USATF-Tennessee 2026 Partnership & Reputation Rebuild Report

Prepared for: USATF-Tennessee Executive Committee
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Report date: November 8, 202

1. Executive Summary

The Strategic Plan named seven deficiencies. Four were about reputation: low visibility, weak communications, few sanctioned events, and little presence at championship-level competition. The 2026 partnership program was the fastest way to address those four. We put the brand into established, well-attended meets and let outstanding athletes carry it.

Measure	2026 result
Events in the partnership portfolio	**8**, all USATF-TN sanctioned
Athlete reach (workbook figures)	**6,039**
Cash partnership payments	**$5,000**
Merchandise distributed (value)	**$5,989.72**
Total value delivered	**$10,989.72**
Estimated sanction rebates	**$1,570**
Estimated net cost to the Association	**$9,419.72**
Blended cost per athlete reached	**$1.82**
Merchandise purchased	**$8,714.17** (about 69% distributed by value)

Headline moments

- **Olympic and Paralympic champions.** Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall wore and distributed USATF-TN gear and met fans. Between them they have well over 1 million social media followers.
- **World-class pros at Ed Murphey.** Donavan Brazier, Craig Engels, and Jamal Britt were in the field at the Ed Murphey Classic in Memphis. Britt won the 110m hurdles and took home $50,000 as the USATF Tour winner.
- **A world-lead sprint at Music City.** Sam Blaskowski ran 9.89 in the 100m at the Music City Track Carnival in May. The performance drew national headlines, though there is a reputational caveat in Section 6.
- **Quincy Wilson at Region 6.** Wilson signed autographs for more than two hours on July 11 at the UASTF Region 6 Championship held in Collierville.

The Association didn't create these athletes' stardom. By being present, branded, and well organized at these events, it earned credibility from association with them, which a typical state association rarely does.

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2. Why Partnerships: The Reputational Problem

The Strategic Plan described an Association with declining membership, sporadic championships, inconsistent communication, and a shrinking footprint of sanctioned events. These weaknesses reinforce each other. Few visible events mean low awareness, low awareness means fewer members and volunteers, and fewer members and volunteers mean fewer events.

The partnership approach breaks that cycle in five ways:

1. **Visibility without building from scratch.** Banners, tables, and giveaways at established meets reached thousands of athletes and families in one season.
2. **Value to meet directors.** Sanction reimbursement, co-branding, and merchandise for top finishers give directors a reason to sanction with USATF-TN.
3. **Coverage across levels.** The portfolio runs from elementary school through pro, with para athletes at Toad Fest and the 8K Championship.
4. **A consistent identity.** The season used one brand set: blue and white backpacks, red, navy and white shirts, silver bottles, and banners.
5. **Credibility through elite association.** When Olympic, Paralympic, and world champions wear the brand and meet fans, the Association gains standing that spending alone can't buy.

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3. Authorization vs. Actual Spend

Category	Approved (Jan 6, 2026)	Actual	Variance to range
Merchandise and giveaways	$9,000–$12,000	$8,714.17	$285.83 below the floor
Co-brand partnership contributions	$6,000–$9,000	$5,000.00	$1,000 below the floor
Combined	**$15,000–$21,000**	**$13,714.17**	**Below the approved range**

The program came in under the approved range. The Executive Committee authorized a larger commitment than we used.

Merchandise purchase detail

Item	Qty	Vendor	Cost	Delivery
Banners, white 4×8	2	Bannersonthecheap.com	$216.73	Jan 30
T-shirts, white/navy (HS Indoor)	300	Marrissa's order	$1,905.00	For Feb indoor
T-shirts: 800 adult red/navy, 300 youth white/red/blue	1,100	5 Boys Apparel	$4,137.25	Apr 14
Water bottles, 28 oz	500	4AllPromo	$1,475.19	Mar 30
Drawstring backpacks	1,000	ToteBagsNow.com	$980.00	Apr 2
Total			**$8,714.17**	

Not purchased: wristbands, hats, and a second set of 3×6 red/blue banners. The January memo had planned 1,500 shirts and 1,000 water bottles. We bought 1,400 shirts and 500 bottles.

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4. Partnership Portfolio Results

Event	Date / Location	Athletes	Partnership Cash	Merch value	Sanction rebate (est.)	$/athlete	Net cost
KYA HS Indoor Championship	Feb 8 Vanderbilt (Nashville)	500	$2,000	$1,828.80	$244	$7.66	$3,584.80
Great 8	April 23 (Nashville)	432	$750	$172.92	$100	$2.14	$822.92
Music City Track Carnival	May 29 (Cleveland TN)	300	$750	$321.45	$100	$3.57	$971.45

Event	Date / Location	Athletes	Partnership Cash	Merch value	Sanction rebate (est.)	$/athlete	Net cost
Toad Fest	June 6 (Mt. Juliet)	167	$500	$381.26	$63	$5.28	$818.26
USATF-TN Association Meet	June 13 (Cordova)	197	n/a	$287.80	none recorded	$1.46	$287.80
Region 6 Championships	July 9–11 (Collierville)	**1**,243	n/a	$961.08	none recorded	$0.77	$961.08
Ed Murphey Track Classic	July 10–11 (Memphis)	200	$1,000	$200.35	$63	$6.00	$1,137.35
Crazy 8's USATF 8K National Championship	July 18 (Kingsport)	3,000	$0	$1,836.06	$1,000	$0.61	$836.06
Totals		**6,039**	**$5,000**	**$5,989.72**	**$1,570**	**$1.82**	**$9,419.72**

The workbook calculates net cost as cash plus merch value minus the estimated sanction rebate. Cost per athlete is cash plus merch value divided by athletes. Region 6 has no cash line, so its figures are merchandise only.

What the numbers show

- **Reach events are the most efficient.** The 8K Championship ($0.61), Region 6 ($0.77), and the Association meet ($1.46) deliver the broadest exposure for the least money.
- **Cash partnerships buy depth and star power.** The KYA Indoor ($7.66), Ed Murphey ($6.00), and Toad Fest ($5.28) cost more per athlete. They buy banner placement, podium merchandise, and access to the athletes and fans in Section 6. **Ed Murphey is the clearest case.** Its $6.00 per athlete is a poor measure of a meet where world and national champions wore and distributed our gear and met with fans. Cost per athlete understates the return on these events.
- **Rebates offset about 14% of gross value.** Estimated rebates of $1,570 against $10,989.72 in gross value is a modest offset. Confirming actual receipts would strengthen the number.
- **Geographic balance.** Cash went mostly to Middle Tennessee ($3,250 across the Indoor, Music City, and Toad Fest) and to Memphis ($1,000, Ed Murphey). East Tennessee's only touchpoint was the Kingsport 8K, which had no cash and $1,836.06 in merch. Knoxville has no summer event in the portfolio.

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5. Season Narrative: From Youth to Pro

Winter and spring: building the base. The 2026 Tennessee High School Indoor Championship at Vanderbilt was the anchor. USATF-TN hung banners and distributed 288 shirts to the top eight finishers in each event, relays included. Great 8 followed in April. At Music City in May, the brand was on site for one of the biggest worldwide sprint performances of the year (Section 6).

June: widening the circle. At Toad Fest on June 6 in Nashville, the brand reached elementary through pro and para athletes. The USATF-TN Association meet in Cordova put the Association's own event in front of elementary, middle, and high school athletes, with a merch table and giveaways.

July: the high point. Region 6 in Collierville (July 9–11) was the largest youth-focused event of the season at 1,243 athletes. It included the 2024 Olympian, Quincy Wilson signing on July 11. The Ed Murphey Classic (July 10–11) put the brand in front of an elite pro field and a USATF.TV audience. The Crazy 8's USATF 8K National Championship in Kingsport on July 18 gave the biggest single audience, 3,000 athletes.

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6. Star Power and Credibility

Branded merchandise only builds a reputation when people see it on credible figures. In 2026, USATF-TN gear was worn and distributed by some of the best-known names in the sport, and those athletes met fans while doing so. For a state association rebuilding its image, that is worth more than the line items suggest.

Olympic and Paralympic champions: Tara and Hunter Woodhall

- **Tara Davis-Woodhall** is the Paris 2024 Olympic champion in the women's long jump (7.10m).
- **Hunter Woodhall** is the Paris 2024 Paralympic champion in the men's 400m T62.
- **Social reach.** In September 2024 (Deseret News), Tara had about 1.1 million Instagram followers and Hunter about 804,000. Their joint account had about 651,000 and their YouTube channel nearly 900,000 subscribers. These figures are two years old and have probably grown.
- **Why it matters.** They are among the most visible couples in the sport, and their audience is large, young, and engaged. They also represent both Olympic and Paralympic sport, which supports the Association's para inclusion, and the plan's goal of a more inclusive Association.

Event and date: Toad Fest, June 6, 2026, Nashville

Tara Davis-Woodhall and Hunter Woodhall were featured guests at the 2026 Toad Fest. Tara didn't compete. Instead, she took an active part in the day:

- She started a race and held the finish tape.

- She presented awards.
- She threw USATF-TN shirts to the crowd.

Hunter competed in the 400m and attempted to break the Para 400m world record. Both athletes spent time with young athletes with and without disabilities. After the meet, they stayed for autographs and photos with fans.

- **Elite pros at the Ed Murphey Classic (July 10–11, Memphis)**

The Ed Murphey budget line specifies shirts for officials and pros. The results show a field that matched that investment:

Athlete	Credential	Ed Murphey result
Donavan Brazier	2019 World Champion, 800m; former American record holder (1:42.34)	**Won** the 800m in 1:44.94
Jamal Britt	2026 breakout star: Diamond League wins in Shanghai, Xiamen, and Paris; 12.86 at the Prefontaine Classic	**Won** the 110m hurdles in 12.91 and earned **$50,000** as USATF Tour winner
Craig Engels	Nationally known pro middle-distance runner	3rd in the 800m (1:47.82); also in the Sub-4 Mile attempt

The meet was also the final stop of the new USATF Tour, a World Athletics Continental Tour Silver event, and a stop on the World Shot Put Series with three-time Olympic champion Ryan Crouser. It was live on USATF.TV. A meet with that profile makes our banner and merch presence far more valuable than the $1,137.35 net cost suggests. Both Engels and Brazier joined other stars in throwing USATF-TN branded water bottles into the stands after their races.

Sam Blaskowski at the Music City Track Carnival (May)

Blaskowski, a former NCAA Division III champion, ran **9.89 in the 100m** in late May. That was a world-leading time and made headlines. The performance happened at the USATF-TN-partnered meet - The 2026 Music City Track Carnival. Immediately after finishing his race he held up a red USATF-TENNSEE t-shirt and posed for the press.

Quincy Wilson at Region 6 (July 11, Collierville High School)

Wilson is a member of the gold-medal USA 4×400m relay at Paris 2024 and the youngest American male track and field Olympian. He signed autographs for youth athletes for more than two hours (self-reported; photo timestamps will document it).

- **Relevance.** Region 6 draws elementary, middle, and high school athletes, and Wilson's path as a high school phenom is directly relatable to them.
- **Credibility.** An Olympic gold medalist at an Association-branded youth event signals a connection to the national and elite level.

- **Content.** The photos are among the Association's strongest communications assets of the season.
- **Region 6 costs.** The $0.77 cost per athlete is merchandise-only. Other Region 6 costs belong in a separate analysis, since the January memo excluded them.

What this adds up to

Level	Who	What it gave USATF-TN
Youth	Quincy Wilson, R	A relatable hero for 1,243 young athletes
Olympic and Paralympic	The Woodhalls	A reach of more than 1 million followers, with an inclusion story
World-class pro	Brazier, Britt, Engels	Elite credibility on USATF.TV at a USATF Tour finale
Sprint spotlight	Blaskowski	National / International headlines

Suggested content plan:

- A feature story and photo gallery on each appearance, using #usatf-tn.
- A "Tennessee 2026" highlight reel for sponsors.
- A thank-you to the meet directors, host schools, and volunteers.
- Tags for partner outlets from the January list.
- Written permission from each athlete or agent before using names, images, or quotes in marketing.

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7. Alignment with the Strategic Plan

Strategic goal	Partnership contribution	Evidence	Gap
Grow membership (+40%)	Branded giveaways, elite-athlete draw at events	6,039 athletes reached; $5,989.72 in merch distributed	No sign-up or conversion data
Improve communications	Consistent branding, partner network, star-athlete content	Banners, shirts, Wilson and star athlete photos	No reach or engagement metrics
Increase sanctioned events (+10)	Sanction reimbursement and co-branding	8 sanctioned events in the portfolio	The sheet doesn't show which are newly sanctioned
Rebuild championships	Co-branding HS Indoor, Great 8, and the 8K National	Visible at three championship-level events	The plan's three Association-owned championships aren't shown here (Association

Strategic goal	Partnership contribution	Evidence	Gap
			Track, Region 6 Track, Association XC)
National engagement	Visibility at Region 6, 8K National, and a USATF Tour finale	Elite athletes wearing the brand	Convention attendance isn't covered in these documents

Budget framing. The Strategic Plan's $28,100 allocated only $2,000 to membership promotion and $1,500 to the sanctioned-event incentive. The partnership program ($13,714.17 in actual spend) was approved separately on January 6, so the Committee should see the two budgets side by side.

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8. Recommendations

1. **Measure outcomes.** Add a QR code or sign-up sheet at every merch table. Track new and renewed memberships by event.
2. **Standardize the partner package.** Define tiers (reach events, relationship events, and flagship events) with fixed deliverables.
3. **Build an athlete-ambassador program.** Ask athletes like the Woodhalls, Wilson, Brazier, and Britt in advance to wear the gear, post, and meet youth, with agreed terms. Don't rely on chance appearances.
4. **Make elite presence a pricing factor.** Measure a flagship event by its earned media and athlete appearances as well as cost per athlete.
5. **Document inventory.** About $2,724 of merchandise at purchase value remains. Count it and plan its use for Q4 and early 2027.
6. **Close the East Tennessee gap.** Add a Knoxville touchpoint, such as the elementary or middle school cross country championships listed in the January memo.
7. **Package the content.** Publish the photos and stories, and use them in 2027 sponsor outreach.
8. **Report rebates received.** Replace the estimates with actual amounts once confirmed.
9. **Set a media-use policy.** Get written permission for athlete names and images, and review athletes' public standing before featuring them.
10. **Clean the workbook.** See Section 9.

Still needed

- **Sanction rebates:** the actual amounts received.
- **Impact data:** any membership, social media, or newsletter data to quantify the reputational effect.

2026 TENNESSEE HIGH SCHOOL INDOOR CHAMPTIONSHIPS





2026 GREAT 8

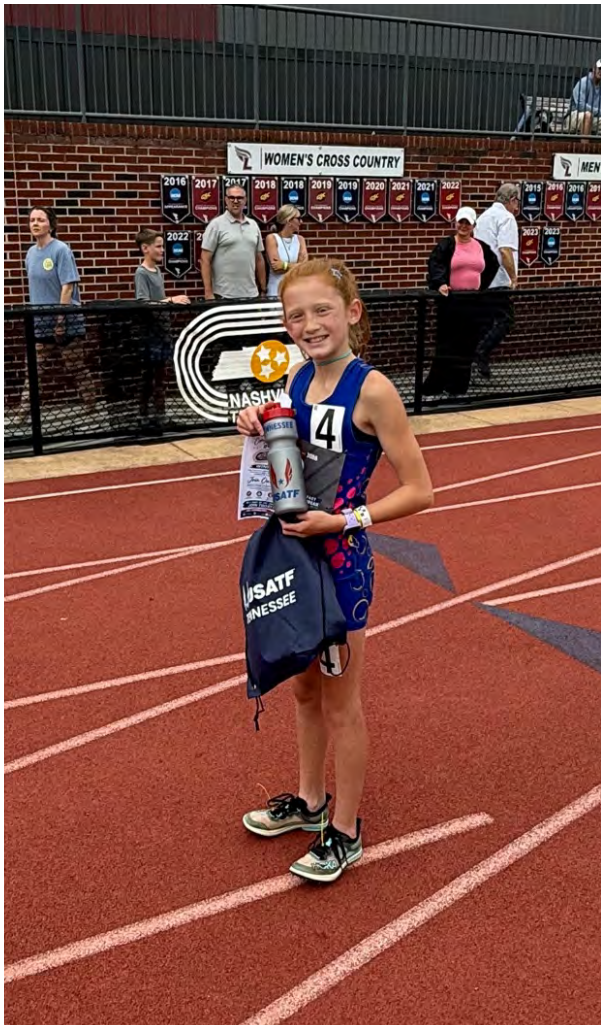

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2026 MUSIC CITY TRACK CARNIVAL






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TENNESSEE


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TENNESSEE
WORLD
ATHLETICS


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2026 TOAD FEST


Achilles
TOADLYFE


3
HOLT
USATF
TENNESSEE
USATF


HAWKS
USATF
TENNESSEE





2026 USATF TENNESSE ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS



2026 REGION 6 CHAMPIONSHIPS


USATF
TENNESSEE
EVENT STAFF



CRAZY 8's USATF 8K NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS




THE BAT
5 MILER
8151
3455


USTTA
TENNESSEE


:10.21
THE REGIONAL
EYE CENTER
Always looking ahead.
BalladHealth.
It's your story. We're listening.
Almost
3K
Crazy
EASTMAN
CREDIT
UNION
ECU BESIDE YOU



Partnership Program: Value Restatement and 2027 Recommendations

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1. Restated Value: What the Program Did for Reputation and Awareness

The problem it addressed

The Strategic Plan described a cycle: few visible events, low awareness, fewer members and volunteers, then even fewer events. The 2026 program aimed to break that cycle by putting the USATF-TN brand into established, well-attended events instead of building new ones.

What it delivered

Dimension	2026 evidence
Visibility	8 sanctioned events and 6,039 athletes reached, with a consistent identity (banners, shirts, bottles, backpacks)
Efficiency	$13,714.17 total spend, $9,419.72 estimated net cost, **$1.82 per athlete reached**, and $0.61–$0.77 at the largest reach events
Statewide footprint	Nashville, Memphis, Collierville, Cordova, Kingsport, and the Sewanee/Cleveland area, with a gap in Knoxville
Full age range	Elementary school through pro, plus para athletes
Credibility by association	Olympic and Paralympic champions (the Woodhalls at Toad Fest), world-class pros (Brazier, Britt, Engels at Ed Murphey), and Quincy Wilson at Region 6
Content assets	Photos and stories that can be reused in sponsor outreach, membership drives, and communications

The value, stated plainly

For about **$9,400 in net cost**, USATF-TN went from a low-profile association to one seen at championship-level events and next to well-known athletes. Spending alone doesn't usually buy that. The Association didn't create the athletes' stardom, but it was present, branded, and well organized when they appeared. That is what earned the credibility.

The program also has a second kind of value that spending figures miss. It gave meet directors a reason to sanction with USATF-TN (rebates, co-branding, podium merchandise), so it supports the sanctioned-event goal as well as awareness.

What the program has not yet shown

The Executive Committee should hear this directly. **The reputational value is supported by presence and association, not yet by measured outcomes.** The report has no data on:

- New or renewed memberships tied to events.
- Social media, newsletter, or website growth.
- Meet directors who sanctioned because of the program.
- Sponsor or volunteer inquiries.

The case is strong on credibility and reach and weaker on conversion. That isn't a reason to doubt the program. It is the main thing to fix in 2027, because measured results are what will secure continued funding.

Cautions

- **Sam Blaskowski.** Cite the performance factually, but don't feature him in new promotion until the Committee decides how to handle his September 2026 controversy.
- **Athlete permissions.** Get written permission before using any athlete's name or image in marketing.
- **Under-spend.** The program came in $1,286 below the floor of the approved range ($13,714.17 against $15,000–$21,000). That leaves room to grow within existing authority, but the Committee should expect a clear plan for any increase.

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2. Recommendation A: Continue the Core Program

Recommend: continue and formalize, with measurement built in.

1. **Keep a three-tier portfolio.**
    - *Reach events* (Crazy 8's 8K, Region 6, the Association meet): low cost per athlete, broad exposure.
    - *Relationship events* (Toad Fest, Music City, Great 8): moderate cash, local partnership depth.
    - *Flagship events* (TN Indoor, Ed Murphey): higher cost, elite visibility and earned media.

2. **Track conversions at every merch table.** Use a QR code or sign-up sheet that links to membership and the newsletter. Report new sign-ups by event.
3. **Create an athlete-ambassador program.** The Woodhalls, Wilson, Brazier, and Britt appearances shouldn't depend on luck. Invite athletes in advance with defined terms: wear the gear, post, meet fans, and sign autographs. Add a review of each athlete's public standing.
4. **Use a simple evaluation scorecard** for each event: cost per athlete, sign-ups collected, earned media or social posts, and photo or content assets captured.
5. **Use the remaining inventory first.** About $2,724 of merchandise at purchase value is on hand. Count it and plan its use before buying more.
6. **Fix the data.** Clean the workbook errors in Section 9 of the report, and confirm the rebates actually received.

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3. Recommendation B: Expand into Coaching and Officials Workshops

Why it fits

The 2026 program built awareness among athletes and families. Coaches and officials are the next layer. Coaches shape where athletes go and which meets they attend. Officials are the shortage that most often limits how many sanctioned events can be held. Strengthening both supports the "increase sanctioned events" goal directly.

Suggested approach

Activity	Description	Where to pilot
Coaching education days	Half-day or full-day clinics (for example, youth coaching basics, event-specific sessions, safety, and para-athlete coaching)	Attach to an existing event such as the KYA Indoor or Region 6, so the audience is already there
Officials certification and refresher clinics	Clinics held *before* high-attendance meets, with newly certified officials working that meet	Near Toad Fest, the Association meet, or Region 6
Elite-athlete sessions	Ask visiting athletes to run a Q&A or technique session	Ed Murphey weekend or a Music City/Nashville event
Branded kit	Shirts or polos for coaches and officials who complete the clinic	Use existing inventory where sizes allow
Regional rotation	Hold clinics in East, Middle, and West Tennessee	Start with Knoxville to close the gap

Benefits

- Builds a trained volunteer pipeline.
- Gives the Association a reason to reach out to school and club coaches directly.
- Creates a credential or incentive (the shirt, a certificate, or a discounted membership) that drives sign-ups.
- Supports the inclusion goal through a para-coaching and para-officiating module.

Caveats

- Check existing certification structures with USATF national and the region before designing a program, so you don't duplicate them.
- Staffing and instructor availability will limit how many clinics you can run. Start with two or three in the first year.

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4. Recommendation C: Add Cross Country, Road Races, and Masters

Cross country

- **Why:** The January memo already listed elementary and middle school cross country championships, and there is no Knoxville presence in the 2026 portfolio. Cross country is also a natural entry point for youth, clubs, and families.
- **How:** Sponsor or co-brand 2–3 fall events across the state. Include one in East Tennessee. Reuse banners, bottles, and backpacks, which suit cross country well.
- **Timing:** Fall, so it fills the gap in the portfolio, which currently ends in July.

Road races

- **Why:** The Crazy 8's 8K National Championship produced the largest audience (3,000 athletes) at the lowest cost per athlete ($0.61). That is strong evidence for the format. Road races also draw adults, runners who aren't track athletes, and families, which is a different membership pool.
- **How:** Offer a standard partner package to sanctioned road races: banner, a membership table, finisher or age-group awards, and membership discounts for participants. Prioritize races that already have a USATF-sanctioned or championship status.
- **Opportunity:** A "USATF-TN Road Race Series" or Grand Prix could link several races and give runners a reason to join and return.

Masters athletes

- **Why:** Masters athletes are often loyal members, have disposable income, and participate for many years. They are a natural source of renewals, officials, coaches, and volunteers. The report has no masters data, so I can't point to current numbers.
- **How:**
  - Add masters divisions or a masters-friendly event at one or two existing partnership meets.
  - Create a masters track at a championship-level event, with recognition for age-group winners.
  - Recruit masters athletes as volunteers, officials, and coaches, which connects directly to Recommendation B.
  - Offer a membership bundle for masters athletes.
- **Messaging:** "Competing for life" fits the inclusion and long-participation themes already in the Strategic Plan.

Link to inclusion

Para athletes were already part of Toad Fest and the 8K Championship. Carry that into cross country and road races (para divisions, accessible courses) and into the coach and official modules.

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5. Proposed 2027 Structure

Pillar	Focus	Primary goal	Key measure
1. Core partnerships	Continue the 8-event base, add tiers	Awareness and credibility	Cost per athlete, sign-ups per event
2. Coaching and officials	2–3 pilot clinics, with a regional rotation	Volunteer pipeline, more sanctioned events	Newly certified officials and coaches
3. Cross country	2–3 fall events including East TN	Fill seasonal and geographic gap	Events added, athletes reached
4. Road races	Partner package or series	Reach adults and families	Race participants, member conversions
5. Masters	One or two masters events or divisions	Retention, loyalty, volunteers	Masters members, volunteers recruited

Budget framing

Planning figures from the 2026 base give you a starting point:

- **Core program:** repeating 2026 costs about $13,700, and some of that can come from existing inventory.
- **New pillars:** the documents don't contain cost data for clinics, cross country, road race, or masters activities. I'd suggest asking for a pilot allocation rather than a full-scale budget, with a request to return mid-year with results. The 2026 under-spend relative to the approved range suggests the Committee may be comfortable with a similar overall envelope. Treat that as a question for the Committee, not a given.
- **Offset with sponsors.** Use the 2026 content, the athlete appearances, and the new conversion data to approach local sponsors for the new pillars.

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6. Suggested Timeline

When	Action
Now–Dec 2026	Clean workbook, count inventory, confirm rebates, get athlete permissions, publish the content, and present this report to the Committee
Q1 2027	Approve 2027 plan and budget, finalize tiers and ambassador terms, launch QR/sign-up tracking, and schedule first officials and coaching clinics
Spring 2027	Run indoor/outdoor core events, hold the first clinics, and pilot a masters event
Summer 2027	Run flagship events, and sign up road race partners
Fall 2027	Cross country events including East Tennessee, then a full review and a 2028 recommendation

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7. Decisions for the Executive Committee

1. Approve **continuation** of the partnership program with the tier structure and tracking requirements.
2. Approve a **pilot allocation** for coaching and officials workshops.
3. Approve a **fall cross country** pilot with an East Tennessee event.
4. Approve a **road race partner package** for sanctioned races.
5. Approve a **masters** pilot.
6. Adopt a **media-use and athlete-permission policy**, including a decision on how to handle Sam Blaskowski.
7. Direct staff to deliver a **mid-year results report** with conversion data.