

# THE Other PAPER

## Front

### Area teen 'Made' to sweat by MTV

[Print Page](#)

By Steph Greeger

Published: Thursday, October 2, 2008 8:40 PM EDT

Forget Heidi, L.C. and the Biggest Loser champs, on Sunday you'll see the premier of what could be America's next big reality television star. And guess what? He thinks so too.

"I like to be funny. I like to make people laugh. So, I would love to do television," said 19-year-old Brandon Baker of Heath. "I think I'm good at auditioning."

Baker's first step toward stardom was getting MTV to bite on his pitch for the reality show, *Made*—which turns contestant's dreams into realities. His story, which airs on MTV Sunday at 2 p.m., is to run a triathlon. A tough feat for a guy who auditioned for the show weighing in at 275 pounds.



Brandon Baker, star of MTV's *Made* season premier on Sunday, stands with his trainer, Matt Hickey, after completing his first triathlon.

Baker also is auditioning for a spot on the next *Real World*, a different MTV reality show that tapes the lives of young folks thrown together in a communal situation.

Before MTV comes calling again though, Baker said he surprised even himself at the first audition by telling MTV execs about his triathlon fantasy. "I think when I said that even *I* was like 'Did I really just say this?' I was shocked it came out of my mouth," he said. "They looked at me like I was insane. They kept saying, 'Don't you wanna do something, like, comedian-like.' That's when I was like, 'No, now I *really* want to do it.'"

From May 26 until Aug. 26, MTV hung around Columbus videotaping Baker's every move, from what he ate to where he went with a watchful Big Brother eye to ensure he was working toward his goal—losing weight and keeping his thyroid and Type II diabetes under control while training to run the Great Buckeye Challenge triathlon.

"It was so hard," he said. "I would get yelled at if I didn't lose weight."

Baker said Matt Hickey, owner of Core Fitness Studios in Lewis Center, was the trainer he feared most--after all, if Baker slipped up, Hickey was the one he answered to.

"I actually never yelled at him," Hickey said. "I was disappointed a few times and I let him know I was disappointed."

Hickey said Baker was a good kid that he enjoyed joking around with, but initially he had some doubts about whether or not the self-named comedian was committed enough to reach his mark of losing 50 pounds.

"I didn't know if he had it in him," said Hickey. "But he was serious about doing this. He's been

struggling with his weight and his diabetes for his whole life. This was his catalyst to get him to achieve his goal."

Baker said he was grateful for the efforts of his trainers and it caused him to lose 35 pounds. Though short of his 50-pound goal, he met the toughest challenge of all--completing the triathlon in three hours, 22 minutes and "some odd seconds."

"I didn't place in last," he said. "And I got a medal. It was awesome. I can't even describe the feeling."

Baker, who said he first realized he was getting heavy at the age of 12, wasn't just inspired by the chance to be on television—it was the chance to override years of hearing mean-spirited comments.

"Every time someone says something mean to me, and people do, I won't say anything, I'll shrug it off," he said. "Because I know that I don't deserve it."

Baker's the last one laughing now. Since the show ended, the young lad said he's shaved off another 25 pounds and is shooting to weigh 180 pounds within the next few months.

"I'm thinking about doing another triathlon sometime," he said. "Who knows? Maybe MTV will be back. We're in talks."

Really?

"I can't say anymore."

We'll look for you on the *Real World*, Baker.

Copyright © 2008 - The Other Paper

[x] Close Window