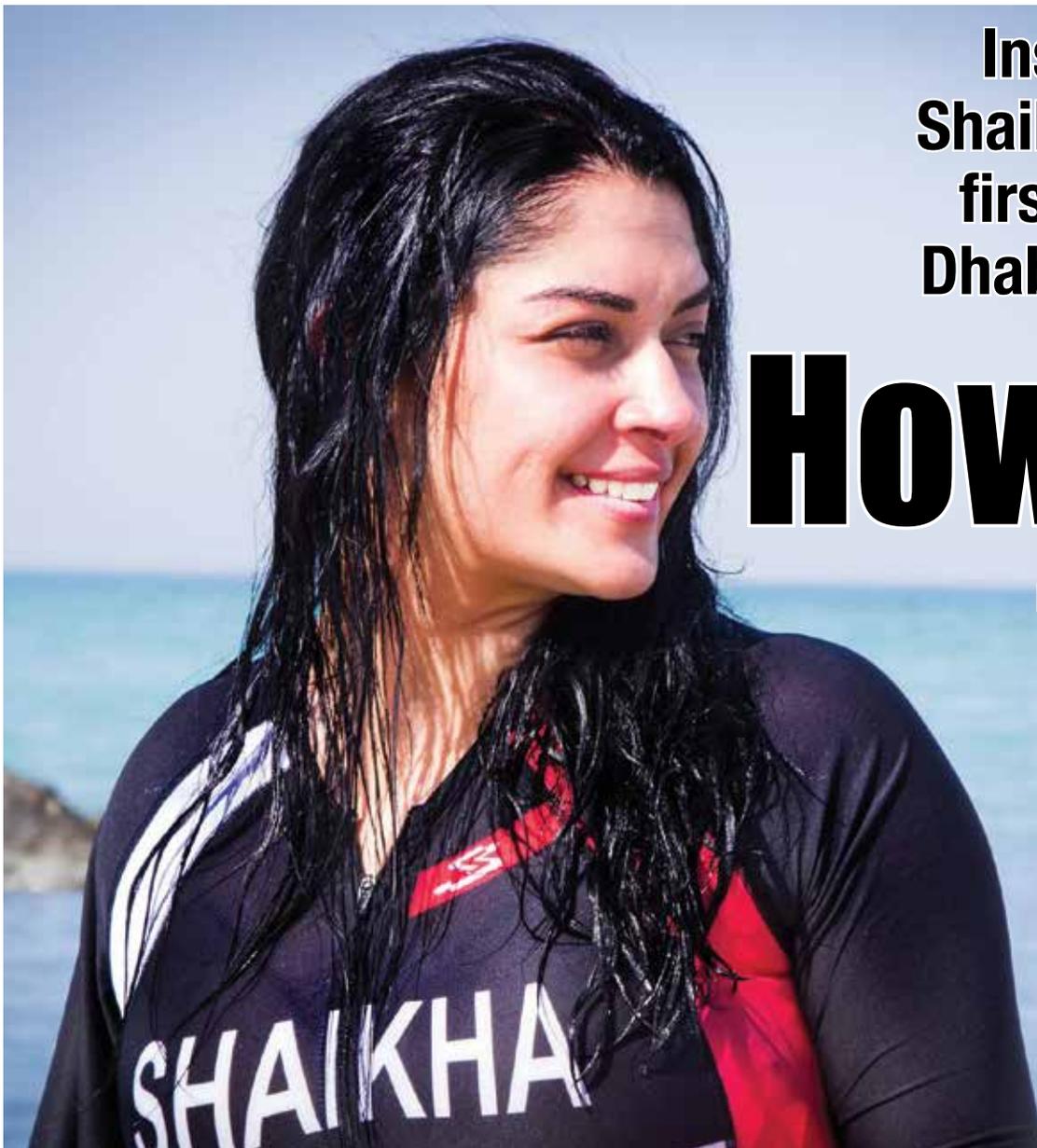


Inspirational Bahraini hero
Shaikha Al Shaiba to tackle her
first ITU world Triathlon Abu
Dhabi on Yas Island this March

How Shaikha trains for Triathlon success



Abu Dhabi

Bahraini national and para-triathlete, Shaikha Al Shaiba, has her sights set on the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi. The pinnacle of world triathlon will take place on 2 and 3 March on Yas Island and will feature dedicated waves for para-triathletes for the first time.

Commenting on how sporting events in the region are evolving to become more inclusive: "We are fortunate that we can now participate in marathons, obstacles races, triathlons and more," said Shaikha. "This has opened the doors for many people like me across many sports."

Seasoned para-triathletes, such as Shaikha, and first-timers will have the chance to rub shoulders and compete alongside inspirational heroes of Paralympic triathlon including: World and European Champion and Rio 2016 Paralympic Gold medallist, Andy Lewis and Mohamed Lahna, the Bronze medallist at the Rio 2016 Paralympics.

The dedicated para waves will take place on Saturday 2 March, on the same course as fellow age groupers at the iconic Yas Island.

Shaikha has signed up for her first Abu Dhabi challenge and is looking forward to tackle the season opener this March.

"I fell in love with multi-

discipline sport last year when I did my first Ironman 70.3 in Bahrain. I was thrilled to complete the swim, bike, run course and decided to check off the Abu Dhabi event for my bucket list this year."

The 34-year-old, who is the Vice President in one of the Investment Companies in Bahrain, lost her arm to bone cancer. "I was 18 months old and had to amputate my arm at that point."

"I went on to attend school and wear a prosthetic arm which I didn't really like and it was more for appearance purposes. I then decided to stop wearing the arm and didn't care what anyone thought anymore," said Shaikha. "This was a pivotal moment in my life because not only did it give me a boost of confidence, but it also led me to believe that nothing is impossible."

In April 2016 Shaikha's friend encouraged her to join their team in participating in the obstacle course race - Spartan Race Bahrain. Contestants had to run, climb and crawl through nets over an intense 15km-plus course with more than 25 obstacles.

"When I was considering competing in the Spartan Race a friend told me that these races do not cater for people like me. That

was the exact moment where I decided that I was going to go ahead and participate with the team and try it out. Remember nothing is impossible."

"Crossing that finish line was the best feeling in the world," recalls Shaikha. "I've now become an ambassador for Spartan Race in Bahrain which is fantastic."

Filled with confidence and determination Shaikha went on to sign up for the Ironman 70.3 in Bahrain in November last year. "I thoroughly enjoyed competing in the Ironman and decided to sign up to the Ironman 70.3 Dubai in February followed by the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi in March."

Shaikha currently trains independently for close to ten hours every week. The Bahraini star is on a mission to motivate others to follow in her steps and take the plunge into the world of multi-discipline sports. "You will be surprised at what you are capable of doing on that race course. Once you've experienced your first triathlon you won't be able to stop at just one."

Abu Dhabi has become the leading regional hub for triathlon, with close to 4,000 triathletes, including 120 of the world's best elites and 500 juniors expected to take to take part in the 2018 event.