in French. What is cool about being a PE teacher is that you can work in an educational program or in a federation. In 2004, I had a second son, Paul, both him and Simon are into trampoline just for fun, not interested in competing at all. In 2008, the CREPS was closed and, as a government employee, I had to think about my future, to choose between the quality of our life or my career. I chose to stay at Saffloz, a village in the Jura mountains where there are eighty inhabitants and where we are very close to nature. But I still like meeting people, I haven't become a hermit!"

Do you still work?

"I do! I have a job that I like at the French Federation of Sport for All. I am a national technical executive now, I don't hold a leading position anymore, which was hard to accept at first, but it's ok now. Since the beginning of the year, I develop an

observatory inside the federation, using the considerable amount of data we have on our registered members. My first mission is to optimize the use of the data in order to help in the decision-making process at all levels inside the Fed and to investigate on data-related subjects chosen by different technical executives, on one side. On the other, and in order to try and prevent clubs from disappearing only after one year of existence, which happens too often, is a task force on the commitment of people in associations. We look for ways to help our elected officials and create links cascading down to the clubs, and many actions to put into operation. It's a great Fed, it's humane and humanitarian, I share an office with people like me when I'm in Paris, and have an office at home too. I'm going to turn fifty-seven, which leaves around ten years of work ahead of me, I'm still very open to any opportunities, I like to exchange, to do new things."

Do you still exercise?

"I'm in a stand-by position, I don't miss sport and I get bored easily when I go swimming for instance. My weight hasn't changed, but I'm unsure about my gesture memory... I had a back operation four years ago, which went well, but running is not recommended and it hurts when I ride a bike because of the forward, leaning position of the torso. I do some cross-country skiing, I love it! But I keep the same slow, easy-going rhythm, for my well-being, when the weather is nice and I feel like it. I also do some trekking, walking quietly. I'm into relaxing sports!"

For which reason(s) did you accept to take part in The Race of Legends™?

"The kids told me: "Mom, you've got to go!" For a long time, I didn't show anything of my sports career at home. And one day, while we were watching the Olympic Games, Simon asked me: "How about you, did you go to the Olympics? Why there is nothing here that refers to your triathlon career?" I took out a trophy, my '93 European Long Distance Champion at Embrun medal, a few pictures. They are proud, talk about it at school... My kids also told me: "We're going, we want to cheer you, you're not going to miss this event, are you?" It cost me to accept because I know I'll be no good, behind. And also because I don't really want to do triathlon today."

So, do you prepare for The Race of Legends™?

"Not at all. Cross-country skiing will build me up a tiny bit. But the snow won't be around until the end of July, so I'll go to the swimming pool or to a lake nearby, although the water should be cold. And I'll be forced to ride my bike a little. Or I go to Embrun and accept to be who I am today... What is sure is that I'll carry a picture of the late former French triathlete Jean-Claude Cauchois. He was like an older brother to me."

Which equipment from the old times will you use?

"I still have my last bike, a Maxi-Sport, I had a contract with them. It's covered with dust! I also have my Giro helmet, my Sidi cycling shoes, my '95 Team France sport-suit, a Team France sweat-shirt for the European Championships at Marseilles, maybe a pair of Oakleys, an Arena Team France sweat-shirt, a cycling jacket. I'll have to choose between all these."

What do you expect from your stay at Embrun for The Race of Legends™?

"See the gals and the guys I trained and raced with. The pleasure of diving back into the world of triathlon for a short while."

Do you have a message about The Race of Legends™ for triathlon fans?

"I dare you to try triathlon! Back then, triathlon seemed out of reach for most people. They said only crazy people did it because the guys and girls often fell exhausted after the finish line. It's more accepted today, but it still creates admiration. It's been an Olympic sport for almost twenty years now, the preparation and the selection that goes with it have changed the body type of high level triathletes of this century. Come see us, we are athletes from the first waves and we're still in one piece, it hasn't broken us. We are the true example of the richness of triathlon, a sport anyone can do, and we're still standing."

1. A region of Eastern France, close to Switzerland