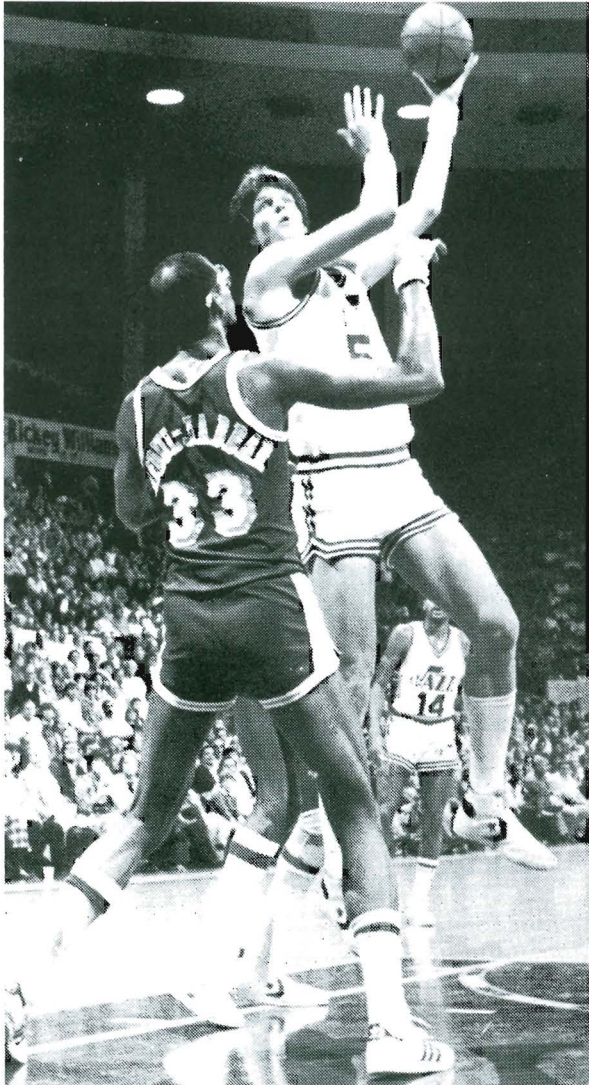


MARK EATON

by Dr. Greg Shepard
Strength Coach, Utah Jazz



Mark Eaton: The NBA's Tallest Player

A Champion in the Making

Those who have subscribed to the BFS Journal have enjoyed a great series of articles about Mark Eaton. They have literally been a part of Eaton's extraordinary development over the past year. Here is his story as it developed issue by issue.

JANUARY'S ISSUE: THE BEGINNING

Mark Eaton is the NBA's tallest basketball player. He plays for the Utah Jazz which has given us the opportunity of training Mark. I feel like a missionary spreading the gospel of weight training for basketball players and coaches to the benefits of strength training for basketball. Our main objective is to help Mark become a better basketball player and win. We are not concerned about how much he lifts or lifting more than someone else. We are absolutely confident that in developing Mark's functional strength in the

proper way, he will see dramatic results on the court.

Mark is a rookie and even though he is 7'4", he played very little in his collegiate days at U.C.L.A. The Utah Jazz signed him to a 5-year contract in hopes that he could develop into an NBA player. Many people thought it was a mistake. However, Mark Eaton has an extreme desire to make it. Jazz Coach Frank Layden told me, "Greg, we probably shouldn't have Mark lift, the kid has got so much to learn I don't want his mind bananas." Mark said, "I want to lift. I know it will help me." Coach Layden cautiously said, "O.K., but go slow please."

Mark had lifted some on his own at U.C.L.A. but nothing like he was going to lift with us. Mark took to it like a duck takes to water. I was amazed at his determination and willingness to learn the technique of the lifts.

Mark has some unique problems brought about by his 7'4" frame. First of all, he weighs 290 pounds and second, his long limbs make squatting very difficult. Mark, like most very tall players, has weak legs in proportion to his bodyweight. This is one reason why many tall players cannot jump very well. Another reason is that at many levels of competition Mark hasn't needed to jump. He hasn't needed strength to gain position or strength to jump. That's all changed now. In order to survive in the NBA, he must increase his strength and jumping ability. Along with strength gains will come the ability to control his frame. His balance should improve. The results should be dramatic.

Rick Anderson and I started Mark out very slowly. We used 145 pounds on the squat, 125 pounds on the clean and the bench press. As his technique improved, so did his ability to handle heavier weights. We are trying to lift twice a week, but with the NBA schedule of 13-15 games per month and travel connections, this has been difficult. Nonetheless, Mark has made steady progress. Probably Mark's greatest asset is that he is hungry for success. He is willing to go the extra mile when dog tired. At this point, Mark is playing way ahead of expectations. He is in the top ten in the NBA for blocked shots and leads the team in this category even though he doesn't get much playing time. Against the Lakers in December, he had nine blocked shots! He has been called the turning point in two of the Jazz's victories thus far!

MARCH'S ISSUE: FINALLY A STARTER!

What a success story we have in the making! Mark Eaton has been consistently weight training in-season. The BFS special in-season program only takes about 20 minutes, concentrating on the legs and hips and development of jumping skills and explosive power.

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EATON: A CHAMPION IN THE MAKING

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Mark gets enthused when he sees himself getting stronger. He breaks at least 8 personal records every week! That is, of course, the BFS guarantee to all athletes who use the BFS set-rep system. When this happens, an athlete can't help but have greater confidence.

Mark has made unbelievable progress on the basketball court this season. Utah Jazz Coach Frank Layden states, "If you would have told me last fall that Mark Eaton would have the most blocked shots in a game (13) for the NBA this season, a chance to set an all-time NBA record for blocked shots in a season and play a great center like Artis Gilmore even, I'd have called the men in the white suits to take you away to the funny farm." "However, we drafted Mark because of his potential, great character and dedication. So it really shouldn't surprise me."

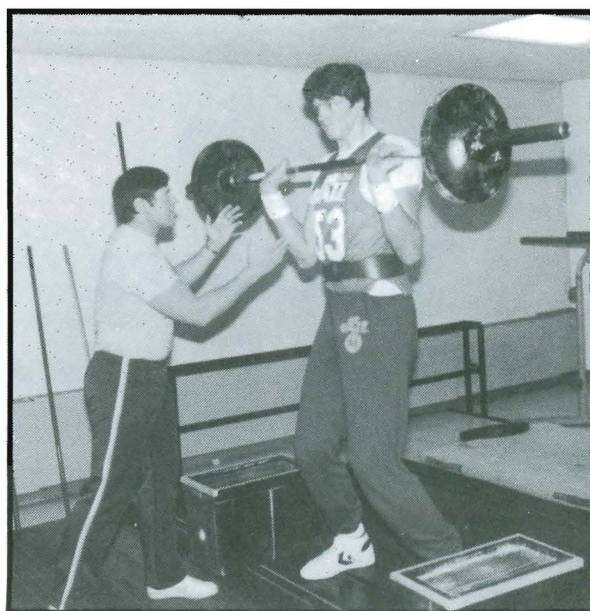
Unbelievable is probably an understatement. You see, Mark sat on the bench in high school. A tragedy! I believe with extra work on skills, agility and the BFS strength training system, he would have had tremendous success in high school. After graduation Mark became an auto mechanic (the world's tallest). A junior college coach saw Mark fixing cars and said, "Mark come to our J.C. and maybe you can help our program." Mark accepted and did well enough his second year to get U.C.L.A. interested. But Mark sat on the bench at U.C.L.A. and last year was forbidden to lift weights. Another tragedy! I believe with extra work on skills, agility and the BFS training system, he would have had tremendous success.

Because of his height 7'4", the Utah Jazz decided to take a chance and draft him. They knew they could sign him for a low figure for the NBA and perhaps he could develop into a player. Since October, Mark has been on the BFS system, and since February, one of Mark Eaton's dreams has come true. He is finally a starter! Can you imagine his feelings? From sitting on the bench in high school and college to becoming a starting center in the NBA in his first season has got to be tremendously satisfying.

Mark's lifts are as follows: Bench Press 205, Box Squat 300 and Power Clean 195 lbs. These will, of course, continue to improve throughout the season and in April, when the NBA season is completed, we can really go to work. I hope basketball coaches who read this article will take the time to learn about the BFS system and become convinced their athletes can make great strides through a proper weight training program.

MAY'S ISSUE: THE MIRACLE OF EATON

"If people had known last year what Mark Eaton would do this year, he would have been the number one pick in the draft," so say some of the owners in the N.B.A. In February, Mark finally became a starter. Quite unbelievable when you consider Mark didn't start in high school or college. Last season as a Senior at U.C.L.A., Mark averaged less than one minute a game playing time and didn't even make the traveling squad for the last game.



Eaton broke over 400 personal records in the first 10½ months!

We have a saying that sums up our philosophy: "Confidence is the memory of past successes." Therefore, our objective in the weight room was to give Mark many successes. The object was, of course, to create confidence that would carry over onto the basketball court. From October, 1982 to April 15, 1983, Mark only spent about 12 hours of total time in the weight room. However, during these concentrated 20-minute workouts, Mark broke 259 personal records! His box squat went from 145 to 355 pounds; the towel bench from 125 to 230 pounds; the regular bench from 125 to 210 pounds; and the hang clean from 125 to 200 pounds.

Mark blocked 275 shots for the season. He was nosed out by Tree Rollins of Atlanta. However, last year this would have won the blocked shot title. His 13 blocked shot effort against Portland was the best for a game in the NBA this season. Eaton started the last 32 games of the 82 game season. Below are his average per game stats:

	Before Starting	After Starting
Blocked Shots	2.3	5.0
Minutes Played	13.4	27.4
Field Goal %-	33%	47%
Rebounds	3.9	8.5
Points Scored	2.5	7.2

SEPTEMBER'S ISSUE: THE OFF-SEASON

7-4 Mark Eaton hasn't grown any taller but the off-season program has sparked continued and amazing progress. First, let's discuss bodyweight. Mark's bodyweight has stayed about the same at 285 pounds. Many basketball players and coaches are concerned that lifting weights will "bulk" them up into an uncoordinated monster. Mark did not "bulk" up but rather developed his body into a much more efficient machine.

A SAGA CONTINUES



We closely monitor an athlete's percentage of bodyfat. Last October Mark's bodyfat was 18.5% which was very high even though he appeared lean. Now, at the same bodyweight he is only 12% bodyfat which is a startling change. Obviously something had to change in body dimension and we were pleased to note that Mark went from a 46 to a 50 inch chest.

Mark's workouts were more involved in the off-season. Not only were the weight workouts more intense but we began including agility, running and basketball technique work. Eaton has made even more dramatic gains with his lifting in the off-season. His towel bench is up to 250 pounds and his box squat is up to 400 pounds.

Sometimes all we hear about in the private lives of pro basketball players is their tragic involvement in cocaine or other drugs. We are pleased to report something positive. Mark also worked very hard this summer at school and received his real estate license. If you want a luxury condominium by an Arnold Palmer golf course in the mountains near Salt Lake City, Mark would love to talk to you. Even though it is still early in Mark's pro basketball career, he is already preparing for the inevitable day when basketball will be over. Mark Eaton's dedication and special spirit is something we can all try to emulate.

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- ★ Eaton's last 1983 off-season training session on cassette with Coach Shepard, Anderson, and the Utah Jazz staff.
- ★ The BFS Set-Rep System is shown in detail as Eaton breaks 12 personal records!
- ★ Special message by Head Coach and General Manager Frank Layden
- ★ Session includes weight training, agility, running and technique work.
- ★ Highlights of Eaton in NBA game action: Putting the hard work to the test!

"This is a unique opportunity to present this kind of session on cassette. Viewing Mark Eaton's training session will leave a big and positive impression on both coach and athlete."



FINAL UP-DATE: OCTOBER 1983

Squat: 265
Box Squat: 415
Bench: 245
Towel Bench: 260
Clean: 215
Standing Long Jump: Improved from 7-5 to 8-7
Vertical Jump: 11 feet 8 inches!