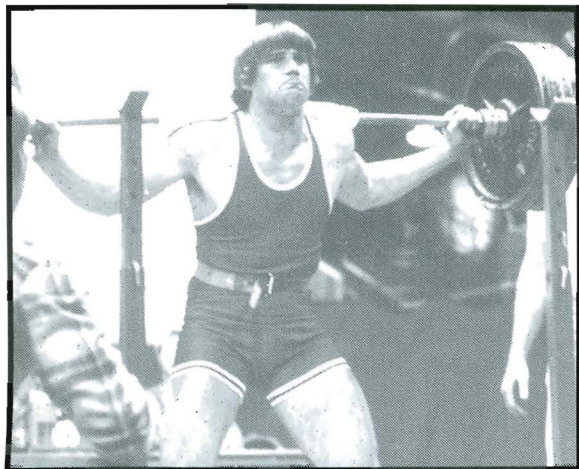
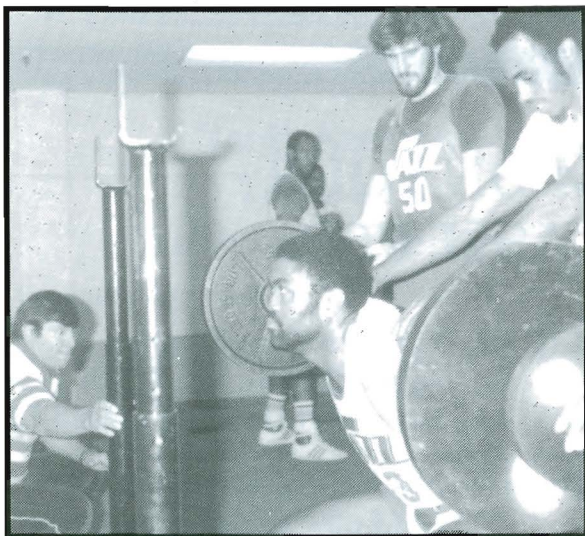


SQUAT CORRECTLY

Part 6 in a Series
by
Dr. Greg Shepard



Maintain a "Controlled Psych." Be mentally tough! Eyes fixed on a point!



Keep your eyes fixed on a point.
(Coach Shepard with Utah Jazz)



Never take your eyes off that point! Pictured is Joe Clifford who has squatted over 800 in competition on Coach Shepard's Power Team!

SQUAT CORRECTLY

Part six in our series on squatting correctly we'll discuss the beginning phase of the downward movement of the squat. Probably the most important coaching point during this phase of the squat is to remember this lift is very much a "mental" lift and not a "psych" lift. The dead lift is an example of an almost pure "psych" lift. A lifter cannot be an effective squatter by yelling, screaming and going crazy as in the dead lift. There must be a certain amount of a calm and controlled psych in order to mentally picture every technique for a form perfect squat. I've seen many injuries occur in powerlifting meets when a wild-eyed frantic lifter attempted a heavy squat. The closer a lifter gets to his max, the more important mental control becomes for success.

As discussed in previous issues, a lifter must be thinking clearly as he approaches the bar, places his hand evenly on the bar, puts the bar properly on his shoulders and steps back with proper foot placement. The only "yell" that is appropriate is when taking the bar off the rack. Aggressiveness at this point is advantageous because this gets things going with confidence and makes the bar seem lighter. However, then the lifter must settle down and mentally get ready to squat correctly.

I recommend taking three to five seconds to mentally prepare before squatting with heavy sets or max attempts. Do not be in a hurry! Obviously, standing a long time with a heavy weight waiting to squat can be tiring but this three to five second period is absolutely no problem in this regard.

During this period, the lifter should "lock in" the lower back, fix his eyes on a specific point at a *slight* upward angle, quickly picture in the mind a form perfect squat, take a huge breath and then do it!

The lifter should have selected a point to look at before even touching the bar. It should not be up on the ceiling. Looking up at the ceiling can actually be detrimental, although it is obviously better than looking down. Looking up at the ceiling can put the lifter in an awkward position at the bottom of the squat. For this reason, a point of focus should be at an angle *only slightly* upward. This point should be selected from a standing position. *Never, never*, take your eyes off this point during the lift. If you do take your eyes off the selected point, your head will move almost certainly to a bad position and thus perfect balance and form will be lost.

It is important to do a great job coaching the squat as this lift is literally the king of all exercises. The entire BFS squatting technique is shown on our video cassette "The Core Program." (See page 19.) In January's issue, we will discuss completing the downward movement and judging the proper depth.