

Division I Strength and Conditioning Facilities: Another Weapon in the Facility Arms Race?

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A construction boom has echoed throughout college athletics as programs have upgraded existing and created state-of-the-art facilities to help lure top prep recruits. Overall, spending on intercollegiate athletic facilities reached \$15.2 billion between 1995 and 2005 (King, 2005). Quality strength and conditioning facilities and programs are viewed by many potential student-athletes as a strong selling point in the recruitment process but little is known about these important facilities. The purpose of this presentation is to discuss data regarding NCAA Division I strength and conditioning facilities (SCF). A survey of head strength coaches at 110 NCAA Division I universities determined the size and scope of the facilities and staffing within the strength and conditioning component of their athletic departments. Respondents to this 84-item survey included the following demographic characteristics: 95.5% male, mean age 35.0, mean experience in strength coaching 10.9 years, mean experience as head strength coach 6.4 years. Results indicated that the mean primary SCF size was 7,874 square feet, and that the combined strength facility square footage for all athlete areas was 10,025 square feet. A majority of respondents (67.3%) reported the creation of athlete-exclusive facilities. Football-exclusive facilities were present in 90.7% of the schools. In addition, major facility renovation occurred within the past five years for 63.3% of this population. Three types of strength coach staffing were present in 100% of the surveyed schools with the following means: full-time ($M = 3.6$), part-time ($M = 1.5$), and graduate assistant ($M = 2.6$). The total size of the strength coaching staff ranged from 3 to 24 employees with a mean of 7.7 positions per school. Facility budgets were assessed in the areas of equipment replacement and equipment maintenance budgets. Annual equipment replacement budget included 31.2 % of universities reporting a \$5,001 to \$10,000 expenditure with an additional 22.9% spending in the \$10,001 to \$80,000 range. Equipment maintenance added \$1,001 to \$5,000 to the budget for 42.6% of the schools with 14.9% spending \$5001 to \$50,000 annually. These relatively low amounts relate to the fact that 56.9% of the schools reported a majority of their equipment is fewer than five years old. As little research is available documenting the size and scope of collegiate strength training programs this investigation creates baseline data to guide further examination of SCF. Future research should replicate this methodology across all NCAA divisions and assess the impact of SCF and programming on student-athlete matriculation.