

Building Strength – and Character – at Gabriele Fitness and Performance

by Josh Shreckengost, 09:20AM, Wednesday, June 29 2011



BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ – Vince Gabriele not only specializes in building muscular, powerful athletes, he also specializes in shattering stereotypes of what the average student-athlete’s parent might think the “typical gym experience” consists of in 2011.

Gabriele has built the most comprehensive and well-run fitness facility in the area over the past four years since returning to the East Coast following a successful career training

NFL superstars in San Diego. Yet here in New Jersey, near the town of New Providence where he himself starred as an offensive lineman for the Pioneers, Gabriele and his extremely knowledgeable staff has created a cutting edge program and philosophy for the development of the bodies – and minds – of middle and high school student-athletes. This summer marks the beginning of the Speed, Strength and Conditioning Program, an integral part of GFP’s year-round student-athlete training system.

(Video of the Speed, Strength and Conditioning Program at GFP:
<http://youtu.be/muB8OX9z8NQ>)

“We have 60-70 kids, male and female, from every sport, from nearly every local school in here during the summertime, committed to getting the very best out of themselves every single day,” Gabriele said while overseeing a pre-Summer workout of about a dozen high school-aged boys and girls on a recent Thursday night. “Our training has evolved to the point where we get athletes better, faster, stronger longer. That’s our main mantra – move better, move faster, move stronger, move longer. We put everyone through an assessment program first. We check their mobility, stability and stamina. [We look to see] if there is a previous injury we need to worry about and work on or around. We take that into consideration.”

From there, Gabriele and his staff – his wife Vanessa, head trainer Tom Langton and trainers Joe Hartigan, Michelle Diggle and Andrew White – focus on the “move better, move faster, move stronger, move longer” credo and push the participants in athlete- and sport-specific workouts that are individually tailored to each athlete’s strengths and desired goals. It is a level of personal training not seen anywhere else and the three parents interviewed for this article all used the same word – “invaluable” – when asked to describe the Program’s affects on their children, both physically and mentally.

“Vince and his staff always have a goal in mind for each kid,” said John Haddad whose son Shane has trained at GFP for the past three years and who last year as a sophomore, was a district champion wrestler at Governor Livingston High School. “It’s not like the kids go in there and

just throw some weights around then go home. There is always a plan – from the nutrition to the workout to the training they help the kids do on their own. Because of that, these kids are seeing some really impressive results.”

Yet physical results – especially those successful physical results for the individual or their team – are not the only things Gabriele and his staff work to achieve with their student athletes. As Mr. Haddad mentioned, each student-athlete takes his or her own “plan” home with them from GFP. That plan includes nutrition, continuing physical education in terms of required reading or viewing of fitness DVDs – something Gabriele knows a thing or two about; he has helped to produce several as well as creating an extremely informative YouTube channel full of workout tips and techniques – as well as learning all-around respect. Gabriele stresses to his student-athletes not only respect for themselves and their trainers, but also respect for every other human being they encounter, whether it be on the field or in the classroom or in the supermarket. It’s a valuable part of everyday life according to Gabriele, one that he takes time to stress to his groups.

“We’ve been very fortunate to have a lot of the players and teams we’ve worked with become very successful, but that’s us just having a small part of that. These kids work their butts off on their own, we’re not going to take credit for a team winning a state championship,” Gabriele said. “But what we will take credit for, is the time they’re here, if they come back and shake our hand the right way, or if we see them out on the street, in the community and they’re courteous, we know that we did a pretty good of making them better people.”

One team that has been affiliated with GFP since it opened is the Summit Hilltoppers Football Team which is led by head coach John Liberato. Liberato has a unique bond with GFP and held a celebration at the facility after his Hilltoppers ran the table en route to an undefeated season and state championship in 2009. After that season, Liberato brought the players who trained at GFP all through the 2009 calendar year – off-season, pre-season and during the season – to the facility to share their state championship with Gabriele and his staff. Liberato’s son Sal, a junior on the 2009 Hilltoppers, trained at GFP his entire high school career and will play football for the Monmouth University Hawks this fall as he begins his college career.

“Vince and his staff are incredible people,” Liberato said. “Just in terms of Sal and what he was able to accomplish there, he worked extremely hard to improve his explosiveness and strength throughout his junior and senior seasons and right now he’s going to play college football because of that work and because of the guidance he got at GFP those four years. You can’t say enough about Vince and the way he and his trainers – from Tom, Joe, Vanessa, Michelle and Andrew on down – work with the kids. They are extremely knowledgeable and they never rest on what they already know. They continue to do the research and continue to travel to the seminars and to meet with people to enhance their knowledge and that shows through in the results they get for their kids.”

(Video of Sal Liberato training at GFP: <http://youtu.be/wF4wQVo0M8Q>)

Gabriele attributes his desire to continue to improve GFP’s techniques and programs for precisely the same reason that Coach Liberato mentioned when talking about his son Sal’s marked improvement from sophomore reserve linebacker to state champion to soon-to-be college football player – noticeable, tangible, *real* results.

“We’re always, everyday, making what we do here better. We’re always learning and visiting people, we’re doing the research in order to put together the absolute best training program we possibly can in order to make our kids better,” Gabriele said. “That also goes for the assessment process, too. Just on the assessment process alone, we’ve spent lots of money and lots of time on that assessment process just to be able to properly evaluate the kids. We’re always looking for a newer or better way of doing things. Maybe we can find a better exercise to help a kid’s explosiveness. We’re always tweaking and changing our program to make it better so that’s really what we want to see in the future, to see everyone’s results get better and better and better.”

Another huge factor for Gabriele’s athletes’ – particularly his female athletes’ – ability to attain those much-desired results is another unique skill set and area of expertise that sets GFP apart from other fitness facilities is the staff’s intricate knowledge and understanding of how to train an athlete over, around and through an injury.

In early March, GFP held a seminar entitled “Performance Enhancement and Injury Prevention for the Female Athlete,” which was co-hosted by Vince Gabriele and Dr. John A. Hurley, Sports Medicine, Summit Medical Group. The evening was just another reminder that GFP stands above the vast majority – if not every one – of the sports training facilities in the area, particularly because the staff understands how to safely get results even if an athlete is injured while also helping them regain and improve upon their full levels of pre-injury speed, strength and explosiveness.

For Doreen Asaro, the mother of New Providence softball and basketball player Cassandra Squeri, the staff at GFP not only got her daughter healthy and playing at a higher level than she was before the injury, they also helped Doreen herself through an injury of her own.

“It is just a unique understanding of the physiology of the body and how to work around and through injuries that really sets Vince and his staff apart. They got my daughter through a shoulder injury in her pitching arm and actually strengthened everything around her shoulder – arm, chest, stomach, back, legs – before knowing exactly when to start working on her upper arm and shoulder to bring her completely back,” Asaro said. “I’m only using myself and my daughter, because that is my own personal experience, but they helped us both. I was always scared to go to the gym when I was hurt or dealing with an injury because I thought I would make things worse, but Vince and the staff there showed me that there are safe ways to get back to being healthy and strong. Once my daughter’s arm was better, she pitches, and she was throwing better than she ever did.”

(Video of Female Athlete Training at GFP: <http://youtu.be/sopRc0Y46Lo>)

While Cassandra has trained at GFP for the past three years and will be a junior next year and a starter on both the Lady Pioneers’ softball and basketball teams next season, Doreen Asaro’s testimonial is like so many others whose children join GFP. The parents see first-hand the dramatic results their children are bringing home every day and they want to experience that strength, that return to an active, healthy lifestyle that they, too end up joining.

That motivation is a clear source of satisfaction for Gabriele and his staff. And while GFP has several adult programs, Gabriele has made it abundantly clear that his mission, his foremost goal

and the reason he opened his business is to improve the lives of the hundreds of area student-athletes that walk through his facility's doors each year.

“One thing I came up with when I was in San Diego training some of the players from the Chargers, I was thinking about what I wanted to call our weekly motivational message that we have. So it's called the Weekly Bolt,” Gabriele said. “We've had that every week since we've opened the door, every week going on four years. Sometimes it's a motivational quote, sometimes it's just one word – “Dedication” – on a piece of paper, and a lot of the kids tell us they take home the Bolts and they put them up on their wall. They have all the Bolts up on their wall. It's something that we use to help them grow and it's something physical that they can see on their wall and remind them of what they've set out to accomplish.”

Helping the area's student-athletes achieve what he or she has set out to accomplish is the lifeblood of Gabriele Fitness and Performance and it's what continues to drive an already driven man to continue to improve the services he offers to the each surrounding high school and its community. For Vince Gabriele, he will continue to improve his programs and while striving to make sure every student-athlete that walks through his doors will continue to “move better, move faster, move stronger, move longer,” not only through their high school sporting years, but for the rest of their dedicated, driven and healthy lives.

To enroll in the Gabriele Fitness and Performance High School Summer Speed, Strength and Conditioning Program that began on June 27th, please email info@gabrielefitness.com and for more details, please visit:

<http://gabrielefitness.com/new-jersey-athlete-training-high-school-summer.html>