USA CLIMBING COLLEGIATE TEAM DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

A guide to forming a successful USA Climbing Collegiate Team

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INTRODUCTION

Starting a USA Climbing Collegiate Team at your college or university can be a challenging and rewarding experience. The level at which Climbing Teams operate varies greatly from school to school but most fall under the category of a Varsity Sports Club Team, which generally means you are an officially recognized sport on campus and you compete against other teams from other colleges and universities. Collegiate Climbing Teams bridge a wide gap of ability levels, but the Collegiate series as a whole is a welcoming competition atmosphere for beginners and elite level competitors alike. If you don’t already have a climbing team at your school we hope that you decide to stick with this process and we’ll be here to help along the way! Besides what is included in this packet, feel free to let us know if you need further assistance.

Members of a USA Climbing Collegiate Team will reap many benefits including but not limited to:

◊ Involvement on campus and an opportunity to make new friends.
◊ A way to remain or become part of the climbing community.
◊ An active and fit lifestyle as well as a skill for life.
◊ Students who participate in sports are often more motivated academically.
◊ Social networking and team-building skills can expose athletes to professional opportunities after college.

We are happy that you have decided to embark on the rewarding experience of starting a USA Climbing Collegiate Team at your school.

The tools and information in this manual will serve to help you form a competitive climbing team as part of your university’s club sports program.

Welcome!
**TESTIMONIAL:** Jake Gadwa, Class of 2017

*What inspired you to start a team?*
Starting and joining a team allows you to connect with a large community of individuals who share a similar passion, while creating lasting friendships. Climbing competitions are unlike any other competitive sport I've done, and echo the welcoming nature of the climbing community as a whole. There's so much camaraderie between competitors and teams alike that it's really infectious.

*How has your team gotten funding to continue competing?*
One of the perks of being a club sport is that we receive funding through the university. The bulk of our yearly funding comes through annual team dues and fundraising events. We're fortunate that the university offers a ton of opportunities for clubs and teams like ourselves to earn money and we try to take advantage of as many of these events as we can.

*What has your team done to ensure the longevity of the climbing team as leaders graduate and move on?*
To get people to take pride in the team. The more invested everyone is, not just the officers, the more likely they'll be to want to make the team better. Something instrumental to us has been establishing a culture of the way we're going to get things done. Having designated officer positions with clearly defined role ensures that a base of strong leadership persists from year to year. An aspect of this is recruiting members during their freshman and sophomore years. This allows for those individuals who are elected to officer positions to stick around for a few years and establish a form of continuity.
TESTIMONIAL: Leah Scott, Class of 2017

What were the challenges your team faced starting out?
The logistics of being recognized as a team by our school was quite difficult, so we settled on being recognized as a club. Funding is also a challenge but not insurmountable. Finding space to train can also be a challenge so we recommend trying to partner with a local gym if your university's gym isn't big enough.

What have you enjoyed most about being on a collegiate climbing team?
The camaraderie and community. The experiences, memories, and most importantly the friendships formed are things that will stick with me forever.

How did your team recruit and garner interest on campus?
We held info sessions at the beginning of each school year and had "team climb times" once a week at the school wall for anyone interested in learning more about the team and competing. Being highly active on social media is another increasingly important aspect for more than just current student recruitment but prospective ones as well. Having an active presence across social media platforms is a great way to garner interest from incoming freshman.
USA Climbing is the national governing body of competition climbing in the United States.

The mission of USA Climbing is to promote the growth and success of the sport of competition climbing in the United States while generating sustained competitive excellence for United States athletes in international competition.

**Bouldering:** Bouldering competitors compete on a 10-15 foot wall with large safety mats in case of a fall. Bouldering competitions usually focus on extremely difficult moves with complex sequences that challenge competitors’ absolute strength as well as problem-solving abilities. In a local competition, around 30-40 climbs are set up for competitors to attempt, each climb increasing in difficulty and score value. Competitors have a minimum of 3 hours to attempt as many or as few of the climbs as they wish, only receiving credit for the top 5 most difficult climbs completed without falling.

**Sport:** Similar to bouldering, sport climbing competitors attempt to reach the top of a very long and difficult course around 35-50 feet tall. As climbers progress up the wall, they clip a safety rope into fixed carabiners on the wall in case of a fall. Less experienced climbers are belayed using a top rope method to ensure safety. In a local competition, around 20-30 climbs are set up for competitors to attempt, each climb increasing in difficulty and score value. Competitors have a minimum of 3 hours to attempt as many or as few of the routes as they wish, only receiving credit for the top 3.

**Speed:** In speed climbing competitions, competitors are allowed two attempts to put up their fastest possible time on a designated wall. The walls are generally 30-50 feet tall and safety ropes are used for protection. Competitors are ranked by the better of their two attempts.

The USA Climbing Collegiate series encompasses bouldering, sport and speed climbing.
SEASON INFORMATION

Regions

- Northeast: NJ, CT, NY
- New England: MA, NH, RI, ME, VT
- Capital: MD, VA, PA
- Florida: FL
- Southeast: AL, GA, SC, MS
- Appalachian: NC, TN, KY
- Texas: LA, OK, TX
- Rocky Mountain: CO, MT, NM, WY, AZ
- NorCal: Northern CA, Northern NV
- SoCal: Southern CA, Southern NV
- Heartland: OH, IN, MI, WI, IL, IA, MO
- Utah: UT
- Pacific Northwest: WA, OR, ID, AK

Collegiate Member Requirements

⇒ In order to receive credit for a USA Climbing sanctioned Collegiate local competition you must be a USA Climbing Collegiate member or an Introductory Membership.
⇒ Competitors must compete in at least one Collegiate sanctioned local competition as a Collegiate Member or Introductory Member.

Introductory members must purchase a Collegiate membership by the close of Collegiate regional registration) in order to be eligible to compete in their home Regional Championship. Collegiate competitors must register for their home regional championship within the time-frame outlined by USA Climbing and compete in the competition in order to be eligible to compete in the Collegiate National Championships.
⇒ Collegiate competitors must register for the Collegiate National Championships within the timeframe outlined by USA Climbing.
⇒ Teams must be officially recognized by the school they are competing under, and competitors may also compete as individuals not affiliated with a team.

- Each Collegiate Member and Introductory Member must submit proof of current enrollment upon purchasing their membership, in order for said competitors to become an active member and be eligible to compete in their Home Regional Championship.
⇒ USA Climbing Rules regarding Certified Coaches apply to all Collegiate Coaches. Please familiarize yourself with these rules so you can coach your team at Regionals and Nationals.

Please make sure the following items are complete prior to creating your team. Download team membership instructions here.

- You must have a current level 2 coach membership
- Your Level 2 coach membership will only be current once you have successfully completed SafeSport training, background screening, and uploaded your First Aid and CPR certifications. Once uploaded, First Aid and CPR certifications must be approved by a USAC staff member. Access for completing these requirements can be found within your personal account.
- A team must be created specific to each series. (i.e. an athlete with a Competitor membership may only be added to a Youth Team, an athlete with a Collegiate membership may only be added to a Collegiate Team.)
- In order for an athlete to be added to a team, they must have a current USA Climbing Collegiate membership
- You will need to know the member ID and date of birth of the competitor to add them to your team
SEASON INFORMATION (cont.)

Collegiate Membership Registration

⇒ USA Climbing memberships are valid from September 1 – August 31, annually.
⇒ Competitors may register individually or as a team.
⇒ If your school or climbing club wishes to pay for the team’s memberships, the team captain should contact USA Climbing to set up a group registration.
⇒ Email kyle@usaclimbing.org and include the following:
  • collegiate school name
  • billing address
  • main contact (name, e-mail, phone number)
  • quantity of memberships desired
⇒ Group registrations can also be set up for Regional and Divisional Championships.
⇒ Please allow 2-3 business days from time of submission to begin the group registration process.

Host a Sanctioned Collegiate Competition

⇒ If you are a school or gym interested in hosting a competition in an existing region you will need to contact USA Climbing or your Regional Coordinator. If you would like to host a competition in a region that currently does not exist, contact zach@usaclimbing.org.

Collegiate Pricing

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Price</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate Competitor Membership</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate Regional Championship</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate National Championship</td>
<td>$200</td>
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</table>
*per competitor
Recruiting and retaining competitors can be one of the biggest hurdles you face when developing a club climbing team. So the more help you have with this, the better! Remember, it is just as important to retain climbers you worked so hard to recruit. **Start early** so that you have plenty of time to develop your team before the season kicks into full gear.

**TIPS FOR RECRUITING**

- Promote your team on campus with posters, flyers, info booths, etc.
- Choose a target audience
- Talk about why you love competitive climbing
- Utilize a faculty advisor and school resources
- Start a Facebook page/Twitter account/Instagram handle
- Be persistent and patient

**TIPS FOR RETENTION**

- Have consistent, organized practices
- Build a core team leadership structure with plans for turnover
- Plan team bonding activities outside of the gym
- Match experienced climbers up with new climbers to act as mentors
- Make every member feel valued
TEAM PREPARATION

COMMUNICATION

It is important to establish a means of communication for the team. Gather everyone’s contact information and make it available to all teammates. Ensure that every member knows which communication tool the team will be using for the season. Finally, communicate the team vision to all climbers.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

- E-mail
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Group Text
- Blog/Website

Use these to communicate with information with the team regarding:
- Practices
- Events
- Issues
- Accomplishments
- Upcoming Competitions
- Registration Deadlines

TEAM VISION

Set a strong foundation for your team by determining early on what you want the season to be like. Discuss the following with other teammates to create a solid vision:

- What is the ideal team experience?
- Will you require tryouts?
- Will you have a coach, captain, treasurer, etc.?
- What are the dates of the competitions you will attend?
- Are the logistics to/from the events finalized?
- What do you want to accomplish as a team?
- What level of commitment is expected from climbers?
- Are there expectations outside of the gym?
- What social aspects do you want to incorporate into the club experience?
- How many competitions will you attend as a team?
- Will you have team uniforms?
- Do you plan to qualify for Regionals & Nationals?
Although worth it, managing a club team requires attention to many different aspects. This is why it is beneficial to divide team responsibilities between members. There are many leadership roles that can exist in a team. The trick is finding the right combination that fits your team’s needs. Below are some examples of leadership roles you can incorporate into your team structure.

- COACH
- CAPTAIN
- TREASURER
- RECRUITING COORDINATOR
- FITNESS/WORKOUT PLANNER
- UNIVERSITY CLUB SPORTS LIASON
- COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR
- WEB/TECH COORDINATOR
- FUNDRAISING COORDINATOR
- MERCHANDISE COORDINATOR
- COMPETITION/TRAVEL PLANNER
- SOCIAL PLANNER
TEAMS PREPARATION

ACCREDITATION

Teams must be officially recognized by their school to compete in USA Climbing Collegiate competitions. At some schools, this process is managed through the club sports department. At other schools, you might have more success through a recreation department or outdoor club (even though the practices and competitions tend to be indoors). It is important that you contact your college/university’s club sports director or other relevant administrator to ensure that you are following the correct process to become accredited as a club with the school. This is best done as early as possible. Details that might be part of a school’s accreditation process are listed below.

⇒ Presenting a Proposal
⇒ Establishing Club Bylaws
⇒ Naming a faculty advisor
⇒ Naming club officers
⇒ Creating a budget
⇒ Agreeing to abide by the rules and regulation, codes of conduct, and bylaws of the school.

INSURANCE
It is ideally recommended that your team have liability coverage.
TEAM PREPARATION

WORKSHEET

Directions: Complete to ensure you have all the necessary information before getting your season started!

Who is interested in joining the team? Target these groups for membership (e.g. freshmen, existing climbing community, outdoors club members, etc.):

__________________________________________  _______________________________________

When and where will practices be held?

____________________________________________________________________________________

The region that your university competes within:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Other universities in the region that your school will be competing against (if applicable):

__________________________________________  _______________________________________

The method of transportation that your club will use to travel to/from events and practices of applicable (e.g. carpooling, club sports vans, public transit, etc.):

____________________________________________________________________________________

The method(s) of fundraising for your club (e.g. Kickstarter campaign video, bake sale, annual member fees, etc.):

__________________________________________  _______________________________________

Location and date of this year’s Collegiate Regional Championships:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Location and date of this year’s Collegiate National Championships:

____________________________________________________________________________________

Team Goals:

1. __________________________________________  2. __________________________________________

3. __________________________________________
FUNDRAISING

Fundraising efforts can go a long way if planned and implemented properly. Climbers will often need additional financial assistance to travel and compete and the team will need to have a plan for a revenue source in order to keep the club operating smoothly. Listed below are fundraising ideas to get you started. Remember you are not limited to these—be as creative as possible!

[EVENTS]
Events generate revenue and spread the word about your club climbing team. Examples include:
- Bake Sale
- Raffle
- Car Wash
- Silent Auction
- Kickstarter Campaign
- Volleyball/Kickball Tournament

[TEAM DUES]
Collecting a fee from each member at the start of the season will ensure that the team has a pool of money upfront for items such as collegiate competitor membership, competition fees, team uniforms, merchandise, and unexpected costs.

[SPONSORSHIP]
Many local businesses will partner with clubs and teams to provide a sponsorship or donation. Do your research to determine what a sponsorship could do for your team (financial support/gifts) as well as what you could provide for their business in return. For example, using their logo on your uniforms or hosting a team social at their restaurant.

[MERCHANDISING]
Team apparel is a great way for friends and family to support your team. Items to consider making include:
- Shirts
- Hoodies
- Hats
- Pants
- Wristbands
- Team Uniforms
- Stickers
Your team needs you to bring in new members and help secure its future! Current members spreading their passion for competitive climbing by word of mouth is the best recruiting tool. Do your best to ignite interest in potential new members. Below are some ideas for things you can talk about that will help convey your excitement. When talking with others, imagine all the reasons why you personally compete and address concerns others have about joining the team.

CONVERSATION TOPICS FOR RECRUITMENT

USA CLIMBING:
» Has a community and culture that is welcoming.
» Is the national governing body for competitive climbing in the United States.
» Offers regional and national championship level events.
» Sends a team to represent the US at the World University Championships
» Is structured so that even new teams have the opportunity to compete at the national level.
» Offers a sport you can do for life.

YOUR CLUB TEAM:
» Has a lot of fun together, where friendships are made.
» Is flexible and will work with various schedules.
» Welcomes all levels of climbers.
» Will give you the opportunity to travel.
» Will keep you physically fit.

HELPFUL TIP
Create a logo for your team. You can use this on all marketing materials and merchandise.
**TEAM VISION**

**WORKSHEET**

Directions: Fill in the blanks to create the vision of the team. Ensure each member has a copy.

**Suggested Leadership Roles** (name/contact info)

- Coach: [Name/Contact Info]
- Treasurer: [Name/Contact Info]
- Fitness Planner: [Name/Contact Info]
- Communications: [Name/Contact Info]
- Competition/Travel: [Name/Contact Info]
- Fundraising: [Name/Contact Info]
- Captain: [Name/Contact Info]
- Recruiting: [Name/Contact Info]
- Club Sport: [Name/Contact Info]
- Web/Tech: [Name/Contact Info]
- Merchandise: [Name/Contact Info]
- Social: [Name/Contact Info]

**Competition Logistics** (location/date)

- Locals: ________________________________
- Regionals: ________________________________
- Nationals: ________________________________

**Tryouts** (date/time/location): ________________________________

**Desired Accomplishments**

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
4. ________________________________

**Desired Level of Commitment**: ________________________________

**Practice/Workout Details**: ________________________________

**Social Events**

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

**Fundraising Events**

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________

**Recruitment Events**

1. ________________________________
2. ________________________________
3. ________________________________
To Whom It May Concern:

We are interested in setting up a competitive climbing club at [Insert University Name Here]. The club will revolve around USA Climbing’s Collegiate Climbing competition schedule. USA Climbing is the National Governing Body of competition climbing in the United States and as a Collegiate team, we would compete in bouldering, sport climbing and speed climbing throughout the season. The season runs from October through April, beginning with local competitions, a Regional Championship, and culminating in the Collegiate National Championships, which will be held the weekend of [Insert National Championship Event Dates] in [Insert National Championship Location] at [Insert National Championship Host Facility].

Climbing has three disciplines in which competitions are held. All three are held on artificial climbing structures in commercial climbing gyms or campus recreational facilities. The first of these disciplines is speed climbing. In speed climbing competitions, competitors are allowed two attempts to put up their fastest possible time on a designated wall. The walls are generally 10-15 meters tall and safety ropes are used for protection. Competitors are ranked by the better of their two attempts.

The second competition discipline is bouldering, which is usually held on shorter walls, generally around 10-15 feet tall with large safety mats in case of a fall. Bouldering competitions usually focus on extremely difficult moves with complex sequences that challenge competitors’ absolute strength as well as problem-solving abilities. In a competition, around 30-40 climbs are set up for competitors to attempt, each climb increasing in difficulty and score value. Competitors have a minimum of 3 hours to attempt as many or as few of the climbs as they wish, only receiving credit for the top 5 most difficult climbs completed without falling.

The third competition discipline is sport climbing. Similar to bouldering, sport climbing competitors attempt to reach the top of a very long and difficult course around 35-50 feet tall. As climbers progress up the wall, they clip a safety rope into fixed carabiners on the wall in case of a fall. Less experienced climbers are belayed using a top rope method to ensure safety. In a competition, around 20-30 climbs are set up for competitors to attempt, each climb increasing in difficulty and score value. Competitors have a minimum of 3 hours to attempt as many or as few of the routes as they wish, only receiving credit for the top 3 most difficult climbs completed without falling.

At [Insert University Name Here], there is already a great deal of student interest. [Include the name of each individual who is interested in being part of your team?]

This year’s competition season is organized between October and April. [Insert University Name Here] will travel to local competitions as well as the Regional Championships to qualify for the National Championships. [Insert University Name Here] competes in the [Insert Region Name Here] Region, and universities who also compete in the region include [Insert Competitor University Names Here]. To travel to these events, the team will use [Insert Method of Transportation].

To remain financially sustainable, the team will [Insert Fundraising Campaign Scheme Here].

Thank you for your consideration. We believe that the [Insert University Name Here] Climbing Team will flourish with support from the university. Our goal for this year’s season is to [Insert Goals Here]. We also want to promote climbing as a safe, active, and fun sport at [Insert University Name Here], and facilitate positive growth within the [Insert University Name Here] community.

Sincerely,
[Insert Club Members Names Here]
# Sample Budget

## Expenses

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## Revenue

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SAMPLE FLYER

INTERESTED IN COMPETITIVE CLIMBING?

Join the men and women’s club climbing team today!

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

WHEN: 
WHERE: 
CONTACT:
IMPORTANT LINKS & CONTACT INFO

Rule Book

Collegiate Facebook Page

USA Climbing Collegiate Website

Please contact zach@usaclimbing.org with any questions about the collegiate series including involvement, scheduling events, requirements, forming a new region, group registrations, etc.

zach@usaclimbing.org can provide you with all USA Climbing and affiliated sponsor logos.