

STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR ADDING A HIGH SCHOOL CLUB TO EXISTING CLUB

Triathlon attracts adults of all ages but over the past decade, it has not attracted the volume of young athletes to engage in the sport. This program is our time to turn the tide and see growth in multisport for those who are part of the next generation of kids who can reap the health benefits this sport provides. For that to happen, we must focus on introducing and providing opportunities for high school aged athletes to be part of the sport. We will meet that goal by having them join existing clubs and provide opportunities for them to train and race with others who are part of your existing programming.

The pathway for this new build is simple - USA Triathlon is currently building a new youth program that we want to connect to high school programs. Kids who graduate from HS and want to engage in the next level will find collegiate club (we are working on new build outs there as well) and the thriving NCAA women's triathlon program as options. Ultimately, we want these athletes to compete as young adults then adults for as long as they find the sport's offering fun and rewarding. Clubs play such an important part in keeping kids interested and engaged. Starting with a HS build we feel is ideal for us to impact kids now at a time when so many other influences are not bringing them to sports.

This document is the impetus to forming a high school club under your adult club structure. The lift is not what you might think. High School clubs are free and will be covered by the same insurance policy that you may already have for your adult club. You'll also be provided with 10 free youth memberships that you can distribute to your new athletes as a tool for recruitment. Again, the focus is to NOT build these in high school par se but to build them in lockstep with what you are doing on the adult side of the club. That means all that you are doing now as an adult club can be mirrored here with the HS club with a few considerations.

High School Mission: To provide high school aged individuals throughout the United States who have an interest in pursuing triathlon/multisport to have the opportunity to receive coaching, support, and camaraderie through local HS triathlon clubs that boost their training, race participation, personal development, and self-esteem.

High School Program Purpose: Create a national high-school-aged triathlon and multisport program for young people to participate in the sport, including all facets

of club support, driven by USA Triathlon but supported locally by kids, coaches, parents, race directors and other constituencies and stakeholders.

How might you add HS aged kids to my existing club program?

Step 1: Alert club members of your interest in adding a High School Club and follow this simple plan for accomplishing that.

The “Why” should be simple to explain – by recruiting HS kids, you are opening the door for your club to impact the sport at a very important juncture where kids are often seeking ties to positive and fun activities.

Step 2: Recruitment of kids for the club

- **In the community where the club is located.** Start by creating a collection of kids in your community versus in a specific school. Then, as the club grows, you can target certain schools for which many of your club members attend and expand the reach you have in a more concentrated area. Because kids will self-recruit, if they enjoy the experience, the club should grow organically. We will share ways to recruit within a community, if interested.
- **Through a Particular High School.** Some of the clubs might have parents who know administrators in specific schools that then drive recruitment to be done for that particular high school. Who might the parent(s) know? Is it another parent, a teacher or administrator? Leverage each of them. Gauge their interest in allowing you to piggyback with your existing club. Speak to them about how advantageous it can be for a HS club to be part of an existing adult club (built in mentorship, contact to event discounts that you might already have, equipment discounts with key vendors, etc.)
- **Top angle for recruitment.** All high school aged athletes can participate but the focus is to introduce new athletes to the sport. These can be athletes with a single sport, ball sport, or no sports background at all. Note that the best means by which we can grow multisport at this level is to expand the offerings to not JUST include triathlon but other disciplines as well – duathlon, aquathlon, Aquabike, off road and even winter triathlon in certain locations.
- **Eligibility Students** are eligible to compete as part of a High School Club starting June 1st after their 8th grade graduation and continuing until September 1st after their senior year.

- **Contact Single Sport Coaches** Coaches of single triathlon disciplines should know of the benefit of cross-training and triathlon is the perfect “off-season” activity. It is not about poaching athletes from single-discipline sports but rather expanding the student’s athletic experience and abilities during the months when they are not involved with the single-discipline sport. Contact other coaches at local high schools and see if they would be interested in encouraging and promoting the triathlon club to their athletes, they may also be a perfect coach to assist with club functions.
- **Contact other Single Sports Clubs** Local running, cycling, and swimming clubs provide a great opportunity to partner with and expand the reach of the club.

Step 3: Identify the HS Club Lead inside of the Adult Club The HS club leader will be the individual who manages the club’s registration and is the point of contact for USA Triathlon and others we will be working with to grow HS triathlon. This does not necessarily have to be the same lead as your adult club. It is suggested to find a parent or another individual passionate about high school multisport to manage this portion of your club. USAT might be able to find someone to also help in case you find this to be a difficult task.

Step 4: Register the Club and Consider Club Insurance Register the club with USA Triathlon to be a part of the program and receive free youth memberships, program materials. Registration is free but it will be a separate application from the adult club profile. Being in the know means learning about the many new concepts and ideas we create that can directly benefit you as a club.

How to Register High School Club

- **Create a personal USAT profile** if you do not already have one at the [USAT Member Hub](#).
- Once in your profile, **visit the “Club Manager”** section where you will start your club application.
- **Complete each section** of the application until the payment screen where you will process the registration.
- The club **certification is free of charge** for 2023 and insurance is steeply discounted.
- **Club Insurance:** USAT recommends that high school clubs secure insurance. USAT club insurance is offered via IOA which is a very affordable option. If the adult portion of the club already has club insurance, simply add the high school club

- members to the adult club's roster and they will be covered. No need to purchase additional high school club insurance in addition to the adult club insurance.
- **USAT Member Registration Registered** clubs receive a code that is good for 10 free youth annual memberships. All students must have a USAT membership. Youth annual memberships are \$10 for U18 athletes and \$36 for ages 18-23. A new Youth Premier Membership is \$25 and is valid until the athlete's 18th birthday so there is not a need to renew until the athlete turns 18 years old.

Step 5: Contact the Talent Scouts for your State or Area

Talent Scouts are selected by USAT to help grow HS triathlon at the local level. The Talent Scouts will exist in every state. Their role will be to assist in the growth of this segment of multisport, answer questions about the HS program, and engage in ways that support the program's movements in all capacities.

Step 6: Marketing

Find a volunteer within the club with a social media background who can create club profiles on social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.). Create a webpage where the club's information can be located and marketed through other means to help find parents of kids who might have interest in joining the club. This should be very simple as too much information will not be read by those just seeking general information about the club.

Step 7: Training and Facilities

Clubs set their own schedules and many probably have pre-existing areas to work out. If you have an interest in pursuing something different from what you currently use for your adult members, talk to local schools about access to facilities and space for training like weight room, treadmills, stationary bikes, and outdoor track. Consider where you will hold swim practices. If not available on a school's campus, connect with local facilities (i.e., YMCA, community groups, and/or local fitness clubs).

Step 8: Finding a Coach with High School Interest

Most of our adult clubs have a lead coach. If by chance yours does not, we will strongly encourage you to partner with a local USAT Certified Coach or a coach who is interested in becoming certified. Coaches will be encouraged to donate time towards helping you with workouts and other needs that the club might have for the HS aged athletes. Over time, they might consider creating revenue sources through the coaching they can do at various levels for all club members. [One avenue to pay for coaching includes grants through the USAT Foundation.](#)

Step 9: Sponsors

There are businesses with soft spots that might have interest to support your club and the youth movement. Consider contacting local bike shops and running stores and let them know of the local club and ways they can support it. You should also approach other businesses as well as they often have commitments to youth programming for which you might not be aware.

Step 10: Identify A Race Schedule

USAT recommends that clubs ask race directors with races listed on the [USAT sanctioned events calendar](#) to see if they are open to adding a high school wave to their race. This might be in a race director's youth event (where beginner racing opportunities come to mind), super sprint or sprint distance race to be added (recommended distance for HS kids is super sprint and sprint). Events can be hosted in an indoor pool, on treadmills and bike trainers, allowing racing in cold weather climates. Including events such as Duathlon, Aquabike, and Aquathlon in the schedule is a way to remove some barriers of entry and may allow success for some athletes who may not fit the traditional triathlon model.

Note that the State's Talent Scouts and USAT, will be tasked with assisting in finding super sprint distance races that can add a high school wave and encourage RDs to help price events so HS kids can afford to do them.

Step 11. High School State Championships

Students from any USAT sanctioned high school aged club or independent high school aged athletes can compete in your respective [State Championship](#). State Championships will be competitive events for many but participatory in nature for HS aged kids. Each race should have a HS wave and as such, have been built on the premise of participation for the reason many kids might not have any previous multisport experience.

Useful Links and Contact Information:

Reach out to Chad Cunningham and Tim Yount with any High School program questions:

Chad Cunningham: chad.cunningham@usatriathlon.org

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[High School Program Webpage](#)

[USA Triathlon Member Hub](#)