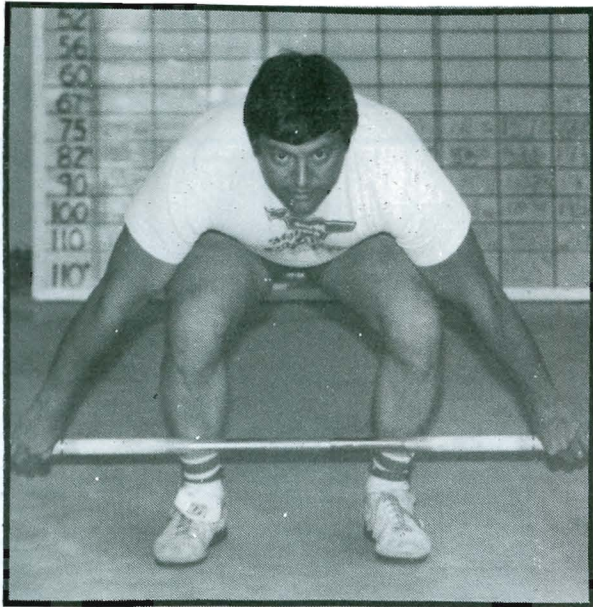


THE OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING TEAM



Greg Shepard on the Olympic platform preparing to do the Snatch.

Veteran Olympic Weightlifting Coach Harvey Newton was at the helm again for the summer Olympic games at Los Angeles. He gave us the grand tour of the Weightlifting Team's facility and answered many questions. The maximum number of lifters at any one time at the OTC is 15 with 10 to 12 being the average. The program is paid for by the Olympic Committee. However, the lifters do provide their own transportation to the Olympic Training Center and can stay through a 6 month semester.

The Olympic team is chosen at the Olympic trials. Qualification for the team must be accomplished at this meet. Ten weight classes comprise a team with an additional two alternates. There is a great deal of strategy involved during a meet. It is like a game of chess deciding on which poundages to select for each attempt while trying to psyche out the other competitors. Coach Newton states "You can't go out on the platform like a crazy wild man, you must have a controlled psyche."

We asked Coach Newton as to who decides on what poundage is to be selected for an attempt. He replied, "It is a joint decision on what to lift. You have to be very careful, if you miss 365 for example, you can't try 350 on the next attempt. You've got to try 365 or more," he further explained. There are two lifts in Olympic lifting; the snatch and the clean and jerk. Each lifter only gets three attempts on each of the two lifts. Therefore, it becomes absolutely critical on selecting the right poundage. A coach has got to know his lifters and each lifter has got to know himself.

We asked Coach Newton what happens if a lifter in the heat of competition calls for 450 pounds and you know he can't make it and it would be far smarter instead to attempt 435 pounds. "It's not like football, where a coach calls all the shots. Naturally, I'd try to talk it over, but if the lifter demands to try it, he can.



Rick Anderson doing Plyometrics in Olympic Weightlifting Gym.

It's that simple."

"Does Nautilus or any other machine have a place in your training regimen?" we asked. "Absolutely not" Coach Newton emphatically states. "Well then coach, how about one set of 8 to 12 or 15 reps as a training system?" we queried again. Coach Newton looked at me funny and said, "No way, we are ranked 11th as a team in the world standings and I can assure you that absolutely no one trains that way who is ahead of us."

Coach Newton gave us some other thoughts. "The higher the calibre of performance of an athlete, the more important nutrition becomes." For the United States to move up from its 11th spot, Coach Newton suggests three areas of improvement:

First, we need help on **motivation**. Our lifters do not get any attention, no recognition like other countries. In fact, much of our competition will receive super gifts for winning; but not here. Athletes need rewards! Our lifters are motivated for intrinsic reasons.

Second, we have to do a better job in **selecting available talent**. Especially in developing our younger talent.

Third, we must develop a **scientific application** to our lifting and technique. This is one area where the Olympic Training Center is being very helpful. The Biomechanics Lab and other video and physiological testing are proving to be of great benefit here at the OTC.

We asked Coach Newton what he thought about record keeping. He stated, "I think it's tremendously important; some of our lifters keep records and some don't. However, they all should!"

We wish to thank Coach Harvey Newton for the tour and we express our best to him and his team in all future competitions.