



Case Study: E3 Endurance High School Triathlon Team

This case study of E3 Endurance High School Triathlon Team is possible thanks to the coach Matthew Clancy. He shares his perspective on managing both Youth Elite and High School teams, and how it can affect club's management and sustainability.

Background and Context: The E3 Endurance Team is a group of youth triathletes who participate in USAT Youth Races in the local area. They were recruited based on their previous participation and their status as high school students. The team was formed when USAT introduced the High School Program in 2016, which allowed the coach to reach out to high school students who had prior experience in triathlon.

Roles and Responsibilities: Coach Matthew Clancy, a USAT Level II Triathlon Coach and the owner/head coach of E3 Endurance, was responsible for recruiting and coaching the athletes. The team's support staff consisted of parent volunteers who helped with various tasks, such as communications with the head coach and filling in gaps in the process.

Volunteer Engagement: The E3 Endurance High School Team had limited volunteer engagement, with most of the responsibilities being handled by Coach Matthew Clancy and the parents who stepped up to assist. The team's operations, development, design, promotion, and implementation were primarily led by the head coach.

Organizational Flexibility: E3 Endurance managed all aspects of the team with the assistance of parents who were familiar with triathlon and USAT. This included coordinating travel, accommodations, and other logistical aspects of the team's activities.

Impact and Success: The E3 Endurance High School Team benefited from having a USAT Certified Training Center infrastructure and a USAT Level II Coach. The team's success relied on the coach's expertise and the parents' involvement in managing day-to-day logistics, travel, team morale, camaraderie, and fun.

Administrative Build: Initially, the support staff consisted of Coach Matthew Clancy as the head coach, and parent volunteers who assisted with communications. There was no hierarchical structure, and parents filled in wherever necessary. The volunteers were a good fit for their roles due to their experience in triathlon and their willingness to support their athletes.

Duties Held by Kids: While the team did not assign specific roles to the athletes, they naturally gravitated towards certain responsibilities within the team.

Team:

Size of the Team: The team initially started with the minimum number of athletes required to score in High School Nationals, which was four boys and four girls. The team's size and composition were driven by the scoring parameters set by USAT.

Recruitment of New Kids: The team focused on recruiting athletes based on the scoring requirements for High School Nationals. The team consistently brought a minimum of four boys

and four girls each year to the championships. When the strongest leaders graduated, the team continued to recruit new athletes to maintain the required team size and composition.

Closing Remarks:

Looking back, the coach and team members acknowledge the importance of having a structured framework for the High School Triathlon Division. Having clear guidelines and development strategies for independent schools and accommodating both elite and non-elite athletes could contribute to the growth of the sport. The team faced challenges when transitioning from the High School Division to the Junior Elite Division, as the non-draft legal high school athletes were discouraged by the more competitive junior athletes. The team's current composition consists solely of junior elite athletes, but they recognize the need for diverse pathways to success and fulfillment in the sport. Direct quote from coach:

“YE/JE development model, with some teams, most likely isn't very accommodating to non-elite level athletes. In as much, as their might need to be 2 divisions at the HS Level (Elite & Open) so that YE/JE athletes don't discourage the HS Division. [...]

I will say that our 2016 High School Team was a GREAT Team. Amazing athletes, and SO MUCH FUN! We had a junior team at the same time, that grew under the high schoolers. One of the biggest challenges for our squad was transitioning our Youth Elite & High School Team to become "ONE" team when HS Nationals ended.

We lost all our non-draft legal High School athletes, because they YE Athletes were so much better, it was demoralizing and pulled the team in many weird ways, that we never recovered from. Our team now is ONLY YE/JE. We have no athletes that are non-draft athletes. Which is unfortunate! Because, as ALL OF US know, that's not the only route to success/fulfillment in our sport.”

Outputs: Maintaining a moderately competitive environment within high school clubs is crucial for fostering the development of beginner athletes and cultivating greater interest in the sport. While it is important to create an inclusive and supportive atmosphere, it is equally important to strike a balance that challenges athletes to improve and reach their full potential.