

*For Women Only*



## The Davis Twins: Defying the Odds

*These remarkable girls prove that it's never too young to start training*

Barrett and Mary Catherine Davis are athletic twins who started weight training in middle school to help them become better athletes. Not only did they have a head start pumping iron many years before most coaches would consider allowing a young athlete in the weightroom, they had an early start in life: The Davis twins were premature babies, born more than two months early!

BFS learned about these two remarkable young women from their father, Jeff Davis, a teacher and basketball coach at Princeton High School in Princeton, North Carolina. His wife, Nicole, is the athletic director and a volleyball coach at North Johnston High School, a rival school in nearby Kenly.

At 29 weeks into her pregnancy Nicole was diagnosed

Mary Catherine (left) and Barrett Davis are twins who overcame serious health problems at birth to become remarkable athletes.



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The twins are multisport athletes who compete in soccer, basketball, and volleyball.

with preeclampsia, a condition that can threaten the lives of mothers and their unborn babies. The twins were due on January 28 but were born November 16. Mary Catherine weighed 2 pounds 5 ounces; Barrett weighed 2 pounds 14 ounces.

Barrett stayed in intensive care until March 19; she was on a respirator for six weeks and had a brain bleed, seizures, and an eye issue that required her to wear corrective lenses after her first birthday (she now wears contacts). She also had three holes in her heart that eventually repaired themselves.

Mary Catherine, whose life-threatening conditions improved faster than Barrett's, came home earlier, in February. Even so, she had a condition called external hydrocephalus (a condition characterized by excess fluid in the skull) that affected her balance to the extent that she could not walk until she was 18 months old. Also during childhood she dealt with severe reflux and a structural problem with her right foot that has continually improved.

Until they were four years old, both girls received occupational and physical therapy for poor muscle tone and tightness. After that they were able to participate

in regular physical exercise and eventually sports.

In March 2012, when the girls were in middle school, they started weightlifting using the BFS program under the direct supervision of their father. Because of his daughters' size and strength, Jeff invested in a 15-pound barbell and 5-pound bumper plates. He even purchased 1-pound weight plates, as it was problematic to increase weights in 5-pound increments. Jeff says the program has helped them become athletically fit for sports. "Mary Catherine, always a little girl, weighed 67 pounds when we started, and Barrett around 82. They now weigh 108

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and 112 and have improved their strength tremendously.” Case in point: They can both bench press nearly body weight, and can hex bar deadlift more than double body weight.

Jeff points out that because young athletes all mature at different rates, it’s important to have a positive, supportive environment in the weightroom. He says, “Often the kids who need to be in the weightroom the most are those who are most afraid of it because they feel they will be embarrassed when they try to lift.” Jeff says he does not allow anyone to be made fun of in the weightroom. Also, he says that the powerlifting community provides a positive experience for the girls and encourages them to succeed.

The twins also compete in volleyball, basketball and soccer – they both have played major roles in conference championships. They also compete in powerlifting, and between them they hold 47 state and 11 national USAPL records in the 10-to-13- and 14-to-15-year age groups. Jeff says that although the twins use the standard Olympic barbell in competition, for training they use the hex bar deadlift, as he believes it is safer on their lower backs at their age. “As a competition nears, I will have them switch to a standard barbell to get used to it, but the majority of our work is with the hex bar.”

Using the BFS program, the twins compete in powerlifting and collectively have broken 11 national USAPL records.



Jeff and Nicole Davis proudly pose with their daughters, Mary Catherine and Barrett.

While Jeff realizes that as the twins’ father, he is obviously biased about the significance of their accomplishments, he believes their story of success after survival needs to be told. He looks forward to seeing them fulfill their potential not just in sports but in all areas of life. What is certain is that by strengthening themselves to meet so many challenges in their young lives, Barrett and Mary Catherine Davis are ready for a great future.

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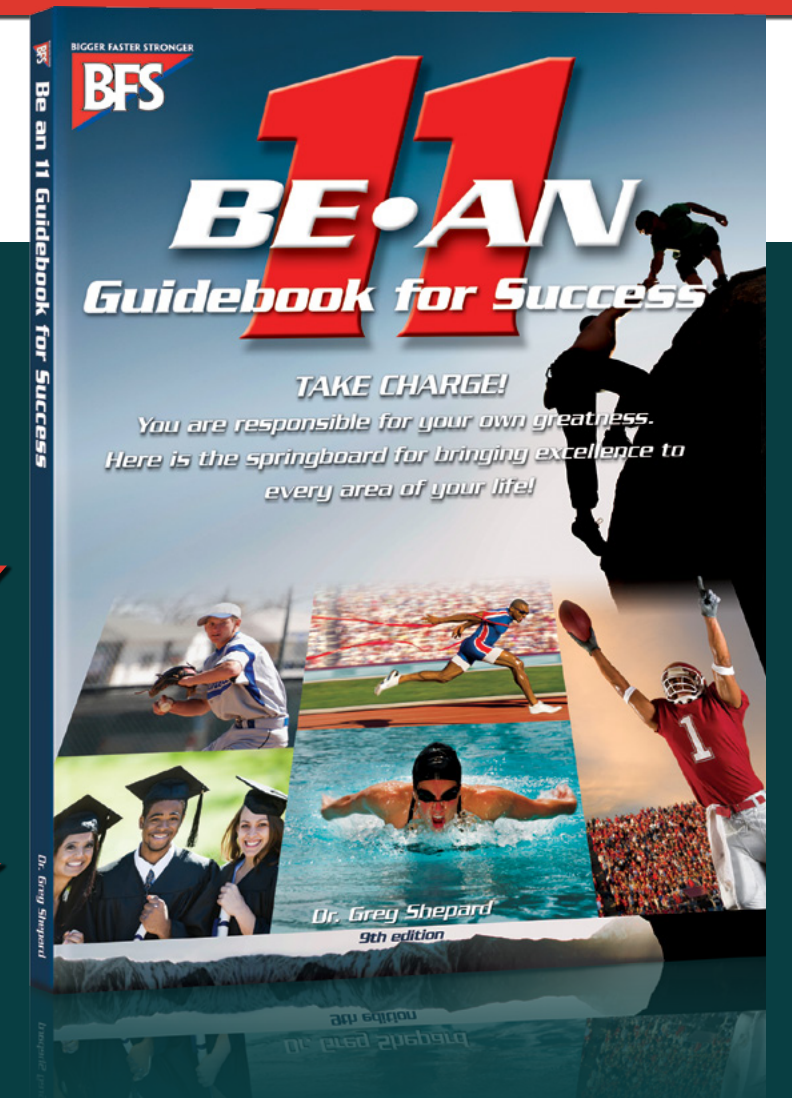
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