

H e a d i n g W e s t

A Suggested Plan for Expansion

November 2009



By Tom Heinonen, Kristen Mohror, and Giovanni Guzman
University of Oregon Running Club

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	A Running Club On Campus, What A Great Idea!	p. 3
II.	University of Oregon: One Example	p. 3
III.	Yeah, But That's Oregon	p. 5
IV.	Your Ideas	p. 5
V.	Starting A Club	p. 6
	a. Gotta Start Somewhere	
	b. Building A Group	
	c. Website Is Crucial	
	d. Got An Email List	
	e. To Fee Or Not To Fee	
VI.	Now That You Have A Club...	p. 9
	a. Entry Fees, Gear, T-Shirts	
	b. Bodies And Brains	
	c. Bring The Money	
	d. Help And Be Helped	
VII.	Coaching	p. 10
	a. Got A Coach? Keep A Coach?	
	b. Pay Or Volunteer	
	c. Expanding To Other Events	
VIII.	Success Is In The Details	p. 12
	a. Compete, Have Fun, Or Both	
	b. Scaring Them Away	
	c. A Welcoming Atmosphere	
	d. After A Run	
	e. More Times, More People?	
	f. The Hard Day	
	g. Recreation = Fun	
	h. Expeditions	
	i. Friends, Roommates, Donors	
IX.	Infinity And Beyond	p. 15
	a. The West	
	b. Road Trip!	
	c. Is It Worth It?	
	d. Now Is The Time, Are You The One?	
X.	Who We Are – Contact Information	p. 16
XI.	NIRCA Development Grants	p. 16



A RUNNING CLUB ON CAMPUS, WHAT A GREAT IDEA!

Do you want to start a running club at your school? Do you want to make your school's running club bigger, better, more vibrant, and all-inclusive? Do you have ideas to share about your experience with your running club?

Read our plan below and tell us what you think!

Email us with your thoughts, the challenges you face getting a club going at your school, what has worked and what hasn't worked for your club in your unique setting.

Maybe we can connect you with someone who has dealt with your challenges or similar ones who can help you out. Maybe you can help other runners get their club off the ground.

We hope to offer help, gather information about what's worked, what to avoid, and to get our conclusions sent out to a lot of college club runners across the country.

Be sure to read on and email us with answers to the questions, or questions of your own!

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON RUNNING CLUB: ONE EXAMPLE

The UO Running Club is what we know best, it's our club. This section is dedicated to how it developed, so feel free to skip ahead to other headings below which might hit your specific interest. We won't feel hurt.

In 2003, Tom Heinonen retired after 27 years as the women's track & cross country coach at Oregon. He agreed to work with Club as a volunteer when asked by student coordinator Richie Carpenter.

The club had existed in some format in previous years including a time when a few runners did a lot of fundraising and flew to the famous Bay-to-Breakers road race in San Francisco. In the previous year or two, even with Olympian Mike Manley to coach them occasionally, there were only a half-dozen active runners.

Beginning in late summer Tom answered emails sent to the UO Club Sports website, and began sending regular emails to the small group list. Word of mouth helped greatly.

Tom was familiar to in-state coaches. So, in the fall he was able to get Club runners into cross country and track meets hosted by NCAA Division III colleges whose meets were open to intercollegiate athletes and some open/unattached/club runners also.

The Club grew year-by-year with new student coordinators every one or two years. We made efforts to be welcoming to recreational runners and competitive runners alike. We always meet Monday through Friday at 3:00pm at the artificial "waterfall" in front of the



rec center, a very public setting which might create more interest. Most of our runs are just relaxed, aerobic runs. Tom is there every day. He works hard to know every runner's name and where they're from. He greets every runner by name, everyday, which creates a welcoming atmosphere and helps runners to know one another.

Our runners usually all start off on a run together, men and women, at a very easy pace. Eventually, people sort themselves out by pace, the distance they want to run and where they want to go. It's self-determined. Almost everyone comes back to the "waterfall" at the end of their run. As they filter back, it's a good time for conversation.

If the weather is dry, after the first few runners get back, we go to the intramural field (just a half-block down the street) for more conversation, some abdominal exercises and perhaps some strides...and more conversation. People leave whenever the need or want to.

Tom needs to be a bit watchful and thoughtful about runners, especially newcomers and females, who don't come back from a run. He's made occasional phone calls to check on people. Usually, if he asks, someone knows that a person has gone straight home.

Our community is unique in the amount of enthusiasm there is for running, in its history, perhaps in its environment, and certainly in the people whom our runners might see while out for a run. We were shocked to have fifty runners show up for our first run of fall term 2008. We'd never had thirty at once before. We thought it might have something to do with the Olympic Trials just two months earlier. We had forty or more everyday during the first week of fall 2009. Then the rains came...

Every large university has lots of runners on campus, runners who could be on an NCAA Division II or III team or a junior college team, but who chose to go to a large university and can't make a Division I team, or chose not to be involved at that level. And there are grad students on campus who have competed inter-collegiately. Often they can't devote much time or energy to running, but if it's low-key and demands little time, a club can be just right for some grad students. They add maturity, athletic and academic purpose, and a wealth of experience. It's great for freshmen to mix with grad students on runs!

Because the organizational focus of the Club is on the competitive side, it's easy to ignore the more recreational side of the Club. But everyone who comes to "Club" does it because they want to. It must be fun and rewarding, or people won't come. The welcoming atmosphere and relaxed interest of the coach are vital. Occasional off-the-wall competitions or challenges help, too...bring back a business card; Tom will pick the most interesting one...bring back a beautiful autumn leaf...run to 2406 Fairmount Blvd and decide what's unique about the house there (Tom knows)...find a house whose street address is 1234 or 4321.

We've found that it's valuable to offer occasional non-competitive outings for the Club. Most of our travel involves day-trips to in-state track or cross country meets. Last spring



we had vans reserved for a meet which had been cancelled. So we took two vans to the Oregon coast on a running day-trip, we ran at a couple of great sites, played some ultimate, did a little hiking, had a meal and ice cream on the way home – it was a long, fun Saturday in the middle of track season, including runners who compete and those who don't. This year we hope to do exploring day-trips in fall, winter and spring.

Tom is a coach who is retired, has lots of time and interest, and lives nearby. He enjoys being around college students who like to run. He keeps the workouts simple, but is willing to spend a lot of time once or twice a week to be on hand for our “hard days.” He loves to keep our all-time lists of race performances (but someone else could do that too). He keeps the group email list and sends a newsy weekend email to the whole Club. He puts together our competitive schedule and enters our athletes in track and cross country races. Club members could do all that, it would simply take some delegating and overseeing by the student coordinators. Later, we'll discuss some possible ways to find a coach who sticks around.

YEAH, BUT THAT'S OREGON

Oregon is a unique setting. We've laughed about the possibility of arriving at NIRCA cross country nationals with Olympian Gabe Jennings, world record holder Hicham El Guerrouj and cross country all-American Liza Pasciuto on our team! They are all in school at UO. But it's not going to happen.

We aren't a farm team for the UO varsity. In the last six years a total of two men have jumped from the club team to the varsity (coach Martin Smith wouldn't let them onto the team in the first place but, later, coach Vin Lananna welcomed them). In those six years three runners have left the varsity and joined the club team. They have fun!

With our group's experience, we feel that we have some good ideas about how to start a club, how to develop it, what mistakes to avoid - how to build a vibrant, thriving, self-sustaining group.

YOUR IDEAS

We welcome your ideas to help develop a plan for clubs to grow, not only in the West where distances are so great, but in all regions of the country.

NIRCA, the National Intercollegiate Running Club Association, has a great website (www.clubrunning.org) which regularly features clubs and their keys to growth and success.

We hope to add your ideas for club development over the next several months and, perhaps, to create a setting where club members nationwide can add their thoughts, so that



we have, in public, many ideas about how to build and sustain a successful collegiate running club. Here's where to begin.

STARTING A CLUB

GOTTA START SOMEWHERE

If you plan to start a club, you most likely will have a handful of runners in mind as your nucleus. Maybe you even run together already. A sit-down meeting or a good conversation on a run can help establish your group's ideas.

Check with your campus Club Sports office to see what it takes to start a team. You may also want to check with your Student Activities office on how to start a student organization. (Does your school have a club that you don't know about? If so, they probably need your help!)

Don't be discouraged if there are hoops to jump through to become an officially recognized team/organization. You'll only have to jump through them one time.

Decide what you want your club to become. Be sure that your goals fit the framework of your Club Sports or Student Activities office. Be flexible, your goals might change over time. Look for future leaders in your beginning group, after all, someone must carry on when you graduate.

BUILDING A GROUP

Once you've committed to start a club and made it official, your leaders need to find ways to publicize and build the group. Big schools have lots of runners and former runners. You have to find them and they have to find the club. Most likely, you'll have little or no funding to start with, but you'll have other powerful tools: word-of-mouth, visibility on campus, and the internet.

Universities typically have a student organization fair or Club Sports open house every fall or even every semester/term. Be sure to be attend and legitimize your new club among others on campus and with university staff. While perhaps only a few of these "open-house" runners show up more than once, you'll never know who you'll find...maybe it will be the next club president.

Meet in a conspicuous place at a busy time. You might get some walk by/run by interest.

Actively recruit people. Don't be afraid to say, "Hey, do you know about the Running Club?" to someone who's out running. If there are running classes at your school, let the instructors know that you've formed a group. Those instructors can be some of your best



recruiters. Running author Joe Henderson teaches jog-run and 5k/10k classes at Oregon and occasionally points a runner in our direction.

Posters might help. Maybe a notice in the student newspaper would be possible. If any local races list runner's affiliations in results, be sure to list your club rather than "unattached".

Once you have singlets or racing shirts be sure to have your runners wear them in every race, especially the ones on campus or in town. Club t-shirts (in exchange for club fee) will help a lot to spread the word about your club and to legitimize your existence. Have you seen Michigan's or Penn State's great shirts?

Even with newspapers dwindling in size and coverage, you might be able to get an occasional result in the community sports page, or perhaps more easily on the newspaper's website.

Staging a race can be valuable, but hugely time consuming. To make sure this is a viable option for your club, be sure that you have fully explored your options and researched all associated costs. If you would like to host a race, please contact race.management@clubrunning.org, whether you are a NIRCA member or not for tips on how to make your event successful *and* profitable.

WEBSITE IS CRITICAL

Perhaps the most valuable way to attract runners is through your website which should be linked to your school's Club Sports/Student Activities website. It is vital to start a website, make it good, and keep it current! Make it something that people want to go to. Give them the information they need, in addition to information that will interest them.

Many club websites are outdated or have little information. An outdated website indicates little club interest, even if there is in fact GREAT club interest. By having old or uninteresting information on their sites, established teams are hurting their clubs.

Needed information: Contact info for key members. "Mission statement" ...competitive, recreational, both? Workout plan for the week or semester. On their site, Michigan has a good set of FAQs to alleviate concerns of would-be club members.

Info of interest: Races, running routes near campus, photos of members, race results, club records at various road and track distances...start a list that shows the best time for every club member at every distance they've run while a club member. At UO a weekly email disseminates timely information and information of "interest", all of which also appears on the website for a week. Some gets archived. Runners from other clubs around the country look at our website. Some coaches even use our workouts. If that helps develop the sport, great! Our website, updated weekly, is at www.uorunning.com.



Illinois has an excellent site with up-to-date information including race results, all-time club records, photos, meet entries, and week-by-week training plans for all distances from sprints to cross country.

Wisconsin also has an often-updated site with weekly training information. Wisconsin is a great example of a unique club which is a student organization, and not a part of a club sports program. They are a non-profit corporation with by-laws, a terrific example of another way to develop a running club with focus on college students, but also open to community members including families.

NIRCA can help you build your website. Go to www.clubrunning.org/web_request.php to get started. There you'll see that NIRCA is the National Intercollegiate Running Club Association, our national governing body. It's a group you'll want to join! They have descriptions of other clubs and how they got up-and-running.

GOT AN EMAIL LIST?

Compile an email list of all Club members so that you can contact them quickly with timely, new info - a great race that's coming up, an outing that people can organize for, or an extra run that people are going on.

You might want your email list to be a formal communication device for your club leaders to contact members, or you might want it to be more social (which might appeal to some runners, and just be spam to others). When our group email list became more "social", it drove some less active runners away from the club. They asked to be removed from the list. We have over 200 addresses on our list including many alums and inactive members. We try to limit the "official" messages to one or two per week. The socializing drove some less active members off the list.

TO FEE OR NOT TO FEE

Once you have a group going, you must decide if you'll have a monetary fee to join. A fee would stop some runners from joining. It might encourage some others to stick with the group to get their money's worth. It would go a long way toward funding the activities that you think are valuable. Club shirts purchased with fees will help publicize the group and perhaps give a sense of unity.

Check with your school's Student Activities office or Club Sports program – a membership fee might cover fundraising requirements for your club.

At Oregon we do not have a fee to join. We get lots of students who come to find out what the club is all about. They sign a liability release form and run. They get put on the club's email list that same day, that's why there are over 200 names on the list. If a runner has not shown up for a few months, they are usually taken off the email list.



NOW THAT YOU HAVE A CLUB...

ENTRY FEES, GEAR, T-SHIRTS

With no club fee and not enough money in the club account to pay race entry fees, the Oregon runners who compete pay their own entry fees for cross country and track races. They buy a racing singlet (in 2009-10, it cost \$25). They provide all their own gear with one exception - each club team at Oregon gets one clothing item from Nike each year for its members. It's ordered a year ahead of time. In spite of good intentions, we usually end up with long-sleeved shirts that are too big or too small or ill-shaped.

If you have someone in your group who can design a good-looking shirt, you can make some money and publicize your club. Michigan has their classic "M" on their racing shirts and they call their club "M Run". They have club shirts with the same well-known logo.

We just got access to the new Oregon "O" for our racing singlets, and hope to make use of it on club shirts.

BODIES AND BRAINS

Make use of the human resources within your growing group. At Oregon, one of our guys is working as a personal trainer in the rec center. He's become our guru for a couple of runners who have specific muscular and flexibility weaknesses, and he's added interesting new abdominals and other strengthening exercises that we can try (and laugh about) as a group on dry days.

A couple of years ago we had a woman on our team who was great at asking local merchants for in-kind donations. Other club members started asking merchants too. From these donations, we had some terrific prizes for a race we organized on Pre's Trail.

BRING THE MONEY

If you have journalism majors or English majors, you have writers for your group. They can even compose fund raising letters. Direct solicitation is the simplest form of fund raising and, once you get past some people's reluctance to ask for money, you can make hundreds (even thousands) of dollars for your club with a well-written, easily personalized letter. This works! People like your runners, so take advantage!

Does your campus have public relations majors or a PR club? Either one will have students who need projects to work on. They can provide fundraising ideas and momentum. Putting on events can make money! For example, you could put on a dance, a tournament, a meal co-hosted with a restaurant and bring in a good amount of profit for your team!



We've lucked out and stumbled into an ongoing fundraiser. We provide five volunteers to work as the ball crew at women's varsity volleyball matches, for \$100 per match. It's fun, we're really reliable, and we make \$1200 per year for our club.

HELP AND BE HELPED

Volunteerism is a key for any club. One NIRCA club, Indiana, provides workers and officials for varsity track meets in return for access to the athletic department's track. At Oregon, we sometimes get reduced entry fees because our coach acts as meet announcer.

Your club is going to be populated with distance runners - smart, capable people. Make use of their talents and tenacity, and especially their willingness to help with club functions. All you have to do is ask, whether it is fundraising letters or a simple task like carrying bags inside when it starts raining, or just bringing a blender to "Smoothie Saturday". There is no need for one person, whether an officer or coach, to be doing all the work – this only leads to burn out.

COACHING

GOT A COACH? KEEP A COACH?

Finding and keeping a coach can be a serious challenge. If you have strong leadership, maybe by mature club members who are willing to subordinate their running for the welfare of the club, you won't need a long-lasting coach.

For continuity in workouts, though, finding a good coach and keeping him/her around for several years is valuable. If that person is a wise counselor, or an interested friend or a teller of stories, so much the better. So, how do you find a coach? A volunteer coach?

Try to find a retired, local coach and make it easy for him/her to do the job. Offer to do all the peripheral tasks and let the coach take as much responsibility as he/she wants and your Club Sports program allows.

Contact local high school coaches to find out who's retired or who's still teaching but not coaching in school.

You, the runners, might actually be the "hook" that will get a retired coach interested in donating time and effort. Your interest in running for its own merits might be reward enough to "net" a retired coach.

Investigate your campus' department of physical education, human physiology, recreation, and psychology. There might not only be candidates there but there also might be a way to arrange credit or practicum experience for coaching. There might be a majors program on



campus that could provide a graduate student coach (maybe with collegiate running experience, if you're lucky) who can work with you for a year or two.

Or, look for faculty members on campus who run. You might find a professor who is a thoughtful, experienced runner. Start with a short term commitment and see what happens. It could end up being long term because it's fun and rewarding for the professor. At Oregon there is a "noon group" of professors who run. A similar group on your campus might be fertile ground for finding a coach or getting a good contact.

You might find a graduate student within your growing group who would like to write workouts for you. Large universities have grad students with running experience at high levels. They might be short on time, but they'll bring their own running experiences and maybe a willingness to give your group some guidance.

Your coach can simply be someone who writes, and perhaps administers your workouts, or he/she can be much more involved and might even be the glue that holds the club together.

PAY OR VOLUNTEER

Do you want to consider paying a coach? Perhaps you would get a greater commitment, but it might be better to try to recruit a coach who would find joy and reward in working with your group for free. A running club is an all-volunteer group. If it isn't fun, people won't come. A coach who is willing to volunteer in that setting would be someone who appreciates runners and enjoys spending time with college students. A retired coach (or grad school volunteer with intercollegiate experience) might enjoy the low-key setting in which runners want to do well, but if they don't, they can deal with it.

Consider the paid coach, and the challenge of raising the money on a regular basis, but also consider the advantages of a volunteer.

EXPANDING TO OTHER EVENTS

Do you want to be more than a distance running club? If you develop into a widely-based club, you'll probably need more than one coach for track's different disciplines. At Oregon we occasionally have sprinters and hurdlers who want to train, but we haven't expanded into that area. With a coach who's interested and well-versed in those events, it would be a possibility. Your club would need access to a track or appropriate surfaces, as well as a weight room. In our rec center, individuals can train but teams cannot train together.

Serving a greater community in track and field is valuable, but requires more people and access to facilities, not just the open road.



SUCCESS IS IN THE DETAILS

COMPETE, HAVE FUN, OR BOTH?

What kinds of activities are right for your club? What is the emphasis of your club? Some clubs will be more recreational and some will be more competitive. Some will try (succeed or fail) to be both.

At Oregon we try to be both recreational and competitive. It's difficult. The competitive runners require more organization (scheduling, workouts, travel planning, uniforms). That means that the emails and website appear to emphasize the competitive side of the club. Also, the more competition-oriented runners show up more often and know each other well. And it's more men than women.

As stated in its mission, NIRCA is focused on providing competitive running opportunities, as well as chances for runners to meet one another by bringing clubs together at various events throughout the year.

SCARING THEM AWAY

Competitively focused clubs may be intimidating for runners who simply want to have someone to go for a run with, or for runners trying to get back into shape. It's vital that at least one person at each get-together of the club is welcoming to everyone. The recreational runners, and the out-of-shape runners, must feel that there is a reason to meet with the group.

At some point, you will have to decide what direction your club wants to go in – recreational or competitive. While it can be difficult to effectively accommodate both groups within the same club, but it can be done. The University at Buffalo (NY) has a fairly large club and they designate separate club officers who focus specifically on the recreational or competitive runners. This ensures that both groups are getting what they want out of the club.

A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

A good way to welcome runners is to be able to call them by name. Once they fill out the liability release form or other paperwork, someone needs to make an effort to learn the new runners' names, maybe their hometown, or year in school, major - something about them which might be used to connect them with another runner in the group.

Our coach tries to be able to call every club member by name when they arrive after the first time they show up. And when he can't remember a name, he makes a game out of guessing or simply asks them again. A college student can probably go for days without talking to an "adult" who knows them by name. Go Club!



The runs, themselves, ought to be non-threatening. They can be organized by pace or distance or route. At Oregon, nothing is organized. They usually start off together, women and men, all running slowly and talking. The run just sorts itself out. Sometimes the coach singles out one runner who decides the direction. The coach says, "Follow him/her for two blocks, then you're on your own." That runner might be having a birthday, or maybe had the biggest improvement in the previous weekend's race, or just got an A on a paper, or maybe has a class soon and simply needs to get going.

AFTER A RUN

Encourage runners to come back to the start when they've finished the run and not to just run straight home. If the weather is decent, it's a good time to chat, do some abs, drills or strides. If the coach or club officer is there when the runners filter back, it's a great chance to get to know each other better, and to cover the club's business if needed.

MORE TIMES, MORE PEOPLE?

Consider offering workout times at different times of the day during the week so that many people can show up at least once. Many runners can't show up regularly because of class, lab and work schedules. Try to find times that accommodate lots of people, maybe consider some mornings. We don't do this except on our hard day when there are several opportunities during the day to do repetitions, hills or other hard running. The coach or someone in a leadership position MUST be at each of the sessions.

THE HARD DAY

If you have harder training sessions, be sure that everyone feels welcome there too. Tell them that you'll all jog to the workout site in a group, and those who don't want to do a workout can go for an aerobic run from there.

Offer a version of the workout that is non-threatening, such as covering a distance without being timed. For example, "You've already run 15 minutes from campus. How about one lap around this one-kilometer loop at a pace that's just a little faster? Then, you can rest two or three minutes and decide if you want to do another one. Remember, you still have to run home or back to campus."

If everyone is offered a workout alternative which is reasonable, there's a greater chance everyone will feel accomplished. For instance, "Three of these reps is a complete workout. After you've done three, if you want to try a fourth one, that's fine. You'll have to twist my arm to do five." Inevitably, someone will go for the five.

Everyone should finish the workout feeling that they've accomplished something and/or that they've made a good decision about what they've done. A "steppingstone" approach can make a lot of people, who are in varied states for fitness, feel good about themselves.



RECREATION = FUN

What else can your club do besides train and race? You are only limited by your own creativity and perhaps money as well. The non-racing parts of running can really bring your group together.

Exploring runs can be great. At Oregon we can ride the city bus for free, so we've taken the bus several miles to a filbert orchard to do an exploring run. Some runners run to the orchard, do a loop, and then take the bus back.

On Fridays when there isn't a race the next day, we sometimes play ultimate frisbee or ultimate football. During basketball season we find an outdoor court on a dry day and play "work-up" ("bump") and we've even played five-on-five ratball with a half-dozen substitutes.

An occasional Sunday carpool trip 20 miles down the freeway gets us to a bike trail on an old railroad bed next to a lake. An out-and-back run, plus a snack and some frisbee can make a good, easy outing and still leave plenty of Sunday study time.

EXPEDITIONS

To help attract both recreational and competitive runners, try having organized day-trips. Our Oregon coast trip, using three vans, was so much fun last spring that we did an autumn version heading toward the mountains...a river trail, hot-spring pool, a pizza place and a fish hatchery that had a 100-year old sturgeon, and a pumpkin patch.

You all have your own destinations to explore and run. Pack a lunch and go! It'll be a great activity for all your runners.

FRIENDS, ROOMMATES, DONORS

Once your club gets established, you'll find that some freshmen club members eat together in the dorm. The next year some will choose to live together off campus.

This is because clubs can become a social group for many runners, for some it's their fraternity or sorority, their most comfortable group on campus. For some freshmen, it's the best way to meet people with common interests. The contacts you make with the running club can last beyond college. At Oregon, we haven't had any marriages yet, but give it time. Also, be sure to establish ties with your club's alumni, they are the most willing and reliable donors out there.

Establishing a club at your school will go far beyond simply having a group to run with.



INFINITY AND BEYOND

THE WEST

What about that big empty place west of the Mississippi?

All clubs do a lot of driving to compete and to explore. Looking at a map, though, it's remarkable to those of us who live in the West how close the schools east of the Mississippi are to each other. Yes, Clemson runners drove overnight to get to the 2008 NIRCA Nationals, and they went home with a national champion in their van. But there are a lot of schools within 300 miles of Ypsilanti, Michigan, the site of the 2009 nationals.

A three-hundred-mile drive gets us to Seattle, but Washington doesn't have a club. Cal and Stanford have more recreational clubs that are not NIRCA members, although Stanford was a member in 2007. The nearest NIRCA member is the University of Denver, which is 989 air miles from Eugene. Many of the clubs in the West Region face this large gap between their team and the nearest NIRCA member club.

ROAD TRIP!

Distances are formidable and perhaps the differences among clubs are just as great. To improve the club scene in the West, we need to reach out to each other and find common ground. Competition seems to be the basis for NIRCA itself, but if the teams are not competitively compatible, something else must draw them together. That something is simply an interest in running.

After some email communication, perhaps clubs could try to arrange meetings "halfway". If Nevada had a club, we could meet for running (and maybe some camping) at Crater Lake in the early fall. If Washington had a club, we could each drive halfway and explore Mount St. Helen's together.

USC (Southern California) has a non-varsity team of cross country men, there is no NCAA men's XC team at USC. We've mused about challenging them to a race in Sacramento which is about halfway between the schools. The coach at American River College, Jean Snuggs, might help us if we asked. We'd hope to find a women's club to race with, too.

IS IT WORTH IT?

It will take some initial communication, cooperation, and perhaps a whole lot of organization to get far-flung groups together, but it would be a great way to help develop clubs in the West. And it would be fun!



NOW IS THE TIME, ARE YOU THE ONE?

So, if you are a student at a Western college, or anywhere else in the country, and you are interested in forming a running club at your school, we hope this information is helpful. If your club is up-and-running and you want to offer your experience, great!

If you want suggestions or advice about getting a club going or making it better, we would like to help. We don't have all the answers but we'll listen and make suggestions if you ask. Our goals are:

1. To help you get a club off the ground or make it fly higher.
2. To get communication going among Western clubs and clubs everywhere.
3. To gather information about what works, and doesn't, on your campus for your club.
4. To put together ideas offered from all over the country which will help develop college running.
5. To get the gathered information to college clubs nationwide - in words, photos, and video.

NIRCA also offers assistance to developing clubs across the country. Please feel free to contact Club Development Director, Jeremy Brown, with any questions you may have about the start up process, or how to expand your club – jeremy.brown@clubrunning.org

WHO WE ARE

We hope to hear from you. Contact us by email!

University of Oregon student coordinators:

Kristen Mohror – kmohror@uoregon.edu

Gio Guzman – cguzman@uoregon.edu

University of Oregon volunteer coach:

Tom Heinonen – heino@uoregon.edu

NIRCA DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

This document was produced as a part of the NIRCA Development Grant project. For more information please visit www.clubrunning.org/member_dues.php or email the NIRCA Executive Council at executivecouncil@clubrunning.org.

