5. What are the responsibilities of the strength and conditioning professional in regard to safety?

Reiman: CPR and first aid training are highly desired.

We stress proper exercise technique and attempt to avoid overcrowding. There should always be a supervisor in the training area, and we try to have constant supervision.

Kintz: Basic instruction begins with beginning P.E. classes in weightlifting. However, for those students that don’t have a class, it’s in the weightroom after school. We require spotters for all the necessary large muscle exercises. But we stress that the spotter is not only there for safety, but to encourage the athlete and ensure proper mechanics of the lift, which will help the athlete make gains.

Cincotta: All staff members are required to maintain current certification in first aid and CPR.

We implement our strategy by providing staff orientation at the onset of the program. We review techniques necessary for avoiding injury (reviewing program rules with the athletes, being diligent in enforcing these rules).

Mueller: Each staff member must have a current CPR card.

I make sure the students are utilizing the proper form for all of the exercises performed. Also, the students must follow all of the class rules (i.e., safety collars must be used on all bars). Heavy lifting (2 RM) will not be performed until the student has an adequate training base.

Gulgas: Daily attendance is a must to prevent injuries. The most important person to sell the weight program to is the athlete’s mother. She will make sure her son attends regularly so that he doesn’t risk injury in the off-season and to prepare him for the rigors of the season. We always insist that the athletes warm up first with a brief flexibility program and lift light weights during their first few sets for the training program. It is important that the coach be present to insure that the athletes adhere to the program and not “max out” on a daily basis, as this is counterproductive. The guiding principle is to train, not strain. We insist that everyone have a training partner and several
spotters during the workout. The major muscle groups are done first in the core lifts before the assistance exercises are done. Realistic goals are set by the player with the guidance of the coach to enable the athlete to make sensible strides toward improvement.

**Toub:** A strength coordinator should take every step possible to prevent injuries. Our strategies for implementing a safe environment vary from organizational strategies to specific rules and regulations. The first consideration is the layout of exercise equipment. Our weightroom equipment is set up in organized rows with at least four feet between each Olympic bar. This provides ample space for athletes and spotters. The overflow traffic moves smoothly between the rows.

Scheduling of workout times is a second consideration. Always be aware of how many athletes are participating in each sport. An overflow of athletes can be a potentially dangerous situation.

When designing strength programs, safety should be considered when choosing exercises. We are careful not to schedule every athlete to do the same exercise in a particular day. For example, during the in-season football program we have half the team working the upper body and the other half working the lower body. This helps distribute the athletes throughout the weightroom to prevent congestion and chance of injury. It also speeds up the workout session during the in-season program.

There are some specific safety precautions we take when implementing a program. We have orientation meetings prior to all training cycles. In these meetings we discuss all techniques, rules and regulations. We take the athletes through the weightroom and review the exercise techniques and spotting techniques included in their program. The most dangerous exercise performed in the weightroom is the back squat. It is an exercise that is crucial to hip and leg development. The strength staff should be aware that the dangers of the back squat exercise can be decreased by teaching sound lifting techniques. Here are a few of our specific rules regarding safety for our athletes:

a. Weight belts—Must be worn during all squatting movements, lunges, step-ups, overhead lifting and Olympic lifting.

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**Ed Kintz** has been a head football coach for 28 years, the last five at Bear Creek High School.

**Mark Reiman, C.S.C.S.** is head strength coach at the University of Houston.

**Liz Mueller, C.S.C.S.** is varsity volleyball coach, throws coach, strength coach and P.E. teacher at Orange Glen High School.

**Bob Cincotta, C.S.C.S.** is an instructor of physical education at Hempstead High School in New York.

**George Gulgas** has been a high school health and physical education teacher for 20 years. Presently, he is also head football coach and heads the strength training program at Liberty High School in Youngstown, Ohio.

**Emory Latta, C.S.C.S.** coaches football, baseball and strength and conditioning at Dothan High School in Dothan, Alabama.

**Douglas Kauffman, C.S.C.S.** is the head strength and conditioning coach at the University of Florida.

**Dave Toub, C.S.C.S.** is head strength and conditioning coach at the University of Missouri and NSCA State Director for Missouri.

**Scott Reese** is head strength and conditioning coach at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia.

**Bob Alejo** is a conditioning coach at UCLA and a USWF Level I coach.

**Mark Larson, C.S.C.S.** is head strength and conditioning coach at Brown University.
b. Knee wraps—Are worn when performing squat lifts when the intensity reaches 85 percent 1 RM or more.
c. Use spotter—On all multi-joint exercises, three spotters on back squat when intensity is 85 percent 1 RM or more. No olympic lifts are performed without a coach observing.
d. Replace weights—Break down

"Safety is bred by knowledge of proper lifting technique. The first phase of every strength program is learning proper form on every lift."

—Scott Reese

all olympic bars and return weights and dumbbells to racks.
e. Use collars—Collars are on all bars, every lift.
f. No horseplay.

Kauffman: Yearly renewal of CPR certification is the only emergency care training required of our staff members. With rare exceptions, our facility is only in operation when a certified athletic trainer is immediately available. This eliminates any extensive need for our staff to have emergency care training.

The prevention of injury while training is a primary objective of our program. All training routines incorporate the lowest risk exercise techniques that are functionally applicable. The professional staff are expected to keep abreast of injury prevention strategies and are encouraged to share this knowledge during weekly staff meetings or through in-service presentations.

In addition, knee, shoulder and low back protocols have been established as a result of a collaboration among the medical, athletic training and strength staff. All athletes identified by the team doctor in need of training protocols are made visible to staff by specific workout attire and color-coded workout cards. Identified athletes are required to follow the training guidelines and precautions until they are cleared by the medical staff. These protocols are in place to safeguard against possible re-injury of the compromised body part. Other protocols are generated based upon need.

Reese: Safety is bred by knowledge of proper lifting technique. The first phase of every strength program is learning proper form on every lift. Proper spotting techniques are also learned in the

"The professional staff are expected to keep abreast of injury prevention strategies and are encouraged to share this knowledge during weekly staff meetings or through in-service presentations."

—Douglas Kauffman

Latta: The coach must utilize and enforce proper lifting and spotting techniques as well as coach the correct mental approach to 1 RM. I also make sure that they are physically ready before allowing them to max out.

introductory phase. Each strength staff member is required to be currently certified in CPR, and should be familiar with the process of injury management by the sports medicine staff.
6. What motivational methods have you found effective for staff and athletes?

Kintz: Teachers and coaches at BCHS believe and teach that the weightroom is the only place that

"The weightroom should be the most positive place on campus. With a properly developed strength program and an energetic staff, the athletes’ motivation will be enhanced."

—Mark Rieman

Latta: We motivate through the use of competition.

a. Individually: 200-, 250-, 300-pound clubs; we have big boards that are mounted on the walls with name plates of each member and also give each a T-shirt. In addition we have a top five all-time board that has the five best lifts in the squat, bench press, clean and and deadlift since 1977.

b. Between groups: Offensive line versus defensive line on dips to failure; during summer workouts we often have a "beach day" and divide up teams for a cheat curl contest.

c. Between schools: Our area of the state has a fairly organized lifting team event schedule.

d. Most importantly by teaching them to compete within themselves trying to set new personal records—not just 1RMs but rep records as well.

Cincotta: Winning at a given sport is our staff’s greatest motivator. The added success the weight program has afforded our coaches motivates them to spend the necessary hours to effectively run the program. Additionally, some coaches are paid for their time.

We have found the use of rewards to be most effective, such as shirts or certificates for particular accomplishments (50 pounds over body weight, 100 pounds over body weight).

Mueller: The student/athlete is more motivated when he or she has a personalized program. Also, each student will eventually write his or her own program. The students will participate in 2 RM testing toward the end of the semester.

Gugus: The athletes gain their motivation by an intrinsic means as they see themselves develop physically. We have a two-tiered T-shirt program to serve as incentives for the various lifts—bench, squat, clean and deadlift. In addition, anyone who totals 1,000 or 1,200 pounds on the three powerlifts is a member of each club respectively. We also try to attend two local contests every year and give awards based on attendance.

Reiman: The staff is given a tremendous amount of responsibility in programming and communicating with the coaching staff. This creates a coaching situation rather than just a "weightroom supervisor"
scenario. In eight years we have had only one assistant abuse the responsibility.

The weightroom should be the most positive place on campus. With a properly developed strength program and an energetic staff, the athletes’ motivation will be enhanced.

“Teachers and coaches at BCHS believe and teach that the weightroom is the only place that an athlete can improve his or her athletic ability.”

—Ed Kintz

Kauffman: It has been my experience that the most effective way to motivate staff is to recognize their achievements, credit their accomplishments and encourage their efforts. Staff members are rewarded in conjunction with the success of the teams they are responsible for training. They receive tangible benefits such as commemorative rings and apparel and intangible regards including acknowledgement to media, recognition among staff and coaches and personal satisfaction. The ultimate carrot is to increase the realm of their responsibilities while decreasing the amount of direct supervision.

Athletes are motivated in much the same way as staff: recognizing their achievements, crediting their accomplishments and encouraging their efforts. Athletes’ achievements are recognized by record and performance boards placed strategically throughout the strength complex for peers and public to view. Accomplishments are credited by team awards such as Lifter of the Year and the Coaches’ Award. Rewards such as T-shirts are presented to encourage effort. Another motivational method we use that targets athletes is to visually represent their attendance and performance levels versus their sport-specific goals. This procedure is conducted through one-on-one meetings between the athlete and the sport’s strength coach. A motivational method that is unique to our program is the performance index. The performance index is a computer evaluation system based on a 1,000-point scale that compiles testing results and evaluates an athletes performance. Results from the index are used to recognize athletic achievement, which is rewarded as stated above.

Reese: Athletes respond to enthusiasm; if the strength coach is not excited about coaching, the athlete will not be excited about training. Interaction between coach and athlete is the foundation of a successful strength program. The athlete should be comfortable around the strength coach and enjoy the weightroom. If the athlete enjoys the workout, self-motivation occurs. When an athlete is self-motivated, success soon follows. The more responsibility given to staff members, the more motivated they become. By being involved with the program and given proper feedback, staff members are more willing to go the extra distance to make the program more successful.

Toub: The single most important attribute a strength coordinator must have is the ability to motivate. The people I hire are highly motivated. I let my staff coach the programs that I assign them. They set up sport-specific programs that I review. When it comes to administering the programs I do not interfere. This allows my assistants to gain valuable experience relating to sport coaches and athletes alike. This independence breeds confidence and consequently brings out their best work.

When motivating athletes there are other considerations. The strength coordinator has to set up situations for motivation. At Missouri those situations come
from program design, realistic
goals, team competitions, record
boards and sport coaches.

Motivation begins with program
design; no two training cycles are
alike. When we visit another
school or professional team, we
often pick up new concepts and
implement them into our training
program. This enables our athletes
to be exposed to a variety of train-
ing techniques, which in turn keeps
them excited about our program.

Second, we look at past testing
results and evaluate the areas that
need improvement. Then we
establish realistic team, position
and individual goals for our team
sports. The athletes understand
these goals and will strive to
achieve them.

Competition is a great moti-
vating force for the college athlete.
We like to put our athletes in as
many competitive situations as pos-
sible. Supervised competition is a
safe way to bring out the best in
each athlete. The best example is
the football team lift-off, an event
that takes place prior to spring
football practice. The lift-off is the
culminating activity for our off-sea-
son program. This three-day
event, which is open to the public,
is run similar to a powerlifting event
(we use the power clean instead of
the deadlift). There are three
judges to judge proper technique of
the bench press, power clean and
proper depth on squats. We com-
bine the totals of all three lifts; the
top three lifters from four weight
classes receive plaques. The lift-off
event is a great motivator for our
football team and at the same time
allows our staff to find out the ath-
lete’s one repetition maximum.

We have seven record boards in
our primary facility. Athletes from
all sports have the opportunity to
have their names added to the
boards. The boards represent ath-
letes who have excelled in strength,
power and speed. The following

"Educating our student-
athletes and creating a
competitive atmosphere
within our facility has
generated a situation
that is conducive to posi-
tive outcomes."

—Mark Larson

are the seven motivational boards
that we use:
a. All-time Top Ten—Missouri’s all-
time top ten totals of the squat,
bench and power clean.
b. Pound-for-Pound Top Ten—ten
totals relative to body weight.
Total = Relative
body weight strength
c. Best of the Rest—This is a foot-
ball board that recognizes the best
testing results of a player by individ-
ual positions.
d. 500-pound Back Squat
Club—Once a name makes the
board it stays.
e. 325-pound Power Clean
Club—Once a name makes the the
board it stays.
f. 300-pound Push Press
Club—Once a name makes the the
board it stays.
g. 400-pound Bench Press
Club—Once a name makes the the
board it stays.

Finally, the last form of moti-
vation our athletes receive is from
sport coaches. The sport coaches
must stress the importance of
strength and conditioning to their
athletes. Motivation for athletes is
a team effort.

Larson: Our staff members are
well compensated for their efforts
and employment in our facility is
extremely desirable by members of
our student community.

Testing and evaluation proce-
dures have been extremely success-
ful in producing outstanding results.
This process produces an atmo-
sphere in which the student-athlete
is periodically receiving feedback
relative to his training progress.
We are presently developing testing
parameters that set standards
according to norms. All athletic endeavors are either dependent upon intrinsic or extrinsic sources of motivation. Rewarding student-athletes with awards of some type also motivates the student-athletes toward achievement. Educating our student-athletes and creating a competitive atmosphere within our facility has generated a situation that is conducive to positive outcomes.

"Every other year we have a lift-a-thon that has been quite successful in raising funds (and publicity) for the weightroom."

—Emory Latta

Alejo: Motivation is the key to achieving results through training, but belief in the program is what lays the foundation for motivation. Teaching your athletes the philosophy behind the design and how it will work for them individually will allow them to take the program another step. I call this motivation through education. Once the athletes learn the value of a well-designed program, it will make it easier for them to commit their energies to training hard. In my experience, this method is the easiest way to motivate.

Another motivational tool we use is praise. Everyone appreciates recognition of hard work and a job well done. Just to acknowledge a great workout or a good week of training could motivate an athlete to another level. It will let them know that you are watching them and noticing their efforts. Continually recognize those who work hard and sometimes those who do not. When pointing out those who are not working, encourage them to work as hard as you know they can. At least this way, identifying their poor habits is outweighed by the fact that you believe they can do better. Also, attending competitions seems to let the athletes know that your scope of interest in them is wider than the weightroom activity.

Motivating your staff has to be specific to the situation. Again, the universal motivator is recognition of good work.

7. How is your program funded and what activities have proven effective in generating additional income?

Kauffman: Due to the outstanding support of our athletic association’s administration, the strength and conditioning program does not need to solicit outside funding. Contributions and donations identified specifically for use in the strength program are distributed and managed accordingly by the association’s administration. Our yearly budget allocates monies for support staff, facility up-keep, equipment purchase and special needs.

Larson: Expenses are absorbed within our athletic administration budget and assisted by the Brown
University Sports Foundation.
We conducted annual lift-a-thons at a university where I was formerly employed, and we were able to generate as much as $7,000 in additional revenue. Each student-athlete takes pledge cards home for the summer months and solicits support in the form of cents pledged per pound. This figure is multiplied times the amount lifted during the testing procedures administered as the student-athlete returns to school.

**Toub:** Our program is funded strictly through the athletic department budget.

**Mueller:** The weightroom was funded by the booster club.

**Reiman:** We are funded by athletic department funds and some private donations. We rely upon personal solicitation for additional income.

**Gulgas:** The program is funded strictly by sources outside the school—the Gridiron Association and the lift-a-thon. These funds are used to maintain the T-shirt program, buy new equipment and give minimal financial support to the staff.

**Cincotta:** Funds for our program come from the athletic and intramural budgets. We have never attempted to generate monies beyond our budget.

**Latta:** Our program is funded through the general athletic budget and occasional gifts from the Dothan Quarterback Club—our athletic booster club.

Every other year we have a lift-a-thon that has been quite successful in raising funds (and publicity) for the weightroom.

**8. What are the responsibilities of the strength and conditioning professional in regard to participant orientation?**

**Reiman:** Each participant must have an athletic physical and the head coach's approval to participate in our program.

We ask all of our athletes to be on time, do a minimum of all the required programing, wear proper athletic attire, help keep the room organized and treat their fellow athletes with respect.

**Latta:** Every athlete receives orientation in the varsity athletic periods that last up to six weeks with the freshman group and approximately two weeks with the varsity. Classroom instruction and video are used as well as in-weightroom demonstration and lecture on lifting technique, spotting and weightroom protocol.

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"To maintain decorum in the weightroom, all participants must be properly dressed, loud radio playing is discouraged and horseplay is strictly forbidden."

—Bob Cincotta

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**Mueller:** Each student is required to go through a classroom orientation. During this orientation the student must fill out a questionnaire about his or her weightlifting background. In addition, a rules sheet must be read and signed by each student. Goals and objectives are also discussed during this orientation. The student is personally responsible for following the class rules. If the student breaks a rule, he or she is given one warning. If the student continues, he or she is dropped from the class.
Kauffman: Student-athletes must complete a multitude of clearance qualifications before participating in our program. Included in this are a check on insurance, eligibility, academic status and physical well-being. Health is evaluated through an extensive physical exam. The exam includes a medical history, X-rays of pre-existing injuries (if applicable), an electrocardiogram, blood work, any legal obligations in case of injury.

After clearance, participants are expected to understand and adhere to established program rules and policies. Similarly, participants are responsible for conducting themselves in a respectful and courteous manner.

Alejo: Prior to the beginning of the training program, an athlete must first be enrolled in school, be on the current roster and, most importantly, be cleared by our sports medicine staff for participation. A team orientation will follow so we can discuss the training objectives, training times and any other rules and regulations that pertain to the particular team.

The athletes have total responsibility for their conduct and the conditioning staff has full responsibility for evaluating such conduct. Although there are general guidelines to follow with regard to dress code, punctuality and weightroom etiquette, there are different responsibilities for each team. Any breach of responsibility by the athlete is evaluated by the coach and the “fines” are then determined.

Reese: To participate in our strength program, the individual must be a full-time student, eligible according to NCAA standards and meet the requirements for our sports medicine program (i.e., pass a physical).

When each athlete begins the program, he or she is instructed on what days and time to lift. The athlete is responsible to be on time or notify the strength coach of any problems that occur. The participant also agrees to these rules:

a. Shirt and shoes are required.
b. No food or drink allowed.
c. No lifting alone.
d. Spotter used on bench and squats.
e. Each lifter must have a training sheet while lifting.

If there is a problem and the athlete cannot follow the guidelines, a meeting is arranged with his or her coach and proper action is discussed.

Cincotta: All athletes are screened for current injuries and surveyed as to history of injury. Each player is then tested in a variety of criteria.

We require all players to be prompt. They must adhere to a schedule of a minimum of two lifts weekly. They must follow the program as prescribed; no freestyling. To maintain decorum in the weightroom, all participants must be properly dressed; loud radio playing is discouraged and horseplay is strictly forbidden.

Toub: To participate in any organized strength and conditioning program at Missouri, each athlete must be actively participating in an intercollegiate sport. The athlete also

“...a strength coordinator needs to understanding when it comes to an athletes’ schedule. Academics come first and the athletes know it.”

—Dave Toub
must be eligible to work out through the guidelines set by the NCAA. The prospective athlete must also undergo a physical examination prior to any physical activity organized by the university.

My staff and I make it a point to treat our athletes as mature adults. We expect our older athletes to set an example for the younger athletes through work habits, maturity and respect. They are expected to follow the programs we have designed because they know it is a scientifically sound, sport-specific program. We also expect the athletes to work out in their specified times. For example, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, all baseball players lift together from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

A strength coordinator needs to be understanding when it comes to an athlete’s schedule. Academics come first and the athletes know it. We work closely with our academic advisors who supply us with a class schedule of every athlete. I work with athletes when a conflict arises. Our athletes call me or an assistant if they have to miss a workout. We strive to make the weightroom a fun place to train and a great place to improve.

Larson: Each athletic team receives an extensive orientation that entails policy and procedures in addition to a complete description and walk-through of the sport-specific program. This occurs at the beginning of the academic year or when a program is initiated. Periodic updates are administered when appropriate.

The student-athletes are responsible for documentation of all training sessions and adherence to our facility policies. These are as follows:

1. No food, beverages or chewing gum.
2. No chewing tobacco of any kind.
3. All lifters must wear a shirt, shorts or sweats and a pair of shoes at all times.
4. No profane, racist or sexist comments. Conduct yourself with class.
5. Rack weights when finished. Please have consideration for everyone who uses the facility.
6. No horseplay. This can and will lead to injuries.
7. Do not use the equipment in an abusive manner. Performing exercises with safe and efficient technique is for the safety of you and those around you.

Latta: Every athlete receives orientation in the varsity athletic periods that lasts up to six weeks with the freshman group and approximately two weeks with the varsity. Classroom instruction and video are used as well as in-weightroom demonstration and lecture on lifting technique, spotting and weightroom protocol.

9. How do you promote your program to your administration, parents of your athletes and the community?

Gulgas: The school administration is supportive of our program, which gives the students another outlet for extracurricular activities. The program promotes itself via the T-shirts, which the players wear in school and around the community. Individual records and lifts are posted in the school. The lift-a-thon’s success is publicized in the school newspaper as well as in the local paper and pictures featuring the off-season program and athletes are displayed. In the weightroom, color-coded achievement charts are kept to measure the athletes’
progress in small increments toward fulfilling their goals. Each athlete is given a weight program manual to write down his workouts and a newsletter goes home several times a year containing announcements for the off-season program and contest results.

United States Weightlifting Regional Training Center

- Olympic Style Weightlifting
- Strength Training
- U.S.W.F. Certification of Weightlifting and Strength Coaches
- Strength Seminars
- Exercise Technique Clinics

"The athletes have total responsibility for their conduct and the conditioning staff has full responsibility for evaluating such conduct."

—Bob Alejo

Reiman: The only promoting we do is personal, day-to-day contact.

Alejo: Beginning with the recruiting of the athlete, promoting the program to the parent is an important aspect of keeping the athlete a proponent of your school. Due to the fact that fitness is so visible to the public, the general knowledge is at a high level.

Because of this awareness, parents are concerned about the type of training their son or daughter is doing. Not just from a safety-conscious standpoint, but also about the effectiveness of the program to create All-Americans.

The biggest promotion scheme to parents will be positive results. Not only testing results, but the positive effect you have had on the athlete as a leader. The athlete's belief in you as a coach is very important to a parent. Once parents see you at a sporting event, I do not think there will be any question of your concern for the athlete. This, in turn, directly promotes your program.

Kauffman: Education pertaining to the development of the total athlete is the primary strategy utilized for the promotion of our program. We encourage active participation by our administration through the use of our facility for their personal training needs. This serves as a hands-on method for illustrating the facility's daily functioning and the training requirements placed on the student-athlete.

Parents of our athletes are introduced to our program in various ways, all of which attempt to depict their son's or daughter's involvement. We provide guided tours of our facilities and host group talks on different aspects of the athletes' training routine. We also notify parents about their son's or daughter's outstanding accomplishments, such
as establishing a new school performance record. This helps to keep parents abreast of their son’s or daughter’s achievements in our program.

Promotion of the program to the community incorporates many of the above strategies employed to educate the parents of our athletes. We also involve ourselves in community events by assisting in programs such as the Special Olympics. Sports information releases on occasions such as team testing days and sport team media guides highlighting our program are additional avenues utilized by our program for community promotion.

**Tobog:** Bob Stull, the head football coach at the University of Missouri, does a tremendous job in promoting our program to the university administration and to the people of Missouri. Coach Stull and his staff realize the importance of a solid strength and conditioning program. Coach Stull promotes our program during interviews and speaking engagements. Articles and/or publications written about our program can be used as promotional tools. Through mailings, we keep the public informed of upcoming events, the football lift-off and NSCA strength clinics.

The University of Missouri has a highly rated journalism school. A number of journalism students do articles about our strength and conditioning program. We have three major television networks in the area, thus we receive ample television sports coverage. The local television stations cover all three days of our lift-off event. The community is kept well-informed of what we are doing throughout the year.

**Reese:** If the program is successful, the athletes promote the program. It all boils down to the strength coach being ultimately responsible to the athlete. The job of the strength coach is to help athletes achieve their physical potential.

**Cincotta:** Our administration plays a vital role in the success of our program. They are fully aware of its importance to the overall success of our athletes and cooperate to the fullest extent of our limited budget. Parents are informed of the off-season program and its importance to their children. The community is allowed to use the training facility, which helps to foster a positive relationship between the community and athletes.

**Larson:** Our promotional activities include ongoing dialogue with coaches and administrators along with appropriate programmatic documentation and media guides for all athletic teams. ⚽

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