

Taking it to the next level

By Jeffrey Vilk

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Some up-and-coming athletes travel across country or wait to play Division I sports to get the training needed in their pursuit to win a gold medal in swimming or the Heisman Trophy in college football.

But, for those in Northeast Ohio, a new Euclid complex is here to help.

Newly opened Speed Strength Systems, Inc. allows young athletes from pee-wee to the pro levels to get specialized training based on skill level and the individual's sport.

"We can train figure skaters to professional baseball players," said Eric Lichter, co-owner of the complex.

"We're bringing the offseason (exercise programs and ideas) of collegiate and pro-like training down to the youth and high school kids."

Lichter warned not to get this complex confused with a gym.

"This isn't a gym," he said. "It's specifically and completely

■ Speed Strength Systems opens in Euclid, serving athletes with Olympic-size dreams

designed for athletes."

Because all programs are different, Lichter said the specialized way of taking part in the complex is what is most important.

"Swimmers shouldn't train like football players, and football players shouldn't train like a tennis player," he said.

Athletes ages 10 and older can get a personal program put together by Lichter and his partner, Tim Robertson Jr., at the 7,000-square-foot training center at 20001 Euclid Ave. in Euclid — behind AGR Industrial Supplies.

With package prices ranging from \$125 to \$250 a month — group packages are available — athletes can use free weights, Olympic lifting devices and parachutes, running sleds and weighed vests to improve speed, according to the company.

In addition, athletes can attach 4-inch-thick resistant bands, and, with the help of Robertson,

Lichter or an exercise partner, can maximize their speed through sprint work.

Robertson holds a master's degree in sports physiology and is a certified strength and conditioning specialist. Lichter is also a certified strength and conditioning specialist who holds a bachelor's degree in exercise and physiology.

Lichter said most Olympic and professional coaches are certified strength and conditioning specialists.

He added that an individual cannot even attempt to get certified if they do not hold at least a bachelor's degree in exercise and physiology.

"We're not just the Joe-Schmo fitness buffs," Robertson said.

Lichter said the two are required to know more than the average gym teacher or fitness enthusiast.

"I could tell you how your heart works just like a doctor would," Lichter said. "You have

to know what you're doing."

Lichter said he and Robertson can also administer the exact tests all sports do to determine ability of the competitors.

Lichter said if parents want to know how their children are developing in their sports, he can give tests to determine how they are performing in their age bracket.

In addition to his academic degrees, Robertson has worked as an exercise physiologist at the Cleveland Clinic and has served as the assistant strength and conditioning coach for the Miami Hurricanes college football team.

Lichter served as the assistant strength coach at Weber State in Ogden, Utah, and strength consultant to Ohio State University in Columbus. He has also worked with the New York Giants football team.

"We're revolutionizing strength and conditioning," Robertson said.

For more information call Speed Strength Systems at (216) 531-7950.