



Through his clinics Coach Shepard has personally inspired countless young athletes to achieve their goals in all areas of their lives.

Getting Young Athletes Off to a *Strong Start*

A look back at how BFS helps young athletes catch the vision of athletic success

BY DR. GREG SHEPARD, BFS FOUNDER

(Editor's note: Although this article on the origins of Coach Shepard's training methods was written 25 years ago, the ideas are still relevant today.)

Can we teach upper-limit, state-of-the-art training techniques in a coordinated manner in our school system, grades 4 through 12? Yes! If you think you can and are willing to listen and try, then you have indeed caught the vision.

The hardest part of catching the vision in grades 4 through 6 is first getting a coach to believe; second, getting administrators to believe; and third, getting teachers to spend the necessary 45 minutes per week. Yes, you heard right – just 45 minutes per week. You see, much of the work is done by the students at home. Here is how it works.

The complete grade school program covers strength, speed, agility, flexibility and plyometrics. The strength

program consists of doing 50 push-ups and 25 sit-ups at home daily. The teacher merely tests periodically. Rewards such as certificates can be given out for achieving minimum standards and for most done, most improvement, etc. Contests can be held among classrooms. The BFS dot drill can be done for agility – this, too, can be done at home. It takes only about 60 seconds daily and can be tested periodically. Stretching should be done daily at home, and kids can use the BFS 1-2-3-4 Flexibility Program.

Kids in grade school should be taught how to jump high and far. They should practice by doing 10 vertical jumps and 10 standing long jumps twice per week. These jumps also should be tested periodically. The last area to implement is speed development, and the 8-point BFS speed technique system should be taught and should take 15 minutes per week. One week, a class could concentrate on keeping the head still and eyes focused straight ahead. The next week could focus on keeping toes straight; the next week, elbows at a right angle. Most grade school teachers should be able to handle this kind of program. If the district



Coach Shepard is shown here at his first-ever BFS clinic. Since then he has given over 500 clinics in 50 states.

weight lifted. The push-up and sit-up program can be discontinued or left in for extra credit. Everything else remains the same.

The kids can stretch and do the agility drill at home. The jumping and running can be done easily at school.

The next most important thing to understand is how rapidly improvements can be made. In just 30 days the results can be dramatic.

is fortunate in having a physical education specialist, then it becomes even easier.

The important point to understand and believe is that a high percentage of kids will do this work at home. When you tell the parents that you are giving their children a chance to achieve their physical potential, and it's backed up by research, they will really get behind you and help. Each kid is supposed to do 50 push-ups and 25 sit-ups daily. They take one minute to do agilities and 9-12 minutes to stretch daily while jumping twice per week. It comes out to less than 30 minutes per day. They can do everything during commercials in the living room. Hey, it just isn't that tough.

The next most important thing to understand is how rapidly improvements can be made. In just 30 days the results can be dramatic. It's much easier to teach a 6th grader how to run than an 11th grader who has to unlearn many bad habits.

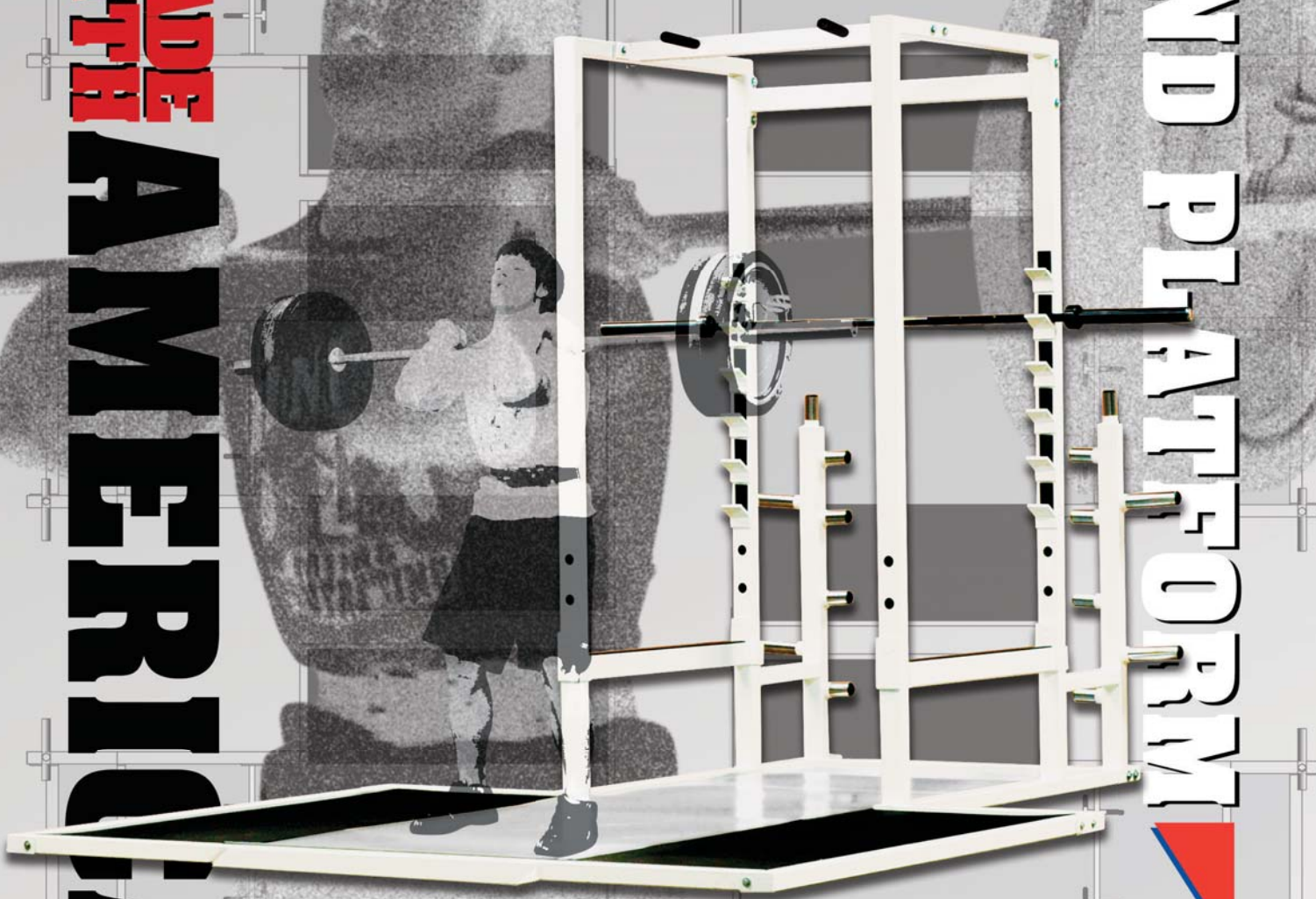
When the students enter 7th grade, a formal weight training program can be implemented. The BFS Readiness Program is tailor-made for a middle school program. It can be done two or three times per week. Lifting sessions last only 15 to 20 minutes and emphasize technique, not the

A physical education teacher can easily check up on kids once a week to see if they have been doing their program at home. Instead of throwing the kids a ball and watching them play basketball, flag football or softball, organize their program and do some teaching on how they can reach their athletic potential. It only takes about an hour of class time per week. Any teacher should be able to take the ball and run with it after seeing our videos.

The rewards are great. By the 9th or 10th grade, athletes coming into the regular BFS program are already flexible with quick feet. They know how to run and jump. Many are able to power clean 175 or more, bench press 200 or more and parallel squat 300 pounds or more. These athletes have pride and a strong self-concept. They have established a strong work ethic to reach their potential. Even the kids who've chosen not to go into organized sports have gained from the program. They've been taught how to run, jump and stretch. They are prepared to do most any recreational leisure time sport or activity.

By starting an appropriate training program early, you'll give kids an opportunity to become the best that they can be. Catch the vision! **BFS**

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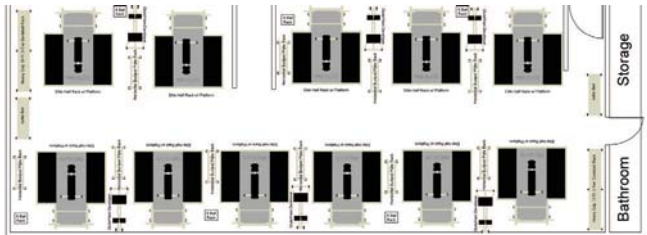


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In addition to 2D illustrations, BFS can also provide you with 3D illustrations. These 3D renderings are drawn to scale to show you exactly how your weight room can look, ensuring proper use of available space and the

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)

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

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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.

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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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