

The Climb to Success

Brooke Artesi has her eye on the top, both literally and figuratively, at the O&P Extremity Games.

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Brooke Artesi, LO-CPed presents a stark contrast — a calm demeanor and easygoing attitude toward life, coupled with fierce yet quiet determination.

At the age of 15, a train accident severed her right leg at the ankle. She recalled the accident, which took place as she was boarding a passenger train with some friends, for *O&P Business News*.

“It was before they had doors that automatically open on the platform. It started moving and it just sucked me right under the train,” Artesi said. “It should have cut me right in half.”

Now, 14 years later, she pursues an active lifestyle and tries things that she never did as a teenager in northern New Jersey.

On the run

As a sophomore in high school, Artesi was not involved in recreational or competitive sports. After the accident, she started running as a way to stay active and describes her running achievements modestly. Although she may not consider herself a hard-core competitor, she certainly has logged many miles and a fair share of success in her running shoes.

She participates in local events with the Challenged Athletes Foundation (CAF) organization and also runs in local 5K and 10K races. Additionally, Artesi was prepared to attend the 2007 San Diego Triathlon Challenge last October, which was cancelled due to the widespread California wildfires. This October she plans on attending the half-Ironman distance competition — not a small feat by any means.



Trial and error led Brooke Artesi to finally pursue rock climbing.

A new hobby

For the O&P Extremity Games, however, Artesi decided to try her hand at top rope rock climbing following the pursuit of other less-successful avenues.

“In early February I went out to Colorado with Adaptive Action Sports on a CAF grant to learn snowboarding and I hated it,” Artesi told *O&P Business News*. “I was so upset with myself. I always wanted to do it. I was so excited and I went out there and I hated it.”

Artesi explained that her dislike of snowboarding led her away from competing in the wakeboarding and skateboarding competitions at the third annual Extremity Games. In fact, she was so upset with herself that she resolved to find a sport in which she could excel and also enjoy, paving the way to the Extremity Games.

“I am going to do the rock climbing,” Artesi said with determination. “I went and tried it and it wasn’t so bad.” She is currently training for the event.

Exciting debut

On her upcoming debut at the Extremity Games, Artesi can only use one word to describe the feeling — excited.

Her excitement is matched by that of her patients and her coworkers.

“I always think everything happens for a reason and there is a reason that this happened to me and now here I am — I am a licensed orthotist at Garden State Orthopaedic,” Artesi said. “I am interacting with all the patients, all the amputees. I am always talking with them. Even though I don’t do that for a living, I am still in that environment every day.”

Working so closely with others so much like her, she can’t help but spread some of the overwhelming enthusiasm as the Extremity Games grow closer.

Now in its third year, the Games have received growing positive feedback, heightening Artesi’s desire to compete.

“I have heard wonderful things about the whole atmosphere there so even if I am terrible, I want to hang out and meet everybody,” she said. “I just want to go and have a really good time. We’ll see if I can win. You never know.”

Jennifer Hoydicz is a staff writer for *O&P Business News*.



Artesi plans to attend the half-Ironman distance competition in October.