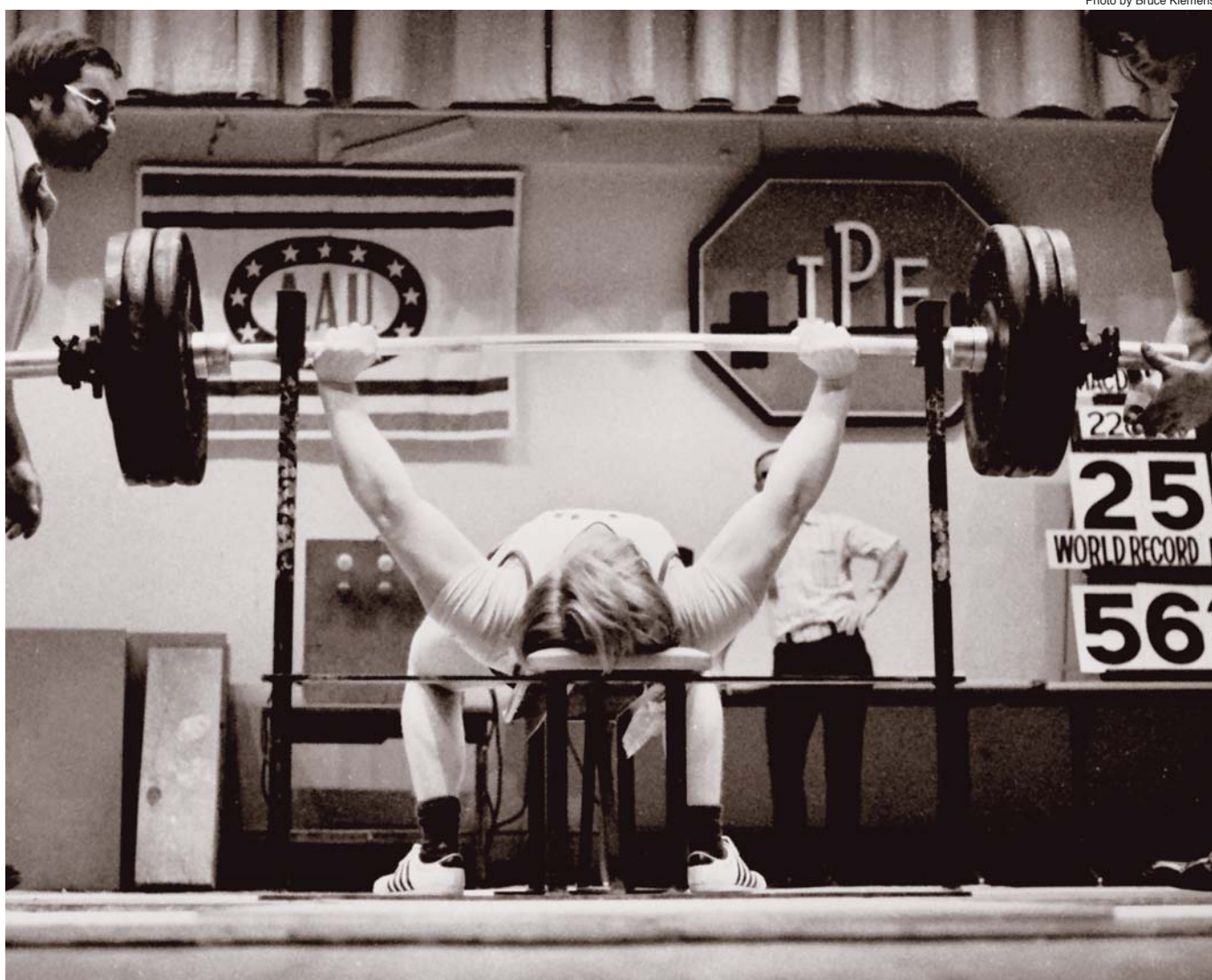


Power Weight Training

A look back at the basic ideas that have made BFS so successful for nearly four decades

BY **DR. GREG SHEPARD, BFS FOUNDER**

Photo by Bruce Klemens.



Mike McDonald is a powerlifter who during the '70s held world records in the bench press in four different bodyweight categories at the same time! In articles about his training, McDonald says he never performed special exercises for his lats, a muscle group many powerlifters believe is essential to achieve best results in this exercise.

(Editor's note: Although this article on the origins of Coach Shepard's training methods was written 33 years ago, the ideas are still relevant today.)

The four most important weight training exercises for athletes are the three power lifts – the squat, bench press and deadlift – plus the clean. Together, these four lifts will dramatically strengthen the major muscle groups athletes rely upon when playing any sport that requires a maximum summation of force, such

maximal results from less than one hour of power weight training performed two to four times per week.

Each of the four power lifts only needs to be performed twice a week. There is no way athletes can squat heavy, near their maximum, three times a week. Athletes will progress much faster by using two different squat workouts per week. Auxiliary exercises should be performed after the four power lifts so that the most energy can be directed to the four

protocol of 3 sets of 10 reps. That type of program comes from the 1930s and is more of a bodybuilding workout. It's not for today's athletes. Also avoid the system of doing only one set with as many reps as you can. It produces probably the worst training effect on athletes I've ever seen. I bring this up because one strength coach strongly encourages his athletes and others to do this routine in articles he has written for other publications.

The good news is that an athlete can get maximal results from less than one hour of power weight training performed two to four times per week.

as football and wrestling as well as the throws, jumps and sprints in track and field.

These four lifts need to be attacked with great intensity. As a coach, be sure to chart your athletes' performance during the lifts to motivate them and to encourage a competitive attitude. When properly used, motivational charts will stimulate an unbelievable desire to achieve in those four lifts. But don't overdo it. Coaches who use 10 or more core lifts will never come close to getting the degree of competitive intensity they expect from their athletes.

Another unique feature of power weight training is the length and frequency of workouts. A top professional bodybuilder's routine might take more than three hours a day to perform, six days a week. There is no way an athlete can train like that. The good news is that an athlete can get

basic lifts. These auxiliary lifts might include dips, biceps curls and lat pulldowns.

As for reps and sets, unfortunately there is no magic formula that produces the best results for every individual. If you understand that statement, you have a great chance to succeed. Never type up a workout, tape it to the wall and say "Go to it!" and leave it there for eight months. You need to change workouts frequently. Generally speaking, however, you can't go wrong with 5 sets of 1-5 repetitions. You may use any combination. For example: 5 sets of 5 reps, 3 sets of 3 reps, or 5-4-3-2-1 reps. If your athletes take less than one hour to complete the workout, you can have them perform additional sets.

Do not use a workout

Most athletes also should avoid circuit-type training with the basic power lifts (performing one set of every exercise in the workout before performing additional sets). Athletes cannot do power weight training effectively in this manner. Instead, have your athletes do all their sets of squats and then go to another lift. You can, however, have them do circuit-type weight training on auxiliary lifts – but again, only have them perform these exercises *after* they have performed the basic power lifts.

By focusing on the four basic power lifts and training them with great intensity, you will enable your athletes to build the strength and power necessary to achieve upper-limit performance. The secret is not training longer but training smarter! **BS**



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