

*PAUL COMFORT, PHD, CSCS,*D*

Education

2015 – Doctor of Philosophy in Biomechanics and Strength and Conditioning – University of Salford

2003 – Master of Science in Exercise and Nutrition Science – University of Chester

1999 – Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Sport and Exercise Science – University of Gloucestershire

Personal Bio

Paul Comfort is a Professor of Strength and Conditioning at the University of Salford (UK) and an adjunct professor at Edith Cowan University (Australia). Paul is a founder member and accredited member of the UKSCA and was previously on the NSCA Board of Directors from 2020-2023. He regularly consults with numerous team sports and has authored / co-authored >150 peer reviewed journal articles. His research focusses on training methods to enhance sports performance and the assessment of force production characteristics to monitor acute and chronic changes in neuromuscular function. Paul is also co-editor of the textbooks, ‘Advanced Strength and Conditioning: an evidence-based approach’, ‘Performance Assessment for strength and Conditioning’, ‘Laboratory Manual for Strength and Conditioning’ and recently edited the 2nd edition of the ‘Developing Power’ for the NSCA.

NSCA Involvement

- Board of Directors, member (2020 – 2023)
- *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, Senior Associate Editor (2017 – present)
- *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, reviewer (2010 – present)
- NSCA ERP Sponsor/Director (2009 – present)
- NSCA Foundation, grant reviewer (2018 – present)
- National Conference, abstract reviewer (2017 – present)
- *Strength and Conditioning Journal*, reviewer (2009 – present)
- *Strength and Conditioning Journal*, Associate Editor (2021 – present)
- *NSCA’s Position Statement on Weightlifting for Sports Performance*, Lead Author (2023)
- Educator of the Year, recipient (2021)
- NSCA Foundation Young Investigator Grant, recipient (2020)
- *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* – Editorial Excellence Award, recipient (2020)
- *Strength and Conditioning Journal* – Editorial Excellence Award (2019)
- NSCA Foundation International Collaborator Grant, recipient (2016)
- *NSCA’s Developing Power*, co-editor and chapter author (in press)

Vision Statement

The NSCA is the World’s leading organisation for Strength and Conditioning and Fitness Professionals, however, to maintain and enhance this status the NSCA faces some specific issues and challenges.

Critical / substantive issues facing the NSCA

There is ever increasing competition from strength and conditioning organisations around the World, with new organisations being established, and established organisations continually developing and evolving. For the NSCA to maintain its position as the World's leading organisation for Strength and Conditioning and Fitness Professionals, it is essential that all aspects of NSCA business evolve to meet the existing *global* requirements. Furthermore, there is still no standardised approach to evaluating a coaches' ability to coach outside of the United Kingdom Strength and Conditioning Association accreditation assessments. The CSCS certification has been enhanced with the introduction of the degree accreditation scheme through the Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Education (CASCE) and in addition to the introduction of the CPSS certification. Both initiatives have already started to positively impact the development of strength and conditioning coaches and sports scientists in America, although this needs to be expanded internationally. However, to support these ongoing initiatives it is essential that additional and appropriate applied research is undertaken and made available in varied formats appropriate to the diverse membership, making the applied findings as accessible as possible.

Continued professional development of strength coaches and fitness professionals, across the duration of their careers, irrespective of age and experience, is crucial for the ongoing development of the profession and certified professionals, especially as research and technology continues to develop. Experienced and novice coaches can learn from each other, forming symbiotic mentorships. Continued development is also essential to ensure that we can appropriately fill volunteer leadership roles, across the special interest groups, professional development groups, committees, and future board members of the NSCA.

Specific Goals for the NSCA

1. To investigate and implement alternative methods of promoting and publicizing applied research findings thereby enhancing accessibility for the members, while further promoting NSCA publications and the NSCA.
2. To identify and implement additional opportunities for development of the members of the NSCA globally, across all backgrounds and levels of experience, to enhance their careers and the reputation of the NSCA.

How to Achieve the Goals

Both goals will help to 'support and disseminate research-based knowledge and its practical application...'. Additionally, the enhanced promotion of applied research findings will not only help to promote research and its practical application amongst the NSCA membership, but also to the wider profession, maintaining the NSCA's position as the World's leading authority on strength and conditioning.

The NSCA staff are already working on numerous areas aligned with education and dissemination of research. For example, NSCA TV, but additional bespoke materials should be developed to fill the gaps in these educational resources. Such gaps can be identified by auditing the existing content and via a survey of NSCA members to identify topics and areas which may enhance their knowledge and skills. The development of such bespoke learning resources should also include a peer review component to ensure that the information is accurate and of the highest quality to the practitioner. In addition, the NSCA foundation offers numerous scholarships and grants to support developing coaches and applied research, however, with additional funding via sponsorships and donations this could be further expanded.

New and enhanced development opportunities, including mentoring and accessible educational and developmental opportunities should help to develop NSCA members and the NSCA's reputation. Mentoring is already in place as part of the Women's Committee and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee; however, this could easily be expanded into special interest groups, professional development groups and implemented among registered strength and conditioning coaches (RSCC). We can also learn from other organisations that have established mentorship opportunities, such as the Australian Strength and Conditioning Association (ASCA).