



SPORT



CHOICE



**EMPOWERING STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING
COACHES FOR CLEAN SPORT: SURVEY REVEALS
THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF
SPORTS SUPPLEMENTS TESTING**

wetestyoutrust.com

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Informed Sport / Informed Choice

INTRODUCTION

In the high-performance world of sports, athletes are constantly seeking ways to optimize their training, accelerate recovery, and enhance their competitive edge. Dietary supplements often play a role in this pursuit, with a vast and ever-growing market offering a wide range of products. However, this landscape also presents significant risks. The global supplement industry, while largely unregulated, faces challenges with product contamination, mislabelling, and the inadvertent inclusion of banned substances. For athletes, consuming a contaminated supplement can lead to severe consequences, including adverse health effects, damage to their careers, and anti-doping rule violations, even if unintentional.

Strength and Conditioning coaches are at the forefront of athlete development. They are trusted figures who guide athletes not only through physical training but often also provide advice on nutrition and lifestyle, including supplement use. Given their influential position, it is paramount that coaches

possess accurate and up-to-date knowledge regarding safe and clean supplement choices. Their recommendations can directly impact an athlete's health, performance, and adherence to anti-doping regulations.

To better understand this critical area, we conducted a comprehensive survey among strength and conditioning coaches of US Collegiate athletes. The primary objective of this survey was to assess their current level of knowledge regarding the selection of safe and clean supplements for their athletes. By identifying potential knowledge gaps and areas where further education might be beneficial, we aim to contribute to a safer and fairer sporting environment, ultimately protecting athletes and upholding the integrity of clean sport.

A special note of thanks to Beth Byron, Chief Science Officer at the Collegiate Strength & Conditioning Coaches association (CSCCa) for your support with the survey.



RESULTS

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY

The respondents comprised a diverse group of experienced professionals, with have dedicated their careers to collegiate sports with over 20 years'

experience, predominantly at Division I institutions (51%).

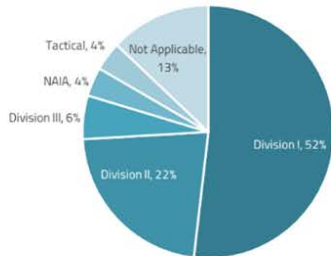


Figure 1: The Division of the Institution

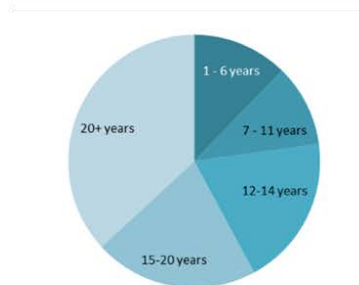


Figure 2: Years of Coaching Experience

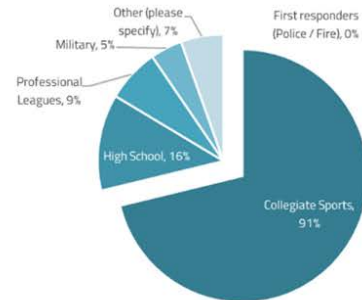


Figure 3: The Majority of Time Spent in Coaching Career

COLLABORATION AND INFLUENCE ON SUPPLEMENT PROVISION

The survey revealed a strong collaborative spirit within athletic departments. Nearly half of the coaches (49%) work closely with a sports dietitian, even if the dietitian reports to another department. This indicates a recognition of specialized nutritional expertise.

While 24% of coaches defer supplement purchasing decisions entirely to the dietitian, 33%

reported having "some influence in the purchase of certain products," underscoring their involvement in product selection.

82% of the institutions represented in the survey actively provide supplements and sports nutrition products to their athletes, emphasizing the institutional commitment to athlete support.

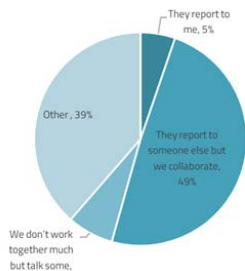


Figure 4: The Relationship With the Sports Dietitian at Your Institution

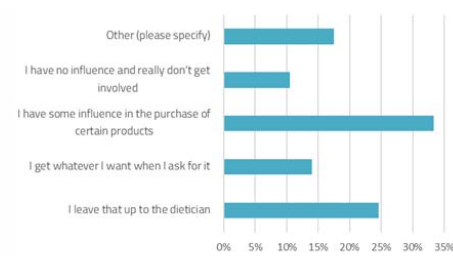


Figure 5: The Level of Influence in the Purchasing of Supplements

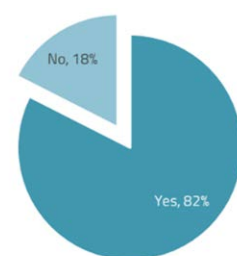
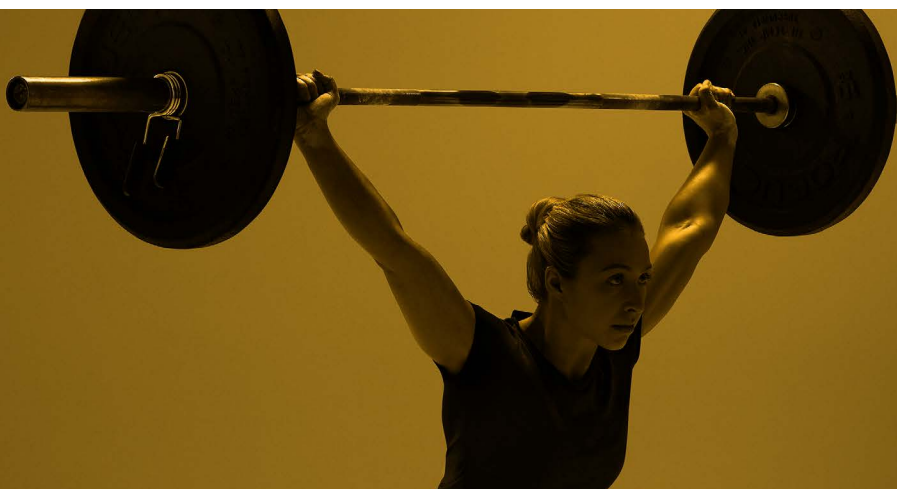


Figure 6: Does Your Institution Provide Your Athletes With Supplements and Sports Nutrition Products?



HIGH AWARENESS OF THIRD-PARTY TESTING PROGRAMS, YET GAPS REMAIN

A cornerstone of safe supplementation is the use of third-party testing programs like Informed Sport and Informed Choice, which screen products for banned substances.

The survey found that 75% of coaches consider these programs “very important” for their athletes. This high level of appreciation reflects an understanding of the strict liability principle in anti-doping, where athletes are responsible for any substance found in their system.

However, despite this strong recognition, 14% of coaches indicated they had “heard of it, but not sure” about these crucial testing programs. This suggests a need for clearer, more accessible information to bridge this awareness gap.

NIL RULINGS INTRODUCE NEW CONCERNS

The evolving landscape of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rulings in collegiate sports has introduced a fresh layer of complexity and concern for coaches. Almost half of the respondents (47%) expressed increased worry about what their athletes or institutions could be exposed to as a result of NIL deals, which might involve athletes independently endorsing or using supplements outside of institutional oversight. This highlights a growing challenge in maintaining control and ensuring safety in a more commercialized athletic environment.

DEMAND FOR ENHANCED EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

When asked what would help them feel more confident in recommending Informed Sport & Informed Choice supplements, coaches pointed to several key areas:

- More education on banned substances (40%)
- Clearer guidance from governing bodies (38%)
- Collaboration with certified supplement companies (33%)
- Resources on Informed Sport and Informed Choice testing programs (31%)

It’s worth noting that a third of coaches (33%) already feel confident in this area, indicating a segment of the coaching community is well-versed. However, the collective desire for more targeted education and clearer directives underscores a proactive approach from coaches to enhance their knowledge base.

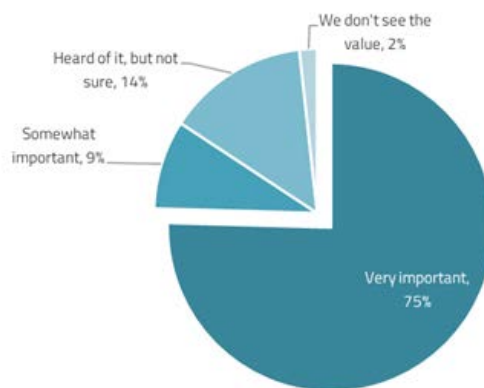


Figure 6: Does Your Institution Provide Your Athletes With Supplements and Sports Nutrition Products?



CONCLUSIONS

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The survey results underscore the vital role coaches play in athlete welfare and anti-doping efforts. Their high level of engagement and concern for supplement safety is evident. However, the findings also highlight a clear need for ongoing and accessible educational initiatives.

For Sports Governing bodies, anti-doping organizations, and reputable supplement brands, these results present a valuable roadmap. Providing more comprehensive education on banned substances, clearer guidelines, and readily available resources on third-party testing programs can empower coaches further. Additionally, fostering direct collaboration between coaches and certified supplement manufacturers could build greater trust and transparency.

Informed has an active engagement program with organizations such as the ASPDA and the CSCCA, as well as working directly with individual institutions. This work is designed to educate and support the confidence of coaches but, more importantly, contribute significantly to safeguarding the health, careers, and integrity of athletes worldwide in an increasingly complex sports nutrition landscape.





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For further information or to enquire about INFORMED's testing services, please contact the INFORMED team at wetestyoutrust@lgcgroup.com

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