

In conversation with a champ

KNOWN as the Princess of Regensburg (her home town), star German triathlete **SONJA TAJSIICH** heads to East London as one of the women to beat in Sunday's Specsaver's Ironman 70.3 after a fabulous 2010 season saw her win the full Ironman in Port Elizabeth as well as the prestigious Ironman Regensburg title. The German star took time off her training schedule to give **DOMINIC PEEL** a run-down of her career to date as well as to talk about her chances come Sunday.

Q: How long have you been a professional tri-athlete?

A: My first professional year was 2003. Since then I had some highlights and some low points and I had also some long breaks. The longest break was when I gave birth to our daughter Lisa from July 2007 – April 2009. Only since then have I been a full-time professional.

Q: How have you coped on your return after having a baby?

A: I returned relatively easily. For the first six months I merely did amateur sport according to my mood and from September started training according to the plans of my former coach. Up to Ironman South Africa 2009 I had only run with a Baby jogger. Lisa was often with me in training, and I managed to combine sport and baby very well.

Q: How do you balance the two?

A: I have a wonderful husband, who stands behind me 150 percent. Besides him I have granny's and granddads who help out as well. Lisa is a very uncomplicated child, so that makes things a little easier. She now goes to a playschool, so that helps as well.

Q: What have been your greatest achievements?

A: My most important achievements have been the sub-nine hour time in Klagenfurt and the wins in South Africa and Regensburg in 2010. Ironman SA was my best race ever, judging my performance subjectively, and the Ironman Regensburg was the most emotional race.

Q: And major disappointments?

A: The races in Hawaii were always beset with problems. The one year the swimming was a disaster, the next it was the cycling. I believe that Hawaii was not the right platform for me in the beginning, but it could still improve. I am working on it and my wish is that one day I would finish in the top-10!

Q: You seem to have excelled in the longer distances ...how do you fancy your chances in East London in the shorter

cold but it's not too bad) and the race goes as planned, it will be interesting to see at what level I can perform. I am optimistic, motivated and focused.

Q: Is this your first 70.3

A: Yes, this is my first Ironman 70.3 and my first time in East London!

So what are you expecting?

I cannot expect anything and cannot imagine how it will be. I am very curious how these distances will suit me.

Q: The sea can be quite rough in East London, are you used to swim in the sea?

A: I am not used to swimming in the sea but I don't think that it can get much worse than Ironman South Africa 2010, and I managed to survive that.

Q: Who do you see as your biggest rivals?

A: Of course Jodie Swallow is our biggest rival as reigning world champion but with Marie Rabie, Tine Deckers and Lucie Zelenkova; there are some other strong competitors fighting for a podium position. Some names are unknown to me, so perhaps there could be some surprises on the day.

Q: In Germany the winter is very cold, how could you train when it is minus 10?

A: I train swimming and cycling indoors and for running I dress very warmly. We have had an unbelievable amount of snow, and I had to resort to running on the treadmill.

For the past two weeks I have already been in a training camp in Lanzarote and think I am in a good shape, considering the early and severe winter this year.

Q: You only arrive on Thursday ... do you think that will give you enough time to acclimatise?

A: After having been in the sun for two weeks I think it will be sufficient. South Africa is in the same time zone as Germany, so at least there will be no jet lag. Last year I only arrived in Port Elizabeth on the Friday afternoon due to the volcanic ash cloud, and the time was sufficient.

Q: What are your plans for the season?

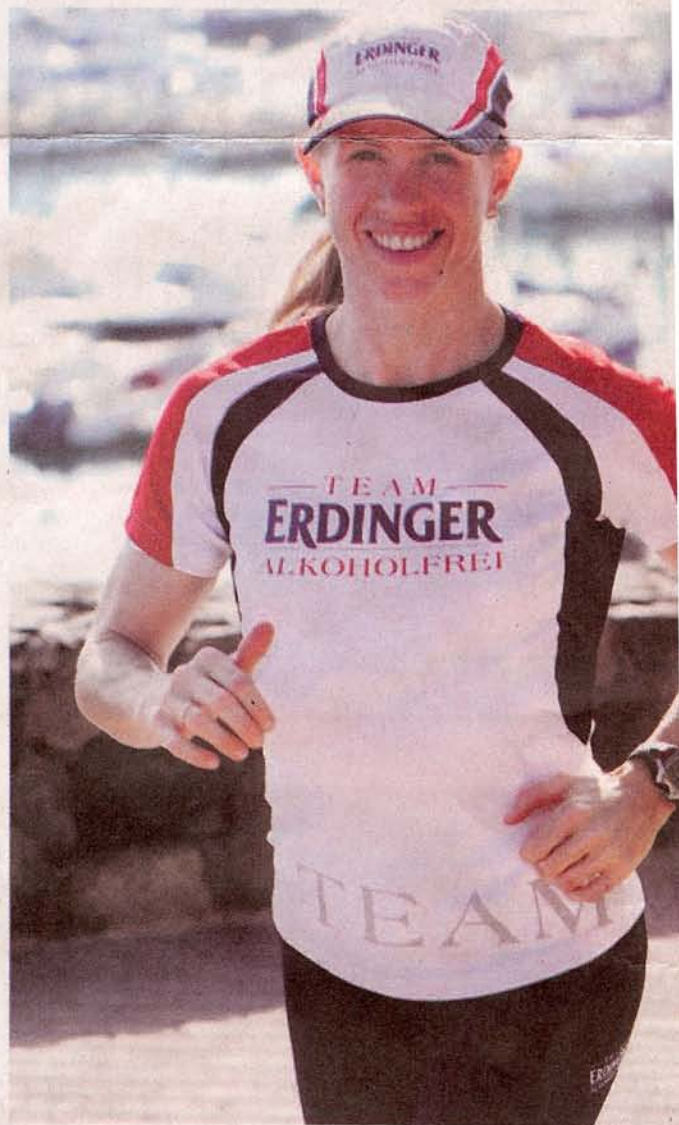
A: I will start at various 70.3 races to work on my pace and besides this I will take part in the Triathlon in Abu Dhabi. In July I will start at the European championships in Frankfurt, and hope to get enough points to qualify for Hawaii.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS:

2010

- 14 – Ironman Hawaii
- 1 – Ironman Regensburg
- 1 – Heilbronn City Triathlon
- 2 – Triathlon des Rhein-Neckar Cup
- 1 – Ironman South Africa

2009



READY TO SHINE: Star German triathlete Sonja Tajsich is one of the women to beat in Sunday's Specsaver's Ironman 70.3 that takes place in Buffalo City on Sunday.

Irongirl ready for BC d

By **ATULE JOKA**

THE 2011 Spec-saver Ironman 70.3 that takes place in Buffalo City on Sunday has given birth to a new race – Irongirl 9.2km fun run set to begin on Saturday.

The Irongirl which will serve as a warm-up to Sunday's big race makes its debut on South African soil on Saturday at 7am.

Ironman media liaison officer Gail Faiers said the event has been well received, with 300 entries being received to date.

"The Irongirl was a huge success in UK and United States. We saw a need for that in the South African market as well, and it has received a great reception," she said.

Ten teams comprising of two members each have been registered and the partners' finishing time will be combined to establish the eventual winner.

The Irongirl, despite being a fun run, will co-opt some of the Ironman

"It's for the female, a participants from ago wards. The distance v strength while they are she added.

Participants are all ister as individuals or

Stirring up the intere mother and daughter r

Jacquie Summers, daughter Danielle-Pa have named their tea girl.

"I feel very excited al My husband always t the Ironman and I ju opportunity to registe Irongirl was introduce

"I didn't train that n considering it's a fun ru strengthen the bond and my daughter as we cross the line togethe fully get to win a me thused.

Another mother an team Blonde Runnie

BAYERN-LB Landesbank fordert Millionen Euro Schadensersatz von Gribkowsky. **➔ SEITE 6**

EXTRA Ihrer MZ liegt heute die kostenlose Fernsehzeitschrift rtv bei. **➔ SONDERBEILAGE**

KULTURGUT Der alte Streit um die Berliner Nofretete-Büste ist neu entbrannt. **➔ SEITE 20**

Mittelbayerische

DIENSTAG, 25. JANUAR 2011

ZEITUNG FÜR HEMAU UND DEN WESTLICHEN LANDKREIS

67. JAHRGANG / NR. 19 / 1,30 EURO

LOKALES

NÄHRUNG

**oxin-Skandal trifft
Rinderzüchter schwer**

Preise für Rindfleisch sind erheblich gesunken. Bei der Vollvermahlung der Rinderzüchter in Hemaunau blieben aber auch die Erfolge nicht unerwähnt. **➔ SEITE 37**

LEGIERTENVERSAMMLUNG

**großkalibrige Waffen
sind verboten**

Im Kreisschützenverband Dommershausen sind künftig großkalibrige Waffen verboten. Die Feuerschützenvereine in Regensburg bekommen keinen Zutritt zum Gaustand. **➔ SEITE 45**



Tajsich, Völk, Pröbß und die Legionäre sind Regensburgs Sportler des Jahres

Die Sportler des Jahres in Regensburg sind gekürt: Bei der 14. Austragung der Publikumswahl unter Führung der Mittelbayerischen Zeitung hatten die

Triathletin Sonja Tajsich (4.v.l.), Judoka Christopher Völk (4.v.r.), der deutsche Baseball-Meister Buchbiner der Legionäre und Eiskunstläuferin Linda-Sophia

Pröbß (Jugend, 5.v.l.) die Nase vorne. Ausführliche Berichterstattung über den Gala-Abend im Cine- maxx folgt in der morgigen Ausgabe. Foto: Lex

