

# THE DARK SIDE OF SPORTS

Certifications, such as the ones offered by BFS, are designed to enhance academic credentials, not to take the place of them. Shown teaching the latest ideas in their profession are BFS clinicians Jeff Scurran (below) and John Rowbotham (right).



## *The Age of Arrogance*

The legal consequences of letting egos get out of hand

BY DR. MARC RABINOFF

I recently talked to an attorney about the case of a schoolgirl who climbed up a set of bleachers during a PE class to get a ball and fell 20 feet. She suffered fractures to her skull, hips and legs. When the supervisor in charge of the class was questioned, he

said to the effect, "I didn't tell her to climb up there!" His reply reflects not only incompetent supervision but also appalling arrogance.

As with 90 percent of the cases I've been involved with in recent years, this incident was videotaped. The

supervisor basically just shouted to the girl to get down, rather than taking the appropriate action, which was to tell her to stay where she was until a ladder could be provided to help her down safely. But the story gets worse.

When the police officer in charge



Carlos Castro, Columbia



John Connor, Ireland



André Benoit, Canada



Daryl Goss, USA



Ashley Wiltgen, USA



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The best personal trainers never stop learning. Shown are some of the best trainers in the world teaching or attending seminars at the Poliquin Strength Institute in East Greenwich, Rhode Island.



Johnathon Wong, Singapore

of the school saw the video of the incident, without the approval of her parents he allowed the video to be shown to the girl – so what she saw was herself falling and crying and writhing in pain. What’s more, the officer offered to make a DVD of the accident

and give the girl a copy! If you talked to any school psychologist about this, they would ask, “What was that police officer thinking to expose a young girl to such a traumatizing image?”

Apparently someone must have talked to this officer, because a few

weeks after the accident he erased the tape, providing the lame excuse that the primary purpose of having video cameras was to prevent and investigate criminal actions. No, in the daytime at least, the primary purpose of having video cameras at a school is to help

ensure the safety of the students. In any case, you would think that for insurance purposes the school would want to keep a copy of the video of such a serious accident.

### The Spread of Arrogance

One common example of arrogance I've seen in high schools is when coaches in charge of weight training programs offer medical advice to

school to go into personal training, thinking that the traditional approach to education is b.s. After they "earn" a weekend or online certification, these posers think they know as much as a person who has taken the time to study and get the proper credentials to work in this field. Regardless if they sincerely think they are working in the best interests of their clients and are willing to use Google to learn

when it comes to physical fitness instruction, professional standards are not clearly established and as such are not enforced. And I can tell you that two of the world's most respected certification programs for personal trainers don't even suggest in their materials that it's important to have at least a bachelor's degree to work in their profession.

Whenever I discuss this matter

*Perhaps nowhere is the problem of arrogance more prevalent than in the field of personal training.*

students who have suffered injuries. I can assure you, if things don't go well for a student's rehab and the case gets brought to court, the first thing the prosecution will ask is where that coach got his or her medical degree!

I'm not questioning the qualifications of a physical education instructor to supervise a weight training class. If a coach has a degree in physical education or exercise science, they have the academic credentials to be an instructor in a weightroom. But that doesn't mean they are also qualified to diagnose injuries and prescribe the appropriate physical therapy protocols to treat those injuries. Yes, they can certainly supervise a rehab workout to ensure that exercises are performed properly, but it would be arrogant as well as irresponsible of them to assume their academic qualifications go beyond that level.

Perhaps nowhere is the problem of arrogance more prevalent than in the field of personal training. If someone is working in a health club, for example, they probably believe it's fine for them to push creatine or other supplements. But there are too many individuals who drop out of

about specific injuries or medical conditions, they are simply asking for trouble by not becoming properly educated in this field.

What's interesting is that when these types of people get into a legal dispute, the defense will usually try to settle early because it quickly becomes obvious that this trainer was not qualified to do what they said they could do. I'm not exaggerating when I say 90 percent of the cases I consult on settle out of court after the defense learns, from my work and from the work of others, what standards should be in the profession. Sure, lawyers charge by the hour, win or lose, but usually they are going to earn more by pursuing cases they can win.

What is especially disturbing about this discussion of misplaced arrogance is that you don't see it in other professions. Why? Because these professions have established standards. You can't practice medicine without a medical degree, you can't practice law without graduating from law school and passing a bar exam, and you can't work as a plumber or even cut hair in a salon without the proper licensing. But for some reason,

with judges, they are often shocked to learn that the personal training and strength and conditioning professions have evolved without clear standards. And yes, BFS has a certification program, but to their credit they clearly state that the BFS Total Program is designed not to take the place of an academic degree but to provide further theoretical and practical instruction in the areas of athletic and physical fitness training.

The bottom line is that professional organizations that provide educational instruction in the fields of physical and athletic fitness must set clear, high standards for their members and also take measures to enforce these standards. Only then can they stop this unprofessional arrogance and legitimately earn the sense of pride that members of other professions enjoy! BFS

"The Dark Side of Sports" is a regular feature by Dr. Marc Rabinoff that answers questions about safety and liability based upon actual litigations.





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GA Damascus 2/12/2011	MI Saline 3/26/2011	NY Manhattanville 4/30/2011
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**See pg.13 Learn how to start your program on a winning path**




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