



Triathlon is a great emerging sport within the high school age group. The following guide will help students across the country set up triathlon clubs at their own high school or within their region from the very first steps to growing a program into a competitive powerhouse. Throughout the entire process, local USA Triathlon registered clubs, USA Triathlon Certified Coaches and the USA Triathlon Sport Development office are great resources and advisors.

All questions related to the High School Triathlon Program can be directed to highschool@usatriathlon.org.

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SECTION 1: STARTING A HIGH SCHOOL TRIATHLON

1.1. BECOME AN OFFICIAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION

Many high schools will only approve a club as an official student organization after a certain number of people have expressed interest. Typically 10 students will need to organize and express interest in starting a student club or sports club team. If you fall short of the required number, see the “Increasing Membership” section below. Becoming a student organization is essential as many high schools may give each student organization financial support or access for facility use.

1.2 ADMINISTRATION/LEADERSHIP ROLES

Once you have enough members, it is very important to appoint officers for the club. The officers’ main duties are to run the operation of the club and to act as a liaison between the club and the directors of the high school club program. Generally all clubs include (at least) three officer positions: president, vice president and treasurer.

The president’s duties include (but are not limited to):

- Coordinating team meetings
- Acting as the primary contact person for the club
- Attending all scheduled club meetings
- Representing the club’s opinions at all club meetings
- Scheduling all practices and/or competitions
- Relaying all club rules and regulations to the coach, adviser and club members
- Ensuring adherence to all rules and regulations
- Ensuring that all required paperwork is completed and submitted on time
- Assisting the treasurer in preparing the budget and coordinating fundraising efforts
- For competitive clubs, sport club presidents are responsible for ensuring team compliance with rules and deadlines set forth by the governing organization

The vice president’s duties include (but are not limited to):

- Assisting the president in all of the aforementioned roles
- Attending all sport club meetings
- In absence of a secretary, the vice president will maintain club files/records

The treasurer’s duties include (but are not limited to):

- All financial obligations of the club
- Coordinating and implementing fundraising efforts as well as taking the necessary steps to gain approval for fundraising projects
- Collecting club dues (if applicable)
- Budget development and management
- Making account deposits

- Submitting requests for petty cash or reimbursements
- Receiving permission for all transactions, purchases or financial agreements

Other officer positions are:

Team captain - The captain is responsible for:

- Executing practice plans or assisting the coach in the execution of practice plans
- Uniting the team to achieve common goals during practice and competition

Webmaster - The webmaster is responsible for:

- Requesting a website (new clubs) or requesting website access for the existing club website
- Creating and maintaining the club website, if applicable
- Ensuring any information displayed on the high school clubs homepage regarding their club is accurate and up-to-date
- (Optional) Submitting team pictures, results and press releases to the high school club program administrator to be posted on the club webpage

Secretary - The secretary is responsible for:

- Maintaining club files and records

1.3. CREATE A CLUB CONSTITUTION

A constitution will establish rules for the club, set standards and ensure the club is run properly. A constitution also will allow you to fall back on original club rules in case there is a problem with how the club is run. A good starting point in creating a constitution would be checking with other clubs that focus on athletics at your high school. In addition, your student organization office or USA Triathlon may have a template you can use and modify for your club.

1.4. FIND A DEDICATED STAFF/FACULTY ADVISER

In order to become a student organization, many high schools will require you to have a staff or faculty adviser. It is best to find an adviser who already competes in triathlon or at least has some experience with swimming, cycling, or running. A few places to start looking for a faculty adviser are teachers in your school's Physical Education department, sport coaches or similar programs

1.5. FIND A COACH

Clubs may utilize a volunteer or paid coach, but it is the club's responsibility to secure these services. If the coach asks to be paid, then the club must provide the money Coaches will most likely have to be approved by the school administration.

Coach Responsibilities:

- Attend all practices and competitions
- Develop and implement training programs to prepare athletes for competition
- Assist in the scheduling of competitions and practices
- Promote good sportsmanship
- Act as a mediator if team conflicts should arise
- Travel to overnight competitions with the team
- Enforce school policies and code of conduct

1.6. MEMBERSHIP

Register your triathlon team as an official USA Triathlon club and high school program member at <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Triathlon/USAT-for-Me/Clubs/Start-a-Club>.

Being an official USA Triathlon club has many benefits such as getting insurance, club race discounts, sponsor discounts and being eligible to receive club grant funding. Furthermore, high school triathlon clubs must be USA Triathlon registered clubs to be eligible to race in triathlon events against other high school clubs in your region, as well as the USA Triathlon High School National Championships.

In the initial years of the High School Triathlon Program, the High School, Collegiate Club, and Women's NCAA Coordinator will oversee each region's high school programs. Once the program has developed and region specific leadership is determined, the leaders for each region will handle area specific program development. The points of contact for each region will be listed on the USA Triathlon website.

Email highschool@usatriathlon.org to provide you with additional information about programs in your area and the USA Triathlon High School National Championships.

In addition to being registered as a USA Triathlon Official Club, each of your members should register to be an official USA Triathlon annual member. All USA Triathlon sanctioned races require you to be a USA Triathlon member to compete and all official region races are required to be USA Triathlon sanctioned events. For members who are new to the sport and want to just try a race out, they can get a one-day membership, but members who are looking to compete in more than one race should get an annual membership. Also, in order to participate at the USA Triathlon High School National Championships, you must be a USA Triathlon member. You can become a USA Triathlon annual member online at www.usatriathlon.org/membership.

SECTION 2: GROWING A HIGH SCHOOL TRIATHLON PROGRAM

2.1. INCREASING AWARENESS

Great ways to get the word out about your club:

- Hang flyers around the high school to let people know about club meetings and practices.
- Many schools have a day where clubs can set up displays in a common area; i.e. Club Fair. These are great for getting the word out about your club and meeting with prospective members.
- Social media outlets (i.e. Facebook and Twitter)
- Partnering with aquatics, running or cycling programming or local gyms and recreation facilities (YMCAs, club swim teams, etc.)

2.2. PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

Triathlon is a sport for everyone. Many beginner triathletes are nervous about everything that goes into a triathlon, so keep it basic. If you portray your club as a group of advanced athletes, you will get little response from the student body. It is better to portray your club as a group of individuals who are interested in the multisport lifestyle and an organization that anyone can join, regardless of athletic ability. These beginners will improve very quickly and you will have a strong team. Also, beginners should know that no high end equipment is required. A swimsuit, goggles, an old bike, a helmet, and

running shoes are all that you need. Keep it basic.

2.3. PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Create learning opportunities for new members. New members will not actively participate in club activities if they feel lost. Beginner workshops that teach the basics of triathlon are a great way to get newcomers oriented to the sport. Because swimming is typically the hardest of the disciplines to master, holding a swimming clinic for new members will be a big stress reliever. Other good workshops include those that focus on cycling skills and transitions. Utilize local multisport clubs in your area to collaborate on hosting these educational events. Use the “Find a Club” tool on the USA Triathlon to find clubs in your area.

2.4. UTILIZING ADVANCED ATHLETES

Make sure you let advanced athletes know that being part of the club can benefit them as well. Club membership can provide them with sponsorship discounts, club funding and the opportunity to race against high school triathletes. Local Youth and Junior Elite athletes can serve as great mentors for the athletes in your club and offer advice. While these athletes have Junior Elite circuit races to attend, they can share their knowledge and passion for the multisport lifestyle.

2.5. KEEPING IT FUN!

If it’s not fun, people won’t want to do it. For the true beginners, do not stress competition. Concentrate on developing appropriate skills. When traveling to races, encourage others to watch if they aren’t racing. Cheering sections provide support and motivation for new athletes racing while also increasing team unity. Also, have fun competitions during practices. Example: sprint to the county lines during rides, or have informal races or relays in the pool.

2.6. HIGH SCHOOL CLUB COMMUNITY

Community equals success. The most successful triathlon clubs have built a community around them and have many social events outside of training and racing. If all the members become good friends with each other, they will be more likely to participate in the club activities, both training and social. This is also a great selling point for freshmen interested in joining the club because freshmen want to get involved to meet people.

SECTION 3: HOW TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT YOUR CLUB

3.1. FUNDS/BUDGET PROPOSAL

Funding is essential for club organizations. If you are an Independent High School Club and recognized by your high school as a club organization, the school may assist in funding your club. In order to receive funding, clubs will have to submit a budget proposal to the department/committee that is responsible for funding clubs. Factors to consider when budgeting include but are not limited to the following:

- Equipment/uniform purchases
- Rental of off-campus facilities
- Travel expenses (gas, tolls, vehicle rental, hotel costs)
- Coaching fees
- USA Triathlon Club Membership annual dues
- CPR certification costs for club leadership

If your high school does not provide funding for sport clubs, fundraising is a great way to raise a lot of money for your club. Another option is to require that each club member pay “dues”, or a fee, at the beginning of each season in order to help cover the costs for that year.

3.2 ALLOCATED FUNDS/CHECKING ACCOUNTS

It is extremely important to understand your school’s philosophy regarding the use of funds and checking accounts. Each school will have different policies in place. Even if the money did not come from the school, you will most likely have to get approval from the school before you purchase anything with your club’s funding. An example of what your club’s funding can go toward is as follows:

- Approved travel costs such as gas, tolls, rental vehicles and documented mileage by personal vehicles
- Lodging in accordance with competition
- Officials/medical personnel
- Event entry fees
- Pre-approved equipment and uniforms
- Medical supplies
- Apparel (which can be kept by club participants at year end)
- Food, refreshments and meals
- Awards or gifts
- Any other approved purchases

A violation in a club’s spending can result in serious consequences such as termination from the clubs program.

3.3. FINDING SPONSORS

Sponsorships usually provide the largest amount of money for high school clubs. Begin by creating a sponsorship packet and let sponsors know what you can do for them. Some good places to start are local bike or running stores. In addition, ask club members if any of their parents, relatives, friends, etc. own companies that will be able to support the club. Ask as many people as possible for sponsorship; the worst that can happen is they say ‘no’. Always consult with your adviser and/or sport clubs director so you’ll know the high school’s rules regarding sponsors.

3.4. DONATIONS

Keep track of club alumni. If your club did a lot for them, they will usually be willing to give back. Community supporters may also be willing to donate to your club if they are passionate about the growth of the multisport community. Local retailers might also be interested in supporting the club.

3.5. FUNDRAISING

Small fundraisers add up. Some ideas include:

- Bake sales
- Car washes
- Home sporting event (i.e. football or basketball) game day car-parking
- Selling raffle tickets at sporting events (check with your athletic department first)
- Check with your student club organization for additional ideas
- Host your own 5k/10k, splash-n-dash, duathlon or triathlon (see below)

Selling club T-shirts to the general student body and the surrounding community provides both profit for your club and advertising. Some pointers are:

- Keep the designs both triathlon and high school-oriented.
- Check with your high school for copyright laws on logo usage.
- Ask other sport clubs or high school clubs about their apparel orders. Usually a local T-shirt maker will work with all student organizations to keep the prices low in exchange for business.
- Try to pre-sell the T-shirts. This allows you to know exactly what quantities you will need. For example, the club can sell five shirts to each member for \$45. The athlete can have his or her shirt for \$5, and sell the others for \$10 once all the T-shirts come in. This generates needed profit for the club and puts the responsibility on the athletes to go out and support the club. Be sure to order a few extra T-shirts to sell to fans and alumni at races.

3.6. STADIUM/ATHLETIC VENUE CLEAN-UP

Many high schools or local universities allow student organizations to assist in the clean-up of the stadiums and other athletic venues. This usually involves picking up the larger items (hot dog wrappers, cups, etc.) before the main cleanup people come and pressure wash everything else away. This can be extremely profitable and quick if you have a large group to help out.

3.7. ORGANIZE A TRIATHLON OR OTHER ATHLETIC EVENT

Looking at the Collegiate Club Program, many collegiate clubs organize their own triathlon (e.g. the [UCLA IronBruin](#), [Cal Bearathlon](#), etc.). Not only do these events often become part of the conference race series, but they also provide the opportunity to raise significant funds. These events are attended by the local community and the athletes typically return year after year. With the proper support, high school clubs can organize their own triathlon by coordinating with local race directors and multisport enthusiasts. If the school's sport facilities allows, the venue can host a sprint-distance event that uses the high school pool or other nearby bodies of water. Some events are held as "reverse triathlons" (run-bike-swim) because mass starts in a pool are not possible. Other schools produce events that are entirely off-campus (proper permits must be obtained from the city, county, EMS, etc.) or are Olympic distance. If you cannot host a triathlon, there are other options. Some teams put on 5k or 10k running events, duathlons, aquathlons, or other multisport events. Here are some tips to get you started on producing your own event:

1. Elect a "race coordinator" as one of your team officers at the beginning of the school year. Planning an event often takes 6-10 months, especially if you have not done one before. Engage adults in your community who participate in the multisport community to help plan for the event.
2. Look up the websites of races that are local to familiarize yourself and your race club with what has been done in the past and what may be required for the future event.
3. Choose a course and format that best fits your situation. This may be a reverse triathlon on your own school grounds, a 5k, or an Olympic-distance event by the local lake.
4. If your event is on school grounds, submit an event proposal to your athletic department (often through your club staff). Having a good relationship with the club staff will go a long way to getting your event approved. Do not become discouraged if your school does not approve a race to be hosted at the high school. Look for other venues within your community that could host an event.

5. If your event is off school grounds, there are various local and county agencies you will need to get approval or permits from: the county, the city, the fire department, the police department, local residences and businesses, etc. Please contact [USA Triathlon Event Services Department](#) with any questions.

6. Make sure your event has the proper insurance. If your event is entirely on school grounds, your athletic department may cover the insurance at no additional cost. USA Triathlon provides very affordable event insurance. For more information about sanctioning your event, please visit: <https://www.teamusa.org/USA-Triathlon/USAT-for-Me/Race-Directors/Sanctioning>.

7. The race coordinator should choose a race staff as early as possible. A bike course coordinator, swim course coordinator, run course coordinator, transition area coordinator, volunteer coordinator and sponsorship coordinator are indispensable.

8. In planning and organizing your event, make safety your number one priority.

SECTION 4: CLUB PRACTICE STRUCTURE

4.1. MAKING A SET SCHEDULE

Have a set schedule of workouts at a variety of times throughout the week. This will allow for planning and a sense of consistency in training from week to week. It is a good idea to have a coach or advanced athlete at each of the workouts to supervise and help the novice athletes.

4.2. MAKE PRACTICES FOR EVERYONE

Have different pace groups at each workout for athletes of different abilities. When new members show up to events, make sure they don't end up alone. There is nothing more discouraging than getting dropped on your first couple of rides or runs and ending up alone.

4.3. COMBINE PRACTICES WITH OTHER CLUBS/TEAMS

Combine your practices with other community clubs. Many cities have masters swim groups, cycling clubs and track clubs. By combining workouts with local clubs, you can double and triple the number of athletes participating and have a wider variation of pace groups. Likewise, for high schools with single-sport teams or clubs such as swimming, cycling, and running; combining groups will increase your numbers and add a greater variety of pace groups. These established groups will be knowledgeable on the area for options of group ride and run routes and it safer to train with a group on open roads.

4.4. CREATE SOCIAL PRACTICES

Include a few social runs/rides on the practice schedule. Advertising rides as 'social' might take the pressure off new members. State that everyone will go the speed of the slowest rider.

SECTION 5: HIGH SCHOOL TRIATHLON PROGRAM RACING

5.1 STATE RACES

Contact the High School, Collegiate Club, and Women's NCAA Coordinator at USA Triathlon to inform USA Triathlon on the creation of a high school club in your area and your intentions to compete against

local high school clubs. Once enough participation is available within the High School Triathlon Program, clubs will be able to race against other local clubs. These programs will work with local races and the race directors to get a high school wave in the event and the athletes will be scored accordingly. The HS Coordinator will be able to connect you and your club with other local clubs to begin developing the racing community in your area.

5.2 HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM SCORING

Once the High School Triathlon Program reaches the ability to have state based racing among high school clubs, the High School Triathlon Program will implement the following scoring method at each designated race for the high school programs.

Each state based race will use the following scoring method and the totals will be added together for an overall series rankings and standings in the state.

Place	Points
1	40
2	37
3	34
4	31
5	28
6	25
7	22
8	20
9	18
10	16
11	15
12	14
13	13
14	12
15	11
16	10
17	9
18	8
19	7
20	6
21	5
22	4
23	3
24	2
25	1

5.3 USA TRIATHLON HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Annually, USA Triathlon will host the High School Club National Championship, which invites clubs and individual high school athletes from across the country and matches talented athletes to earn national recognition for themselves and their club. Contact the highschool@usatriathlon.org at USA Triathlon for specific qualification instructions.

SECTION 6: CLUB MISCELLANEOUS

6.1. RACE ALL TYPES OF RACES

Do not only race the biggest and most popular races. Racing smaller, local races helps take the pressure off new members. You should also look into participating in local 5k or 10k road races or local bike tours in the off-season. These can be used as training sessions and are great opportunities for team bonding.

6.2. VOLUNTEER

Volunteer as much as possible throughout your community. This can be a great way to get the word out about your club and can lead to potential sponsorships. If you volunteer at masters swim meets, community cycling races, and community running races, the community members will be more willing to help when your club puts on your own events. As a sport club, you may also be required to do some community service anyway. You may find that these efforts attract additional athletes to your club in response to making your club known to the community.