

Winning change

WHEN Rosanna's Jodie Ball turned 30, she decided to change her lifestyle.

She quit smoking, went on a diet and started running.

Two-and-a-half years on, Ball has lost 16kg and has won an international triathlon.

Ball won the Fiji Triathlon on Sunday, May 16, surprising even herself in only her third event.

The triathlon was held on Denarau Island and involved an 800m swim, 30km bike ride and 8km run.

Ball was the fifth last out of the water during the swim, her weakest leg, and was five minutes behind the leader.

"On the bike I pegged back a minute and I made up six minutes in the run," she said.

Ball ended up winning the event by 1.49 minutes, but even as she crossed the line she wasn't sure she'd won, after having to overtake so many competitors in the running leg.

When Ball first took up running, she struggled to run more than 2km, but eight months later she competed in the Melbourne Half Marathon in October 2002.

Last year Ball joined the Victorian Cross Country League and competed in the winter series, which includes races



between five and 16km every Sunday over a six month period.

Ball's first triathlon was the 2003 BRW Triathlon at Elwood, which she and her work colleagues entered as a team.

Ball, who works for wine distributors Casama Group, said she and her colleagues decided to enter the Fiji Triathlon so they could help each other.

"I'm starting to take it more seriously," she said.

Ball is planning to run the Melbourne Marathon in October, the Noosa Triathlon in November and the Gatorade Triathlon series over the summer. Ball is a nominee for the Heidelberg Leader Senior Sports Star of the Year award.

■ Nominations for junior, senior or services to sport categories can be made to the Heidelberg Leader on 9875 8333, fax 9877 5354 or e-mail heidelberg@ldr.newsitd.com.au.



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