



Private High School Club:

A Case Study in Organizational Structure and Volunteer Engagement

The following case study presents the evolution of St. Xavier's "TriBombers", a private high school triathlon team based in Cincinnati, Ohio. This case study draws inspiration from the insights and experiences shared by Jim Murphy, a key member of the team. Throughout seven seasons, the St. Xavier's TriBombers have transformed their organizational structure and volunteer engagement, demonstrating a remarkable journey towards success and one that survived the pandemic because of their organizational structure. By incorporating the expertise of three USAT certified coaches and fostering active participation from dedicated parents and alumni, the team has cultivated a supportive community that represents a positive culture and racing that is fun for all the kids who are part of the program.

1. Background and Context

The team, now in its 7th season, has grown significantly since its inception. In the beginning, none of the team members were USAT Certified Coaches - but two members, Colin Riley and Jim Murphy, acquired certifications shortly after the team was created. Currently they have three USAT-certified coaches leading the team.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

a. Jim Murphy - Administrative Director:

- Handles administrative tasks such as insurance, waivers, SafeSport, and USAT registrations.
- Manages team communication through platforms like TeamSnap.
- Maintains the team calendar and ensures timely updates.
- He is like their CEO – looking at the big picture movements that the team can make if needed/desired

b. Rachel Langenderfer - Team Manager:

- Assumes responsibility for coordinating logistics for travel and on race days, including equipment, team tent, and apparel.
- Manages apparel, jerseys, and other team-related items.
- Takes the lead in organizing the team banquet.

c. Colin Riley - Head Coach:

- Implements training plans and designs workouts for the team.
- Leads in-person practices after school, devoting three days a week after school for 2 hours for three months.
- Utilizes Training Peaks for training program management.

3. Volunteer Engagement

a. Committee Meetings:

- Regular committee meetings are held, inviting school staff, parents, and alumni to participate. These are held on a regular basis.
- Meetings serve as social gatherings and provide an opportunity for involvement, support but also updates around the program.

b. Parent and Alumni Involvement:

- Parents and alumni contribute their assistance in various capacities, such as photography, videography, bike mechanics, and race day support.
- Specific roles may vary each year based on the willingness and talents of the parents and alumni.
- The absence of membership fees and the provision of free gear and apparel encourage parent and alumni engagement. Free gear is secured mainly through local retailers and paid for by donations from the coaches, alumni, and student families.

4. Organizational Flexibility

- The team does not enforce set roles or positions for parents and alumni but rather relies on the volunteers' willingness and talents to assist where they are most comfortable.
- The core coaching/administrative staff handles most tasks but delegates responsibilities to parents and alumni whenever they are available and willing.

5. Impact and Success

- The team's evolving structure and volunteer engagement approach has proven successful over the years.
- Having three USAT-certified coaches allows for a comprehensive coaching approach. Kids are seeing improvement which is a large part of the motivation for them to stay engaged to the program from year to year
- The involvement of parents and alumni as volunteers creates a supportive and collaborative environment.

6. Financial Sustainability:

Initially, the team incurred higher start-up costs in the first 1-2 years. However, through effective management and community support, the team now operates with an annual surplus. The estimated cost to operate each season ranges between \$6,000 and \$7,000, with a significant portion allocated to paying Colin Riley as the Head Coach for leading practices.

While the team could operate on a smaller budget, they prioritize maximizing benefits for current students through donations. Rachel contributes financially on an ad hoc basis by purchasing necessary items. Additionally, Jim Murphy makes a formal donation to the club through the school, allowing for corporate matching.

Furthermore, his company provides an annual Volunteer Grant, amplifying the team's financial resources. An alum's generous donations, coupled with corporate matching, further support the team's financial stability. The team's ability to accept tax-deductible donations of equipment and cash through the school has proven instrumental in sustaining their operations.

Conclusion: The triathlon team's organizational structure and volunteer engagement have evolved organically over the years, leading to a thriving HS triathlon program. By utilizing three USAT-certified coaches and actively involving parents and alumni, the team effectively manages administrative tasks, logistics, and coaching responsibilities. The team's flexibility in delegating tasks to willing volunteers has contributed to its ongoing success, creating a collaborative community of athletes, parents, and alumni.