

# CHOOSING A STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING COACH FOR YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER

*This article was written by our friend Sean Skahan and originally appeared on [hockeystrengthandconditioning.com](http://hockeystrengthandconditioning.com). Sean is the former strength coach for the Anaheim Ducks and has recently accepted the position of strength coach for hockey at Boston University. He shares our mentality regarding appropriate training for sport performance, and this article offers a step-by-step approach to selecting the most appropriate strength coach for you or your child. Although he references hockey specifically, the trend of bigger, stronger athletes is a reality across the board, so this approach can be applied to training for any sport. Enjoy Sean's article!*

Today's hockey players are becoming bigger, stronger and faster while becoming more fit than they were in years past. In addition to young players participating in other sports, they are also participating in strength and conditioning programs either at their own school, with their team, or with private training companies that are in the communities.

Strength and conditioning for sports has now become a common necessity that really wasn't around until recently. It has now become a business, as there are now several training facilities within every neighborhood.

With the sports training market becoming very saturated, there are several to pick from when it comes to choosing one for your son or daughter. Like any other businesses, in my opinion, there are some very good ones, some average ones, and some not-so-good ones. What I have listed below are some quick guidelines on making a selection for a strength and conditioning coach/personal

trainer or company. These are based on observations and opinions about today's hockey players and performance:

**1-** Make sure that the trainer(s) has a degree from a four-year college/university. A master's degree would be a plus. Preferably, their degree is in exercise science, kinesiology, biomechanics, or any other major related to exercise and/or sports medicine.

**2-** Make sure that the trainer is certified by a reputable certification agency. For strength and conditioning coaches or personal trainers who work with hockey players, the Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach (C.S.C.S) certification from the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) is probably the most reputable certification. Another good certification is any certification provided by the National Academy of Sports Medicine (N.A.S.M.).

**3-** Ask for testimonials and/or references from athletes that they have actually coached. They should be able to provide current or past testimonials from people who have trained with them. If they can't provide you with any testimonials, ask for references. If they can't give you any references, find another trainer. Also, make sure that the trainer actually trained and worked with an athlete who they say they may have.

**4-** Don't get caught up in the bells and whistles of the facility. Most of the good strength and conditioning coaches and personal trainers out there can get

results without the high-tech equipment which may be considered "hockey-specific". Also, they may not need a large facility the size of a Wal-Mart.

In today's world, it is easy for anyone to get a personal training certification from a non-reputable source and then partner up with someone with a lot of money and start up a sports training business. I would always prefer an individual or company that started out with close to nothing and then grew their business by getting positive results from their athletes and clients. As a parent who is paying for the child to participate in a strength and conditioning program, you must do your homework when trying to choose one. Hopefully these guidelines and recommendations will help you make the right decision.

### - DARRYL NELSON AND BRIAN SIPOTZ

*Darryl Nelson and Brian Sipotz are regarded as top experts in the field of strength and conditioning for ice hockey performance. Darryl has been the head strength and conditioning coach for USA Hockey's National Team Development program since 2000 and also serves as the director of performance for Advantage Strength and Conditioning in Ann Arbor. Brian played 7 years of professional ice hockey and is the founder and strength coach of Advantage Strength and Conditioning. Darryl and Brian are also the cofounders of [www.hockeystrengthandconditioning.com](http://www.hockeystrengthandconditioning.com).*

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