

ATHLETE RECRUITMENT FOR HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

Recruiting athletes for high school triathlon events and clubs requires a focused approach that targets students within the school community. Here are some steps to consider when recruiting athletes for high school triathlon events and clubs:

Where to look for potential recruits:

- Databases of athletes that are thriving in any of the three disciplines at their high school (High performance Team Contact List)
- Single Sport athletes though talent scouts
- Town halls
- **Local sports clubs:** Contact local swimming, running, and cycling clubs to identify athletes who may be interested in expanding their skillset by joining a triathlon club. Many student-athletes may be interested in cross-training or trying a new sport during the offseason. Highlight the benefits of triathlon training for overall fitness and performance enhancement.
- **Social media and online platforms:** Utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook groups or Instagram, to advertise the club and attract potential recruits. You can also post in local sports forums or websites dedicated to triathlon or multisport events. In many communities there are also chat rooms where people post many things from seeking who the best plumber is to consider to a horrible dining situation with a restaurant. This is low hanging fruit to post base club details and contact info.
- **Host tryout sessions:** Organize tryout sessions or mini-triathlons within the school premises or nearby facilities. This allows interested students to experience the sport firsthand and assess their interest and aptitude. Provide guidance and support to help them through the process. USAT calls these combines and they have deemed successful in finding high end interest. Key is finding locations to host the swim and run near the same location. Tryout sessions can also be indoors which can lessen the intimidation factor for many kids.
- **Connect with local triathlon clubs:** Establish connections with local triathlon clubs and invite their coaches or experienced athletes to share their expertise with high school students. This collaboration can provide additional training opportunities and exposure to the wider triathlon community.
- **Leverage your existing athletes first, parents second:** The best recruiters for any programs are the kids themselves. They can post on social media, they can hob knob with kids in school and can engage others in special interest committees they might be part of during the school season. Parents are second on that chain of best recruiters. NICA has shown that word of mouth expression is at the top of ways to build and grow club interest and participation. If the experience is positive and fun, that is the starting point.

What to look for in athletes:

Single Sport Athletes: Seek athletes with a foundation in swimming, running, or cycling, who might want to consider explore new discipline or trying themselves out as a multisport athlete.

Hardworking and athletes that want to have fun: Look for athletes who demonstrate a strong work ethic and a desire to improve. This group is all about having fun and dabbling in the sport.

Kids who might not fit the standard triathlete mold: Many kids have experienced youth sports in ways that might not be ideal for them to ever want to return to any sport. Getting cut from a team or not having a coach who engaged them in the workouts are things that happen with many sports even at the youth level. How about those coaches who didn't work with kids on getting better every day? These are all the reasons around what this club can do for these kids to re-engage in sport.

Existing triathletes: Yes, it is important for existing triathletes who are not currently engaged in a club to have a presence on a new club build. Key is not having them intimidate others because of that experience. They can be great mentors and with the right delivery and timing, can assist coaches in various workouts that kids will be asked to do.

Positive attitude: Seek athletes who maintain a positive mindset, even during challenging training sessions or competitions. A positive attitude can be infectious and contribute to a supportive team environment.

How to communicate with athletes and their parents:

Information sessions: Organize information sessions where athletes and their parents can learn about the Triathlon Club, its goals, mission/vision, training schedules, and any associated costs. Use this opportunity to address any questions or concerns they may have. Have handouts or info cards that each person can take with them after the meeting. Follow up with them after the meeting on next steps.

Email newsletters: Regularly send out newsletters or email updates to keep athletes and parents informed about training sessions, upcoming events, and any changes or important announcements.

Open communication channels: Provide contact information, such as an email address or phone number, where athletes and parents can reach out to ask questions or seek clarification. Respond promptly and professionally to their inquiries.

Communication platforms: Some will use some group chat app that allows for information sharing. GroupMe and Slack are two common ones. What's App is another.

Remember to emphasize the benefits of participating in triathlon, such as improved fitness, time management skills, goal setting, and teamwork. By implementing these strategies and creating a supportive environment, you can successfully recruit athletes for high school triathlon events and clubs.