

## **2021 Collegiate Club Committee Report**

### **Mission**

The USAT mission is, with the help of the Collegiate Club Committee, to develop, advance and promote club-level collegiate triathlon. The overall focus is on competitive excellence, overall participation and supporting/sustaining all clubs.

### **2021 Accomplishments**

The first half of 2021 was tough for Collegiate Club Triathlon. There were few, if any, collegiate races around the country. Covid continued to take its toll. Many teams were unable to hold group practices even through the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. Other schools were able to hold limited practice sessions. Team membership dropped at many schools to less than half of pre-pandemic numbers. There were no conference championships and no national championship in the spring of 2021.

Cal Berkeley was able to assist their coach in holding a virtual swim/run national competition. This Dean's List Virtual Swim/Run competition offered \$7500 in prize money. The 5K run/500 yard swim competition took place over several months and Cal Berkeley kept a leader board so participants could see where they stood in the results. There was no entry fee and they ultimately had about 200 participants from around the country. It did help keep some athletes engaged and motivated to get their best times even though many were training on their own. This is a format that may help connect the various clubs around the country during the academic year and provide a chance to compete against each other at other than just collegiate nationals. There is currently no other national collegiate club competition.

During the summer USAT worked on finding a suitable location for a "make up" collegiate club national championship competition in the fall that would allow 2020 and 2021 graduates, and all existing collegiates, the opportunity to compete in a National Championships since the prior two nationals had been cancelled due to Covid. Ultimately, the iconic Malibu triathlon was selected for the 2021 nationals. Although the total number of collegiate club participants was just over 200, the race provided a chance for clubs around the country to race each other. Overall, the event was a big success. Those who raced were able to watch the Super League race later in the day and hang out with some of the top pros in the world, including all of this year's Olympic medalists. Unfortunately, the usual overall very high energy collegiate atmosphere was not present since it was not a stand-alone event, but a collegiate race "piggybacked" on to an existing race. The three negatives, on an otherwise very positive and exciting weekend, were 1) the men and the women competed at the same time, as opposed to separate races, so they weren't able to cheer for each other 2) there was no mixed relay or DL race and 3) we seemed to have been an afterthought at the awards ceremony, having to wait a couple hours for awards. Tim Yount did his best to keep the collegiate athletes engaged during the long wait for results.

Overall, with the Malibu triathlon, and with the resumption of many other collegiate club races in the fall, we appear to be headed back to a more normal 2021-2022 season. Since USAT just announced a spring National Championships at Lake Lanier, Georgia, on April 1 & 2, this will help motivate clubs around the country to plan and train for a full spring season.

## **2021 Objectives**

In line with the mission of the Collegiate Club Committee, the following are some of the objectives for next year.

The committee should encourage their respective conferences to return safely to a normal race schedule leading to collegiate nationals.

We should consider adding additional races to conference races calendars and encourage, if possible, participation in national events with collegiate divisions, such as Malibu and Escape from Alcatraz. We can further explore the idea of a Collegiate Club series or at least several Collegiate Club races.

Consider adding a virtual event, like the Dean's List race, as a national event.

Promote collegiate club nationals in April, with the goal of having over 1000 participants from over 100 schools.

Work towards including new collegiate teams in each conference. There are several thousand colleges in the United States. There are likely some triathletes at most of these schools. How can we promote greater participation nationwide?

Explore the possibility of USAT, and/or the USAT Foundation, providing some funding for new or emerging collegiate triathlon programs to participate at collegiate club nationals.

Examine the current Collegiate Club rules and make any changes the Board, together with USAT, that we believe are appropriate.

## **Roster**

### Commissioners

Dean Harper (Committee Chair, West Coast Conference)  
Dylan Beitel (Florida Conference)  
Blair Bronson (Northwest Conference)  
Cody Elder (Southeast Conference)  
Dan Frost (Asst. Chair, Mountain Conference)  
Edward Hansen (Midwest Conference)  
Amy Maxwell (Northeast Conference)  
Tim McCurry (South Midwest Conference)  
Erik Stitt (Midwest Conference)  
Nico Duchez (Mid-Atlantic Conference)  
Erik Stitt (Mideast Conference)

USAT Staff

Tim Yount  
Chad Cunningham

Elite Representatives

Kevin McDowell  
Mary Beth Ellis  
Sara McLarty