

Sara Ballantyne

Sara's passion for the outdoors began as a child of 13 when she visited Colorado from her hometown of Indiana, PA. She accepted the challenge to climb three fourteen thousand foot peaks in one day! Sara headed west once again to attend the University of Colorado, graduating with a degree in Psychology in 1982. She then joined the faculty of Colorado Outward Bound teaching mountaineering courses across the many mountain ranges of Colorado.



Sara relocated to Breckenridge, CO to join the U.S. Professional Ski Patrol in 1985. During the summer months, she traded her skis for her mountain bike not realizing at that time that it would spark the beginning of a 12 year career in outdoor sports. Sara became the pioneer for women's mountain bike racing being the first American woman to race full time in Europe in 1990. During the next six years, Sara was a National Team Member winning the titles of World Champion and National Champion. She was inducted into the Mountain Bike Hall of Fame in Crested Butte, Colorado.



After her retirement of full time Mountain Bike Racing, Sara was approached by former teammate, Mike Kloser, to join Team Vail's Adventure Racing team. Traveling to the 1997 Eco-Challenge in Australia, the team successfully finished while learning the lessons of what it would take to become a competitive team in the sport of adventure racing. Returning to the 1998 Eco-Challenge in Morocco, Team Vail put their learning to work and earned the title as the first American team to win the Eco-Challenge. Sara has continued her success with a win at the 2001 Gorge Games with Team Beaver Creek and a second Eco-Challenge win with Team Eco-Internet at the 2001 Eco-Challenge, New Zealand.

The new millennium brought Sara the gift of her daughter, Emma Lynn Haaland. Sara continues to race on a selective basis with Emma in tow much of the time! She was certified in massage therapy and personal training and has a successful practice in Durango, Colorado working with many aspiring athletes.

Topics

Balance of Life

How can we juggle the demands of career, family, community, friends, and personal interests? Achieving our best in each of these areas not only requires the art of balancing time but also requires the ability to experience harmony as we move from one area to another. The sport of adventure racing is the perfect parallel to our many demands of life. Balancing the demands of learning and excelling in 10+ sports requires focus, goal setting, and dependence on your team. Sara became a mom at the age of 40 and went on to win the 2001 Eco Challenge one year later. Learn how Sara is able to balance the demands of a full life while achieving harmony in all that she does.

Mental Toughness for Teams

As a 3-time world mountain bike champion, Sara Ballantyne learned how to win on her own. She was solely responsible for her success or defeat. Making the switch to the team sport of adventure racing forced Sara to look beyond her individual performance and achieve success as part of a team. At the 2001 Eco-Challenge New Zealand, Sara was the representative female of the world champions, Team Eco-Internet. Enduring 350 miles and 5 days of continuous effort with less than 2 hours of sleep per night, the team traveled through the challenging terrain of the South Island of New Zealand while mountaineering, climbing, running, trekking, mountain biking, kayaking and rafting. Team Eco-Internet succeeded in beating the competition and crossing the finish line first. Learn how Sara was able to mentally persevere and adapt her skills to contribute to the team's success.

"Participants in Thunderbird Executive Education programs have found Sara's insights into high performance teams both stimulating and thought provoking. Sara communicates with today's business leaders honestly and effectively, with a freshness and genuineness without the usual 'business-speak'."

*Michael Moffett
Academic Director
Thunderbird Executive Education*