

# Internship Recruitment

By Bryan Mann

For many strength coaches, having a large staff is not an option. There is a one man show at many universities, where they will go from 5 in the morning until 8 in the evening with no break and no help. They go to bed physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. The coach's personal life and social life will greatly suffer because of situations like this. However, there may be some help out there in untapped resources.

The resources are the intern and the work study people. Some people want to know if this is what they want to do, some want to be around college athletes, someone who is working their way through school and someone out there who is dying to get into the field. These people can be a great resource for you. Even if all they do is wipe the benches and straighten up, that's one less thing for you to have to do. Some however, will turn into a great assistant for you.

The first thing to do is get a website set up for your strength and conditioning department and put internship information on that. It's a great resource for someone who is curious. Take a second and google strength and conditioning intern. Take a look and see what all results you see come up. Stonybrook University, Stanford University, University of Missouri, Drake University, The Ohio State University are all results that pop up for anyone desiring to be an intern. That's step one.

Now the website may seem like tedious work for the strength coach. After all, most of the degrees earned by a strength coach are in the exercise science or physical education departments, the last thing that you need to learn for a degree like that is website building. However there are usually IT people or people that work in the sports information department in the athletic facility. If there is no one there, check with the computers department on campus. Talk to an instructor and it would make for a great project for a website design class. Not only is it another topic they would not normally encounter, but it's experience that actually matters. The student who designs that website can show it to anyone, and say they did it.

The next thing to do is contact people on campus pertaining to work study. Many times this would be student employment. Find out what is necessary to obtain work study people, and jump through the hoops to get them. You can count on these people to show up since they get paid to do it. Make friends with the people in the student employment office so you can get the best students, and get the most students you can.

Next is to get in contact with the most hated group of people for the strength coach: The academian's. The professors in the exercise science department, the physical education department, the wellness department, etc can be invaluable for you. They are always looking for an interesting diversion for class by having a guest speaker. When you go to be a guest speaker, you can plug your internship program. In many programs, the students are required to go do an internship in the field. So not only do you get introduced to the class you speak to, but you may get introduced to their friends. Also, the professor may have a student inquire with them about internships in the field of strength and conditioning, and with a good relationship with the professor they will send them your way.

The academians are not only a good resource for interns, but you never know who you may come across. For instance, we came across one of the researchers on the study

of linear vs. undulating periodization in our talks with professors on our campus. There are many fountains of information out there that are unutilized, but are dying to get involved. They may be anxious to do the elusive studies on elite athletes, and will trade off helping you do the program with the access to the data/results garnered by the strength program.

Now that internship recruitment has been discussed, what do you do with them once you get them? Train them, train them, train them.

Take time to sit down with the interns before the semester starts and explain to them your program, what you expect of them, and what they can expect from you. Take time to teach them, having a class once a week or once a month to go over different topics and give them assignments.

Take some time to explain to them your program, be it over an hour or a week. Go in as deep into it as you can. The more they know about the in's and out's of your programs, the more likely they are to coach as hard as they can. If someone doesn't realize why you do what you do, they may think it's bunk and let it go by the wayside. If they understand the importance of it, they will do everything they can to build the athlete in the way you want them built.

Explain your expectations of them clearly and concisely. If their job is to clean the weight room, tell them. If their job is to work with the athletes, tell them. If their job is to cover the weight room while you go to lunch, tell them. Tell them upfront all of the good and bad things that they are expected to do. Many times, it will be the middle of the semester and the strength coach will be mad at the "worthless interns" who don't do their job, only to find out that they didn't realize it was their job. This leads to a bad relationship from both ends just because of poor communication.

Tell them what they can expect of you. Are you going to help them find a GA job when they are finished with their internship, provided they do a good job? Are you going to help them learn the science portion of the field? Are you going to take them to a convention?

Take the time to teach them. If you have no budget to pay them, give them something that is more valuable than money: Knowledge. The old adage saying knowledge is power is very true in our field. The knowledge of how to get the most out of the athlete is what they are ultimately spending their time for. Teach them everything you can in the sports psychology of the field, the strength science, the metabolic systems, they will appreciate that as much, if not more than, any financial compensation that they receive. It doesn't take much time, just one time a week, or once a month after the initial teaching to go in depth into the more complex methods you use.

Out of personal experience, the best thing that ever happened for me as an intern was an assignment to write a program and defend it to the staff. It forced me to put what I had learned from several different areas into practice and scrutinized by people in the field with more experience. Assignments to where someone goes out and learns a topic on their own and then brings it back and teaches the group are great as well. The coach in charge may even learn some new information as well.

Finally, realize that interns are investments that take time. In the beginning it takes a lot of work, and may feel like baby sitting for a few weeks. But over time, as they grow and gain responsibility the pay off is evident. For those who are long-term interns (ie-1 or more years) they may begin to take on their own sports, greatly reducing the load

from the strength coach. Over time they may even begin to teach the intern classes for the strength coach.

As with anything in strength and conditioning, don't be afraid to think outside of the box. The box is nice and safe, but once you get outside, there is a whole new beautiful world with no limits. You may be one strength coach, but with an army of interns at your disposal, you can compete with any staff.