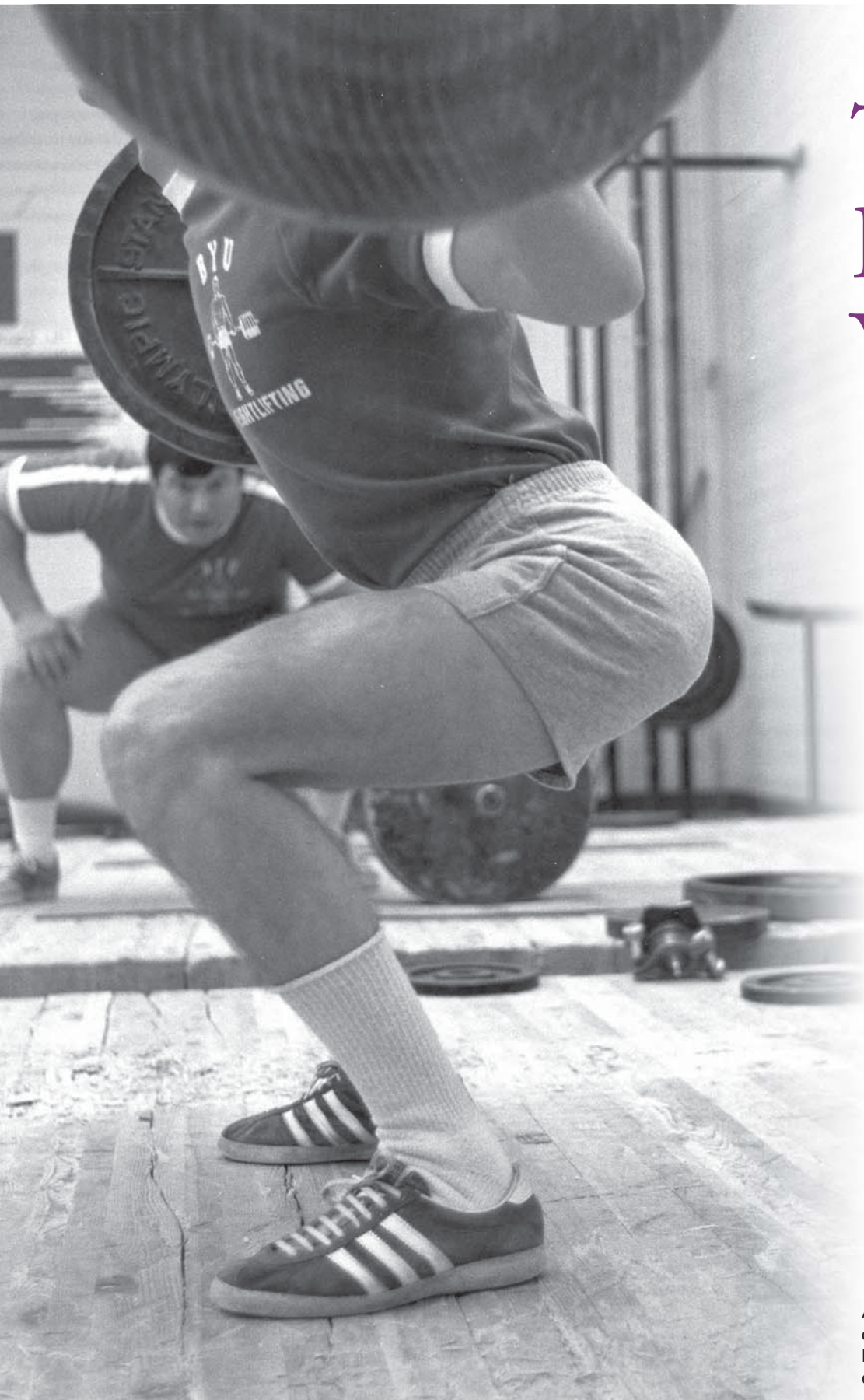


The Rise of Youth

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



A hands-on coach during his career, Dr. Greg Shepard believes that perfect technique is essential for 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 13 years ago, the ideas are still relevant today.)

There are many who believe our world is getting worse and that the way our young people behave is almost frightening. I see a different picture.

I see more opportunity than ever before for teens today. Despite the many problems and challenges our youth face, there is much goodness among these kids. I see many wonderful examples of greatness. In fact, I believe that the percentage of teens who are in the eleven category is higher than ever before. The best kids of today are better than the best kids in my day, despite the presence of more evil in the world than ever before.

It is truly amazing that kids do as well as they do. More than one million children a year have experienced parental divorce since 1970. Some 40 percent of all married adults have already been divorced. Married couples with children represent only 26 percent of all households. About 45 percent of new marriages will end in divorce, and 60 percent of remarriages will end that way.

Today the battle lines between good and bad are more clearly drawn. The importance of making great decisions and choices is more important than ever before. The responsibility of teachers and coaches is greater than ever before. The need for athletics and structure in athletics is greater than ever before. I see a great need for our Be an 11 seminars.

In our schools' athletic programs our student-athletes spend a lot of time trying to get bigger, faster and

stronger. We spend a lot of time practicing the X's and O's. We spend a lot of energy getting our athletes to play hard. But what good is all that if our athletes are ineligible to play, unfocused or in jail?

Teens are more aware than ever and, in general, are making better choices just as a means of survival.



Coach Shepard when he was coaching football at Sehome High School in the '70s. Many of his players weighed over 200 pounds while benching 300-plus, squatting 400-plus and deadlifting 500-plus.

Teens want, and should have, a bright future. So, in spite of a lot of terrible things going on, our youth need to be praised and further encouraged. Let me give you two examples of remarkable teens I met at our Be an 11 seminars.

At a Be an 11 seminar in Silverton, Oregon, one junior athlete really stood out. He had this wonderful glow and smile. He was always respectful and courteous to everyone. He was an eleven. His father had died in prison, and all of his brothers were in gangs and constantly in trouble with the law. This kid decided, on his own,

to move in with his grandparents. Living in the smaller town of Silverton got him away from many negative situations. He took responsibility for his own greatness. When kids do that, they become elevens.

At one seminar at a high school in California, I asked the students about deaths in their families. A few had lost grandparents, but one football player had lost his father. I asked him how his father had died. He replied, "Coach, he was tied up, taken to a remote spot in the desert and shot several times in the head." It was a drug deal gone bad. Now this man's son was at a Be an 11 seminar. His goal was to get better and play his song. Wow!

Unfortunately, there are too many examples today of teens turning to violence. In one true story, five teenagers who came from solidly middle-class families in New York pummeled to death a 44-year-old man. These kids had no prior criminal records. They were hungry but had no money, so they ordered a bunch of Chinese food. They lured the deliveryman to a vacant house and jumped him. Even though the deliveryman had \$600 on him, the teens left the money – they only wanted the food. These four boys and one girl, all under the age of 17, have horribly changed the lives of many people forever, including their own.

Our youth need proper guidance and better examples. I believe our *Be an 11 Guidebook* helps all teens and athletes not only cope with but thrive in today's world. It gives teens who want to be great a better chance to do so. It helps kids be leaders. But, most of all, it sets kids on a true course to achieving their highest personal destiny. BFS



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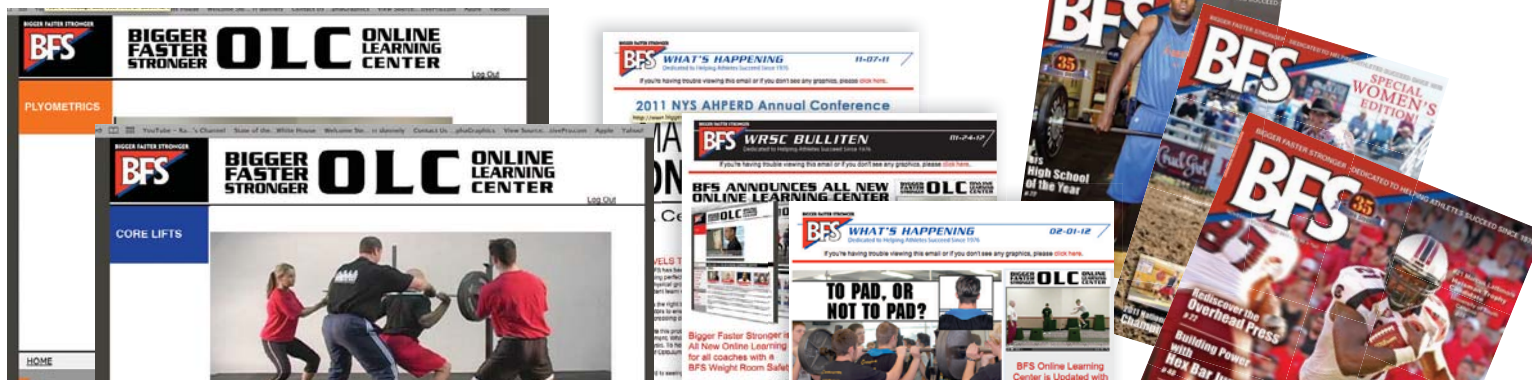
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