

A Closer Look at *BOX JUMPING*

A simple approach to plyometric training

It's a given that speed and jumping are key components of athletic training, and it's also a given that plyometrics is an effective way to develop both of these qualities. But how to implement a plyometric program, especially in a high school setting, is a bit of a mystery to many coaches. At BFS, we've developed a simple, but effective, plyometric training program that takes only 10 minutes, twice a week.

While it's true that strength training will improve jumping ability and running speed, even better results can be attained when strength training is combined with a plyometric box jumping program. For example, in a paper published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Science Research* in 1992, researchers reported the results of a six-week study on the effects of squatting and plyometrics on the vertical jump. The group


that performed just the squat increased their vertical jump by 1.3 inches, the group that performed just plyometrics increased it by 1.5 inches, but the group that performed both squats and plyometrics increased their vertical jump by 4.2 inches!

The reason for the effectiveness of plyometrics is that this type of training involves maximal explosive contractions. Whereas weight training affects the muscles, plyometrics affects the nervous system. In effect, plyometrics teaches your muscles how to more effectively use their strength.

The BFS Plyometric Box Jumping Program consists of three parts: vertical jumps, standing long jumps, then box jumps. You start with one set of 10 quality vertical jumps followed by three sets of three reps of the standing long jump. This is your warm-up. Then you

perform four sets of progressively more difficult box jumps: 1) jumping off the boxes, 2) jumping off the boxes and performing a vertical jump, 3) jumping onto the boxes and 4) multiple box jumps. That's it!

To properly run a plyometric box jumping program, coaches should make sure that athletes have access to boxes of various heights. Whereas the standard plyometric box for high school athletes is 20 inches, for middle school athletes, heavier athletes and athletes at a lower skill level it's best to start them on 10-inch Readiness boxes. For safety reasons, boxes should be solid rather than open, as the feet can get caught in an open plyometric box. Also, spotters should be used when attempting jumps of greater difficulty.

The details of the BFS Plyometric Box Jumping Program can be found in the BFS textbook, *Bigger Faster Stronger*, but it's best also to view the *BFS Plyometric Training DVD*. This DVD shows beginners performing the complete box jumping program for the first time, followed by an amazing demonstration of advanced box jumping skills by BFS Clinician P.J. Brown. 



Students at Whitmore Lake High School perform plyometric box jumping in their physical education classes. This school in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, was our 2005 BFS High School of the Year.

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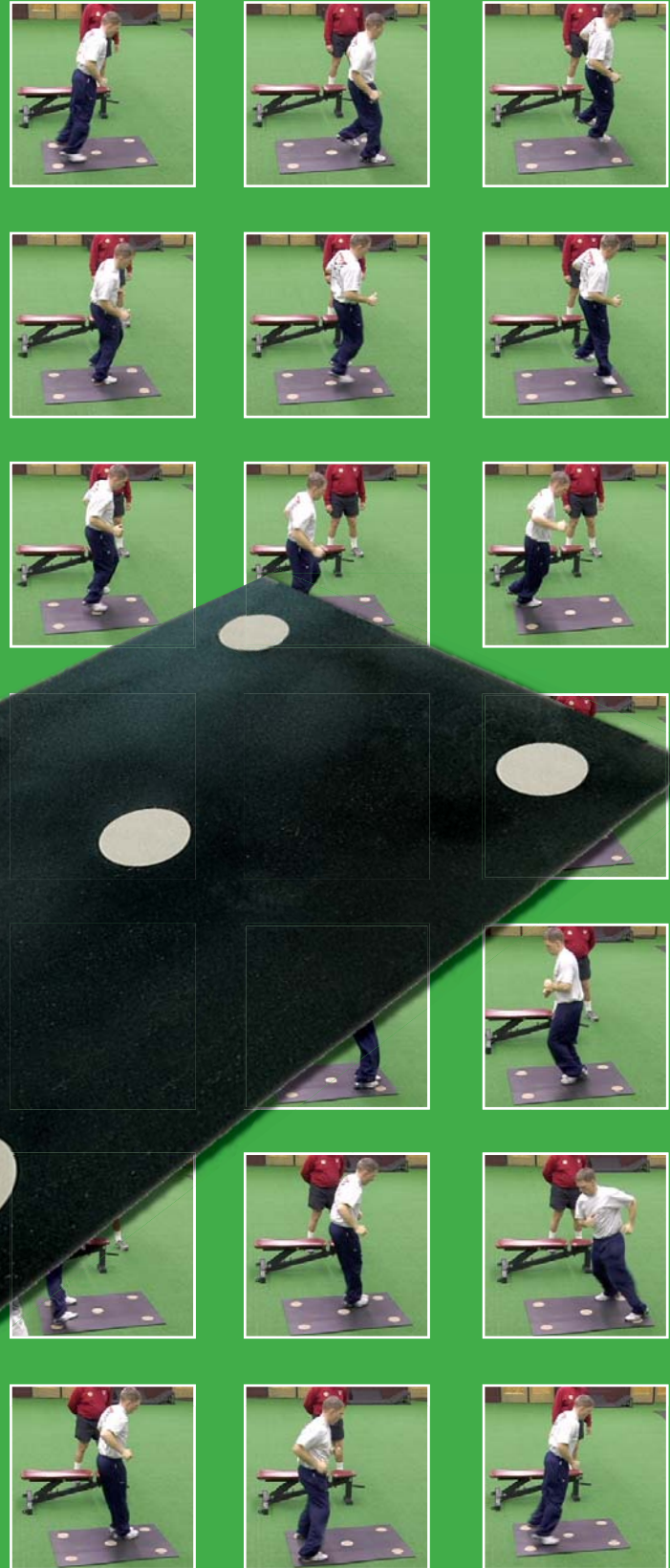
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