



**READY, SET, TRI!**

**YOUTH PROGRAMMING GUIDE**



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# TRIATHLON 101

## WHAT IS TRIATHLON?

Triathlon and multisport are athletic contests and endurance sports that combine the disciplines of Swimming, Cycling and Running into a single event.

Triathlon is the combination of all three disciplines into one single event, but multisport includes other events such as Duathlon which combines the Cycling and running into one event, aquabike which combines Swimming and Cycling as well as Swim-Run events sometimes called “Splash and Dash”.

Athletes racing in a triathlon, or any multisport event must be proficient in swimming, cycling and running and are timed from the beginning of their swim event to the finish line of their run event including the time taken to go from one discipline to the other.

In triathlon the three disciplines are not treated as separate events, but rather are done in sequential order and the cumulative time of all three is the athlete's finish time.

Triathlon is open to anyone who wants to participate, athletes who compete and participate in triathlon come from all walks of life, all demographics, all body types and all ages. There is no single characteristic that makes a “triathlete” rather because triathlon is made up of three disciplines in one it is uniquely suited to any person who wants to learn and compete.

## YOUTH TRIATHLON RACING

Triathlon and multisport is a fantastic introductory sport for youth athletes, the multidisciplinary aspects make it perfect for youth and junior athletes, because there are three disciplines to master. Triathlon helps to keep kids engaged in the process of improvement and fun without frustration or boredom.

## YOUTH TRIATHLON DISTANCE GUIDE

Triathlon distances can cover a very wide range, but for youth athletes the distances are generally tied to age-appropriate targets designed to keep things short, fun and engaging while still challenging and exciting.

Each race distance will vary a bit based on the space available, but below is a chart to help you prepare your athletes for the appropriate targets for athletes of their age category.

<b>Athlete Age</b>	<b>Swim</b>	<b>Bike</b>	<b>Run</b>
7-8	50-100 yards	Up to 2 miles	.5 mile
9-10	100 yards	Up to 3 miles	.5 mile
11-12	200 yards	3-4 miles	1 mile
13-15	200-400 yards	5-6 miles	Up to 2 miles

## **COMMON TRIATHLON TERMINOLOGY**

As with any sport there are lots of sport specific terms and phrases that can make things feel complicated to a newcomer, but below is a quick primer on some of the most common triathlon specific that may apply to your youth triathletes:

### **KEY TERMS**

Transition- The transition is the part of any multisport event where an athlete is changing from one discipline to another. This is a timed portion of the event and thus is completed as quickly as possible.

- For example, in a triathlon consisting of a swim, a bike and a run there will be two transitions. The first, which is commonly referred to as T1 is where the athlete will come from the swim and get ready to go out on their bike. A triathlon will also have a second transition commonly known as T2 where the athlete will come in from the bike and begin to run.

Transition Area- This is a specifically designated area of the race event where athletes will perform the transition from one sport to another. All their gear will be kept in one location where they will return before the bike and run portion of the race.

Brick Workout- A brick workout is a workout that combines two disciplines of the sport into one workout. For example, a youth athlete may bike for 10 minutes before practicing Transition two and going for a short run. The goal is to better replicate the demands of the sport.

## OTHER KEY TERMS

### MULTISPORT RACE TYPES

- Triathlon: A race that combines swim, bike, run.
- Aquabike: A race that combines swim and bike.
- Aquathlon: A race that combines swim and run.
- Duathlon: A run, bike, run combination race.
- Off-road triathlon: An open water swim, mountain bike ride, trail run combination race.

### TRAINING TERMS

- Warm-up: Light exercise before a race or workout to warm up your muscles.
- Cooldown: Physical activity and stretching done after a workout or competition.
- Cross-train: Any activity other than the athletes primary focus that helps to build different skills.
- DNF: Stands for did not finish.
- DNS: Stands for did not start.

### CYCLING TERMS

- Aerobars: Bike handlebars that allow athletes to ride in a tucked position.
- Drafting: When two or more cyclists ride close together to help reduce wind resistance and save energy.
- RPM: Stands for revolutions per minute, which is the number of times the athlete turns the pedal a full revolution each minute.

### SWIMMING TERMS

- Wetsuit: A close-fitting suit made of a rubber-like material and worn by swimmers when they are in cold water to keep their bodies warm.
- Front-Crawl: The predominant stroke used by triathlete, characterized by a face down, prone position and alternating arm strokes

### MISCELLANEOUS TERMS

- PR: A personal record or your best time in a race of a specific distance.
- Race packet: The packet each athlete receives before a race. It usually includes a race number, swim cap and timing chip.
- Racing age: The athlete's age on Dec. 31 of the competition year.
- Waves: When a race does not start in a mass, the race director will break athletes into groups called waves, often separated by gender and age groups.

## **TRIATHLON EQUIPMENT**

The gear in triathlon can seem daunting at first, but when we distill it down to only what a youth athlete will need to complete their first triathlons it is really not that complicated and this part of the sport can be incredibly fun for our newest young athletes. Below is a list of some of the crucial equipment for each discipline in a triathlon.

### **SWIMMING EQUIPMENT**

- Swimsuit
  - A comfortable swim suit for the athlete is important and the athlete will wear this for the duration of the event including the bike and run.
- Swim Cap
- Swim Goggles

### **CYCLING EQUIPMENT**

- Comfortable Cycling Attire
  - For youth athletes this is commonly their Swim Suit and a T-shirt with shorts optional
- Bike
- Helmet
- Shoes

### **RUNNING EQUIPMENT**

- Shoes
- Comfortable Running Attire

# GETTING YOUR PROGRAM STARTED

## ADVERTISING

It is essential to advertise your program and generate excitement and interest! To ensure that your advertising is delivering the information, use these important components:

- What is the program about and how is it presented?
- When is the program?
- What is the age group that this program applies to?
- Link to register for program when applicable.
- Contact info for questions.
- Depending on the platform method of advertising can include images.
- Include any kind of free swag items the participants will receive for being in the program..
- At times leave the pricing out of the advertising and especially when you include the link to the programming as that drives curiosity and drives people to use the program registration link to find out information like pricing, age, skill level, more in depth program description etc.

NOTE: Remember your audience! Make it easy to read and not put any unnecessary burdens on your audience to figure out what you are saying or click on too many links to get the information about the program.

It is important to time the advertising so you create the interest and not bombard the audience with too much too often. Having quality content makes a difference in capturing your audience. You can advertise through social media, engagement emails, flyers, a table at an open house for upcoming seasonal programming, and community events.

Showcase the value of your program to parents/and guardians and how the kids will benefit. Remember, besides the kids learning a sport this is also all about fun. You are the driver of this energy!

Have a blurb about your coaches, their backgrounds, any relevant credentials the coaches have, why they are passionate about triathlon/multisport and introducing it to youth.

## DETERMINING PROGRAM SESSION, LENGTH AND ABILITY LEVEL

There are a variety of ways to deliver the triathlon program to fit into your programming style.

- 4 Week Program
- 8 Week Program
- Summer Specialty Camp 1 week
- Weekly Club-ongoing yearly timeline
- Clinics
- Seasonal: Spring, Summer, Fall

For a 4-week session it is recommended to host two sessions per week. One on weekdays and one on weekends. This maximizes the content of the program to be delivered and not having to distill the program and compromise the delivery of the program experience.

For an 8-week session, you can host one session per week. Good Idea is to host 2 sessions per week that are separate registrations. This allows kids who already have commitments on the weekends to come during the week and the kids who have commitments on the weekdays to come on the weekends.

NOTE: Sometimes the kids will have scheduling issues, it is ok to allow the kids to flip flop the day they are technically registered.

Summer Specialty Camp is a Monday-Friday program. This is an all day summer camp. The coaches will coach the triathlon program in the morning after the kids are dropped off and the camp does their morning roundup with the camp kids.

A timeframe of 9:00 am to 12:00 pm is great because the kids have the morning of the triathlon program and end by going into their lunch time. Once the coaches are finished with their part of the camp day the kids go with their camp counselors for the remainder of the day.

Weekly Club Yearly Ongoing this can be a 1, 2, or 3 times a week program. This program welcomes all levels of participants and runs all year long.

Clinics- Clinics are great to host for beginners and more skilled athletes for learning and honing skills, providing a fun event, friendship and community environment, an opportunity to showcase the triathlon community and sport, and advertise the triathlon/multisport program.

## **SESSION LOCATIONS**

Swim: indoor or outdoor pool. Make sure you are coordinating your program calendar, dates and times, with the aquatics director in advance so that you will have the lanes reserved.

Bike: outside location or in a gym. If you need to use a gym, make sure you pay attention to the size of the class vs the size of the gym space. You may only need half the gym, or you may need and want the entire gym no matter the size. Make sure you are coordinating your schedule with the programs director in advance, so you have the gym reserved.

Run: outside location or in a gym. You may only need half the gym, or you may need and want the entire gym no matter the size. Make sure you are coordinating your schedule with the programs director in advance, so you have the gym reserved.



Transition Skills: outside location or in a gym. You may only need half the gym, or you may need and want the entire gym no matter the size. Make sure you are coordinating your schedule with the programs director and the aquatics director in advance so you have the gym and pool lanes reserved for the time frame you need them since this can take up more time than you are normally conducting your sessions.

#### Participant Age

\*6 or 7 start to 12 years old

13-17 years old

\*This can vary depending on what kind of program you are running.

\*There are times that parents/guardians will have a child that is on the cusp of the participant age, like a 6 year old that is almost 7 and meets the skill requirements for the programming. Offer a “Try Out” session to see how the child handles the program and gives you an opportunity to do your own assessment.

### **ABILITY LEVEL ASSESSMENT**

For all of the programming it is always good to set the levels of the skills required to participate. You do not want to leave anyone out but having the levels required in place gives parents/guardians an idea of what the program will ask of their child. There are always exceptions and it is important to be fluid in this circumstance.

In your program description include what the skill level requirements are.

- Example: “All participants must be able to proficiently swim at least 25 yards continuously and be able to ride and safely control a two-wheeled bicycle”.
- Example: This is tricky in the sense that you need to have kids swim unassisted from one end of the lane to the other end. It is important to convey to parents/guardians that it doesn’t have to be pretty swimming, they need to get from one end of the pool to the other unassisted.

In a circumstance like this, you can state that if the child doesn’t meet the swim requirements that child is welcome to come to the bike and run sessions of the program and then steer the parents/guardians to your swim program for lessons. This keeps the child in the program and getting a fun experience and education in the sport.

When you have a child that cannot ride a bike or is too big for a bike with training wheels and meets the swim requirements, you can offer for the child to come to swim and run.

- NOTE: You can teach kids how to ride a bike if you have enough staff, coaches and/or volunteers during a program bike session to take the kids who need this specific coaching into an area that is safe to teach them these skills while the other bike session is going on.

If you do not have enough coaches/volunteers to handle this during the session, you can run a 4 week 'learn to ride' program before the Triathlon program starts. Hosting a session 1 day per week for 4 weeks, ideally on weekend mornings, and each child will need to bring an adult to assist them throughout the sessions. You can have a little graduation ceremony and make them certificates to celebrate the achievement. They are now ready to join the Triathlon program.

This is about working with the families and to build a connected, supportive, trusting relationship with the parents/guardians/kids so they know that this program is going to find all the ways (we) can support their kids to participate.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

You may need the support of volunteers. Engage the support of people in your community center that are involved in triathlon/multisport, are interested in this sport, or have no familiarity and they get to learn about our wonderful community and support and serve our youth in their triathlon/multisport journey.

Reach out to the parents, as often they may be Triathletes or multisport athletes and willing to volunteer. They are bringing their child to practice, so they will be there driving there regardless.

You can use the internet and search for triathlon/multisport clubs and organizations in your locale. This is a great resource and often you will find a goldmine of people who want to volunteer to help our youth discover this amazing sport!

Once kids have aged out of your program, you can invite them back to be volunteers. Most high schoolers need to gain a certain amount of community service hours for each school year, so you are helping them out too.

Getting in front of your volunteer planning is a priority because people are very busy and have planned out schedules especially during the spring and summer seasons. Many adult triathlon/multisport athletes are training and racing and doing that managing the rest of their lives.

Create a spreadsheet database of volunteer contacts with contact information. You can keep notes about the volunteers, about their schedule preferences, volunteer preferences, and any other notable things that help nurture your relationship with the volunteers.

All volunteers must be background checked and have the SafeSport certification.

SafeSport certification requires recertification every six months.

\*Be sure to allow plenty of time ahead of the session start for background checks to be conducted.

They can take several weeks to be completed

<https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

Make sure to THANK your volunteers. They are a huge part of the foundation of why a program like this will be successful. And you want them to keep volunteering!

Information to give to volunteers when asking for their assistance in volunteer emails and sign up:

- Description of program.
- Description of sessions.
- Description of what each session volunteer duties will be and can be.
- Dates.
- Days of the week.
- Session time start and finish.
- Assign a primary coach to be the main point of contact for the volunteers. Provide the coach cell phone number and email so the volunteers know who to communicate with.
- Let the volunteers know the timeframe you want them to arrive prior to the start of the session and leave once the session is over.
- State if there are expectations of lifting heavy equipment, any set up and breakdown of session equipment.
- Information for volunteers to bring hydration and/or fuel, clothing to fit the season and environment the session is being held, sunscreen, hat, etc.
- Address of session location, if needed.
- Information on where to park, if needed.
- Let volunteers know they can choose the dates and times to fit their schedule, meaning volunteers do not have to commit to an entire program duration.
- Remind volunteers they need to be fluid about the sessions and have the ability to pivot with the coaches when changes need to be made to the session in advance and on the fly.
- Let the volunteers know the primary method of communication from their main point of contact coach and the frequency of communication. Example: Every Sunday you will receive an email about the upcoming session plan and a confirmation of your day, time, and volunteer role.
- State any training that will need to be done prior to the sessions: In Person, manual, or online, dates, days, time, location address. If in person, state how long the training session is.
- Thank the volunteers for their time, help, dedication to help the kids learn and have fun, and make the program a success.
- If possible, provide a Volunteer T-shirt as free swag. This also helps the kids identify who is there to help in the session.

# **RUNNING YOUR PROGRAM**

## **A PREPARED COACH IS A SUCCESSFUL COACH!**

- Planning ahead and organization is a priority for success.
- Have your equipment organized. Having plastic storage containers and ziplock bags are great for keeping everything organized. It will get messy through the program, take time to clean out and reorganize.
- Review your curriculum well in advance of the session. It is ok to have it on a clipboard and reference it throughout the session and you need to be very familiar with it before you walk into your session.
- Charge any bubble machines, speakers, cell phones before the session.
- If you create a playlist you must make it kid friendly and be very aware of the lyrics of the music you choose.
- Arrive at your session with plenty of time in advance to set up your equipment, ensure that the area you are using is available, free of debris and any other hazards.
- Have name tags already made for your participants, get name tags that will stay on clothing. This is great for the initial sessions when you are learning everyone's names.
- Have name tags already made for all of the coaches and volunteers. Always have name tags for volunteers at every session.
- Arriving before your session starts gives you time to get set up and check over the setup, go to the bathroom, and take a breath before everyone arrives.
- You may need to print or write material, do it the day before.
- If you have a lot of equipment and gear for a particular session, pull that gear the day before, or at least check it and know that it is there for you to pack.
- Have your phone ringer on and volume up so you can hear if any parents call, text or email you before and during and after the session.
- Send your parent/guardian, volunteer and coach session info emails out on the designated day so everyone knows what is going on.

## **WELCOME ENVIRONMENT AND BELONGING**

This is a great opportunity to connect with your participants as their coach and foster a sense of belonging and a team environment.

- Get to know all of your participants' names and when they come in, welcome them using their name. Make it a point to find a moment to ask them about their day, "What was the best part of your day today?"
- During the session use the participants name "Hey Emma, great bike handling skills! Nice Job!"



- Ask questions that engage them to help make decisions about the training for the session. It gets everyone involved in the team environment and also has the kids working together to make decisions with you and their peers.
- DEIA is non negotiable for a welcoming environment and creating a sense of belonging. All coaches and volunteers should have basic DEIA training.
- When the parents/guardians drop and pick their kids up, say hello to them as well. Deliver a positive comment using their child's name.

## **DELIVERING THE BEST EXPERIENCE TO KIDS AND THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

A fundamental part of this program is about delivering an experience. Just like when you go to a restaurant, Disney, shopping at a store, YMCA, beach rental house, any event; this list can go on and on. Having an experience that is fun, safe, memorable, positive, friendly, caring, and professionally delivered is a normal and reasonable expectation.

Parents/Guardians are paying money for their kids to have an experience in this program. The kids have expectations and the parents/guardians have expectations.

This is noteworthy to ensure that it is always on the radar of the coaches to hold themselves to the highest of standards and professionalism to deliver the most instead of the least, and the best experience. You will be working with other coaches and volunteers and when you conduct yourself at this high level others will follow your lead and it makes it much easier to deliver the best experience.

Remember, everyone is watching, the other coaches and volunteers, the kids, the parents, the staff around, the other members of your community center, and people talk. The best kind of advertising is word of mouth!

You cannot make everyone happy and that is ok. Some may find this sport is just not for them no matter how wonderful the experience is, others may have unrealistic and unreasonable expectations.

A great way to help create a great experience is at the beginning of each new program have a huddle with the kids and have them work with you to create a set of Expectations for the program.  
Expectations: Behaviors and attitudes for success.

Use a big Post-It easel board and marker, ask if one of the kids wants to write it down as the group comes up with the expectations. This gives the kids ownership and skin in the game of their experience and sets the tone for a team environment and experience.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN COMMUNICATION AND EMAIL TEMPLATES**

- Weekly Session Communication- Set a day each week that the parents/guardians will receive each week's upcoming session information through email. Let the parents/guardians know to be on the lookout for the information on that day and that this is the primary method for all the information they need for their athlete to be prepared for the upcoming session.
- Parent/Guardian Email Privacy Protocol- Blind Copy parent/guardian email addresses. It is important to do this so you are not publishing and sharing email addresses. It is a respect of their privacy and needs to be a protocol that is always followed and respected.
- Cell Phone- It is a good idea to give your cell phone number and suggest the parents/guardians put it in their cell phones to make communications easier.
- Communication Response Time- In your welcome email kindly state that you will respond to communications via email and text as soon as possible and please allow 24-48 hours response times. For phone calls, state if you do not answer to please leave a voicemail. This establishes your boundary lines and sets the expectations for your participants' parents/guardians.

### **EXAMPLE EMAIL FOR WEEKLY SESSION**

Hello Triathlon Families!

This week's session is BIKE! We are working on cornering skills, braking, and pacing with some really fun drills and games!

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at 5:00 pm on Thursday in the lower parking lot!

For this session your child will need:

- Bike
- Helmet
- Filled water bottle
- Athletic shoes and socks (no sandals, crocs, flip flops)

Wearing a bike helmet is mandatory. In order to ensure the safest fit, please make sure your child's hair is styled so that the helmet will fit properly, the safety strap can be buckled, and no pressure points are created.

Everyone is doing a great job and Coach X and Coach Y are so proud of each of your triathletes for the awesome training they are doing!

**SWIM! BIKE! RUN! SO MUCH FUN!**

## **INCLUDE NECESSARY INFORMATION**

In your weekly email it is always good to state the time, the day, and where you are meeting. Also, do not expect people to read the emails and expect to get lots of questions even when you have sent emails with all the information. Gracefully respond and answer the questions.

## **END OF WEEK WRAP-UP EMAIL**

An end of week wrap up email is encouraged. Talking about what the kids worked on, naming some of the fun drills and games that you saw were a big hit with kids, any notable positive moments, and growth in the kids training.

## **EVENT INFORMATION**

When your participants are participating in a youth event that you are escorting and supporting, sending an email with the event information is a must. Do not assume people know anything about triathlon and the event protocols and preparation tips. There are plenty of people who have never heard the word triathlon and multisport and/or have never been exposed to this sport. This could be the first time a family is going to a triathlon/multisport event or any sporting event and they need your thoughtful guidance.

This kind of thoughtful communication can make a huge difference in the perceived value of your program. Too often the ball is dropped by coaches with poor communications and creates a level of frustration with parents/guardians. Do not make people hunt for the information no matter if it is a weekly email or an event email.

This is an opportunity to represent the triathlon/multisport community by showing how helpful and welcoming we are! This kind of care is a pathway to bring families together and showcase how family friendly our community is. These kids are not driving themselves to training and youth events which means ensuring the parents/guardians experience your welcoming, supportive embracing energy. You never know who you will inspire and the embracing and inclusive environment you create can also lead to any of the adults wanting to get into triathlon/multisport!

Below is one example of an event email. In the weeks leading up to the event it is good to do a separate email with only race day tips and USAT YouTube video of a similar style youth triathlon or if the event has their own media to use from a previous years event as a fun way for the families to sit together and get the idea of the event. Suggests to parents/guardians to sit with their kids and review this information. It gets the kids involved and if it happens in the kids home, it is time well spent with their parents/guardians.

## EXAMPLE EVENT EMAIL

Hello Triathlon Families!

We are so excited for your triathlete to participate in the Doylestown YMCA Youth Triathlon! Here are your race day logistics and helpful tips to enhance the experience for your child and you! A Prepared Triathlete is a Successful Triathlete!

Race Name: Doylestown YMCA Race Logistics

Race Date: Sunday, August 13th, 2023

Race Time: 6:30am- Transition Opens 7:30am- Race Begins

Race Ends: 11am

Race Location: 2500 Lower State Road Doylestown, PA 18901

### Race Day Information:

- Arrival time at race location: 6:30am!!
- You will pick up packets for your child at the packet pickup table. There are tons of volunteers and if you do not know where anything is just ask them.
- Meet your coaches at the tent we have set up in the upper parking lot. If you cannot find us please call the coaches cell number. This is where we can help you with the race bib and anything else you might need assistance with.
- If you are running late, get lost, are not coming, need any kind of help, call the coaches cell number and/or text.

### Parking:

Free race day parking is available in the following lots:

- Central Bucks West High School - All Lots
- Lenape Middle School
- Doylestown Health Hospital
- Side Street Parking, where applicable

### What to bring on race day:

- Preferred style of swim attire. Preferable to arrive in swim attire.
- Towel.
- T-shirt to wear over your swimsuit when doing the bike and run portion and shorts for girls if they want that to put over their swim suit.
- Filled water bottle.
- Athletic Shoes and Socks.
- Bike and helmet.
- Goggles and Swim Caps will be provided to you at the race.
- Clothes to change into after race, optional.



### Water Safety Protocols:

- Ages 3 to 5 are required to bring their parents into the pool, as well as jog alongside them during their short bike and short run.
- For ages 6 to 14, as well as all age groups from 3 to 14, we have a full pool of lifeguards, swim instructors, and swim team coaches helping aid swimmers throughout their swim.
- We also of course have and allow all participants to use lifejackets, pool noodles, and other flotation devices (swim blocks) to help them aid in their swim! Those are certainly allowed and children may bring their own from home - but we have and are of course invited to use ours! We have tons.

### Morning of Food:

- Eat a good breakfast, bring snacks for the road, before and after the race, and have lunch planned after the race.
- You are getting up really early, plan accordingly for the long day.
- Since you are getting up pretty early, if your child doesn't want to eat that early, do not force it. Plan on bringing food in the car and let them eat then. This way they get food in their system and no one is stressed.
- If you are bringing your wee ones who are not racing, please plan for them as well. While there is event food for purchase it is always a good idea to have water and foods, and plan for sun protection.

### Race Day Tips:

- Use the checklist in the athlete guide! Check and double check when you pack!
- You are getting up really early! It is much better to have everything set out and/or packed the day before. It will give you peace of mind and make race morning much easier for everyone.
- Organize everything you need for your kid(s) to race and everything you are taking on the trip, food, beverages, change of clothes etc.
- If your kid(s) do not want to eat that early in the morning on race day, have food for them in the car to eat before the race.
- Have a portable snack for them if they get hungry before the race.

### READ AND PRINT THE RACE DAY LOGISTICS EMAIL AND READ ATHLETE GUIDE!

- For older kids it is great to review the race day logistics and the athlete guide as this gives them the experience of getting prepared for their event.

NOTE: If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask me! If you need to call me or email me multiple times, that is ok! I know this is a lot of information and a lot of unfamiliar information. I am here to support you!

SWIM! BIKE! RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

## **ANTICIPATING CHANGE AND PIVOTING**

Things are going to happen that will create change in your session plans. This could be in the moment or as you watch the weather for your upcoming session or weather changes at your session.

This program is fluid and gives you creative freedom to make changes to the sessions while always keeping with the theme of the program and session plan.

Be prepared to pivot and modify your session plan. You can engage the kids and offer up some alternatives if the pivot in the plan happens during the session. Even if the session changes up to playing a long game of Sharks and Minnows, the kids will have a ton of fun, run and get exercise.

## **VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

Keep your volunteers well informed of what is expected of them and what their roles are at each session. A prepared volunteer is a successful volunteer.

Several days before the session email the volunteers to confirm the date, day, time of arrival, position for which they volunteered.

Include the address, meeting spot, parking information, reminder of attire to match the weather conditions and type of session plan, and to bring hydration.

Have all of your volunteers cell phone numbers in your phone and they have yours in their phone. This will allow everyone to expedite communications especially for last minute changes.

\*Make sure they are background checked and have a current SafeSport certification.

## **FUN! GAMES GUIDE**

Make warmups, cooldowns, and skills building more engaging and fun with these items (all items can be found on Amazon):

- Exercise Dice for Kids: Have the kids toss the dice and see what it lands on! These are adult hand sized dice, not game board dice.
- 10" Jumbo Customizable Inflatable Dice: Customize your drills while involving the kids in by rolling the dice for what the next drill will be. Can be used for Swim, Bike, and Run. Print your custom drills and fit into the pockets of the dice.
- Catch a Tail Game: Great for running exercise and kids forget they are training!
- Cooperative Stretchy Circle Rope Game: Place tennis balls on top of cones or on the ground in a 4 corners format and kids inside the stretchy rope and kids work together and stretch the rope to get the balls.

- Team Fun Mat Working Together: Kids get inside the mat/gigantic band and have to work together to move forward and backwards.
- Traffic Cone Obstacle Course: Use for running and cycling for skill building.
- Small Cone Cornering Course: Use for teaching cornering skills.
- Hopscotch Rings: Assemble hopscotch rings and have kids hop through warmups and running drills.
- Tennis Balls: Great for fun swimming drills. Make sure you let them dry out before storing them in a container or they will get sour!
- 303 Kid-Approved Exercises and Active Games: An amazing book to keep things fresh and fun!
- Rechargeable Bubble Machine: Great for outdoor activities to create a fun environment.
- Communicating and Attention Span with the Kids

This is about the kids having fun while they learn a sport and the skills needed to be active in the sport. The kids want to have fun, play with each other, and get all of that energy out. They will wiggle, fidget, look everywhere but at you, play with sticks, grass, their shoe laces, their shirt collars, talk to each other, while you are coaching them.

You have a very brief window of time to keep their attention and deliver information. When you are planning your session ahead of time, take time to create a script for the activity instructions. This gives you familiarity and allows you to expedite the information and not lose your audience.

Avoid asking rhetorical questions. This sets you up for failure when you need the kids to respond because they are used to you asking questions that you do not want a response from them.

If the kids are really full of energy when you first huddle up, consider putting on some fun music and let them run around and wiggle a lot of that energy out. Create a fun name for that moment, “Wacky Wiggle Time”, and tell them to go run around, dance, hop, skip, and set a timer for 5 minutes. Tell them when the music stops you will come back to X spot and start the next activity.

If you are in a swim session, you can start the session off by having everyone do a cannonball, jump, or dive off the blocks a few times (if you have blocks). If you do not have diving blocks, you can have the kids see how high they can jump in the water.

Keep the tone and energy fun, read your audience, get to know the special needs and/or social comfort of each of your kids.

## **IDENTIFY LOCAL USA TRIATHLON SANCTIONED YOUTH EVENTS**

<https://www.usatriathlon.org/multisport/youth>

Set a max drive time: 2-3 hours away as a max drive time. Events in travel time ranging from 45 minutes to 3 hours.

Then you can create an email flier and send out this information for parents/guardians and their kids to have on their radar to participate in. This is a great way to engage the families and create goals for your participants and get everyone involved and learning.

Racing at events should never be mandatory for participating in your program.

Max time of 2-3 hours is good to have as some families may want to make a weekend out of it. Your youth club could also make a weekend out of it going to an event that is this farther proximity.

Highlighting races that are 45 minutes to 1.5 hours because this is an easy travel distance from your town and doesn't really require an overnight stay.

## **DEIA: DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

### **SWIM ATTIRE**

In parent/guardian emails a considerate way to address swim attire is to use "Please have your child arrive in their preferred style of swim attire". There are a variety of reasons some kids may feel uncomfortable in traditional swimsuit styles. This may keep them from getting in the pool and also having fun if they are uncomfortable and self conscious about their bodies and the gender they identify as.

### **SWIMMING AND HAIR**

For some of the participants their hair may require extra care. Getting their hair wet or wearing a swim cap and hair drying needs to be managed with care. This is especially important if you are going from swimming to another activity outside of the pool.

### **BIKING AND HAIR**

Helmets are mandatory for biking. It needs to be thoughtfully stated in parent/guardian bike session emails to make sure their child's hair is styled so the helmet properly fits on their head. High ponytails or buns that cannot be adjusted prevent the child from wearing their helmet. Certain styling with beads and braids can create pressure points when the helmet is on the child's head. Loosening the helmet to release the pressure points enough that the helmet is sliding back is a safety risk. Also, when the child's hair is styled as an afro, there are times that the amount of hair may not allow the helmet to fit onto the child's head.



Being considerate and getting in front of this by working with the parents/guardians ensures the child is prepared and doesn't have to sit out because their helmet won't fit on their head.

This is a big reason why the Weekly Session emails several days before the session are very valuable as it gives parents/guardians lead time to make modifications and it sets the tone that the coach cares about all the participants, their comfort and experiences.

Always be proactive and active about DEIA with your participants and their families.

## **COMMUNICATION: BEHAVIOR CORRECTION AND SKILLS CORRECTION**

### **BEHAVIOR CORRECTION**

These are kids and regulating their emotions and energy is still being learned. They can be tired, hungry, stressed, dehydrated, you do not know the kind of home life they are living, they can be going through a life event or trauma, living with illness or in the process of a diagnosis, trying to figure out who they are, where they fit in and belong, they may not want to be in this program, they can be insecure, have fears, hormones can be at play which impacts mood and behavior, they can be really amped up kids and have a hard time regulating that energy, they can be attention seekers with good and poor behavior, some kids may have a special needs physically and/or emotionally, they may be struggling in school, have pressures from parents/guardians to perform.

If the disruption is chatter while a coach is talking, have one of your other coaches walk over and stand near where the kid or kids are talking. This usually breaks it up. If it doesn't stop the chatter, the coach can quietly say something like "Hey friend(s), pay attention, you wouldn't want to miss hearing the fun we are about to have". This way they are not put on the spot, and it doesn't disturb the entire group.

If you need to correct an individual's behavior gauge if you can let it slide until after the session or if you need to take the child off to the side.

You can say things like "Hey friend, how are you doing/feeling today?" which can help calm the situation and help the child not feel like they are about to get in a bunch of trouble. This is a moment when the child may tell you something that happened that has them upset or they are not feeling great, or you may get "I don't know". And they may very well not know how they feel and how to articulate it. Totally ok and respecting that is important.

Follow up with "Help me understand why you (said or did) X?" This is helpful because then you can engage in a short dialogue and it allows them to feel validated as they speak with you, their coach.

You may find out where the behavior is coming from and help them find a way to manage their emotions, feelings, and behavior.

It is also ok to ask them if they want to take a break and regroup. Not in a way that makes them feel like they are getting in trouble, just giving them some space, they still feel validated and are getting support from you.

At times you may have a kid or kids who don't want to do the activity or their fitness is not allowing them to perform at the level some of the others are performing. They may act out to get out of doing it. Always offer modifications and let them know they are still working the same engine (their body) through the modified movement and this will feel more comfortable for them to do, participate and have fun.

## **SKILLS CORRECTION**

As coaches we are helping our participants to improve their skills and techniques. The manner in which we deliver this information is strategic to how the information is received and how it gets processed in the child.

Ask the kids how they felt during the exercise and if there is anything they see or feel that needs an adjustment and feels good and is working for them in the exercise. This engages them instead of the coach always talking and giving lectures, gives them a sense of control, validates their participation, gives them a sense of belonging because you care about what they are doing and experiencing. This also helps them to envision themselves doing the drill or activity.

### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “BUT” AND “AND”**

When you need to correct technique it is best to state a positive about their performance and give them praise for that effort. There is a big difference between “But” and “And” when you deliver the correction.

1. Hey Peter! Good Job! Your catch and pull is looking super strong but let's work on the position of your hand entry. Let me show you what I mean and we can practice this and you'll be moving through the water like a missile!
2. Hey Peter! Good Job! Your catch and pull form is looking super strong and let's work on the position of your hand entry. Let me show you what I mean and we can practice this and you'll be moving through the water like a missile!

Using “And” doesn't invalidate the first praising comment and it lightens up the weight of the correction delivery.

## **BIKE SAFETY AND HELMET FITTING**

This is a must at the first bike session of each program you run.

Review bike safety with your participants and check over everyone's bikes. Have everyone put their helmets on to make sure they fit properly. Using a kid as a model, demonstrate an incorrect fit and a correct fit. Explain the reason for a proper helmet fit. A fun game to play on the first bike session is guessing the parts of the bike, including wheels, tires, saddle, handlebars, chain, brakes, spokes and reflectors. This way they are learning about the bike and understand the terminology. Explain they must pump up their tires before each session/race, as it will make them go faster.

Always have extra helmets on hand and a few different sizes. Have a bike pump on hand with valve adapters.

## **SESSION ENDING GROUP HUDDLE: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!**

Having the kids huddle up at the end of each session and cheer is great for creating a team environment. You can lead it the first time so they know what is happening and going forward pick a different kid to lead it.

You may pick a kid who is not comfortable doing this. Do not force it. You may ask them to pick someone else which still gives them a feeling of being a part of that moment.

This is a time to give quick positive feedback and acknowledge the greatness in all of them! "Keep shining like the stars you are!".

You can give out rewards after each session to encourage the kids to try harder, achieve a goal, show good behavior, show good sportsmanship, etc. You can use tokens chains or lanyards from "Fitness Finders" and they can collect on a chain or lanyard. At the end of each session, give out 1 or 2 tokens to each group and explain why they are receiving it. For example, "This token is going to Dylan for showing good sportsmanship when Johnny fell over, and Dylan checked he was ok and helped him up". Kids love rewards and it motivates them to be better. You can give every child a token in the first week to get them started and excited to earn more.

# **GENERAL TRAINING PRINCIPLES**

## **PRINCIPLES OF TRAINING**

Training, at its core, is the physical and mental preparation for an athlete's sport or a specific event. In exposing your youth triathletes to triathlon and preparing them for their first triathlon there are a few key principles you should keep in mind to help guide you and your athletes through a successful and fun program

### **SIMPLICITY**

Keep it simple! The goal with your program is to give kids a fun outlet and an exciting way to engage in a new activity. When in doubt, keep things simple and effective, it doesn't need to be complicated.

### **SPECIFICITY**

Training should be specific to the demands of the sport or the event the kids are training for. It should also be specific to the needs of each athlete when possible.

### **PROGRESSION**

The training should progress gradually throughout the program in order to challenge, stimulate and keep the athletes engaged in the process.

### **VARIENCE**

The training should be varied and change regularly. Doing the same thing over and over gets boring. Varying the activity or the sport helps to keep kids engaged.

### **CONSISTENCY**

Consistency is key to success and fun. If the kids are engaged and training consistently, training will feel much easier than if they are inconsistent. This goes for instruction as well, consistency is key, things get confusing when there is too much varied input, keep it consistent and simply

### **FUN**

Most of all, MAKE IT FUN! The goal with your program should be to make it fun and engaging for the kids.

## **SAFETY IN TRAINING**

Safety is critical in training and teaching kids proper safety early is key to creating a safe and healthy experience in the sport. Below are some of the key safety considerations for each sport.



## SWIMMING

- Always swim with a lifeguard present.
- Avoid long breath holding - Kids should be taught to avoid long breath holding games or training.
- Hypothermia - Be aware of early signs of hypothermia, while it is rare, hypothermia can happen during long exposure to even moderate temperatures of water with little activity. If your kids are shivering or looking cold, give them a chance to warm up.

## CYCLING

- Helmets- Helmets should always be worn when on a bike. Be sure the helmets are oriented properly and the strap is sung around the chin. A properly fitted helmet should not jiggle or move.
- Signaling - It is always good practice to teach turning signals to new cyclists even though many triathlons are on closed courses, this is a safety habit that will keep them safe at all times
- Traffic - Obey ALL relevant traffic laws ( be sure to familiarize yourself with your local and state cycling/ road safety laws)

## RUNNING

- Heat concerns - Familiarize yourself with common signs of heat exhaustion and be on the lookout for symptoms. Triathlon is predominantly a warm season activity and so any heat stress related signs and an athlete should be given the chance to cool down.
- Sidewalks- Always run on sidewalks, if available
- Running at night- Always run in well lit areas!

## NUTRITION

This program is a chance to mention and discuss health eating habits at all times. We want to emphasize a healthy lifestyle to the kids and a well balanced diet is a key to having lots of fun in the sport!

[MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov) can be a helpful resource in explaining healthy diet to kids

During training be sure to give the kids plenty of opportunities to drink fluids and hydrate.

## WHAT DOES TRAINING LOOK LIKE?

In order to help you get your program started, in this section you will find a sample training program for your aspiring triathletes. Obviously, every situation is going to be a little bit different, from program length, days of the week, participant skill levels and facilities available. Below we also provided some rough guidance on how best to adjust for some of the most common limitations, but always use your best judgment when adjusting the program to fit your kids needs and you should always start and finish with the question “Will this be fun?”

## FACILITY LIMITATIONS

Here lies the true beauty of multisport. Within the multi-sport family of events we have every combination of our three disciplines covered. If you don’t have access to facilities that allow your kids to participate in one of the sports safely you can still prepare them for a multi-sport event like duathlon or splash and dash races.

When it comes to what facilities make a good training environment for the kids, you do not need as much as you may think, a small parking lot of paved area is fine for the kids to play running games and ride their bikes in laps around. We do not need miles of roads and paths, we need a basketball court sized area that will allow the kids to move!

## SHORTER PROGRAMS

The 8 week program is designed to be segmentable and customizable to your program duration and schedule. In the end, our primary goal with the program is to give these kids a chance to try multisport. In this program, the first weeks are the most important, so depending on the length of your program you will simply follow the program from Day 1 for as long as your program is.

For example a 4 week program will complete the first 8 sessions of the plan.

But remember, you as the coach know your kids and their needs the best, so be adaptable and make sure you look at what your kids need to work on and adjust to fit them.

## MAKE IT FUN!

Most importantly our goal is to give youth athletes a fun and exciting exposure to triathlon and multisport, so always start and finish with the question “Will this be fun?” Because if it is fun, the kids will be engaged and they will want to participate and learn more.

# 8 WEEK SAMPLE CURRICULUM #1

## WEEK 1

Participants Need: Athletic shoes and filled water bottle.

### INTRODUCTION INTO TRIATHLON & MULTISPORT

SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

#### SUPPLIES:

- Post-it 20"x23" easel paper board
- Markers
- Name tags
- Transition towel
- Swim cap
- Goggles
- Helmet
- Bike
- Socks
- Run shoes
- 6 Traffic Cones
- Laminated SWIM, BIKE, RUN, TRANSITION, T1, T2 sheets for cones
- Tape
- \*Bottled water for kids that do not have filled water bottles, it happens more than you think.
- \*Have name tags ready for when kids arrive to put on.
- \*Have easel paper boards prepared prior to the session.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION AND CIRCLE TIME

- Coaches welcome all participants by name and introduce themselves.
- Engage kids asking them if they know what a triathlon is and what the order is. Swim Bike Run
- Ask if anyone has done a triathlon.
- Ask if they are excited to have fun and learn or enhance their skills in swimming, biking and running.
- Encouraging Moment: No matter if this is your first time experiencing this sport or if you have heard of it or done it before, this is all about having fun and doing your best.
- Tell the kids they are training for a race that will take place in the final session, this will get them excited about triathlon

Have fun and challenge yourself while you are doing this sport with your friends! It is also great for making new friends, helping you to be healthy, and gain more confidence. You'll learn skills in sportsmanship, teamwork, and resilience.

## 2. PRESENTATION

Present the easel board with the word TRIATHLON and the next sheet with SWIM BIKE RUN. Make this presentation big and colorful with markers and big enough for them to see. Talk about how fun triathlon is and also about Multisport. You can do an AquaBike, Aquathlon (Splash & Dash), Duathlon. Lots of fun ways to be active and challenge yourself.

- Allow for engagement with kids and stories they might want to share or goals they have.
- Be mindful some kids may not want to talk or they might be shy and especially if they have never heard of the sport and had any exposure to the sport. This could be intimidating for those kids. Do not force them to talk as they are getting comfortable and taking all of this in.
- Show kids this video to help them understand what triathlon is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rxphp807vUw>

## 3. TRANSITION SET UP EXAMPLE

- Bike with towel laid out with swim cap, goggles, helmet, socks and run shoes. Briefly explain each component and this is the gear used in the sport. (You can state that swim caps are optional. Some kids do not like swim caps and/or have sensory issues with them.)

## 4. WRITE GOALS:

- EXAMPLES:
  - Have fun!
  - Believe in yourself!
  - TRI YOUR BEST!
  - Lift up and encourage others!
  - TRY TO TRI!
  - Believe you can do this sport.
  - Don't give up!
  - Do a triathlon or multisport event!
  - Have Fun!

## 5. SET EXPECTATION:

- EXAMPLES:
  - Be kind.
  - Be respectful.
  - Listen and follow coaches instructions.
  - Raise your hand to speak when in group time.
  - Be SAFE! Safety is always a priority. (this is an opportunity to explain safety)
  - Have Fun!

## 6. ACTIVITY:

Warm Up! Briefly explain why this is important. Getting the body loose and heart rate up a little, getting the body all ready to have some active fun!

- Have the kids do dynamic stretching. Ask the kids if they have any warm up suggestions.
- Butts kicks
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Heel walking
- Frankenstein legs
- Side shuffle
- Karaoke
- Arm circles wide and narrow.

## 7. ACTIVITY:

### CONE 2 CONE!

- Place 3 cones on each side of the gym or field.
- On one side place the T1 and Bike cones next to each other.
- On the other side the first cone is Swim. About 10'-15' from that are T2 and Run cones next to each other. Place the Finish cone with the same spacing.
- As a group the kids will start at Swim Cone and run across to T1/Bike cone. Have the kids move their arms like they are swimming.
- Cheer the kids!
- On the other side have T1 and Bike cones next to each other. As a group the kids will pretend to be biking from T1 to T2. Tell them to use their imaginations when they are pretending to bike to T2.
- \*Engage the kids and ask them what is the next step.
- Cheer the kids!
- When the kids arrive at T2 and Run cones engage and ask them what the next step is. As a group have the kids do a couple of laps running and put the finish cone out for them to run to.
- Cheer the kids!
- Take a water break.
- Ask if there are any questions or comments.
- Repeat a couple more times if time allows.

This is where transition and the movements from Swim to T1 to Bike to T2 to Run to Finish Line is explained but in a fun and simple way. Do not over complicate this is just to get them introduced to the words and the process of triathlon/multisport.

## 8. STATIC STRETCHING AND COOL DOWN

- Side lunge
- Cross over toe touch
- Hamstring stretch
- Hands to wall calf stretch
- Quad stretch

## 9. WRAP UP:

Have kids circle up and put arms in and have them enthusiastically cheer:  
SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next week is Swim!

## WEEK 2

### SWIM

Participants need: Preferred swimsuit/wear, goggles, swim cap, towel, filled water bottle.

\*Swimsuit preferences: Please be mindful that not all kids feel comfortable in traditional swim attire.

Example: If you have a girl who wants to wear swim trunks and a shirt please allow that to ensure comfort to participate.

### SUPPLIES:

- Extra goggles and swim caps
- Bottled water for kids that do not have filled water bottles

## 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Review Pool Rules

- No long breath holding contests or swimming
- Safety in and around pool
- Both hands on wall during instruction

2. Make sure kids' goggles are on properly.

- Explain and demonstrate where the goggle straps sit on the head.

3. Explain and demonstrate how to wet and put on a swim cap.

\*Some kids may not want to wear a swim cap. Swim caps are optional.

4. Explain circle swimming and why this is the etiquette. Engage kids and have them repeat back what circle swimming is.



## 5. ACTIVITY:

### GET IN THE POOL! SWIM EVALUATION AND WARM UP

- Have kids swim, no stroke instruction, to the opposite end of the pool. Meet kids at the end of the pool. Have kids swim back to the other end of the pool.
- Determine the strongest vs weakest skills swimmers.
- Reassign swimmers and be prepared for the kids that need floatation and hands on assistance in the water.

## 6. WATER ACCLIMATION

- Who can jump the highest? Take a silly moment and have everyone jump up and down fully submerged in water 5 times shooting out of water to see who can jump the highest! (shallow end)
- Everyone practices proper exhalation in water humming with mouth closed bubbles out the nose (shallow end)

## 7. SWIM FORM TRAINING ON THE WALL (FREESTYLE)

- Kicks on wall 30 seconds
- Kicks & arm circles on wall 30 seconds
- Explain and demonstrate (on pool deck) breathing out of your nose and taking a breath with your mouth and to not hold your breath when your face is in the water. Take air in the mouth and breathe out through your nose as soon as your face goes into the water. Talk about regulation of breathing.
- Arm circles & kicks & side lateral breathing 30 seconds

## 8. SWIM LAP TRAINING (FREESTYLE)

- Kick with board up and back \*Show kids proper hand placement on the board
- Side lateral breathing drill up and back with board
- Two laps freestyle

## 9. END OF SESSION FUN JUMPS

- If there are diving blocks, have kids do cannonballs or jump style of choice off the blocks. If no blocks then off the wall in deep end.
- There may be kids who do not want to jump off blocks and prefer jumping off pool deck. Accommodate their preference. There may be kids who may not want to participate in this activity.

## 10. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Have kids get out of the pool, get towels to dry off and grab some water.
- Engage with Q&A. Talk about how great the kids did today!
- Ask who would like to lead the cheer today!
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next week is BIKE!

## WEEK 3

### BIKE

Participants Need: Bike, Helmet, Athletic Shoes (no flip flops, crocs, or sandals), Filled Water Bottle.

#### SUPPLIES:

- Bike tire pump
- Bike Helmet for fit test demonstration
- Bottled water for kids that do not have filled water bottles
- Traffic cones as many as needed to set up in the space for biking to mark course corners or any other biking activities.

#### 1. BIKE SAFETY INTRODUCTION

- Have kids put on their helmets. Some kids may need help snapping the straps.
- Observe helmets too loose and sitting too far back on head and straps that are too loose.
- Coach has a helmet on and shows two finger strap test under the chin. Explain why this matters and strap not being too tight or too loose.
- Coach shows where the helmet properly sits on the head. Explain why this matters and how important it is to protect your head.
- Coach shows kids how to adjust the rear dial on the helmet and that you do not want it squeezing the head, just snug enough that it is not sliding back and forth on the head.
- Engage kids with questions about bike safety.

#### 2. PARTS OF THE BIKE

- Pointing to different basic parts of the bike, ask the kids what each part is.
- As you move through, asking the kids what the parts are, the coach will briefly explain what the part is and what it does.
- Depending on the bike style being used some things are pretty basic and will not need elaboration, some may be more technical, like bikes with cassettes and 2-3 chainrings. You do not need to get super technical. Keep this short and simple.
- Review checking your bike for safety before you ride.
- Remind kids to pump up tires before each session
- Allow for Q&A.

#### 3. ACTIVITY:

Warm Up! Briefly explain why this is important. Getting the body loose and heart rate up a little, getting the body all ready to have some active fun!

- Have the kids do dynamic stretching. Feel free to ask the kids if they have any warm up suggestions.
- Butts kicks

- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Heel walking
- Frankenstein legs
- Side shuffle
- Karaoke
- Arm circles wide and narrow.

#### 4. ACTIVITY

##### NOTES:

- Some kids may have bikes with gears and have no idea which gear to be in.
- This is a great moment to talk about transition to the bike and always put your helmet on first before you touch your bike.
- Some kids may have trouble snapping their helmet straps.

##### SAFETY AND AWARENESS! Before the kids ride talk about:

- Paying attention to other riders in front and around them.
- Keeping their head facing the direction they are traveling. Looking at the coach or your friend and not paying attention can cause an accident.
- Controlling your speed and passing your friends safely.
- Braking and stopping safely.

##### RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

- Great for working on stopping and starting skills.
- With kids on the bikes have them spread out along a line with the coach(es) at a distance across from the kids. (can be further or closer depending on age and ability).
- The coach yells GREEN LIGHT for GO and RED LIGHT for STOP. Can also use Green GO and Red STOP laminated signs along with vocal prompts.

##### SLOWEST RIDER RACE

- This is great for bike handling skills and agility.
- Start in a line and have a “race” to see who can get to the finish line the slowest without stopping.
- Explain to keep the bike moving and pedaling slowly.

-Offer a water break-

## RIGHT OR LEFT

- This is great for bike handling skills and agility.
- Set up 2 cones about 30 feet apart.
- Have a coach standing in the middle and behind the cones.
- One at a time have the kids pedal towards the middle of the 2 cones.
- As the rider approaches the cones the coach yells RIGHT or LEFT and the rider must make the proper turn in the correct, go around the back of the cone and ride down the outside of the area to the back of the riders in line.
- Speed can be picked up as the rider gets better at turning.
- Optional: This is a great opportunity to talk about cornering and where to look so the bike goes in that direction.

## 5. ACTIVITY

### STATIC STRETCHING AND COOL DOWN

- Side lunge
- Shoulder stretch
- Cross over toe touch
- Hamstring stretch
- Hands to wall calf stretch
- Quad stretch

## 6. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Have kids park their bikes.
- Talk about how great the kids did today!
- Ask the kids what the area is where you go from Swim to Bike To Run. Answer: Transition.
- Engage in Q&A and ask what their favorite part of the session was.
- Ask if someone wants to lead the cheer!
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next week is RUN!

## WEEK 4

### RUN

Participants Need: Athletic shoes and filled water bottle.

### SUPPLIES:

- Post-it easel board
- Marker
- Bottled water for kids that do not have filled water bottles

## 1. CIRCLE UP

Make this time playful and exciting! Put your silly coaching hat on so the kids are engaged. You can really wear a silly hat!

- Have the kids circle up.
- Ask them what the order of a triathlon is?
- Ask them about what the area is called when you go from Swim to Bike To Run.
- Who's having FUN! Awww Yeah!
- What is their favorite activity so far?
- Anything else anyone wants to share? Can be a fun thing, or something they have been afraid of and found out wasn't so scary because they did it.
- What are they looking forward to about running?

## 2. TRANSITION FROM BIKE TO RUN

- Ask the kids again what the area is that allows you to go from Swim to Bike to Run.
- Briefly talk about transition and going from the pool to the bike, coming back in from bike to transition and going out for the run.
- Ask them where they go after they finish the run. Answer: THE FINISH LINE! YAY!!!

## 3. HOW TO PACE AND WHY

- Ask the kids what it means to pace yourself when doing things like Swimming, Biking, and Running. Allow time for several kids to answer.
- Ask the kids why it is important to pace yourself. Allow time for several kids to answer.
- Pacing is cutting up your activity into manageable chunks. If you are running really hard and feel like that is not going to be a pace you can keep doing, you need to do what? Ask the kids to answer.
- Pacing applies to swimming and biking too.
- Pacing is like regulating gas in your engine. You can burn all that gas up really fast. What happens when you have no gas left and you still have to get where you are going? Ask the kids to answer.
- Pacing is to ensure that you preserve enough energy for your entire training session or racing.

## 4. ACTIVITY:

Warm Up! Briefly explain why this is important. Getting the body loose and heart rate up a little, getting the body all ready to have some active fun!

- Have the kids do dynamic stretching. Ask the kids if they have any warm up suggestions.
- Butts kicks
- High knees
- Jumping jacks

- Heel walking
- Frankenstein legs
- Side shuffle
- Karaoke
- Arm circles narrow and wide.
- Add something silly into the WU, offer up a crab walking contest. Always a hit!

## 5. ACTIVITY

### RUN SPECIFIC GAMES

#### TELEPHONE LINE

- Divide the group up and have each group a good distance across from each other so they can run back and forth. Have the kids line up one in front of each other.
- The coach whispers an inspirational or funny sentence to the first team member on one side only. That kid runs to the other side and whispers the sentence to the kid in that line. That kid runs to the other side and whispers to the next kid in line.
- Each kid that runs over and whispers then goes to the back of that line.
- Once you have the last kid getting the sentence, that kid then states what the sentence is.
  1. It's cool to be kind!
  2. I run because it's fun!
  3. Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear!

#### -TAKE A WATER BREAK-

#### DRAW A PICTURE

- Use a Post-it board or some form of large drawing pad and a marker at one end of the running area.
- Each kid will sprint to the drawing pad and draw a part of the picture, sprint back, tag the next teammate to go.
- Give the kids the floor to make suggestions on what they will draw. Keep it simple! (i.e. snowman, house, boat, bird, etc) Give the kids a short time to come up with what they want to draw.
- Make sure the kids understand to draw bigger on the big paper.

#### SHARKS AND MINNOWS

- The kids always love this one!
- Ask who wants to be the shark. If the group is pretty large, have 2 sharks.
- Designate a starting line and finishing line.
- Minnows start on the starting line and slowly "swim" jog/run forward.
- Whenever the coach yells "SHARK ATTACK" the minnows must quickly "swim" to the finish line through the sharks and not get tagged.
- If a minnow is tagged they become a shark.
- Keep going until there is only one minnow left. That minnow will be the shark the next time.



-TAKE A WATER BREAK-

## 6. ACTIVITY

### STATIC STRETCHING AND COOL DOWN

- Side lunge
- Cross over toe touch
- Hamstring stretch
- Hands to wall calf stretch
- Quad stretch

## 7. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Tell the kids how great they did today!
- Ask the kids how they think they were pacing today.
- Ask them the order of Triathlon including the area you have to move from Swim To Bike To Run.
- Ask who wants to lead the cheer.
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next week SWIM

## WEEK 5

### SWIM

Participants need: Preferred swimsuit/wear, goggles, swim cap, towel, filled water bottle.

\*Swimsuit preferences: Please be mindful that not all kids feel comfortable in traditional swim attire.

Example: If you have a girl who wants to wear swim trunks and a shirt please allow that to ensure comfort to participate.

### SUPPLIES

- Kickboard
- Bottled water for kids who don't have filled water bottles

## 1. CIRCLE UP

- Ask the kids what sides of the lane you swim up and down when circle swimming.
- Explain swimming down the lane, when you get to the wall, go under the lane line, and swim down that lane to the wall. Let them know they will get out of the pool and get in line again. \*Have a coach in the pool to demonstrate this.

## 2. ACTIVITY

### WATER ACCLIMATION

- Who can jump the highest? Take a silly moment and have everyone jump up and down fully submerged in water 5 times shooting out of water to see who can jump the highest! (shallow end)
- Everyone practices proper exhalation in water humming with mouth closed bubbles out the nose (shallow end).

### SWIM FORM TRAINING ON THE WALL (FREESTYLE)

- Kicks on wall 30 seconds
- Kicks & arm circles on wall 30 seconds
- Explain and demonstrate (on pool deck) breathing out of your nose and taking a breath with your mouth and to not hold your breath when your face is in the water. Take air in the mouth and breathe out through your nose as soon as your face goes into the water. Talk about regulation of breathing.
- Arm circles & kicks & side lateral breathing 30 seconds

### SWIM LAP TRAINING (FREESTYLE)

- Kick with board up and back \*Show kids proper hand placement on the board
- Side lateral breathing drill up and back with board
- Two laps freestyle

-Ask if anyone needs a water break-

### LANE SNAKES

- Have the kids start in a line on the deck and jump in about 5 seconds a part.
- Swim down one lane, go under the lane line, and swim back down the opposite direction to the wall.
- \*Going under the lane lines might be uncomfortable for some kids to pass under the lane lines. This can be a moment to take those kids into the shallow end and work with them going under the lane lines.
- You can add variety to this drill by having kids do wall pushups or up and out exercises at the end.
- Passing can be added to this drill so swimmers understand and get the feel for how to pass properly.

### UP AND OUT

- In the deep end, swimmers form one or two lines side by side.
- Swimmers dive or jump in the water and swim to the shallow end and jump out quickly and do a choice of squats, jumping jacks, push ups.
- Swimmers jump back in the shallow end and swim to the deep end and get out of the pool. Can have them do the exercises at the deep end or just start the drill over.

## END OF SESSION FUN JUMPS

- If there are diving blocks, have kids do cannonballs or jump style of choice off the blocks. If no blocks then off the wall in deep end.
- \*There may be kids who do not want to jump off blocks and prefer jumping off pool deck. Accommodate their preference. There may be kids who may not want to participate in this activity.

## 3. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Have kids get out of the pool, get towels to dry off and grab some water.
- Engage with Q&A. Talk about how great the kids did today!
- Ask who would like to lead the cheer today!
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next Week: BIKE!

## WEEK 6

### BIKE

Participants Need: Bike, Helmet, Athletic Shoes (no flip flops, crocs, or sandals), Filled Water Bottle.

\*Mock Transition Bike Session: BIKE TO RUN

## SUPPLIES

- Bike tire pump
- Bottled water for kids that do not have filled water bottles
- 13 Traffic Cones
- Tape: tape to top of cones from cone to cone to mark off transition area.
- Hazard tape for the floor to mark Mount and Dismount lines
- Laminated Signs:
  - 2 TRANSITION
  - SWIM IN
  - BIKE IN
  - BIKE OUT
  - RUN IN
  - RUN OUT
  - BIKE MOUNT
  - BIKE DISMOUNT
  - FINISH LINE

## 1.SET UP BEFORE KIDS ARRIVE

- Set up a transition area with 6 cones, 3 on each side, spaced out enough that bikes can line up side by side at the transition spot.
- Use tape to mark off the transition area on each side. Run from one cone to the next sticking tape to the top of the cone.
- Mount and Dismount Lines: Outside of transition place two cones on each end, spaced about the width of transition, far enough from the transition area to give the kids the space to exit transition and mount their bike and dismount and walk into transition.
- Using hazard tape, run the tape between the cones to mark the mount and dismount line.
- Decide which end is Mount and which end is Dismount and tape the laminated signs to the cones. Make sure you put the signs facing the right direction.
- Decide which end is where kids enter after "swim". Place a cone with that sign on it so they can see but not obstruct the other cones.
- Decide which end is Bike In and Bike out. Tape sign to cone and place Bike Out cone facing into Transition.
- Tape Bike In sign to cone and place outside but near Bike Dismount sign.
- Place Run Out cone on the end where Bike Out is and facing into the transition area.

## 1. CIRCLE UP

- When kids arrive, have them put their bikes and helmets off to the side. Not in transition.
- Gather the kids at the transition area.
- Welcome the kids and ask them what this is that they are looking at.
- Then ask what the order of the sport is and how you get from Swim to Bike To Run.
- Today we are going to do a mock transition! Tell the kids they are going to put their bikes into the transition area shortly.
- We will pretend we are swimming, then we will move to the bike portion, do a little bit of riding, come back into transition, and head out for the run!
- Ask them where they go when they finish the run. Answer: The Finish Line!

## 2. TOUR OF TRANSITION

- Starting at the SWIM IN sign, explain to the kids these are the words on signs you will see at triathlon and multisport events.
- Tour through transition showing the placement of the signs and why they are placed there. \*This is a lot to deliver, make sure you go slowly and ask if there are questions.
- Feel free to walk through this a couple of times. Acting like you have finished the swim and now heading to transition and talk through all the steps while walking to the areas you are speaking about and point to the appropriate signs.
- Have the kids put their bikes in transition and have them hang their helmets or put them by their bikes like transition set up. \*Some kids may not have kickstands and bikes will be on the ground.

### 3. ACTIVITY:

#### DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Warm Up! Briefly explain why this is important. Getting the body loose and heart rate up a little, getting the body all ready to have some active fun!

- Have the kids do dynamic stretching. Ask the kids if they have any warm up suggestions.
- Butts kicks
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Heel walking
- Frankenstein legs
- Side shuffle
- Karaoke
- Arm circles narrow and wide.

### 4. SESSION EXPLANATION

As this session is going on, remind the kids about pacing.

- After the dynamic stretching, the kids start their “swim”. Have them run a few laps using their arms to “swim”.
- Once they finish the “swim” they will go into transition and the kids will stand next to their bikes.
- Explain that in transition they will have a towel to dry off, and they will all put on shirts, girls put on shorts over their swim suits so they can do the bike and run.
- \*This may take a few minutes to help them understand they will need to put other clothes on but are still in the swim suits. Some kids may use tri kits.
- Now they are dried off and ready to bike, ask them what they do next. Answer: Always put their helmet on first! Explain this is always a rule and for safety.
- Tell them they will ride X amount of laps and also coaches will call them back.
- Ask them if they run out of transition to the mount line or walk to the mount line? Answer: ALWAYS WALK TO THE MOUNT LINE. \*Some kids will forget this. Explain this is always a rule and for safety.
- Instruct them to put their helmets on and walk their bikes to BIKE OUT and one at a time to BIKE MOUNT line and mount their bikes.
- Kids will ride several laps and coaches will call them back to Bike Dismount Line.
- One by one kids will dismount their bikes and put their bike back into transition. \*Most kids will forget where their bike went. Not a big deal at this time.
- Instruct everyone to take their helmets off and ask kids where they go next.
- Kids will exit through the RUN OUT and have them do a few laps.
- Have them pass the Finish Line cone and cheer them!

\*Run through this several times. You can extend the swim, bike and run times each time.

\*Allow for water breaks.

\*Allow for questions and a lot of attention guiding the kids through the entire process.

## 5. ACTIVITY

### STATIC STRETCHING AND COOL DOWN

- Side lunge
- Cross over toe touch
- Shoulder stretch
- Hamstring stretch
- Hands to wall calf stretch
- Quad stretch
- Butterfly stretch

## 6. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Ask the kids what their favorite part of the session is!
- Allow for Q&A
- Tell them what an amazing job they did and they are rock star triathletes!
- Ask who would like to lead the cheer today!
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

Next Week: RUN!

## WEEK 7

### RUN

Participants Need: Athletic shoes and filled water bottle.

### SUPPLIES

- Kid friendly fun upbeat music
- Portable speaker
- 4-5 cones Large
- 10 little cones

## 1. CIRCLE UP

- Welcome kids and have them sit down.
- Talk about last session and ask the kids about how they felt doing the mock transition.
- Ask if they have any questions about the last session or any part of the triathlon.
- Talk to them about the next session and that it is the last which is the Triathlon Simulation! Let them know it is not a race. It will be done as a group and allows them all to shine like the triathlete stars they are by putting all of the 7 weeks together! Allow for a little Q&A about the Tri Simulation.



- At this point if you choose to do a mini event like this at the end emails should have gone out to parents about this Triathlon Simulation with all the What to Expect, A break down of how it will be done (moving from SBR as group) Schedule and approximate time frame this mini event will take, What to Bring, and anything special you have planned for the finish line.
- Get this kids excited about running today!

## 2. ACTIVITY

### DYNAMIC STRETCHING

Warm Up! Briefly explain why this is important. Getting the body loose and heart rate up a little, getting the body all ready to have some active fun!

- Have the kids do dynamic stretching. Ask the kids if they have any warm up suggestions.
- Butts kicks
- High knees
- Jumping jacks
- Heel walking
- Frankenstein legs
- Side shuffle
- Karaoke
- Arm circles narrow and wide.

## 3. ACTIVITY

### WACKY LAPS

- Run every lap in a different way!
- Run a lap to kid friendly music. Can play music the entire running time.
- Run a lap backwards.
- Run a lap weaving through cones.
- Run a lap as wacky as they can be.
- Have the kids brainstorm their own wacky lap is a great way to keep them engaged.

-Water Break-

### RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

- This is great for interval training and listening skills.
- Designate a start line and finish line.
- Line kids up at the starting line.
- Coach calls out "Green Light" everyone starts running as fast as they can toward the finish line.
- Coach calls out "Red Light" all the runners must freeze in place.
- Coach calls out "Green Light" and runners start out running fast again.
- Coach can call "Yellow Light" and runners must slow their pace down until it is time to freeze or run fast again.

-Water Break-

#### FOUR CORNERS

- Using cones, create 4 corners in an area.
- Kids start at any corner they would like.
- Coach stands in the middle of the space.
- Coach closes eyes and says "GO!"
- Kids run to different corners.
- While coaches eyes are still closed, coach points to a corner and opens eyes.
- Kids in that corner have to do an exercise the coach picks. All other kids will count 5, 10, etc.
- Keep going and changing up exercises. Can do silly things, like crab walks, donkey kicks, silly dancing.

- -Water Break-

#### 3. ACTIVITY

##### STATIC STRETCHING AND COOL DOWN

- Side lunge
- Cross over toe touch
- Shoulder stretch
- Hamstring stretch
- Hands to wall calf stretch
- Quad stretch
- Butterfly stretch

#### 4. SESSION WRAP UP AND CIRCLE UP

- Ask the kids what their favorite part of the session is!
- Allow for Q&A
- Emphasize how great all the kids have done over the past 7 weeks!
- Talk about Triathlon Simulation and how excited the coaches are for this event!
- Ask who would like to lead the cheer today!
- Cheer: SWIM BIKE RUN! SO MUCH FUN!

# AUTHORS

## **Jennifer Giesber**

Jennifer Giesber discovered her passion for triathlon in 2013 finishing her first mini-sprint triathlon at the age of 43. She has trained for and completed numerous races in triathlon, multisport, cycling, swimming, and running. Jennifer has a sincere passion for serving her community and coaching youth and adults to lean into their greatness and achieve their dreams.

## **Nick Farr**

Nick Farr is the Owner and Head Coach of P3 Fitness. With 20 years of experience in triathlon and multi-sport Nick has guided 100's of athletes of all ages, levels and abilities to achieve their version of success in sport.

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