

TX NICA Mentorship Manual

Goal: To share knowledge with new or prospective teams and provide mentorship opportunities with existing, successful teams to help ensure successful new team launches and growth.

1. Vision

- a. [Starting a NICA Team](#)
- b. Define the vision for the team
 - The **most successful teams** put an emphasis on participation, camaraderie and group goals, not performance or individual achievement.
 - [NICA: Defining Vision for your Team](#)
 - [NICA: Think about your team identity](#)
 - Considerations:
 - a) Creating a vision & culture that keeps kids engaged: [Project Play: Kids Quit Most Sports by age 11](#)
 - b) A Playbook for keeping kids in sports: <https://projectplay.org/youth-sports/playbook>
 - (1) What do kids want?
 - (2) Reintroduce free play
 - (3) Encourage sports sampling (other kinds of games)
 - (4) Design for Development (teach to levels)
 - (5) Train all coaches
 - (6) Emphasize prevention (safety)

2. Leadership, Structure & Team Foundation

- a. Recruit Coaches & Volunteers
 - Suggest starting with around 4 committed coaches, enabling you to break into 2 groups, each with a lead and a sweep.
 - Don't try to do everything in year one. It will take time to build out your program with all of the roles and responsibilities; start small and develop more volunteers as the team grows!
 - [NICA: Recruit Coaches & Volunteers](#)
 - a) Check involvement in local mtb organizations (TMBRA, FMBRA, DORBA, etc)
 - Identify the roles and duties for your team
 - a) [NICA: Team Volunteer Roles](#)
 - b) [NICA: Identify Roles and Duties for your Team](#)
- b. Recruit Athletes & Parents
 - [NICA: Begin recruiting interested kids and their parents](#)
 - Suggestions for recruiting student athletes:
 - a) Fliers home with middle school and high school students (can be done via email)
 - b) Set up a table with information outside of schools (with permission)
 - c) Utilize school "club recruitment" day(s)
 - d) Hold pre-season informational meetings with parents and athletes. Invite Trek! Invite your sponsoring LBS (local bike shop)!
 - Tips for Parent involvement:
 - a) Have LOTS of areas for parents to help. Off-bike needs include: cooking (race weekends), sorting gear, helping with end-of-season party,

communication, photography, fundraising, jerseys & t-shirts (design, ordering, distribution), etc. (see [NICA: Identify Roles and Duties for your Team](#) or [NICA: Team Volunteer Roles](#))

- b) Ask for a commitment to do 1 thing per month or X hours per season.
Ex: Volunteer at a race, help organize trail day, help with gear/materials (tshirts, etc). Again, have lots of areas for parents to get involved with other than coaching.
- c) Offer to teach them how to ride (outside of team practices) & explain the value of riding with their kid and others (The TX League is starting classes for new adult riders)
- d) For parents who do ride, encourage them to coach outside their kid's sphere

c. Develop a Team Budget and Establish Team Fees

- [NICA: Develop a team budget and establish team fees](#)
- Utilize Google Forms for receipt submission; require photos of all receipts. Form will link to a Google Sheet for tracking.
- If possible, set up club/team account at the school - this will help with tax exempt status when making purchases (talk to school business manager and easier with a teacher/connect at the school)
- Become an official 501(C)3 non-profit organization. Which choice will depend on your school district and their requirements!
- [NICA: Managing Team Finances](#)

d. Develop a Fundraising/Sponsorship Plan

- [NICA: Develop a Fundraising & Sponsorship Plan](#)
- Suggestions for Fundraising/Covering Team Cost
 - a) Team Fees to cover the basics or more
 - b) Ask the parents if their business can sponsor
 - c) Charity 5K
 - d) Research district endowments - (more likely at smaller school districts)
- Apply for NICA Scholarships(exTREK Pathfinders for bikes)

3. Creating a Season Plan & Practice Plans

a. Develop a season and practice plans

- Have a set practice schedule that athletes and coaches know they are committing to. Maintain consistency to aid in retention. (ex Wed. - Skills, Thurs. - Endurance, Sat. - Longer Ride with Skills and Endurance, Sun. - Long Ride with Skills and Endurance)
- [NICA: Develop a season and practice plans](#)
- Create a schedule that includes key events (Leadership Conference, PreSeason, Spring Season)
- Off the bike Adventure games:
[NICA Adventure: Off-The-Bike Games](#)
- On the bike Adventure games:
[NICA Adventure: On-The-Bike Games](#)
- Season Planning Template:
[NICA: Season Planning Template](#)

b. Practice Essentials

- [NICA: Pre-Race Activities](#)
- Weather Reference & Assessments
 - a) Decide which weather app to use for practice cancellations due to weather.
 - b) Utilize the [NICA Weather Guide](#) if unsure whether or not to hold practice.
 - c) <https://www.weather.gov/>
 - d) Define a time for cancellations due to weather
- What to Bring to Practice:
 - a) Pumps, basic bike repair tools.
 - b) Walkie Talkies for Coaches (based on who your team decides should have one: all coaches or just lead/sweep or something different?)
 - c) tubes/patch kits
 - d) lube and review the ABCDEs (Air/Brake/Chain/Derailleur/Everything)
- What to wear and bring to practice/What NOT to wear:
 - Helmet
 - Water
 - Eye protection
 - Appropriate shoes
 - Comfortable clothing (possibly with padding)
 - Gloves
 - A good attitude!
 - No earbuds

4. Team Communication

- [NICA: Team Communication](#)
- Establish this as a role on the team. *Who will be in charge of communicating information to the team via email/text/TeamSnap?* Consider creating templates to be used for various communication pieces: Registration Information, Race Information & Details, etc.
- Consider use of an app like TeamSnap
 - a) Schedule of Events; consider asking Coaches AND Athletes to “rsvp” with their availability for practice planning.
 - b) Use TeamSnap Chat to converse with everyone; easy way to communicate quickly.
 - c) Ensure all contact information for parents is accurate for emergency use.
- Utilize radios for coaches while on trail.
 - a) Some teams require all coaches to have radios and others require it only of leads/sweeps. Decide what’s best for your team!
 - b) Some options include [Rocky Talkie](#) or [Baofeng UV-5R 8 Watt Ham Two-Way Radio](#)
 - c) If using Rocky Talkies: Recommend 1 using the ALL Coaches handle at Races
- Consider off-season communication tool (ex GroupMe)

5. Race Day Information

II. What the Team Should Bring to Race Day

- Decide if making Team Meals (Pre-order or Pre-Arrange)
- Essentials
 - Team canopy for shaded (or wind-screened) place to gather
 - Team feather flags/banners (optional)
 - Drinks and snacks (WATER!) (It’s good to set food expectations for the team area, otherwise the sugar can get out of hand. Also, student athletes may not have caffeine on race day.)
 - Trash can and trash bags
 - Bike rack (optional) (for storing bikes instead of littering your area)
 - Bike stand (optional) for working on, cleaning & lube bikes
 - Walkie Talkies/Rocky Talkies
 - Tables
 - File box - manage team roster, race plates, zip ties, business cards, waivers, NICA handbook, receipts, lanyards, etc
 - White board - post schedule, duties, important race day info
 - Spare helmet/jerseys
 - First aid kit
 - Pumps
 - Hand sanitizer/hand soap
- What Students should bring to race day
 - Tents
 - Weather appropriate sleeping bags/attire
 - Head lamps, some type of light to walk at night
 - Bikes, helmet, gloves, jerseys/shorts for at least 2 days
 - Non-riding clothing and toiletries
 - Hat/sunscreen/cold weather headgear

- Camp chair
- Personal snacks
- Water bottles
- Other
 - Extra Canopy for PitZone
 - Cookware
 - Wagon
 - Work gloves and mallet
 - Bike supply storage bin (tubes, lube, pedal and Allen wrenches, tire levers, valve stems, tires)
 - Kitchenware (plates, cups, utensils, paper towels, wash bins, trash bags, cooking utensils, dish towels)
 - Stove and fuel
 - Team bikes
- Team Culture Revisit!
 - Stay for podiums
 - Cheer on the rest of your team when not in your own race
 - Get parents to volunteer for race setup and takedown
 - [Pre-Race Activities](#)
 - [Other NICA Resources: Handbook, Coach Help Desk, Trailhead](#)