Scope of Practice

Strength and Conditioning Coach (Canada)

Developed by: Canadian Strength and Conditioning Association

in Partnership with Sport Scientist Canada

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Overview

Strength and Conditioning (S&C) coaches are performance professionals responsible for enhancing athletic performance, supporting injury risk reduction, and contributing to long-term athlete development through the application of evidence-informed training practices.

Context of Practice (Canada)

S&C coaches operate within the Canadian sport system and must:

- Align with applicable provincial and organizational policies
- Respect the roles and scopes of regulated health professionals
- Support national sport principles, including athlete safety and long-term development

Core Responsibilities

S&C coaches are responsible for:

- Designing, implementing, and evaluating strength and conditioning programs
- Coaching and supervising training sessions (strength, speed, power, conditioning)
- Conducting and interpreting physical performance testing
- Monitoring athlete workload, adaptation, and readiness
- Ensuring safe training environments, including risk management and emergency procedures
- Educating athletes on performance-related habits (e.g., recovery, basic nutrition, training principles)
- Collaborating with integrated support team members to optimize athlete outcomes

Professional Boundaries

S&C coaches must recognize when issues fall outside their scope and take appropriate action. S&C coaches operate within a performance-focused scope and do not:

- Diagnose injuries, illnesses, or medical conditions
- Provide medical treatment, rehabilitation, or therapy
- Prescribe individualized nutrition or supplementation protocols

- Engage in personal conversations outside of the training or competition settings (digital or in vivo)

Referral to Qualified Professionals

When appropriate, S&C coaches will refer athletes to qualified medical and allied health professionals, including but not limited to:

- Physicians
- Physiotherapists
- Chiropractors
- Registered Dietitians

S&C coaches are required to refer out for:

- Injury assessment, diagnosis, or treatment
- Persistent pain or medical concerns
- Individualized nutrition planning or supplementation strategies

Nutrition and Supplementation Guidance

S&C coaches may provide:

- General, evidence-informed nutrition guidance to support performance
- Education on foundational habits (e.g., hydration, recovery nutrition)

S&C coaches will:

- Avoid individualized diet or supplement prescriptions
- Defer all specific or clinical nutrition and supplementation advice to Registered Dietitians

Professional Conduct and Standards

S&C coaches are expected to:

- Work within their level of education, certification, and experience
- Maintain current knowledge through ongoing professional development
- Apply evidence-based practices in training and decision-making
- Communicate effectively within a multidisciplinary team
- Uphold ethical standards and contribute to a safe, respectful sport environment

- See Safe Sport Training and Making Ethical Decisions through coach.ca

Summary

S&C coaches are performance specialists who design, coach, and monitor training. They do not diagnose or treat medical conditions and are responsible for referring athletes to appropriate qualified professionals when issues fall outside their scope.