

## SPORTS

### Human Performance Lab provides high-tech training

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“Be all that you can be” isn’t just the slogan for the Army.

The Human Performance Lab at Swedish Medical Center is providing training evaluations and sport-specific workouts for athletes in competitive sports that can change an athlete’s physical and mental health. Their goal is to optimize an athlete’s potential and performance through a series of high-tech tests, each closely monitored by computers.

These tests, which include body fat percentage, blood pressure and maximal oxygen consumption, are used to assess an athlete’s current capabilities and then used to design individualized workouts to improve upon their athleticism and overall health.

The facility uses “athletic keys” to track the progression of an athlete’s workouts. The “keys” are like hard-drives that are given to each athlete that attends the gym located within the James Tower at the Swedish Medical Center’s Providence campus. Besides tracking progression, the “keys” also control the weight, tempo, and difficulty of each workout.

Dr. Dan Tripps is director of sports performance at the facility and also a Seattle University professor in the College of Arts and Science. Tripps came to the university by way of Seattle Pacific University. He left SPU after he was given the opportunity to direct the facility.

“This situation is unique because it’s a partnership between the public and academics. I was really intrigued to help create this,” said Tripps.

Tripps also adds that he wishes to round out the Jesuit experience. “Seattle University has such an emphasis on the mind and the spirit with the Jesuit tradition, that sometimes the body is ignored. I’d like to help change that.”

The facility has led Tripps and his staff to have tested all different types of athletes and people, from CEO’s competing in triathlons to City of Seattle firemen.

However, despite the center’s close proximity and partnership with Seattle University, the center has been somewhat ignored by Seattle University athletic teams. One team that has visited the Performance Lab is the women’s volleyball team.

Shannon Ellis, coach of Seattle University women's volleyball team, decided last year that her team could benefit from the testing at the labs and subsequent specialized workouts that her players would receive.

Coach Ellis was unavailable for comment.

Each player on the volleyball team was given a workout individually tailored to match each one of their results on the tests. They completed the workouts on their own time at the Connolly Center. But for many of the volleyball players, the workouts weren't what they expected.

"I felt myself getting a lot progressively stronger than I thought would," said Libby Graff, junior mathematics major and outside hitter for the volleyball team, referring to the incremental increases in each workout.

Other Seattle University coaches may also be recognizing the benefits of sending their athletes to the lab to be tested by Tripps and his staff.

The universities athletic department and the Human Performance Lab are currently in discussions about a possible contract for all Seattle University athletic teams to attend the lab for testing and to receive workouts.

The cost for the test and workouts can seem out of reach for athletic teams. The lab charges \$295 for a "fitness assessment", which is a two-hour test. The lab also charges an extra \$100 for "athletic assessment", which includes the sport-specific workouts.

However, Tripps and his staff are proud to give special rates to Seattle University teams: close to half the regular cost. The special rate, coupled with the universities expanding budget, could lead to a long-term partnership.

Tripps and his staff try and help athletes become more successful, but their goals stretch beyond that.

"We want athletes to leave our center with a better chance at a healthier life after sports", said Tripps.

The Human Performance Lab is located on the corner of 18th and Cherry Street behind the Connolly Center and is open to anyone that wishes to become healthier or a better athlete.