

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO STARTING A HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

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.

Step 1: Alert your multisport community of your interest in starting a High School Club and follow this simple plan for accomplishing that. For application here, ‘community’ refers to all those who have even a tertiary tie to the sport from community program leads to YMCAs, YWCAs, Schools/teachers, Institutions/administrators, business leaders, retailers, event directors, and single sport/multisport coaches. Everyone in a community might want to play a part at some level so the approach is not to assume that any of these groups are not interested in being stakeholders in this program.

Step 2: Whenever approaching any group, have a one pager (we will create for you) that responds to the “Why”. The “Why” should be simple to explain – by recruiting HS kids to join a club, you are growing and strengthening you’re your local community and impacting the sport at a very important juncture where kids are often seeking ties to positive and fun activities.

Step 3: 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.

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. Whom might the parent(s) know? Is it another parent, a teacher, or an administrator? Leverage each of them. Speak to them about how advantageous the development of a high school multisport club is and how it can improve the experience athletes have during their high school years.

Best targets 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 background or no sports background at all.

Sports we are supporting with club development

- If USAT were to just create a triathlon club, the ability to grow the club to significant numbers would be impacted. The intent here is to support the many disciplines that multisport constitutes – triathlon, duathlon, aquathlon, aquabike, off-road (now known as Cross), and even winter. By offering a cross section of disciplines, you increase the ability of the club to grow exponentially. Be creative. Be inclusive. Try different things. There is not magic recipe for how you mix and match these sports.

Eligibility: Students are eligible to compete as part of a High School Club starting the summer after their 8th-grade graduation and continuing until September 1st after their senior year. The ages will vary but all athletes will be entering high school, registered in high school currently, or would have just graduated from their senior year.

Contact Single Sports Coaches: Coaches of single triathlon disciplines might not know the benefit of cross-training in multisport and that triathlon is an ideal “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/multisport 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. NICA (and independent programs that support off-road cycling) for example, is a fast

(and independent programs that support off-road cycling) for example, is a fast-growing off-road cycling program. Cross Tri or Duathlon could be a highly probable tie for them to do outside of the off-road cycling season.

Step 4: Identify the HS Club Lead

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 person that developed the new club.

Step 5: 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 and program materials to assist with the growth and development of the club. Registration is free for youth and high school clubs. 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 your High School club](#)

1. Create a personal USAT profile if you do not already have one at the [USAT Member Hub](#).
2. Once in your profile, visit the "Club Manager" section where you will start your club application.
3. Complete each section of the application until the payment screen where you will process the registration.
4. The club certification is free of charge for 2023 and insurance is steeply discounted.
5. A Club Profile should be registered for every high school club to be a part of the program.

Club Insurance: USAT recommends that high school clubs secure insurance. [USAT Club Insurance](#) is offered via USA Triathlon's broker, IOA, which is a very affordable option. Club insurance includes general liability for the club and participant accident coverage during in-person group club activities for the athletes.

USAT Member Registration

All students must have a USAT membership. Youth annual memberships are \$10 for U18 athletes and \$36 for ages 18-23. Registered clubs receive a code that is good for 10 free youth annual memberships which can be distributed to existing and new members of the club.

Contact clubs@usatriathlon.org to receive your club's code for 10 free youth annual memberships. A new Youth Premier Membership is \$25 and is valid until the athlete's 18th birthday.

Step 6: Contact the Talent Scouts for your State or Area

Talent Scouts are selected by USAT to help grow HS triathlon at the state and local levels. 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. Locate your area's talent scout by visiting the [high school triathlon](#) and [click here to find out more](#) about the role of the talent scouts.

Step 7: Marketing

Find a volunteer 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 an 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. So, pieces should be focused and targeted.

Step 8: Training and Facilities

Clubs set their own schedules but talk to local schools about access to facilities and space for training like weight room, treadmills, stationary bikes, and an 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). Some club leaders will negotiate sponsorships around use as a tradeoff for marketing they can receive. Barter first, pay rental fees second. Every need should be negotiable.

Step 9: Finding a Coach with High School Interest

Each club will be encouraged to partner with a local USAT Certified Coach or a coach or contact (athletes, parents, etc.) 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. One avenue to pay for coaching includes grants through the USAT Foundation. The coach and club lead relationship is an important one to create early in the development of the program. Options for a coach to generate revenue will exist through creative opportunities that will ultimately arise.

Step 10: Sponsors

There are businesses with soft spots that might have an interest to support your club and the youth movement. Consider contacting local bike shops and running stores and letting them know of the local club and ways they can support it. Don't assume other retailers might not have an interest. Everyone in community business might have the desire to support the club in ways you have not thought about.

Step 11: 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 on 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 to entry and may allow success for some athletes who may not fit the traditional triathlon model.

Note that the State's Talent Scouts and even USAT staff 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 12. 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 Championships](#) 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

Tim Yount: tim.yount@usatriathlon.org

[High School Program Webpage](#)

[USA Triathlon Member Hub](#)