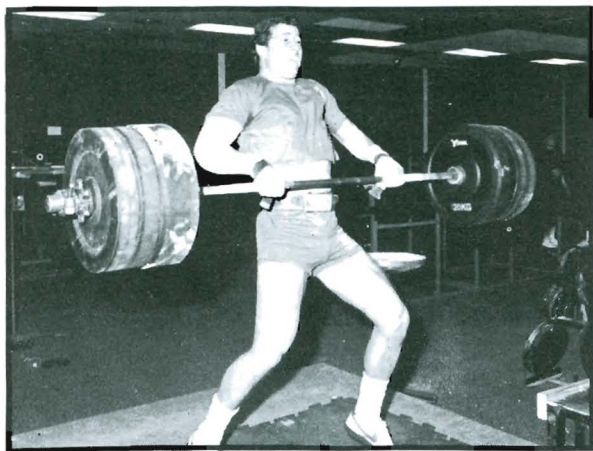


CLEANS ARE OK!

By Dr. Greg Shepard



Chris Durand DT from East Carolina U. Cleaning 319

I have recently read two articles on the clean which discourage this great lift on the grounds it is dangerous and does not develop explosive power. Since it is one of our core lifts in the BFS program, I want to reaffirm our position. We believe in the clean. We believe the clean is a great lift for football, basketball, track, baseball and all other sports dealing with explosive power.

The clean is one of the most popular power movement lifts among strength coaches. The power clean may also come in the form of dumbbell cleans or hang cleans. Some feel dumbbell cleans simulate football movements better and some feel that hang cleans are easier on the lower back. It is my estimate, that about ninety-five percent of all strength coaches use the clean movement for a basic power building exercise.

We believe the clean to be a safe lift. There are, for example, many more injuries on the bench press than the clean. Also, weight training in general has proven to be about the safest of all activities. We feel we are in touch with what is happening around the country better than anyone. We are doing clinics nearly every week of the year outside of our home base in Utah. Sometimes we do 3 clinics in one day between our staff at BFS. We also have a toll free number which is constantly used by high school coaches. We are literally in personal touch with tens of thousands of athletes and coaches in every corner of the United States. At this point, *we just do not have anybody complaining about the clean.* Since these articles came out, we have made it our business to ask if there was a problem. We obviously do not want to recommend something dangerous. It is our conclusion that cleans are safe!

Now we will address the question of cleans not developing explosive power. We believe it does! Especially in the marginal athlete. Coaches, how many times have you seen one of your players with a

big upper body but he just can't hit? And, conversely, the player who weighs 155 pounds who will just knock your socks off. What the clean can do, is help the athlete who does not have that natural hitting ability. We also have standards. The varsity standard is 175, All-State 235 and All-American is 300. Things do not really start to happen until the 200 pound level is reached. Then, the athlete is forced to execute the lift with correct technique and quickness. He is forced to create a maximum summation of force with his entire body. I really saw this happen when working with Mark Eaton of the Utah Jazz. When he was doing 125, he would wimp it up and that's how he looked rebounding and blocking shots. I thought seriously about getting him a ballerina outfit. But then his technique improved with a much more aggressive attitude towards the clean. Now, he cleans 215 and during a lift he lets out a roar and explodes through the lift. Mark now leads the N.B.A. in blocked shots and leads the Jazz in rebounds. I would now like to put a football helmet on him.

One strength coach at a powerful football university does not recommend the clean. The head coach's son was seriously hurt during the clean and so cleans are now forbidden. Was it the clean which was responsible or poor technique or perhaps an already present problem? I would like to present our BFS technique guidelines which will greatly reduce the possibility of injury and increase your chances of success.

TECHNIQUE GUIDELINES

1. Never do more than 5 reps during a set.
2. Only clean once a week.
3. Do not bounce the bar on reps, but pause and make sure of a proper starting position.
4. Maintain a proper position at the start. (See also page 15.)
 - A. Back should be in a concave posture.
 - B. Feet should be flat on floor especially the heels with the shins placed on the line on the bar where the knurling begins.
 - C. Arms straight.
 - D. Bar should be touching the shins.
 - E. Hands should be placed on the bar very close to the lifters legs.
5. Maintain a proper position during the lift.
 - A. Chin up and shoulders back.
 - B. Elbows high.
 - C. Bar should be as close to chest as possible.
 - D. The bar should actually travel in a plane several degrees backward; never forward.
 - E. Snap explosively under bar with elbows snapping forward under bar.
 - F. As the body surges under the bar, the lower back should be in a concave posture.