Erin Dwinell

**Professional Interview #2:**

Scott Duggan

Director of Strength and Conditioning- Athletic Evolution

Major- Kinesiology

**Question 1:**    What does a typical day and week look like for you?

**Answer:** My day’s switch seasonally, but typically they start at 6am and end between 6pm-8pm.  When I first started coaching the majority of my days were spent on the floor doing personal training and group training with high school, college, and professional athletes.  Since taking over as Director of Strength and Conditioning I now spend about 50% of my day in the office doing a variety of things like sales, website updates, scheduling, coaches/intern meetings and programming.

**Q2:**What is your position and what are the major responsibilities of your position?

**Answer:** As Director of Strength and Conditioning I am in charge of the entire facility.  This includes our personal training, athletic performance, rehab, and adult training departments.  I have a CrossFit and Office Manager underneath me that handle the day to day tasks in those departments.  I handle sales and scheduling for personal training, athletic performance, and rehab departments.  I am also responsible for scheduling, training, and supervising all of our coaches and interns in the athletic performance program.  In addition, I have several personal training clients and coach our college, junior hockey, NFL Combine, and baseball programs throughout the year.

**Q3:**What is your educational background (school, major, degrees)? And what were your most important undergraduate classes?

**Answer:** I have a Kinesiology degree from UMass Amherst.  I am a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist through the National Strength and Conditioning Association, and I am a certified Level 1 Sports Performance Coach through USA Weightlifting.  I am also CPR/AED/First Aid Certified and have taken a couple other small certifications involving Kettlebells and Functional Movement Screening.  Before starting work I completed full-time internships at a college, in a private facility, and in a physical therapy practice.

**Q4:** Is there a need for more education or skill training even after getting a job? If so, what skills do you feel are necessary?

**Answer:** Yes, the education you get before your job provides a good starting foundation, but it very important to keep up with continuing education in this field and to get practical experience.  This is a very competitive field that is always changing and growing, and if you don't evolve and grow with it, you will be left behind.

**Q5:** What does the career path look like for your position?

**Answer:** You need to start by getting a degree in an exercise science related field, and then get a major certification like the CSCS is one I recommend, it allows you to work in both college and private settings.  Once you get these you will need to do several unpaid internships to gain practical experience, network, and grow educationally and professionally.  If you are not willing to work for little to no pay for 2-5 years post college in this field, you will not make it.  You can get a head start on this doing internships during college.

**Q6:**What are the high points and low points of this job? What are the high points and low points of your career?

**Answer:** The high point of the job for me is being able to affect young athletes lives in a positive way each day.  Being able to work out daily and come to work in gym clothes is a plus too.  The low points are definitely long, physically demanding hours.  You need to love what you do to get through the low points.

**Q7:**What kinds of people do well in this career area? Why did you select this area?

**Answer:** People that succeed in this field are people with strong work ethics, good communication skills, and great critical thinking skills.  You also need to love being in a gym and working with athletes of all sports.  This is why I selected this field.

**Q8:** Are there areas of educational specialization that should be considered either during or after an undergrad degree?

**Answer:** There are so many different avenues in this field.  You can work with adult populations, young athletes, elite athletes, and/or rehabilitation.  I think it is important early on to be exposed to all of these avenues before finding your specialty and growing in that area.

**Q9:** What changes have you noticed or do you expect in your field?

**Answer:** The shift towards injury prevention and movement efficiency.  20 years ago this field was all about getting stronger and faster, but over the last 10-20 years preventing injuries before they happen has become just as important, if not more important, than increasing athletic performance training.  You are seeing strength coaches that act more like physical therapists.

**Q10:** What other career opportunities did you have? Why might you not have taken a particular path that was possible for you, given your educational background?

**Answer:** I could have gone to Physical Therapy School or studied to be an athletic trainer or worked in a lab.  I also could have stayed working in college programs (this is something I could always switch back to).

Personal Response

 Before this interview my idea of all strength and conditioning coaches resided within a picture of muscular body builders that do personal training and spend all their time in the gym. My ideas have changed because through the interview I was introduced to the position of Director of Strength and Conditioning and learned that this position is has responsibilities in areas such as scheduling, marketing, and sales. I believe I would fit this position well because I am a very dedicated a self-motivated person, and I believe the first 2-5 years after college these character traits are necessary to pursue a career in strength and conditioning. Overall, I believe this position requires dedication to the field and passion for strength and conditioning and exercise science as well.