



BFS Program

Upgrade Your Coaching with the Six Absolutes

A simple way to teach optimal lifting and sports technique

In the coaching profession there is an overwhelming amount of information available about biomechanics. If you want to know the optimal position of your thumbs at the start of a 40-yard dash, you could probably find some research study on it. Although these details are important at the highest levels of competition, most coaches simply need to know the basics of human movements. That is where the Six Absolutes come in.

Rather than presenting complex science terms and mathematical equations, BFS offers a simple way to teach basic biomechanics for athletes. It's called the BFS Six Absolutes, created by BFS founder Dr. Greg Shepard.

The Six Absolutes are six training principles that are amazingly effective in teaching perfect technique, not just in sports but also in the weightroom. Coaches who practice the BFS Six Absolutes can dramatically

elevate their athletes' strength and their own coaching ability.

What are the Six Absolutes? Here they are:

1. Use an Athletic or Jump Stance
2. Be Tall
3. Spread the Chest (lock-in the lower back)
4. Align the Toes
5. Align the Knees (knees over toes)
6. Eyes on Target

As with the BFS concept of developing a total program for all athletes, the Six Absolutes are used to unify the terminology coaches use when training athletes, whether it's on the court, on the playing field or in the weightroom. Let's say an athlete is performing a deadlift. One coach may say, "Stick out your chest!" and another may say, "Pull your shoulders back." Instead, both coaches can say, "Spread the chest!" Likewise, when a batter is slumped over the plate, a coach can shout, "Spread the chest!" to help the athlete get into a better hitting posture.

Charles Cook of Parish Episcopal High School is using the concept of "Eyes on Target" to make a big play. This Texas school was featured in our January/February 2011 issue.



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The concept of the Six Absolutes was created by BFS Founder Dr. Greg Shepard. Here is Coach Shepard spotting when he was a strength coach at Brigham Young University.

The Six Absolutes are discussed in detail in our clinics and certifications. For now, here is a quick overview of each Absolute.

1. Use an Athletic or Jump Stance. In most sports and weight training exercises there are two basic foot stances, a jump stance and an athletic stance. With a jump stance the feet are directly under the hips, and this is the best stance for generating speed and jumping power. An athlete would use this type of stance when performing a vertical jump or a deadlift. With an athletic stance the feet are approximately shoulder-width apart, which is the best stance for providing stability. When an athlete catches the bar in a snatch or clean, an athletic stance will provide more stability.

2. Be Tall. Good posture improves athletic performance and reduces the risk of injury. An athlete can't slump or lean forward outside their center of gravity and expect to perform well. The Be Tall Absolute should be used with most lifts in the weightroom. When performing the hex bar deadlift, focusing on being tall throughout the entire lift helps ensure that the spine is in proper alignment and that the legs



are being properly used during the lift. Outside the weightroom, the Be Tall Absolute should be used as often as possible. For example, after athletes reach full speed in sprinting, they should be sprinting “tall” (Be Tall).

3. Spread the Chest (lock-in the lower back). The lower back must assume a concave position, or “neutral spine,” which is how exercise physiologists refer to this position. When athletes spread their chests, the lower back will start to lock in properly in a concave position. When an athlete performs a back squat, spreading the chest helps ensure that the spine is



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in this safe, neutral position. When a baseball player steps up to the plate, spreading the chest will position their upper body to generate the most power to their swing.

4. Toes Aligned. Athletes should always strive to have their toes in optimal alignment. When using a jump stance, the toes should be straight ahead; when using an athletic stance, the toes should be pointed slightly out to improve balance. This principle of Toes Aligned can also be used with stretching, jumping and sprinting.

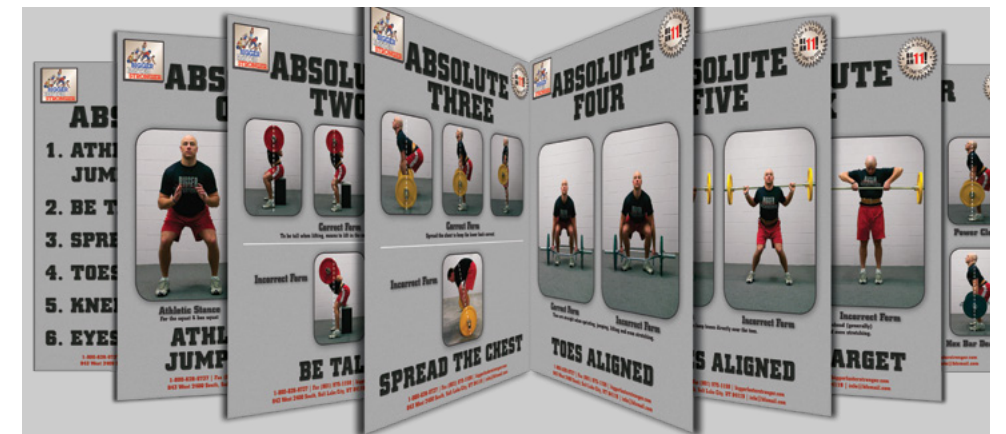
5. Knees Aligned (knees over toes). In addition to having the toes in alignment, athletes must also keep their knees aligned with their toes. In jumping, landing with the knees buckled inward places the athlete at a high risk of injury. Likewise, not having the knees aligned will reduce speed and power.

6. Eyes on Target. Eyes on Target refers to the importance of focusing the eyes on the athlete's immediate goal. Eyes on Target is a useful tool to use in the weightroom because the spine will follow the head, and the head will follow the eyes. If an athlete looks down during a deadlift, their head will drop and their spine will round, placing their lower back at risk

The Six Absolutes can be applied to lifting and stretching. In the snatch lift, for example, the athlete moves from a jump stance to an athletic stance. In the hamstring stretch shown, both the toes and knees must be in alignment to get the desired effect from the exercise.

of injury. If a football player looks down during a tackle, their head will drop and this could result in a neck injury.

The study of biomechanics is complex and ever expanding, but a great place to start is by applying the Six Absolutes. Give them a try and you'll see significant improvements in weight training technique and athletic performance.

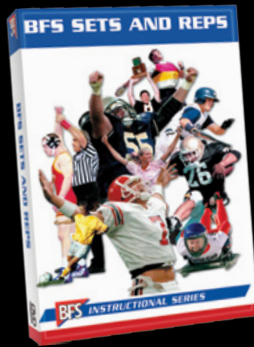


Posters describing each of the Six Absolutes are great learning tools to remind athletes of the importance of always focusing on perfect technique.

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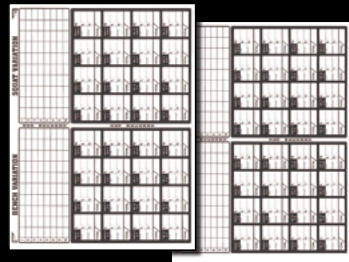
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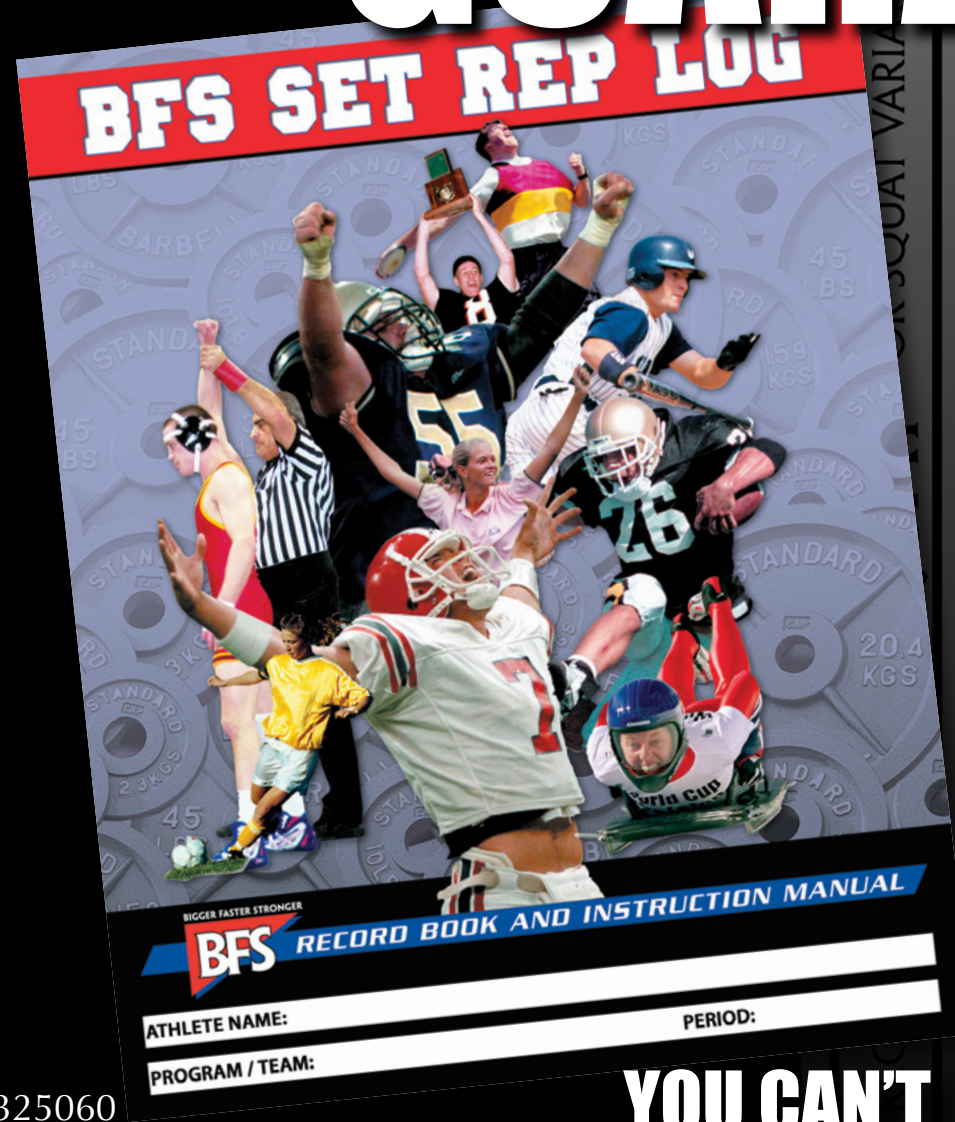
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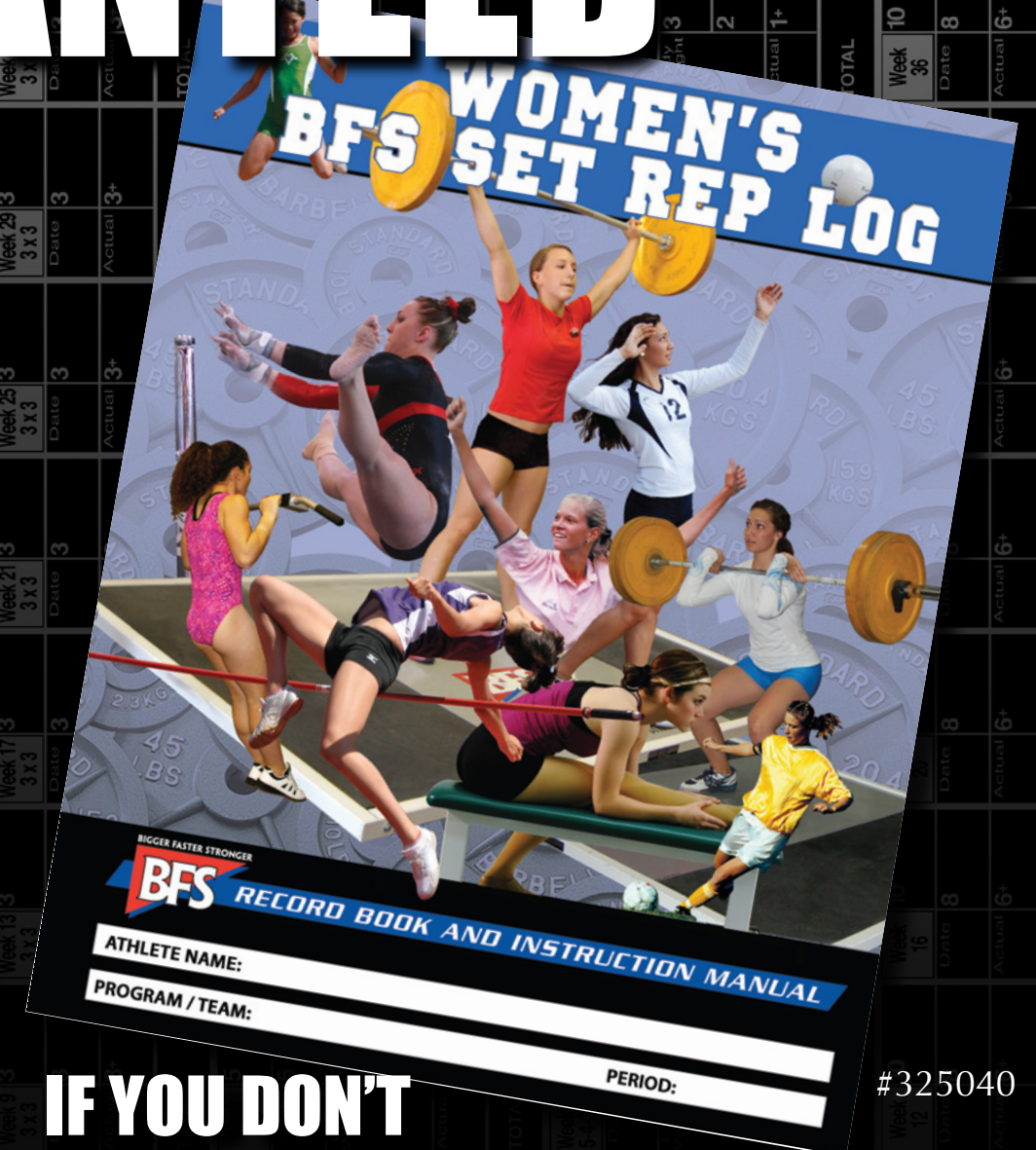
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