



# PEAK NUTRITION FUELS PEAK PERFORMANCE

How Two Higher Ed Campuses Feed Athletes  
Through the Aramark Training Table Program



*“Proper nutrition — eating the right food at the right time — is vital to enable student-athletes to train, compete, recover, heal, and learn.”* — [Collegiate and Professional Sports Dietitians Association](#)

Eating properly and maintaining an appropriate diet is a critical factor in game-day preparation for all athletes — including college athletes. Well-designed and perfectly executed nutritional programs on campus set athletes up for success on multiple levels — from strength training to conditioning to recovery. To meet athletes’ unique nutritional requirements, many higher education institutions are implementing training table programs to optimize the diet of a student-athlete and ensure they have the nutrients they need for their body type and sport.

The concept of training tables for athletes began at Yale in 1903 to ensure players had enough food to eat. Over the years, coaches and campuses evolved the concept of basic dining programs into more sophisticated nutrition-focused programs. As advancements in science brought new knowledge to sports, the campus dining programs adopted new ideas and expanded their focus.

*“The training table meal is a great opportunity for student-athletes to learn about nutrition and develop healthy eating behaviors that can last a lifetime.”*

— [Collegiate and Professional Sports Dietitians Association](#)



Today, the best training table programs include specialized menus created by chefs, nutritionists, and dietitians that cater to athletes' special dietary needs. They also meet the guidelines of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The healthy performance of college athletes is foundational work of the NCAA Sport Science Institute. Its guidelines promote adequate nutrition, hydration, sleep, strength and conditioning, and the responsible use of supplements.

Aramark has helped numerous campuses across the nation launch and manage training tables for their athletes. Successful programs include Clemson University and the University of Virginia, to name a few. The following provides an overview of these programs, including highlights, power plays, and successes.

## Advantages of On-Campus Training Table Programs

- Meals specially designed for sports, body types, and goals
- Customized meals to meet the nutritional needs of each athlete
- Nutritional education to fuel student-athlete lifestyles
- Athletes don't have to wait in long lines to get nutritional needs met
- Athletes eat as a team to build camaraderie
- Cultivate a culture of excellence around a shared dining experience
- Healthier athletes are better prepared to win more games



# SERVING ATHLETES SINCE 2009

Clemson University launched its training table program in 2009, and the program has evolved since its inception. Today, the program includes two Chef Managers and an Operations Manager who work in conjunction with Clemson Football's Nutritionist and Performance Chef to develop menus. They are supported by a staff of 18 serving the food. Aramark has worked with Clemson for 55 years and supported the training table since it launched.

## Training Table Highlights

Clemson's Aramark training table team performs the following functions:

- Stocks the kitchen with foods required to fulfill the customized menus
- Prepares the food according to exacting nutritional guidelines
- Serves the food at the designated meal and snack times

## Power Plays

The Clemson chef, dietitian, and nutritionist teams are in charge of meeting the nutritional guidelines of the NCAA. Aramark helps ensure the requirements are implemented, including:

- The recommended caloric intake for male and female athletes
- All-day food and beverage choices based upon practice sessions
- Weight training recovery needs
- Hydration needs
- Mobile ordering for players to ensure they fuel on the go

## Scoring Success

The financial structure of Clemson's training table program evolved to provide more transparency. In this program, Aramark assists the athletic department with budgeting and labor. This approach delivers two key advantages:

- Athletes, coaches, and dietitians get the resources they need to deliver a high-quality nutritional program.
- The University gets complete budgeting transparency.

# “EDUCATION, NOT DEPRIVATION” APPROACH

The University of Virginia (UVA) Athletic Department has offered its athletes a training table program since 2007. Today, more than 600 athletes participate in the Cavalier Sports Nutrition program at dinner five days a week (Sunday through Thursday), using their meal plan swipes to access meals specially created for their nutritional needs. UVA became one of less than two dozen NCAA Division I schools to have a full-time nutrition specialist on staff for their student athletes.

A certified specialist in sports dietetics helps educate student athletes and coaches on appropriate food choices to enhance performance. Meals and recipes are created by a certified executive chef. A staff of chefs, cooks, and attendants make sure the food is prepared and served to the highest standards, focusing on locally sourced ingredients prepared fresh to maintain their nutritional integrity. Aramark's chef and registered dietitian plan menus for the training table and for pre- and post-competition meals.

## Training Table Highlights

UVA's training table team delivers the following benefits:

- Through a customized individual plate program, athletes talk to a chef and get specially designed meals
- The institution runs a snack program, which includes stocking locker rooms
- The commissary supplies the kosher needs of athletes with premade microwave meals, sandwiches and salads
- A True Balance allergen solutions program in every residential dining hall for the athletes
- The men's basketball team has a separate dining space with a private chef, with the potential for expansion into additional sports



## Power Plays

With a staff of six, the Aramark team helps the campus meet NCAA guidelines through the operation of the dining venue five days a week for dinner, serving about 350 students and athletic managers at each meal. Aramark also caters meals, snacks, and desserts for the John Paul Jones Arena.

### Scoring Success

Working with Aramark provides the campus with several advantages that have made its training table program a success with its student athletes, including expertise in dining and sports nutrition, industry connections to meet specialized resource needs, and a broad scope of performance capabilities to meet every need and bridge every gap in sports nutrition — from staff management to menu planning to food preparation. The partnership includes a continuous communication stream to support the athletic department's goals.

## Is your campus ready to give your athletes a nutritionally focused training table program?

If your campus is ready, Aramark is a dining partner that will help your training table program score high points. While dietitians often see nutritional support in terms of percentages and quantities, the culinary team members at Aramark view nutrition-driven dining as a passion. As such, the Aramark team works hard to ensure that student-athletes get the food they need so they can excel in their sports and win big for their schools.

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