

# SPECIAL REPORT

## The High School Strength and Conditioning Professional: A Job Description

*A Special Report by the High School Job Description Committee of the National Strength and Conditioning Association, Randy Best, CSCS, \*D, Chair*

### **Committee Members:**

**Dennis T. Beaver, CSCS; Arran Caza, CSCS, NSCA-CPT;  
Bruce Harbach, CSCS, \*D; Richard Harris, CSCS;  
Michael Intemann, CSCS; Emory Latta, CSCS;  
Larry Meadors, CSCS, \*D; NSCA-CPT, \*D; Mike Nitka, CSCS;  
Stephen Nunnink, CSCS; Mark Riehl; and Les Rogers, CSCS**

**Keywords: high school; strength and conditioning professional;  
job description; coach.**

---

WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE NSCA, the high school strength and conditioning professional is a qualified individual working within a high school setting. In this school setting, the professional may serve solely as the strength and conditioning coach for the various athletic teams, but more often than not, he or she also serves as a classroom teacher and a sport team coach.

This professional is in a unique and excellent position to integrate and solidify a greater balance between athletics and academics in the high school setting. Based on a knowledge of scientific theory and supplemented by current research-based guidelines, programs instituted by the high school strength and condi-

tioning professional will efficiently and safely produce maximum health and fitness development in a minimum amount of time, thus providing students and student-athletes more time to devote to academics and non-sport-related activities.

By modeling and promoting responsible behavior, as outlined in the NSCA Code of Ethics, as well as school, district, and state guidelines, this professional is able to nurture a positive environment based on health, balance, fair play, and goal-directed achievement. The high school strength and conditioning professional is thus able to enhance the successes of the entire academic and athletic program. The professional's position within the school community pro-

vides a unique and rewarding experience for all involved.

In the high school setting, the strength and conditioning professional is in an ideal position to develop general conditioning programs for the student body, faculty, and staff. Incorporation of strength and conditioning principles in the required and elective health and physical education programs, along with the opportunity for faculty and staff to participate in wellness programs, can greatly enhance the overall physical health of the entire school population (7, 8).

Habits developed during the high school years are influential in our pattern of behavior for life. Changes in the body that occur as it responds to physical activity are

---

consistent with health benefits. These benefits encompass both the physical and the mental aspects of health. No one in the high school setting is more capable, or in a better position, to educate the general school population as to the principles and components of fitness, the dangers of drugs, the benefits of proper nutrition, and the health implications of an active physical lifestyle than the certified strength and conditioning professional (5, 7, 8).

### ■ Minimum Expectations for Qualifications

The high school strength and conditioning professional should meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Hold an undergraduate degree.
- Hold a state teaching certificate and/or the equivalent for private and parochial schools.
- Be a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS), and maintain that distinction through the NSCA.
- Maintain current certification in CPR.
- Have a working knowledge of basic first aid.
- Have relevant experience in program design and in the instruction and training of junior high- and high school-aged students and student-athletes.
- Abide by the NSCA Code of Ethics.

### ■ School-Related Benefits Derived From the Employment of a Certified Strength and Conditioning Professional

The entire school, including the administration, general student population, athletes, faculty, and staff, will benefit greatly from the employment of a certified strength

and conditioning professional. Positive results that can be expected because of the employment of a certified strength and conditioning professional include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Increased potential for athletic success, in terms of both team win-loss performance and individual athletic accomplishments.
- Reduction in the rate and severity of injuries, including a faster and more complete recovery from injuries that do occur.
- Reduction of exposure to liability (as a result of a reduced number of injuries) and the provision of a higher standard of care for the health and well-being of the athlete.
- Promotion of a greater balance between athletics and academics as a result of increased athletic efficiency, which can result in higher levels of participation in extracurricular activities.
- Promotion of a greater balance between athletics and academics as a result of an increased awareness of the work ethic required for success in both academics and athletics.
- Fewer missed school days, as a result of improved physical conditioning (3, 7, 8).

### ■ Whom the Professional Reports to and Works With

Because the certified strength and conditioning professional's duties within the school setting are so far reaching, he or she will work and have direct contact with administrators, faculty, and coaches.

- Reports to: Designated athletic administrator.
- Works with: Principal, athletic director, designated athletic administrator, sports coaches, athletic trainer (1, 6).

### ■ Responsibilities

Depending on the various goals identified by the school, the school district, and the community, the certified strength and conditioning professional's responsibilities could include at various times, but not be limited to, any or all of the following:

- Promoting a proper balance between athletics, athletic skills, resistance training, conditioning, and academics.
- Teaching fundamental skills through strength-related exercises for safe and effective competition.
- Ensuring that students and student-athletes injured under his or her supervision receive prompt and appropriate medical attention consistent with district policies.
- Motivating athletes to perform to their maximum potential.
- Maintaining a positive and educational environment in the weight room, including motivational and educational posters and literature.
- Ensuring that workout facilities and equipment are safe, clean, and functional.
- Reporting unsafe and/or unusable equipment to the athletic coordinator.
- Being punctual to all workouts and remaining until all students and student-athletes leave the facility.
- Completing all assigned reports and records.
- Advising and coordinating with the head coach in fulfilling assigned responsibilities related to the strength and conditioning requirements for their sport.
- Advising and coordinating with the head coach in fulfilling the assigned responsibilities related to physical conditioning.

- Advising and coordinating with the head coach in fulfilling the assigned responsibilities related to facility rules and discipline procedures.
- Being available to the students and student-athletes for counseling and individual help.
- Informing students and student-athletes of pertinent school policies and regulations.
- Requiring appropriate conduct and dress from those using the training facilities.
- Implementing training rules and discipline procedures.
- Interacting with the community in a professional manner.
- Maintaining a positive relationship with parents.
- Maintaining a positive working relationship with members of the faculty.
- Presenting a desirable coaching image to the parents and the community.
- Promoting good staff morale among members of the coaching staff.
- Demonstrating ethical behavior and loyalty to the program.
- Abiding by the school district's code of ethics for coaches and conducting himself or herself in a professional manner at all times.
- Supporting all phases of the athletic program at the school by attendance at various contests in which he or she is not directly involved.
- Promoting and encouraging sportsmanship and fair play by athletes, coaches, fans, and student support groups.
- Modifying performance of duties as necessary, based on self-analysis, evaluations, and feedback from colleagues and supervisors.
- Attending all meetings called by all his or her supervisors.

- Remaining attuned to current coaching techniques through in-service opportunities, reading, professional organizations, clinics, and coaching schools (1, 6).

### ■ Duties

The function of the high school strength and conditioning professional is all-encompassing within the school community and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identify the sport-specific needs of the athletes for whom a program is being developed, including the energy systems' requirements and the degree and frequency of exercise the various muscle groups will experience.
- Give consideration to the time of the year in which the athletes begin training and vary the programs accordingly.
- Test and retest to measure the development of the various components of athletic ability being stressed in each sport.
- Evaluate performance levels by comparing athletes of the same age and sex based on their sport and position needs.
- Set goals for both individual athletes and teams based on the results of testing and evaluation.
- Implement programs for a specific sport at the appropriate time of the year, combining strength-training techniques with proper conditioning drills.
- Be mindful of the special requirements of the multisport athlete and implement programs accordingly.
- Be mindful of the nonathlete in the school environment and design individual and group fitness programs.
- Set fitness goals and design

programs to reach those goals for the nonathlete and evaluate them in conjunction with national and state goals for the general student populations (1).

### ■ Teaching

At minimum, the high school strength and conditioning professional should teach, but not be limited to, the following:

- The importance of strength training.
- Correct lifting techniques.
- Spotting techniques.
- Basic principles of resistance training.
- Exercise prescription.
- Eccentric and concentric principles.
- Various systems of resistance training.
- Various systems of strength training.
- Muscle group identification and muscle physiology.
- Flexibility.
- The inherent dangers of steroids, drugs, and ergogenic aids.
- Information regarding the pros and cons of sports supplements.
- Nutrition.
- Health benefits of exercise.
- Components of fitness.
- Reading and interpreting percentage charts.
- Weight room safety.
- Discipline.
- Cooperative skills.
- Respect for facilities (1).

### ■ Academics and Athletics

Because the high school is first and foremost an academic institution, books and barbells can and should be combined. The high school strength and conditioning professional can enhance academics in the weight room by stressing the following.

**Table 1**  
**NSCA Code of Ethics**

1. Strength and conditioning professionals should neither practice nor condone discrimination.
2. Strength and conditioning professionals should not condone or engage in illegal behavior or defend unsportsmanlike conduct or practices.
3. Strength and conditioning professionals should refrain from using techniques and practices in which repeated acts of negligence would result in injury to an individual.
4. Strength and conditioning professionals should use care to be truthful and not misleading when stating their education, training, experience, and involvement in NSCA and should not misrepresent or misuse their affiliation with the NSCA for unwarranted favors-monetary or otherwise.

### Math

General math skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division when figuring the amount of weight on bars, percentages, strength factors, and conversion skills from kilograms to pounds is a constant in the weight room.

### Computer

Computer knowledge and skills enable athletes to help implement, plan, and change their workouts.

### Reading Comprehension

In the weight room, students must read and interpret strength charts, tables, and graphs.

### Science

Weight training includes biomechanical multijoint movements. Knowledge of how joints work and where stress is placed, along with knowledge of muscles and their actions, can be transferred from the weight room to the classroom with the help of a qualified strength coach.

### English

The keeping of daily records and journals helps to enhance the student-athlete's academic skills.

### Recognition

A strategically placed academic board in the weight room (recognizing athletes' grade point averages) is a great motivational method to promote the relationship between books and barbells (2, 4).

### Code of Ethics

The high school strength and conditioning professional abides by the NSCA Code of Ethics (Table 1) and does not practice or condone discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, or national origin. They do not support illegal behavior or defend unsportsmanlike conduct or practice.

### Conclusions

The high school strength and conditioning professional is an integral part of the preparation of young athletes for competition. Strength and conditioning professionals are in a unique position to teach young athletes the value of goal setting, hard work, discipline, and other abilities that improve the overall quality of life. ▲

### References

1. Best, R. *The High School Strength and Conditioning*

*Coach: A Job Description*. Richardson, TX: Richardson Independent School District Athletic Department, 1997.

2. Burgener, M. 1992. Writing across the curriculum. *Natl. Strength Cond. J.* 14(1). 1992.
3. Buturusis, D.J., W.F. Hejna, A. Kreiger, and A. Rosenberg. The prevention of sports injuries in high school students through strength training. *Natl. Strength Cond. J.* 4(1). 1982.
4. Harbach, B.R. Incorporating the academic curriculum into a strength and conditioning program. *Natl. Strength Cond. J.* 14(5). 1992.
5. National Youth Sport Safety Foundation. 6(3). 1997.
6. Richardson Independent School District Athletic Department. *Assistant Coaches Job Description*. Richardson, TX: Richardson Independent School District Athletic Department.
7. Townsend, R. 1982. How to build a strength training and conditioning program in your high school. *Natl. Strength Cond. J.* 4. 1982.
8. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General Executive Summary*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.

**Acknowledgments:** Grateful appreciation is extended to the committee members who helped make possible this document describing the high school strength and conditioning professional. Their suggestions, critique, and review of the material in a timely manner were valuable aids to the composition of this paper.