

## TRIATHLON NEW BRUNSWICK Interested in Starting A Triathlon Club?

As detailed in our "Tri NB Club Affiliation Information Document", there are a number of great reasons why a strong club network is vital to the long-term success and growth of our sport. Taking the first step in starting a club is easy to do and listed below are a number of tips to help you through the process. Working with dedicated people for common goals can be very rewarding, and we are confident that your hard work in organizing a club will pay dividends! Now, let's get to work, shall we?

### **Why start or join a club in the first place? I can train just fine on my own, become better, and don't need to train with others thank you!**

Well, that may be the case for a few "A" type triathletes, but there are many folks out there who are looking to clubs for other reasons. For example, to form an identity with their chosen sport, social interaction and engagement with others, as well as training and racing opportunities as a member of a larger group. The internet is riddled with websites and social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) which all play into our need to associate with others who share our passions and join with them for a common purpose. While triathlon has traditionally been an "individual" sport, times are changing. Advancements in technology, training, products, nutrition and more have changed the way triathletes train and dedicate themselves to becoming better through our sport. The sharing of information within a club or group environment and the acceptance (inclusion) one finds within it are strong arguments for aligning with or better yet, starting a club. And of course, clubs are fun! That's right. We may train hard but should never lose focus on having fun at the same time. It's hard to beat the sharing of training or racing "war" stories with friends after it's over, and the pride you feel in achieving your goals.

### **"Work your plan and plan your work"**

Now it's time to get down to business. Here are a few "high level" suggestions to start you off on the right foot!

- Think through your expectations for your club. Determine the general guidelines and plan for your club. Who is it aimed at? Experienced triathletes, newbies, both? What types of activities will your club focus on? Swim workouts, run, bike, all the above? What facilities will you need to look into to make it happen?
- Spend some time browsing the internet, reviewing other triathlon clubs and how they are organized. Start small, and let your club evolve over time. Don't get overwhelmed or lost by the size, depth and activities of larger clubs...you'll get there, be patient!
- Draw on the resources of experienced triathletes or sport contacts in your town or city. Ask questions at local swim, bike or run shops, even your local gym...is anyone interested in working with you in setting up your club? Provincial sport associations, Chambers of Commerce and business groups may have suggestions or be able to offer advice as well (in the form of possible grants, subsidies, key contacts and more). \*\* Don't forget to check out our Athlete Resources page on our website.
- Arrange a club charter meeting and promote it! This will be an important step in the process in terms of gathering interested individuals together to start your club. Talk it up, print flyers, post ads, network on-line...be creative and get the word out there!
- In considering your first meeting, don't forget about the small things which make a big difference: location of the meeting, room setup, media and visual aids, refreshments, etc.
- Don't be shy to ask for support in advance from others who share your desire...getting people involved from the start displays a sense of commitment to taking action and helps develop others for future positions of responsibility in your club.

## Charter Meeting Agenda Suggestions

- Decide on a club name. Seems like a “no brainer”, but it is an important decision and not one to be taken lightly!
- Elect a Club Executive. This is generally a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (at a minimum). We suggest an internet search to provide you with more detailed information on formal meeting protocols and position descriptions, motions, voting procedures, taking minutes and other key points to assist in running your meeting(s).
- Put together a club vision, mission statement, bylaws (constitution) and values. This is a great starting point and helps formalize the club direction and set the tone for the future.
- Discuss and decide on club training activities, membership fees (if applicable), club colors and uniform, website or blog setup, official address and contact info for the club, future meetings and calendar and other incidentals.
- If desired, committees can be set up and formalized. For example, a youth development committee, social committee, sanctioning committee...this will depend on the size of your club and you desired goals and purpose for forming. Committees are a great way to involve larger numbers of your club in decision making, getting their buy in and commitment at the same time.
- Set the expectations up front that if you are a member, you will be 100% committed. If you are taking on a role of responsibility, your follow through and engagement is critical! Don't be afraid to hold members accountable for their (in) action and make the changes necessary to grow your club in a positive and motivating fashion.
- In order to become a Tri NB affiliated club, incorporation is required. Details on this can be found in the “*Tri NB Club Affiliation Information Document*”.

## Ways to Make Your Club Successful

**Bottom line: engagement, activity and communication. End of story.** These are the keys to a successful club. You may have a great looking club jersey or website, but if your club is not actively training, socializing, celebrating / sharing success and encouraging all members to participate, your club will be short lived.

- Of course, a regularly updated blog or club website is a great focal point for communicating and coordinating activities. How about a Facebook page or Twitter account? These are also great ways to stay in touch! Make sure you set up a calendar of regular meetings as well to stay connected.
- Social events are important as well. Season end celebrations, BBQ's, fun runs, pub nights, pot lucks and more are all suggestions to keep things fun, meet others and have a great time (which balances out all that training you have been doing!).
- Talk it up. Never miss the opportunity to reach out to others an encourage them to join, wear your club colors with pride at races, and be proud of your club.
- Be creative and look for opportunities to benefit club members. For example, is there a charity your club could become involved with? How about discounts on gear at local shops? How about drawing a product representative or name athlete into a speaking engagement at a future meeting to share their knowledge or product info? Look into organizing inter-club competitions...there are lots of possibilities.

Remember, clubs are set up for a purpose but never lose sight of the fact that this is sport. Feel free to take it seriously but have fun and enjoy the ride (pardon the pun). If you put the effort in up front, you will be reaping the rewards in the long run (another pun, the last one, we promise). Action and results...good luck with your start up and we will see you at the races!