

Athletes in Action Sports Performance

Changing lives through Sports Medicine and Strength & Conditioning

HISTORY – Athletes in Action was founded in 1966 and quickly entered the world of Sports Performance. AIA founder, Dave Hannah; World Champion and 2-time Olympian Russ Knipp, and Wes Neal made up the first weight lifting team touring the United States annually from 1969 until 1976. Their impact was widespread among college and high school campuses and the United States Military. Wes Neal went on to develop “Making An Athlete of God”, the forerunner to the AIA Athletic Principles.



Today, AIA Sports Performance impacts professionals and students in sports medicine and strength & conditioning with a vision to see a Christ follower in every sports medicine and strength & conditioning facility in the world! To fulfill this vision professional and student volunteers are recruited to serve on over 40 competitive and educational projects annually, while outreaches are held at professional meetings, and individual and group Bible studies are being organized. Discipleship materials have been written specifically for professionals and students in these fields. A variety of internship opportunities have been developed for students and young professionals seeking to establish a spiritual foundation to their careers. Professionals and students in a variety of sports performance fields impact every sport in every nation every day. By meeting the physical needs of those they serve, they will have excellent opportunities to meet others' spiritual needs as well.

Ed Gold became AIA's first Certified Athletic Trainer in 1973, building a staff of four medical professionals serving AIA's five teams. Jim Porter served as the Director of Sports Medicine from 1983 to 1987, developing a network of Christians involved in the field of sports medicine. Porter called the group the Christian Sports Medicine Association (CSMA). In 1989 five certified athletic trainers met at the National Athletic Trainers' Association's (NATA) Annual Meeting & Clinical Symposium to discuss re-developing the CSMA to reach sports medicine professionals for Christ. The NATA has over 45,000 members worldwide who are recognized as leaders in providing health care to the active populations. A partnership of volunteers from Athletes in Action, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and other sports ministries was forged with the guiding principle that these individuals and ministries could do more together than separate. The CSMA has held an outreach event at the NATA annual meeting every year since 1990 to meet the needs of thousands of attendees. AIA and FCA have taken the lead in hosting these events with a variety of individual volunteers helping out. AIA, FCA, and Christian Sports Performance started partnering in 2005 in an effort to recreate the CSMA's ministry within the National Strength & Conditioning Association. In 2012, AIA began partnering with members of the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) to provide a chapel service for those attending their annual meeting.



As of 2018 AIA Sports Performance has impacted 30 countries on five continents. The international vision developed through various certified athletic trainers and strength coaches doing impromptu educational clinics while traveling with AIA sports teams. AIA Power was formed in 1997 to use strength & conditioning as a platform to reach others for Christ. Within six years AIA Power impacted six countries on two continents. In 2003 sports medicine professionals were included on a clinical education team to Guatemala. In 2008 the Sports Performance Department was officially formed to use the platforms of sports medicine and strength & conditioning to change lives through the love of Jesus Christ. As of 2018, fifty-four interns have served either 9-week, 15-week or year round internships. The International Sports Performance Academy was started in 2014 to receive professionals from others countries in the US for two weeks of training. Since 1997, AIA has sent out forty-seven international sports performance mission teams, conducted hundreds of clinics, and recruited hundreds of volunteers to travel with competitive sports tours, camps and projects to change lives through sports medicine and strength & conditioning.



For more information visit: www.aiasportsperformance.org or contact us at sportsperformance@athletesinaction.org.

ONE WORLD to reach, ONE LANGUAGE of sport, ONE MESSAGE of victory