

The Path to Become a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach (RSCC)

Becoming a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach (RSCC) is the highest distinction a strength coach can achieve. Why would Nebraska strive to have all eligible strength and conditioning coaches in the NSCA Registry? A career in the strength and conditioning field provides the opportunity to influence athletes in a team environment, as well as see measureable results for individuals. You can change an athlete's life by motivating them to achieve higher goals. Nebraska strength coaches are a valuable part of the coaching staff by developing athletes to make a positive contribution on the field or court. When a team wins championships, they know they were a big part of the success.

Whether you are a high school student, a college student, or a college graduate, it is not too late to get on the path to become a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach (RSCC). The National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) Education Department provides coaching performance programs to guide strength coaches along a coaching path throughout their careers which can lead to the RSCC Registry.

Benefits of Being a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach

What Are the Responsibilities of a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach?

- Develop, distribute, and administer policies and procedures for the performance team
- Determine the strength and conditioning programs for all sports
- Determine lifting technique and appropriate volume, load, and intensity for major exercises for all sports
- Administer and evaluate performance testing and goal setting
- Evaluate the performance staff
- Oversee budget for the performance program and facilities
- Oversee the facility development and scheduling
- Inventory of all strength and conditioning equipment
- Communicate with coaches as needed for program development
- Visit with all recruits if necessary
- Maintain athletic performance records and awards
- Oversee mentoring of strength coaching staff
- Conduct an annual orientation for staff, sport coaches, and athletes to administer policies and emergency procedures
- Coordinate special events and promotions for strength and conditioning
- Attend annual NSCA Coaches Conference
- Work cooperatively with medical staff (Certified Athletic Trainers (ATC) and/or physicians) in order to ensure the athlete's development, health, and safety

The coaching performance path consists of four areas that you should be aware of and take advantage of the options that each one has to offer. These areas are Membership, Certification, Education, and Experience/Recognition.

NSCA Membership Options

NSCA Membership:

- Student
- Associate
- Professional

Student Membership

The NSCA produces the finest peer-reviewed journals in the strength and conditioning field. All journals and archives are available online for Members. Online archives of the Strength and Conditioning Journal (SCJ) and the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research (JSCR) allows you to search years of strength and conditioning related articles.

Associate Membership

Many potential young coaches ask themselves, “I have a college degree, now what?” Your next step is to sign up for the Associate Membership and receive the Basics of Strength and Conditioning Manual. This manual is complimentary and available to all NSCA Members online. NSCA Coach, a quarterly online associate publication, provides informative strength and conditioning topics based on sound research and practical application.

Professional Membership

Anyone that is in a position to design exercise programs should have an NSCA certification and be a Member of the NSCA. By combining the Basics of Strength and Conditioning Manual and attending NSCA conferences, you should be ready for the Professional Membership level and to tackle the Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning textbook as you prepare to be a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS).

Strength and Conditioning Journal (SCJ)

The *Strength and Conditioning Journal* contains articles written by experienced coaches that provide information on applying research to your programs. Each issue includes peer-reviewed articles on a wide variety of timely strength and conditioning topics. Continuing education units (CEUs) are available online from the articles in the SCJ.

Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research (JSCR)



The *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* is the NSCA’s scientific journal. This monthly publication prints original research information important to strength and conditioning coaches. The research ranges from the effects of training programs on physical performance and function to the underlying biological basis for exercise performance.

NSCA Bulletin

The *Bulletin* is your link to association events and news, and is sent to all NSCA Members each month.

Certification Options

Certification

The strength and conditioning coach should achieve and maintain an accredited professional certification such as the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® (CSCS®). Strength and conditioning coaches in Division I college programs must have accredited certification by August 1, 2015. Currently, only two strength and conditioning certifications meet the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) legislation for “nationally accredited strength and conditioning certification” which are the NSCA’s Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) and the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association’s (CSCCa) Strength and Conditioning Coach Certified (SCCC). Adding RSCC status ensures strength coaches have adequate mentoring and experience to independently design and implement individual and team conditioning programs.

Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

The NSCA’s Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist is nationally accredited, well respected, and recognized worldwide. The competencies of the CSCS are exercise sciences, testing and evaluation, exercise technique, program design, organization, and administration of the strength and conditioning facility.



Several types of study materials are available to help you prepare for the CSCS exam. You may want to attend a two-day NSCA Exam Prep course to make sure you are on the right track or take the online practice exam, which mimics the actual exam. The questions are not the same as the actual exam. By practicing your testing skills, you will be more comfortable and confident when the time comes to sit for your exam.

Education

The strength and conditioning coach should have a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in Exercise Science or a related field.

Attend NSCA Conferences

NSCA conferences are the best way to learn the latest research, techniques, and breakthrough methods used by top coaches throughout the world. All of our conferences provide Continuing Education Unit (CEU) opportunities. The Coaches Conference and the National Conference include a trade show where attendees can try out the latest equipment and network with important industry suppliers.

Annual Conferences

The NSCA hosts two annual conferences for strength coaches each year in exciting locations throughout the country. The Coaches Conference in January offers coaches information about new training techniques as well as an opportunity to network with others in the field. The NSCA National Conference in July features sessions covering all aspects of strength and conditioning, plus presentations of original research by top scientists, as well as numerous social events.

Other NSCA Events

In addition to conferences, the NSCA also hosts a variety of clinics and symposia throughout the year, many of them in the world-class teaching facility in beautiful Colorado Springs, CO. NSCA state and provincial chapters also host regional conferences.

Where do Students Go to Learn how to Become a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach?



The Education Recognition Program® (ERP®) of the National Strength and Conditioning Association identifies institutions that have met, and continue to meet, minimal requirements and teach proper guidelines for strength training and conditioning in the correct energy system.

ERP schools will help prepare undergraduate students for the CSCS exam and these students will receive discounts on study materials and exam cost. The ERP Graduate Program recognizes educational programs that offer at least a Master's degree in the field of strength and conditioning. There are two levels of recognition with the program. One is for applied competencies and the other is for research competencies.

Experience and Recognition

EXPERIENCE

To really flourish in this field, you need to gain experience in a strength and conditioning setting. This can be accomplished in several different ways, such as internships, volunteering, and graduate assistantships. In addition, working with specific teams and athletes can boost your chances of landing your dream job. The NSCA Registry lists Registered Strength and Conditioning Coaches who are CSCS with at least two years of experience in the field.

Career Leadership and Development

As you work your way up the coaching path to become a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach, many challenges will present themselves. The opportunities listed below will help coaches network with other experienced coaches to find ways to determine best practices. The

best way to network for job opportunities and advance a coaching career is to visit the NSCA Career Center, which travels to the NSCA Coaches Conference and the NSCA National Conference, matching up employers and prospective employees. All NSCA conferences feature social events that encourage networking with other coaches.

Job Board

Employers looking to recruit top-notch applicants and strength and conditioning coaches seeking employment can benefit from the NSCA Job Board. It is a complimentary service for NSCA Members and brings together strength coaches, sport coaches, sport scientists, researchers, educators, sport medicine professionals (e.g., physical therapists, physicians, and athletic trainers), and personal trainers. The NSCA provides educational resources and opportunities for its Members and strives to develop and promote the profession of strength training and conditioning.

NSCA Assistantship

The NSCA offers five student assistantships each year to qualified candidates. Coaches who are awarded an assistantship have the opportunity to work with an experienced Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach. Each recipient is awarded a \$10,000 stipend over a 12-month period. The purpose of the Mentor Assistantship Program is to link qualified students with experienced coaches to help develop the next generation of strength and conditioning coaches. This is an excellent opportunity for the college graduate to gain practical, applied experience in strength and conditioning while learning from a highly skilled and educated mentor. Additionally, the Student Assistantship Program is an exceptional vehicle for the established Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach to access qualified apprentices.

Grants and Scholarships

The NSCA Foundation financially supports higher education of students pursuing a career in the strength and conditioning field. Learn more about each grant and scholarship opportunity, and the Foundation's mission.

Internships

The NSCA offers internship opportunities in the state-of-the-art Performance Center, located at the World Headquarters in Colorado Springs, CO. This internship coincides with traditional college fall, spring, and summer semesters. Interns are guided in program design and implementation, lifting technique instruction and analysis, injury prevention and reconditioning, performance testing, and research analysis.

Candidates for this program must be enrolled in or have graduated from an exercise science or related program at an accredited college or university. Candidates should hold, or currently be pursuing the CSCS certification. Many colleges and universities offer internships and graduate assistantship programs. Use the NSCA Job Board for more information on openings.

RECOGNITION

Certified Professional Members that have two years or more of strength coaching experience can apply to become a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach, which is the highest distinction a strength coach can achieve. Recognizing that their area of expertise is separate and distinct

from the medical, dietetic, athletic training, and sport coaching fields, Registered Strength and Conditioning Coaches (RSCC, RSCC*D [10+ years of experience], and RSCC*E [20+ years of experience]) consult with and refer athletes to these professionals when appropriate.

The purpose of the NSCA Registry is to encourage the highest standard of professional practice and responsibility. Registered coaches demonstrate their experience by applying foundational knowledge to assess, motivate, educate, and train athletes to reduce the risk of injuries and improve athletic performance.

High schools, colleges, and professional teams should employ Registered Strength and Conditioning Coaches to design and oversee their athletic strength and conditioning programs. These coaches are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the strength and conditioning program and work with teams and individual athletes assuring their safety while maximizing their athletic performance. Registered Strength and Conditioning Coaches often work with parents, coaches, staff, and administrators to ensure that the overall goals of the entire athletic program are being met.