

PRESS RELEASE  
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**National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Celebrates  
2021 NSCA President's Award Recipients:  
Maria Teresa Mendizabal, NSCA-CPT,\*D and  
Jerry Palmieri, MA, CSCS, RSCC\*E**

**Colorado Springs, CO** – The President's Award is awarded to individuals by the NSCA President in special recognition of their contributions to the field of strength and conditioning. In 2021, the award is presented to **Jerry Palmieri, MA, CSCS, RSCC\*E** and **Maria Teresa Mendizabal, NSCA-CPT,\*D**.

New Jersey native and longtime Tom Coughlin assistant, Jerry Palmieri served 12 seasons as the New York Giants' strength and conditioning coach, a position he assumed on January 13, 2004. He was with the Giants for Tom Coughlin's entire tenure as head coach, helping secure wins in both the 2007 and 2011 Super Bowl Championships.

Palmieri was the New Orleans Saints' assistant strength and conditioning coach in 2003. Prior to that he spent nine years as a strength and conditioning coach under Coughlin, one at Boston College (where he was the director of strength and conditioning operations), and eight with the Jacksonville Jaguars.


Palmieri began his career as a strength coach at the University of North Carolina in 1982. From there he moved to Oklahoma State University (1984-86) and Kansas State University (1987-92) before joining Coughlin at Boston College. In addition to his coaching experience, Palmieri has taught physical education classes and written articles about strength and conditioning for national publications.

Palmieri is a 1980 graduate of Montclair State University. He received a master's degree in exercise physiology from North Carolina in 1984. Palmieri was a three-time New Jersey Golden Gloves champion (1976-78) and competed in international competitions as a member of the 1978 and 1979 USA Boxing Teams.

He was honored as the 2007 Samson's NFL Strength and Conditioning Coach of the Year. In 1999, Palmieri was honored by the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Society as Coach of the Year, and then in 2018, this organization presented him with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Currently, Palmieri volunteers for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes advancing that ministry in North Jersey. He works closely with the Professional Football Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association to unify and provide professional education for the NFL Strength and Conditioning Coaches. He also speaks on topics of strength & conditioning and his faith, while also conducting workshops on three-dimensional coaching. Palmieri was raised in Dumont, N.J. He and his wife, Ellen, also a New Jersey native, have two children and one grandson.

Maria Teresa Mendizabal was born in Puerto Rico, and for many years was a professional Ballet and Flamenco Dancer. She has a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Puerto Rico, and years later graduated Magna Cum Laude in Physical Education. During the 1970's she founded her Dancing and Fitness School. Today, many of her students are dancers and ballet teachers in Puerto Rico and the United States.



In 1975, she introduced aerobics in Puerto Rico, and together with her dearest friend Christine Vega, founded Aerobic Trainings International, a Personal Trainer and Group Exercise Trainings Organization. Together they have traveled to South and Central America, Europe, the United States, and the Caribbean, certifying more than 2,000 fitness professionals. During those years, she was invited to present at several conventions and fitness organizations in Europe, South, and Central America, as well as in the United States. In 1995, she was a Gold Medalist in South Africa during the World Aerobic Competition. Maria Teresa had her own Fitness TV program for many years, and had her weekly fitness column in one of the best known newspapers in Puerto Rico. In 2004, she was selected by the NSCA as the Personal Trainer of the Year, and a few years later she was appointed State Director for NSCA in Puerto Rico, and served as State Director for many years.

She holds several certifications including NSCA-CPT,\*D, ACSM, TRX, ZUMBA, Pilates, Willpower and Grace, and Ballet Barre. Her spicy styles, her unique choreography, and her never-ending desire to elevate the quality of the fitness profession keep her active in her personal training and group classes.

She has been happily married to Hector Santiago, her beloved husband for 45 years, and together they have six children, and eight grandsons.

Ms. Mendizabal and Mr. Palmieri will receive special recognition of her accomplishment at the NSCA National Conference which will be held in Orlando, FL from July 7-10. The conference brings together the best of the best from all reaches of the strength and conditioning industry to provide an educational experience unlike any other. From cutting-edge presentations to dynamic hands-on sessions by renowned professors, researchers, strength coaches, and personal trainers, attendees receive the tools to help expand their knowledge and further their careers. For more information regarding the NSCA and their awards, please visit [www.nasca.com](http://www.nasca.com).

*Media Note: To schedule an interview with an award winner, contact [Marketing@nsca.com](mailto:Marketing@nsca.com).*

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL STRENGTH & CONDITIONING ASSOCIATION**

Founded in 1978, The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) is a nonprofit association dedicated to advancing the strength and conditioning and related sport science professions around the world.

The NSCA exists to empower a community of professionals to maximize their impact through disseminating evidence-based knowledge and its practical application by offering industry-leading certifications, research journals, career development services, networking opportunities, and continuing education. The NSCA community is composed of more than 60,000 members and certified professionals throughout the world who further industry standards as researchers, educators, strength and conditioning coaches, performance and sport scientists, personal trainers, tactical professionals, and other related roles.