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Collegiate strength and conditioning programs are becoming more sophisticated with each passing year. At all levels, strength and conditioning coaches are adding more staff, purchasing and utilizing more sophisticated equipment, and even employing dedicated data analytics software and personnel. However, as programs expand, it becomes increasingly important to document the daily routines and responsibilities within the department to ensure optimal efficiency with minimal oversight.

A department policies and procedures manual contains essential information about a strength and conditioning program in an easily accessible reference. It contains the basic workings of the department; the reporting chain of command; the processes for daily, weekly, and annual tasks; and all other information covering how the program runs. Such a manual is particularly invaluable for coaches of small college programs who commonly serve in several capacities, such as a fitness center manager, strength and conditioning coach, sport coach, or game day manager, to name a few (1,3). Including clearly defined facility program rules and guidelines, as well as consequences for breaking them (preferably pre-approved by the administration), can save considerable time and headaches when issues occur.

Organizing a department policies and procedures manual can be quite a project due to the large amount of information that must be documented. The following is a non-exhaustive list of items that should be included in a strength and conditioning department policies and procedures manual.

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT, VISION, VALUES, STANDARDS, AND PRINCIPLES

The mission statement, vision, values, standards, and principles define a program. Therefore, it is important that they be included in the policies and procedures manual. If a program does not have a stated vision, values, standards, principles, or at least a mission statement, then that should be the first and main priority. These elements are the road map of the program. Like a policies and procedure manual itself, the vision, values, and standards or mission statement is a reference for how the program operates. These directives should be at the front of the policies and procedures manual and should be referenced frequently to remind athletes and employees of the foundational principles of the program.

DEPARTMENT CHAIN OF COMMAND AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

When managing employees, it is important to have a copy of their position descriptions on hand in case there are any misunderstandings regarding responsibilities. The position descriptions should be as detailed as possible and should specify the role each employee plays in the organization, as well as the administrative expectations of each position. Along with those descriptions, having a chain of command mapped out is helpful. To help plan out the department's chain of command, consider

the following questions: does the head strength and conditioning coach position report to the head athletic trainer, to an assistant athletic director, or straight to the director of athletics? Does the program have multiple levels of interns or assistants? Do lower level interns/assistants take direction from interns/assistants that are above them, or do they take direction specifically from the head strength and conditioning coach? It is not uncommon for collegiate strength and conditioning departments, and entire athletic departments, to vary in structure. Having everything mapped out can go a long way in preventing misunderstandings and streamlining the reporting process.

DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY, AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

While the section covering position descriptions summarizes what employees are expected to do in their role, this section explicitly lists the tasks that are to be completed each day, week, month, and year. Daily tasks may include routine cleaning/disinfecting equipment, dusting, cleaning mirrors/windows, etc. Each week, equipment should be checked for wear and tear, guide rods on machines should be lubricated, and floors should be mopped and disinfected (this could also be a task that is performed several times per week, depending on the flooring and the number of people who use the facility each day). Every month, cables, flooring, and walls should be inspected for damage, and then fixed if any damage is found. If there is any cardio or selectorized equipment in the facility, it is always a good idea for the annual maintenance to include a service appointment by a technician. This step is a great way to reduce liability significantly. Certified technicians will be able to find potential problems that may cause injury, as well as perform preventative maintenance. Repainting walls and replacing aging equipment should also be considered for the annual maintenance plan. Examples of facility and building maintenance checklists for facility supervisors are given in Tables 1 and 2.

To further organize maintenance lists, they can be assigned to specific positions (interns, assistants, etc.) or employees. It may also be necessary to create checklists for daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly maintenance tasks to ensure they are completed as required. A simple way to produce these checklists is to create them digitally using Microsoft Word or Excel, or using web-based Google applications. Once the digital checklist is completed, it can be downloaded as a PDF and stored digitally. Alternatively, the checklists could be printed out daily and stored in folders within a file cabinet. These forms should be archived for as long as the equipment is owned or leased. While an assistant strength and conditioning coach or assistant facility director can manage the archiving of these records, it is ultimately the responsibility of the head strength and conditioning coach or facility director to ensure that these tasks (including record archiving) are being completed. Keeping up on scheduled maintenance is a necessity for reducing liability, as well as prolonging the life of the equipment.

TABLE 1. EXAMPLES OF CARDIOVASCULAR, SELECTORIZED, AND FREE WEIGHT MAINTENANCE CHECKLISTS

CARDIOVASCULAR EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	
Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disinfect all equipment using combination of disinfectant/fungicide/virucide/mildewstat/deodorant. Check equipment for signs of wear or damage. Vacuum/sweep floor. Wet mop floor using combination of disinfectant/fungicide/virucide/mildewstat/deodorant.
Monthly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open equipment, where possible, and vacuum. Equipment is inspected for wear or damage. Incline treadmills to maximum and run at maximum speed for one minute to check for proper function.
Biannual Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is inspected and serviced by authorized service provider. Move all equipment, sweep and mop the floor underneath.
SELECTORIZED EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	
Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disinfect all equipment using combination of disinfectant/fungicide/virucide/mildewstat/deodorant. Check equipment for signs of wear or damage.
Monthly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lubricate guide rods and inspect them for wear or damage. Inspect cables for wear or damage. Equipment is inspected for wear or damage.
Biannual Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is inspected and serviced by authorized service provider. Equipment is moved and the floor underneath is swept and mopped.
FREE WEIGHT EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	
Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disinfect all equipment using combination of disinfectant/fungicide/virucide/mildewstat/deodorant. Check equipment for signs of wear or damage.
Monthly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brush and oil bars and dumbbell handles to remove rust. Equipment is inspected for wear or damage.
Biannual Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is inspected and serviced by authorized service provider. Move all equipment, sweep and mop the floor underneath.

TABLE 2. EXAMPLES OF FLOORING, WALL, AND WINDOW MAINTENANCE

FLOORING MAINTENANCE	
Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweep/vacuum flooring. Check flooring for signs of wear or damage. Wet mop floor using combination of disinfectant/fungicide/virucide/mildewstat/deodorant.
Monthly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooring is inspected for wear or damage.
Biannual Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spray flooring with bacteria, virus, and mold inhibitor.
WALL AND WINDOW MAINTENANCE	
Daily Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean window interiors with window cleaner. Check windows and walls for signs of wear or damage.
Monthly Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walls and windows are inspected for wear or damage.
Biannual Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repaint walls where needed. Exterior windows are cleaned by campus maintenance staff.

FACILITY RULES/GUIDELINES AND CONSEQUENCES

It is imperative to include the facility rules and the consequences for breaking those rules in the policies and procedures manual. Depending on which rule is broken, examples of consequences could be a verbal warning or a one or several day ban from using the facility. Facility guidelines should also be clearly posted within the room. Having facility rules documented is important for reasons of liability and deniability. First, anyone who uses the facility is immediately informed of the facility rules by the posted sign. Second, by posting the facility rules in a clearly visible location, preferably the entryway, patrons are less able to deny that they were unaware of the rules. While student-athletes are most often required to sign liability and consent to participate waivers, it is also suggested to have anyone who uses the facility or its equipment to sign a written acknowledgement of the facility rules and liability waiver (4).

Within the policies and procedures manual, consequences for breaking the facility rules should be listed. Theoretically, a documented list of consequences should create consistency when dealing with rule violations. At the very least, it will give facility supervisors guidance when they are put in the position of disciplinarian. It should be noted that while it may be appropriate for a strength and conditioning coach or facility supervisor to enforce lesser punishments (sending someone to change into more appropriate clothing or footwear), as the top authority of the facility, the head strength and conditioning coach or facility director should handle more severe punishments.

INCIDENT DOCUMENTATION

It is also a good practice to create a system of documenting and reporting incidents that occur within the facility. Not only should this system be documented in the policies and procedures manual, incident report forms should be kept on hand to be filled out if such an incident occurs. Examples of weight room incidents include complaints, suggestions, injuries, thefts or lost items, and equipment problems. These forms should contain fillable fields that documents date and time of the incident, name of person(s) involved, description of the incident, location, information from the witness(es), if/what authorities were contacted, and the actions taken. Separate forms should also be on hand to be completed in the event of an altercation with a student, staff member, employee, or other user of the facility. Altercation report forms should document the names and positions of persons involved, date, description of events, and names of witnesses. Additionally, these forms should document the actions taken by the persons involved and/or their supervisors following the incident. Both of these forms should be shared with the head strength and conditioning coach's or facility director's supervisor to collaborate on if or what further actions should be taken. As with maintenance task lists, incident and altercation report forms should be stored in the event that they are needed in the future for reference. Because these forms may be subject to use in a lawsuit, they should be stored indefinitely or according to the recommendation of the institution's legal counsel. They should also be kept in a secure location (either a lockable location or a password protected digital folder/program) where the

files will not be at risk of damage due to fire, water, mold, etc. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of these forms, the head strength and conditioning coach or facility director should be the person to archive them (2,4). Figures 1 and 2 show example incident and altercation report forms.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

One of the most important inclusions for a strength and conditioning department policies and procedures manual is a section containing all of the department emergency procedures. This section should have a list of all important phone numbers and personnel to contact in case of an emergency, such as campus police, the director of athletics, the facilities/maintenance department, and others. Phone numbers for these contacts should also be posted next to the main phone in the facility.

Next, an emergency action plan should be included in the policies and procedures manual, as well as posted in a visible spot in the facility. The emergency action plan should contain detailed information on what to do in cases of inclement weather (e.g., flood, tornado, earthquake, etc.), fire, a violent individual or crime on campus, power outage, and other dangerous situations. Administration should be consulted when creating this plan to ensure it is comprehensive and thorough.

Plans should also be documented within the policies and procedures manual that detail how employees should handle medical emergencies. Although employees should be trained in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED), these procedures should be explained in the manual. Procedures for employees to follow in the case of broken bones, bleeding, unconsciousness, and similar situations should be carefully detailed in the manual. These procedures should include instructions on how to properly dispose of biohazardous materials and potential blood-borne pathogens. The emergency action plan should be included in new employee orientation and should be reviewed and rehearsed annually with all employees who work in the facility (5). Detailed emergency procedures will help to keep employees and those who use the facility safe while reducing legal liability.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Creating a policies and procedures manual for a strength and conditioning department from scratch can be a daunting task. A good deal of forethought is required to be sure to encompass as many facility guidelines and procedural methods are included as possible. Creation of this document is likely best undertaken by a small committee, if possible, so that several different views and opinions are taken into consideration when collecting and creating data. It is also advised that the document be reviewed, edited, and updated each year to keep it current. A good manual will provide numerous benefits to employees, the institution, and the patrons of the facility. Creating a department policies and procedures manual is not only a best practice, but is also a legally sensible and responsible course of action (3).



Weight Room Incident Report Form

Information below is one person's account of an incident that happened in or around the Weight Room at Emory and Henry College. What is contained here does not ensure accuracy or completeness of all that occurred. It is merely the impression, recollection, witness of, or report taken by the individual identified below and subsequently reviewed by the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach. If warranted, contact with any/all party(ies) will be made following the review of this document. To help ensure the safety of each user of the weight room, please report all happenings.

Date: ___/___/___

Time: ___:___ AM/PM

Name(s) of person(s) involved: _____

Relationship to E&H (*circle one*): Guest Student Faculty/Staff

Nature of Incident:

Complaint

Suggestion

Item Lost

Other

Injury

Equipment Problem

Theft

_____ (list)

Witness Information:

Name: _____ Phone: _____ - _____ - _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Description of incident by witness and action taken:

Location: _____ Conditions: _____

Weather: _____ Injury: _____

Action(s) taken: _____

Supervisor Information:

Who was notified of the incident?

Police

Fire

Paramedics

College Official(s)

Name of supervisor/person completing this report? _____

Name of outside responder (if applicable): _____

Signature of Head Strength and Conditioning Coach/Fitness Center Director _____

Date: ___/___/___

If needed, provide a more detailed account of the situation on the back of this form.

Return this form to Mike Caro, Head Strength and Conditioning Coach/Fitness Center Director

FIGURE 1. WEIGHT ROOM INCIDENT REPORT FORM

ALTERCATION REPORT FORM

(Attach witness statements to the back of this form)

Report submitted by:	Date:
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Date of altercation:

General description:

Individuals involved in altercation

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Name:

Position:

Nature of altercation:

Initial response:

Follow-up actions:

List of witnesses

Name:

Name:

Name:

Name:

Signature:	Date:
Person receiving witness statements:	Date:

FIGURE 2. ALTERCATION REPORT FORM

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mike Caro is the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, Campus Fitness Center Director, and Track and Field Throws Coach at Emory and Henry College in Emory, VA. Previously, he was the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at Transylvania University in Lexington, KY, where he started the strength and conditioning program and was the only strength coach for 26 teams and 400 athletes in an 800-square foot weight room. Caro is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist® with Distinction (CSCS, *D*) and has been recognized as a Registered Strength and Conditioning Coach (RSCC®) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA). He also holds the Level 1 United States of America Weightlifting (USAW) certification and National Academy of Sports Medicine's Performance Enhancement Specialist (NASM-PES) credential. Caro earned his Master's degree in Exercise Science from California University of Pennsylvania and currently serves as the chair of the NSCA's College Coaches Special Interest Group (SIG).

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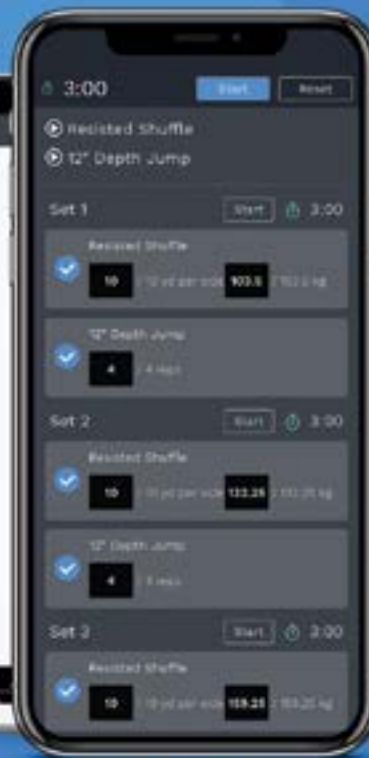
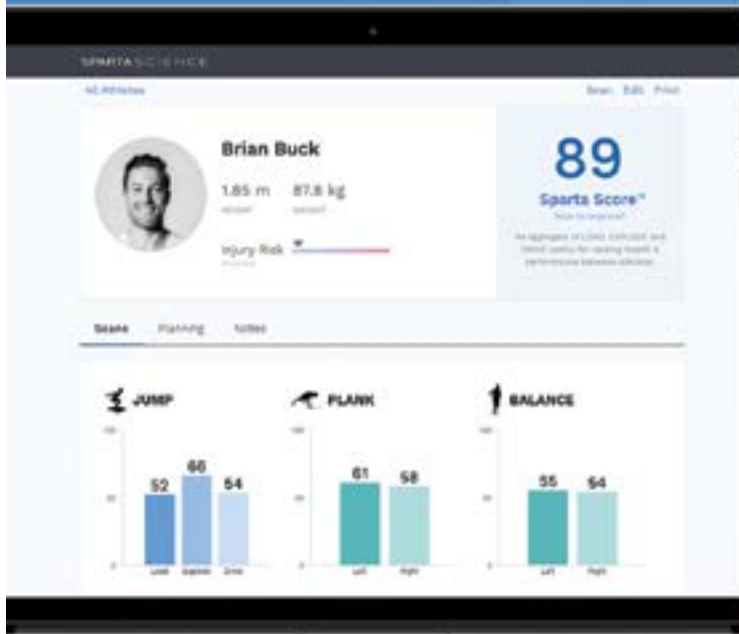
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