

DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2017

For many years now Triathlon Zimbabwe has been saying that we need to develop our sport back into the schools, to be back in their sporting curriculum. This is easier said than done as it is unlikely for a school to add another activity to their already busy schedule unless a teacher or parent are already involved and interested in Triathlon.

Last season, our Harare based Triathlon events had participation of numbers ranging from 80 to 128 athletes competing in the series events and a maximum of 270 athletes at the Pink Day Breast Cancer Fundraiser.

To break these figures down further, approximately 35 athletes per race were Tri kids and Tri sport, 30 were children between the ages of 9 and 19, approximately 30 athletes were over the age of 20 and there were generally only 3-5 teams per event.

AQUATHLON

This year we introduced Aquathlon. The series was a huge success. We had participation from 19 schools and at one event we had a maximum of 218 athletes competing. We are hoping that season 2017/18 will be an even bigger success. With these athletes already at our events, we need to now entice them to try triathlon.

TALENT SCOUTING

As noted in my selectors report, we had no U13 girls participating at SA Champs and few U13 boys. If we are unable to have triathlon as a club or sport at various schools, then it is time to talent scout, looking for athletes who are good swimmers and who can also run, starting with our existing Aquathlon athletes.

COACH EDUCATION

In order for the sport of triathlon to develop in schools, school coaches need to be educated in triathlon so they understand how exciting triathlon can be, with tours to SA Champs and also the possibility of down the line, athletes competing at the Summer Olympic Games. If we get their interest in the sport then a Level 1 coaching course needs to be held to qualify them.

ADULT DEVELOPMENT

The Corporate Challenge was introduced last season to help develop the number of adults that participate in Triathlon. Unfortunately this series was not a success but with early advertising, hopefully the coming season will be a success. We need to encourage companies already involved in triathlon to start challenging other companies to compete. Gym participation should also be key to this initiative.

PROVINCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Triathlon used to be very popular and competitive in Bulawayo. Unfortunately the sport has fallen away completely there. Having provincial competition is very healthy for our athletes and also for developing the sport. This season TZ is committed to resuscitating Triathlon in Bulawayo. If anyone has any contacts in Bulawayo who may be interested in assisting with developing the sport there, please contact myself or the Triathlon Association. We would be committed to having a “road-show” there to promote and assist the sport- target their off-road Ncema event.

SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES

Having an athlete to follow in the steps of Chris Felgate and compete at the Summer Olympic Games would be our ultimate goal. We have already started the process of applying for scholarships and sponsorship for Gideon Benade. He is committed to putting everything into achieving his dream and we as an association will support him as best as we can.

EQUIPMENT

It is hard and expensive for new triathletes to gear themselves with the correct size bike, acquire a helmet, shoes and all the other required equipment. I suggest that TZA has a section on the website where people can post any triathlon related equipment they have available for sale or donation to make it easier to start up in triathlon. In the past we did have a donation box but I am not sure where everything went to. I would be happy to coordinate the beginning of another one and ensure the equipment goes to deserved people who will appreciate and look after the equipment.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Earlier this year I was fortunate enough to be 1 of 4 Zimbabweans to attend a Child Safeguarding in Sport course where I realized how important it is for every one of us involved in Triathlon to be aware of the importance of safeguarding our children.

TZ have many plans with regards to development in Zimbabwe. Many will be time consuming, costly and long term, so development will not happen overnight.

Hopefully this time next year I will have lots of successful and exciting news and developments to fill you in on.