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Polaris fitness club owner gets moment of fame on MTV show

Business First of Columbus - by [Jeff Bell](#)



Janet Adams | Business First

Core Fitness Studio owner Matt Hickey says when he helped an out-of-shape 19-year-old from Newark compete on MTV's Made program, he was overcome with emotion at the teenager's accomplishments.

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Matt Hickey is a tough guy by training, but he developed a soft spot for a Central Ohio teenager he helped survive the rigors of MTV's Made reality television series.

Hickey, who owns [Core Fitness Studio](#) in Lewis Center, was Brandon Baker's nutrition coach for an episode that aired Oct. 5.

In the series, MTV follows teens who want to be "made" into entertainers and athletes.

Baker, an admittedly overweight and out-of-shape 19-year-old from Newark, trained for and completed a triathlon, an endurance test that mixes swimming, cycling and distance running. Hickey, a personal trainer, was there to watch him cross the finish line at an August triathlon in Springfield.

"A huge emotion came over me," Hickey said. "I get choked up when I talk about it. This was a kid who had never exercised in his life."

Hickey said that day was part of a great personal experience that should also aid his business. He plans to use his involvement in the Made program to promote the four-year-old Core Fitness Studio.

"It's something to build more credibility," Hickey said. "It shows we get results for people, are able to do big things."

Core Fitness started in a 900-square-foot workout studio. Today, it occupies 3,500 square feet in the clubhouse at Little Bear Golf Club off South Old State Road. It employs four personal trainers and a massage therapist.

The business' next big step is getting a building of its own, possibly as soon as next year, Hickey said. He's in the final stages of getting approval for an 8,400-square-foot building that would be constructed off Lewis Center Road. His plan calls for Core Fitness to take 6,000 square feet with the rest to be leased to other businesses.

Hickey started coaching Baker in June after an MTV producer discovered Core Fitness through an Internet search.

Baker was an exercise-averse young man who weighed 270 pounds and suffers from diabetes and a thyroid condition. Baker acknowledged his diet was a major part of the problem.

"I'm a big junk food eater," he said. "Matt helped me eat healthier. He showed me things could be healthy and still taste good."

Baker lost 35 pounds by the time the triathlon was held and since has dropped an additional 15 pounds.

"This (experience) has changed my life," he said.

Hickey initially had doubts about Baker's chances of finishing a triathlon

But, "I didn't know how serious he was about it, but he had great determination. If people told him he couldn't do something, he was out to prove them wrong."

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