

SPECIAL FEATURE

WHY YOUR HIGH SCHOOL NEEDS A QUALIFIED STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROFESSIONAL

NATIONAL STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING ASSOCIATION (NSCA)
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BENEFITS TO THE STUDENTS

1. **Reduce injuries:** A qualified strength and conditioning professional can play a pivotal role in preparing young athletes for sport, and thereby minimize or offset the incidence and severity of sport-related injuries common to young athletes (7,10,16,18,20).
2. **Improve long-term athletic development:** A qualified strength and conditioning professional understands the many variables that go into designing training age-appropriate programs, and can produce more positive results (3,7,11,21).
3. **Improve performance:** Athletes who participate in a well-designed strength and conditioning program may be faster, stronger, more powerful, move more efficiently, and be more athletic than they would be without it (8,9,10,12,25).
4. **Improve confidence:** Athletes who invest time in strength and conditioning tend to develop confidence through desired changes in their body composition, increased physical literacy, and the knowledge that the development that occurred because of their training prepares them for competition (1,17,23).
5. **Improve health:** In addition to increasing muscular strength, power, and endurance, regular participation in a youth resistance training program may positively affect many health- and fitness-related measures and alleviate many adverse health-related conditions (2,9,10,15).

BENEFITS TO THE SCHOOL

1. **Limit liability:** A qualified strength and conditioning professional can help limit a school's liability and implement procedures that support risk-management (4,15,16,19,24).
2. **Increase professionalism and safety:** For the same reasons schools require a certified athletic trainer to work with their injured athletes or a certified lifeguard on pool decks, a coach who is designing and supervising the strength and conditioning program should be qualified to do so (4,6,24).

3. **Extra coach on staff for all sports:** A strength coach allows the sport coach more time to focus on the day-to-day sport practice schedule, while the strength coach oversees the strength and conditioning of the team (15).
4. **Due diligence:** Demonstrates the school's due diligence in properly preparing athletes for the physical and mental demands of sport and establishes a greater commitment to injury prevention (22).
5. **Gender equity:** Assists an athletic department with implementing strength and conditioning programs that are gender specific (22).

WHAT IS A QUALIFIED STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PROFESSIONAL AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL?

1. **Certification:** A qualified strength and conditioning professional should achieve and maintain a professional certification credentialed by an independent accreditation agency—for example, the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® (CSCS®) certification—as well as standard first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and automated external defibrillation (AED) (4,6,19).
2. **Education:** A qualified strength and conditioning professional should acquire expertise and have a degree from a regionally accredited college/university in one or more of the “scientific foundations” of strength and conditioning (e.g., exercise science/anatomy, biomechanics, pediatric exercise physiology, nutrition), or in a relevant subject (e.g., exercise/sport pedagogy, psychology, motor learning, training methodology, kinesiology) (11,13,14,15,22).



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