

Program, People, Product



Three guidelines to remember when designing, building or renovating the college or high school weightroom

BY ROD MERGARDT, BFS CLINICIAN

You have just received funds to improve your athletic facility – now what?

The best plan “begins with the end in mind,” as suggested by Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Before taking any action, ask yourself, “How can this money improve our facility to optimize the performance of our athletes and enhance the health and wellness of our students?” Our instinct might be to immediately acquire as much attractive new weight training and cardio equipment as possible. It’s a common pitfall for many administrators, teachers and coaches to move forward with

purchases before designing an overall plan for the investment. However, unless we first address potential problem areas – in the equipment, the space, the level of instruction or the ages of the students and athletes – we’re sure to face unnecessary financial and physical costs later. If a plan is sound and managed properly, there should be no damage to the equipment and no injury to students from improper use.

Here is the most effective and efficient process I have found as an athlete, educator and parent for building a safe and fiscally responsible program for the highest level of athletic

performance enhancement: **The 3 P’s: Program, People, Product.**

Program

“Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance”

—Universal management axiom

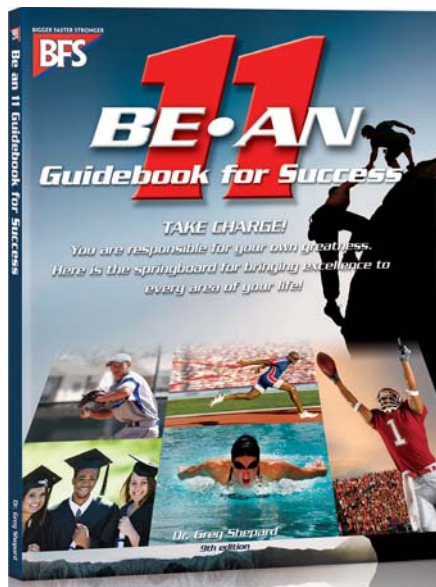
Before setting out on any journey, we must know our destination. Although it’s not possible to predict every bump in the road, we can prepare for human error in the interest of minimizing it. For instance, as tempting as it is to fill our facilities with expensive new equipment, doing so will not guarantee that our students will make amazing gains in performance.



In January 2012 Mergardt gave a BFS certification at White Plains High School in White Plains, New York.

The determining factor here is the curriculum. In most institutions the equipment purchase comes first, then the program; in many cases no program is ever established. We can all agree that for athletes to reach their performance goals, they must be taught to use the new facility and new equipment in a safe, efficient and effective manner. This is why we must decide as a faculty and coaching staff what we need to teach and how we will train our athletes long before we start typing purchase orders. We need to choose an educational program that will provide our children the optimal learning experience. Their chances of success rise astronomically when we become unified in our approach to guide them in achieving their learning objectives.

It's important to consider the individual needs and interests of students – the elite athlete, the average team member, the student who has no interest in weight training at all – so we can deliver the most appropriate experience for each. The BFS Total System is designed to deliver appropriate instruction and practice to all students in a safe, efficient and effective manner.



The Be an 11 program is a great way to help young people develop the important skill of goal setting.

The BFS Total System provides the most solid foundation possible for highly competitive interscholastic programs as well as physical education programs for the student body. Proper instruction of the six core lifts along with a wide range of auxiliary lifts will prepare any student to pursue their sport and athletic performance goals.

1. Box Squat
2. Parallel Squat
3. Bench Press

4. Towel Bench
5. Hex Bar Deadlift
6. Power Clean

People

“The single most important business practice for organizations to increase their odds of success by any measure is to more consistently appoint the Right People to the Right Roles”

—Tom Olivo

Once the faculty and coaching staff are unified and have agreed on the appropriate curriculum, the next step is to determine who will deliver the instruction. Just as in any field, the quality of coaches and their educational backgrounds vary from person to person. College students majoring in education and exercise science take courses that focus on theory, classroom structure and organization. Although many institutions produce outstanding teachers and coaches, they commonly neglect to address methods of conducting safe, efficient and effective teaching in the weightroom for large numbers of students and athletes.

Over my career of 50 years, I have had the opportunity to visit hundreds of schools and colleges around the

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Mergardt believes that proper instruction of core and auxiliary lifts is fundamental in preparing students to pursue their goals.

country. It disturbs me to see weightrooms in which the lifting instruction is poor, technically incorrect or completely nonexistent. Inadequate supervision leads to injury and the potential for litigation.

Among other requirements, teachers and coaches must be present in the weight training facility and must provide appropriate instruction in both lifting and spotting skills; three spotters must be present for the squats and bench presses. Consistently correcting the technique of lifts and of spotting performance will reduce the chance of injury and will increase positive results. For the sake of safety and protection against litigation, all institutions must demonstrate that they have taken every measure to provide a reasonable standard of care for everyone who participates in the weightroom.

Safety concerns have led to the recent mandate by the NCAA requiring that weightrooms in their institutions be supervised by certified coaches. Although there is no specific certification required, the BFS Weightroom Safety Certification is clearly the best because only BFS addresses the class organization and progression of instruction necessary to train large numbers of students and athletes in the weightroom.

Many of the dangerous conditions in exercise facilities are caused by adults in charge who simply do not know what to do. To ensure that our students are taught in the safest and best way, we must hire teachers and coaches who have received additional training and have been certified to safely conduct classes for large groups in the weightroom. If a new hire is not an option, administrators must provide for the professional development of their existing staff. The best

way to ensure they are qualified to deliver safe, efficient and effective programs is through intensive hands-on practical instruction, evaluation of their teaching skills and testing of their knowledge. This in fact describes the curriculum of the BFS Weightroom Safety Certification.

Product

“Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.”

—Unknown

The point here is that to get a fish out of the water and onto our table requires appropriate tools (machines, implements) to do it. Tools are important in just about any endeavor. In interscholastic and intercollegiate sports, athletic performance and physical education, there never seems to be enough money, time or space for the tools of our trade. Therefore, it is imperative that we unify our program and unify our people. Together, we can select products that satisfy program requirements and fulfill learning objectives for the greatest number of students, athletes and stakeholders while best utilizing the limited time and space available.

Ultimate Objectives

“It is the pervading law of all things organic and inorganic...that form...follows function”

—Horatio

Greenough, architect
Let’s make this simple: Just as the

architect creates a physical structure, the administrator is the creative “architect” of the educational structures that will provide for the needs of many stakeholders. By following the model of the 3P’s we create the structure necessary to support the functions agreed upon by the stakeholders. For example, if an architect designed a stadium solely for football and the stakeholders later decided the structure should also function for baseball and soccer, neither party would achieve their desired objectives.

It’s helpful to remember Brian Tracy’s 10/90 Rule: The first 10 percent of time that you spend planning and organizing your work before you begin will save you as much as 90 percent of the time in getting the job done once you get started. The 3Ps will serve to guide you through that critical first 10 percent. **BFS**

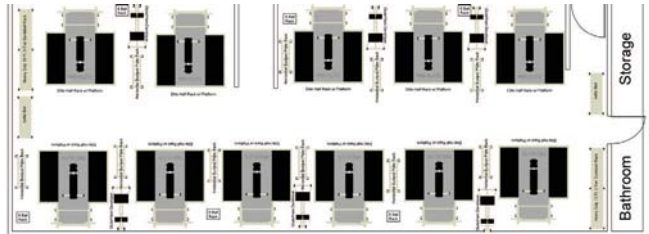


Mergardt with BFS President Bob Rowbotham (left) and veteran BFS clinician Jeff Sellers (right).

CONCEPT TO COMPLETION™

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The 2D illustration is the first step of the Concept to Completion process. These illustrations are drawn to scale to show you exactly how your

weight room can be laid out, thereby ensuring proper use of available space and the best design for safety and traffic flow.



3D Illustration \$250
Fee waived upon order of \$3000 or more

In addition to 2D illustrations, BFS can also provide you with 3D illustrations. These 3D renderings are drawn to scale to show you exactly how your weight room can look, ensuring proper use of available space and the

best design for safe traffic flow. Having a 3D illustration is also a great way to help generate funding for a new facility. (BFS must complete a 2D illustration of your facility prior to the 3D illustration)



Ask about installation services!

BFS provides unmatched, ongoing support. With instructional clinics in safety and technique as well as coaches' certification

courses, BFS provides all the tools for raising your program to THE NEXT LEVEL!

BFS STEP UP TO SUCCESS PROGRAM BUILDING A GREAT WEIGHT ROOM - ONE STEP AT A TIME, ALL ON YOUR 3 TO 5 YEAR TIME LINE

Although it's great to get the funding to build a new weight room as we say, "From Concept to Completion," the reality is that many schools have limited budgets. The alternative is not to give up on your dream, but to take the process one step at a time.

Throughout this process of long-term planning BFS can help by providing you with a safety evaluation and needs analysis. From there we will help you establish an annual budget and then show the process, step-by-step, with 2-D and 3-D image rendering technology.

As an example, during the 1st year you could replace bent barbells with high-quality multi-purpose bars, and your solid steel weight plates with bumpers. The next year, replace worn-out benches and flooring. The following year start adding racks. Before you know it, your dream weightroom will become a reality!

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