



20 LEADERSHIP 26 SUMMIT

GEORGIA CYCLING ASSOCIATION



2026 LEADERSHIP SUMMIT PROGRAM



Step up your coaching game — and be part of something bigger.

The Georgia Cycling Association's Annual Leadership Summit is where passion, purpose, and progress come together for our statewide community of volunteer youth mountain bike coaches.

This isn't your average training weekend. It's an energizing mix of workshops, on-the-bike sessions, and peer-to-peer learning designed to help you lead with confidence and connect with other coaches who share your commitment to youth development. You'll gain practical tools, new perspectives, and a deeper understanding of what it means to coach in a student-first culture that changes lives one ride at a time.

The Leadership Summit is more than professional development — it's an investment in you and all of student-athletes you inspire. Whether you're new to the trail or a seasoned Master Coach, you'll leave motivated, equipped, and ready to make an even greater impact on your team and community.

Join us at one of two events this year and help shape the future of youth mountain biking in Georgia.



JAN 31 & FEB 1
Lost Mountain Middle School
Kennesaw, GA



MAR 14 & 15
Academies of Discovery
Gainesville, GA

*Are you
Riding?
Or are you
Racing?!?*



KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Don't miss our first-of-its-kind Georgia Cycling morning keynotes happening on both Saturdays.



**DR. ERIN
AYALA**

Dr. Erin Ayala will join us on **Saturday January 31** with her presentation titled *Mental Health & Performance for Cycling Leadership: Supporting Youth Athletes On and Off the Trail*.

This two-part presentation is explicitly designed for our coaches and will focus on evidence-based strategies to help coaches understand and normalize the emotional ups and downs of teenagers, handle emotional breakdowns and anxiety, and shift from outcome-focused to effort-focused coaching.

Dr. Ayala will be back in the afternoon for guided reflection, during which participants can discuss their experiences, share insights, and develop actionable plans to create a positive team culture that supports lifelong cycling.

You'll leave with practical tools and strategies tailored to your role as an advocate, mentor, and leader, while fostering connections with other cycling coaches.

About the presenter: Dr. Erin Ayala is a Licensed Psychologist, Certified Mental Performance Consultant, and member of the USOPC Mental Health Directory, specializing in female athlete mental health. Based in Minneapolis, MN, she serves on several professional boards and committees, including the MN State High School Sports League's Sports Medicine Advisory Council. She brings 15+ years of experience in both clinical practice and research, along with her personal background as a competitive cyclist.



**DR. KRISTEN
DIEFFENBACH**

Dr. Kristen Dieffenbach will join us on **Saturday, March 14** with her presentation titled *Riding Together: The Power of the Volunteer Coach in Adolescent Athlete Development*.

The coach plays an essential role in creating and implementing a healthy sports environment. Join Dr. Kristen Dieffenbach for a fascinating and insightful conversation around the coach-athlete relationship. As a volunteer Georgia Cycling coach, you have the power to build resilience, self-confidence, teamwork, and discipline — traits that serve individuals well beyond their time with our programs.

Our morning keynote session with Dr. Dieffenbach will inspire you and amp you up for the 2026 season. You'll leave with new insights and a well-stocked toolbox to leverage with your team.

About the presenter: Kristen is a full professor in the College of Applied Human Sciences at West Virginia University and serves as the Executive Director of the United States Center for Coaching Excellence. This national non-profit organization supports coach development and coach education systems. She holds a doctorate in Exercise Science with a specialization in Sport and Exercise Psychology. Her work focuses on athletic talent development through evidence-informed coach education and coach development systems that enhance learning and performance across all levels of sport.



EDUCATION DAYS

ALL ATTENDEE GENERAL SESSION **We Are Georgia Cycling.** **8:30 – 9:00 a.m.**

Kick off the Leadership Summit with energy, purpose, and unity! You'll hear exciting updates about the Association as we get ready for the 2026 Trail Rangers and TeamMTB seasons.

ALL ATTENDEE GENERAL SESSION **The Coach-Preparing You To Prepare Them** **9:10 – 9:55 a.m.**

This session dives into why you are here and guides you through "riding the trail". Our coaches are our backbone and how to support your student athletes and peer coaches to align with our mission- to create lifelong cyclists who love this sport, is instrumental. You will be guided to best prepare yourself to develop our student athletes and tap into the training opportunities and adult learning model to be aligned with student athletes on day 1. We explore how you view yourself as a Georgia Cycling Association "Certified Coach".

ALL ATTENDEE GENERAL SESSION **Team Management Landscape** **10:05 – 10:50 a.m.**

This session takes you beyond coach certification and guides you through the application to managing your coach experience and expectations of student athletes. Self-awareness strengthens being an effective leader. Capitalizing on your coach resources creates a cohesive team structure beyond the trail.

ALL ATTENDEE KEYNOTE PRESENTATION **11 - 11:50 a.m.** See information on pages 3 & 4

LUNCH BREAK **11:50 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 **1:10 – 1:55 p.m.**

OPTION A - Practice Design and Engagement

This class builds effective, structured practices to keep kids engaged. We'll develop the necessary skills and mindset for riding performance while maintaining the proper balance between fun, adventure, and skill proficiency.

OPTION B - Maximizing Coach Engagement

Now that you've been a Level 1 coach for a year or two, how can you become more effective in helping the students and other coaches on your team? We will explore ways to engage and connect with your riders in more ways than on the bike, how to assist the Level 2 and 3 coaches to implement the practice plan, and become more comfortable communicating with riders in skill development and building relationships.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 **2:10 – 2:55 p.m.**

OPTION A - Maximizing Coach Engagement

See Description Above

OPTION B - Take Charge of Your Race Weekends

Race weekends can seem overwhelming, but in reality, they can be the easiest way to divide responsibilities to many of your parents and coaches. The logistics of pre to post race days can be structured in a way that makes things run smoothly and enjoyable for all involved. We will discuss ideas for pre-ride, Pit Zone set-up, race plates, warm-ups, staging, food, etc.

OPTION C - Taking Your Practices to the Next Level

Head Coaches, Team Directors, Level 2 and 3 coaches will collaborate and share best practices and ideas for implementing the best practice plans for intermediate and advanced riders while still keeping the focus on youth development and fun for their riders.

BREAKOUT SESSION 3 **3:10 – 3:55 p.m.**

OPTION A - Taking Your Practices to the Next Level

See Description Above

OPTION B - Take Charge of Your Race Weekends

See Description Above

OPTION C - Practice Design and Engagement

See Description Above

LEADERSHIP SUMMIT CLOSING SESSION **4:05 – 4:45 p.m.**

ON-THE-BIKE TRAINING



Sunday mornings at Leadership Summit offers Georgia Cycling coaches the ability to take on-the-bike training. These sessions last three and a half hours and are available at no cost to you. However, you must register in advance to reserve your spot in the course.

Sunday, February 1

9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 101
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 201
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 301
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Trail Rangers Skills & Gameplay

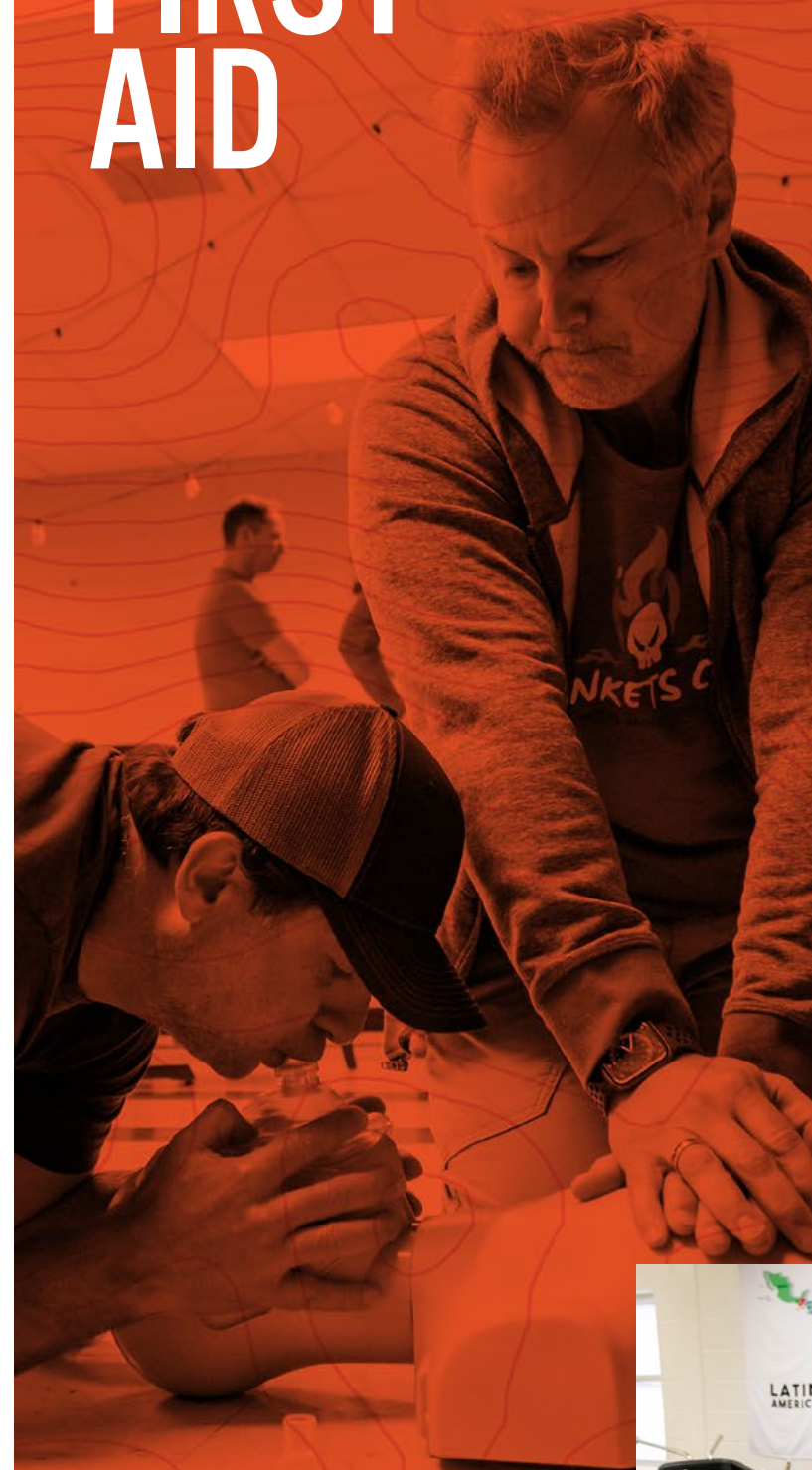
Sunday, March 15

9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 101
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 201
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. MBC 301
9:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. Trail Rangers Skills & Gameplay

**TEAMMTB COACHES MAY ONLY
TAKE ONE MBC COURSE PER YEAR.**



FIRST AID



Advanced First Aid/CPR training is a full day course offered four times. The cost is \$100 per person. Registration must be completed in advance.

Saturday, January 31

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Advanced First Aid/CPR

Sunday, February 1

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Advanced First Aid/CPR

Saturday, March 14

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Advanced First Aid/CPR

Sunday, March 15

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Advanced First Aid/CPR



TRAIL RANGERS

Join us for an indepth look at the Trail Rangers program. This two-part session will immerse Trail Rangers coaches in lecture and dynamic on Saturday and off-the-bike experiences on Sunday.

We will cover the essential content needed to prepare coaches in managing a Trail Ranger program and conducting the 10-week curriculum.

**Trail Rangers: Trail Rangers 2026
Saturday 2:10 – 3:55 pm**

During the first segment of the session, you will take away with you the full understanding of the Trail Rangers philosophy, the curriculum, and method of instruction. This segment will prepare you for the second segment where you will experience how it all comes together in a dynamic environment.

**Trail Ranger Skills and Activity: Teaching Skills Through Game Play
Sunday 9:15 – 12:45 pm**

You will be fully immersed into all the activities and experience first-hand of what each Ranger will receive during weekly sessions. You will have the knowledge needed for conducting Trail Rangers activities and on and off the bike skills. Come prepared to ride with your necessary riding gear for this segment.



GIRLS RIDE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

The Girls Ride Leadership Workshop will be offered as a dedicated afternoon session at both Leadership Summit weekends.

Female coaches and Girls Ride Advisors are invited to attend this interactive workshop, which provides an extended opportunity to engage directly with our keynote speakers in a focused, small-group setting. This session is designed to foster open dialogue around the contemporary challenges and opportunities facing girls and young women in sport.

Drawing on expertise in sport psychology and exercise science, our speakers will explore topics related to training, performance, confidence, and mental health—specifically through the lens of adolescent female athletes. The discussion will connect research-based insights to real-world coaching scenarios, helping participants better understand how to support female athletes at different stages of development.

This workshop also creates space for meaningful questions, shared experiences, and peer learning. Participants will leave with practical takeaways to strengthen their coaching approach, support athlete well-being, and optimize training environments—not only for their athletes, but for themselves as leaders within the Georgia Cycling community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS INVITATION-ONLY EVENT: email saskia@georgiacycling.org

Saturday, January 31

2:10. - 4:05 p.m. Girls Ride Leadership Workshop

Saturday, March 14

2:10. - 4:05 p.m. Girls Ride Leadership Workshop





The Georgia Cycling Association proudly thanks Honda Powersports & Products for their continuous support of our volunteer youth mountain bike coaches.