



Case Study: Kids That Tri Cleveland

Genesis for the Program

The Kids That Tri Cleveland (KTT Cleveland) program was founded with a clear mission: to introduce triathlon to a charter school in Cleveland that lacked after-school sports programs, primarily serving children from underserved communities, many of whom were kids of color. The primary goal was to provide these students with tools for a healthy, active lifestyle while broadening their horizons. For many of these children, the program offered their first experience of the Lake and participation in a sporting event.

Critical Initial Steps

The first few critical steps taken in the early stages of the program were:

- **Securing Commitment:** The KTT Cleveland team connected with the Athletic Director and Head of School, securing their commitment and assistance in developing the program.
- **Information Meeting:** An information meeting was scheduled for prospective athletes to introduce them to the program.

Must-Do Steps in the First 60 Days

In the initial 60 days of the program, several essential steps were undertaken:

- **Formation of USAT Youth Development Club:** KTT Cleveland formed a sanctioned USAT Youth Development Club, which involved obtaining insurance and annual youth memberships for the participating children.
- **Coach Training:** A core group of coaches was gathered, and they completed Safesport and CPR training.
- **Season Definition:** The program defined its season from April 1 to August 12, culminating in the TriCLE triathlon.
- **Partnership with Downtown YMCA:** KTT Cleveland partnered with the Downtown YMCA to access facilities for swimming, workouts, and gear storage, as the school had limited hours and access.
- **Mission Statement and Forms:** The program established a mission statement and created participation forms to formalize its structure.

Program Cost and Inclusivity

KTT Cleveland decided not to charge any fees for participation, aiming to be fully inclusive to kids living below the poverty line. The program provided bikes, swim gear, wetsuits, racing uniforms, training apparel, running shoes, bike helmets, and entry fees. As economically better-off children joined, the decision to keep the program cost-free was maintained to ensure fairness.

Equipment Procurement

Equipment procurement was achieved through various means, including:

- **Donations:** The program sought bike donations through social media and received generous donations of used gear from triathletes and cyclists nationwide.
- **Local Bike Shop Partnership:** A local bike shop provided access to bike parts and accessories.
- **Support from Companies:** Companies like Quality Bicycle Products and Newton Running offered discounts on bike parts and running shoes, respectively.

Lessons Learned

Some valuable lessons were learned during the program's development:

- **Swim Training:** Teaching kids with no swimming experience, especially for open water swims, proved challenging and time-consuming.
- **Special Needs:** The program faced difficulties in handling kids with developmental disabilities, diverting attention from the core participants.

Future Plans

For the future, KTT Cleveland plans to:

- **Program Duration:** Evaluate the duration of the program, considering that the current five-month duration may conflict with school activities.
- **Distribute Responsibilities:** Delegate responsibilities among adult leaders to prevent burnout and ensure smooth operation.
- **Swimming Requirement:** Establish a minimum swimming requirement for participation.
- **Transportation:** Address transportation issues for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Advice for Starting a High School Club

Jerry Shere offers valuable advice to those looking to start a high school club:

- **Create a Solid Structure:** Develop a professional structure for the club to make a positive impression on parents, athletes, and school personnel.
- **Consider School Sports Seasons:** Align club activities with school sports seasons to avoid competition or conflicts.
- **Participate in Local Races:** If feasible, consider forming teams for local races and liaise with State Athletic Associations to ensure eligibility for student-athletes.
- **Have Fun:** Remember to prioritize enjoyment and a positive experience for the students.

Team Diversity

KTT Cleveland had ten diverse athletes on the team, although not all of them completed the season due to transportation challenges. Exposure to successful athletes of color in triathlon, such as Max Fennel, Khadijah Diggs, and Sika Henry, is expected to increase the interest of these young athletes in multisport.

Contact Information

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