



# HIGH SCHOOL COMBINES

In 2019, USA Triathlon established 15 regional combines across the United States, aiming to identify athletes interested in competing either at the collegiate club or NCAA varsity levels. These combines were strategically located near existing NCAA programs at the time. However, in response to the pandemic, we transitioned from in-person combines to a virtual format.

Each combine gathered approximately 12 to 15 athletes, typically at venues like high schools or colleges equipped with tracks and pools. The invitation to attend these combines was extended to youth participants. While the events themselves were cost-free for participants, there were minor expenses such as lifeguard payments. Parents were also present during the combines.

During the same year, USA Triathlon hosted its own combine at Cheyenne Mountain High School, drawing an attendance of 25 kids. Volunteers numbering around six were enlisted to assist with timing participants on the track and in the pool. Post-combine, we dedicated around 30 minutes to interact with the participants, sharing insights about the Club and NCAA triathlon and presenting it as their potential next step.

Given the introduction of the high school program, the current timing is highly favorable for considering a combine within your local community. If this piques your interest, we can provide initial details. Riley Ballard, a USAT intern, can act as the point of contact for now (contact: [Riley.ballard@usatriathlon.org](mailto:Riley.ballard@usatriathlon.org)). Additionally, Tim Yount will be available to offer guidance and answer any queries that may arise. Should you manage to amass an attendance of 50 kids, Tim is prepared to visit in person and spend time engaging with both kids and coaches.

The main challenge faced by many was athlete recruitment. To overcome this hurdle, we encourage creativity. Utilize social media platforms effectively and seek out high school champions. Extend invitations to swim team members, and cross country/track athletes, encouraging them to participate for enjoyment. Distributing information at local YMCAs and community pools can also yield positive results.

Here are some simple steps to follow:

- Find a school that has both a track and pool.
- Get them to register with you so you have their contact info.
- Get them to support sanctioning the event through us as a clinic so they are covered insurance wise
- Find a date that you feel works for kids to come to this school and be part of a time test for swimming (100 meters) and running (1600 meters). You can do this about 30 minutes apart.
- You get volunteers to take the times and you record them. Time trial them if you can, to lessen the intimidation. Parents can also record the times for you if volunteers are scarce.
- No cost to do other than their time. Have the parents come to watch too since this is about self-testing and sharing with family.
- We have a platform for the program – gmtm.com – where kids can post their times. They can also upload any video they like.
- After they have self-tested, bring them to one location where you can speak to the club program you are building. We will also have a collegiate club and NCAA info for the groups you can hand out.
- Share the database with us, so we can add them to our hit list for post-high school activities. You can then keep in touch with them too about joining the club.
- Find a few sponsors/donors who can offset that cost for you in exchange for some marketing and parent info exchange.
- USA Triathlon can share with you their to-do list if you want to see it so that you can see how they structured their combine a few years ago.

Combines are not only 'cool' but they can work if you find the right means to recruit kids to do them. If you set this up correctly, local donors and sponsors can pony up and cover all costs with the return being kids who have an interest in HS and collegiate triathlon.