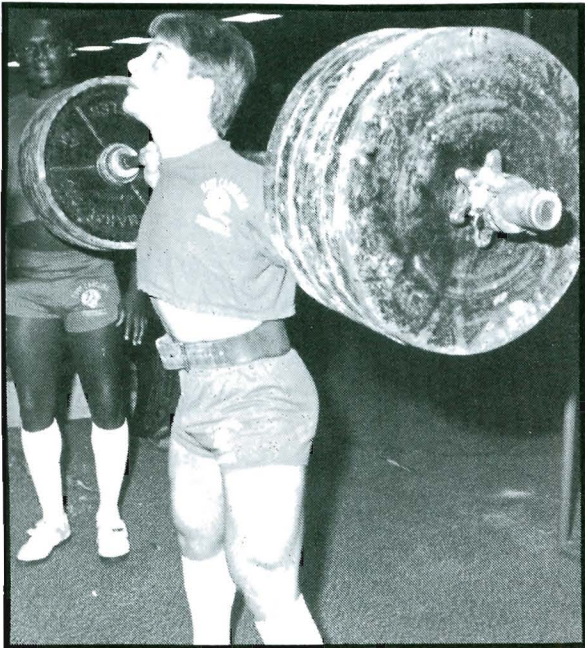


THE RIGHT TRACK

by
Dr. Greg Shepard



Daniel Cole, 190 lb. Defensive Back for East Carolina squatting 505. Photo by Katie Zernhelt.

THE RIGHT TRACK

This year at a BFS clinic a coach asked, "Why isn't there just one right program? I get confused with so many philosophies." I don't think we should ever sit back and be content with one "Right Program." We should always be searching for a better way to do things. However, strength training has progressed to the point where we can now say this program is really good and this one isn't so good. The purpose of this article is to establish my analysis and opinion on what constitutes correct training principles. This will enable a coach to determine if he is on the RIGHT TRACK.

FREE WEIGHTS or MACHINES?

This is now practically a dead issue. It is estimated that only about 3% of our universities now use machines as their primary source of strength building for the power sports such as football, basketball, track and field, etc. Most universities went through their machine stage in the 1970's and found free weights worked better. It is my opinion, that unless a school is loaded with a winning tradition where motivation is not necessary and talent is abundant, machines should not be used. A few major universities, such as the University of Michigan, fit that description and use machines as their primary training source.

A word of caution about parents, boosters and alumni. Because of extensive advertising of machines, it is generally considered by the above group that machines are necessary. Often great sums of

money are offered to make sure the school has the best. I would like to make two points regarding this situation. First, some schools are getting so much equipment including free weights and machines that there is a danger of athletes doing too many things and not concentrating on the basic power movement lifts. Second, instead of spending thousands for an arm or chest machine, a coach could better spend that money on motivation and derive far greater benefit. You're on the right track if you use free weights!

WHAT KINDS OF LIFTS?

The greatest success comes when an athlete emphasizes the basic power movement exercises and then does several auxiliary exercises. There are a number of power movement lifts and a strength coach usually will select three or four on which to concentrate. The squat and the power clean seem to be the two favorites. Others are the bench press, incline press, press lockouts, dead lifts, front squats, power snatches, hang cleans, and dumbbell cleans.

If you are doing ten or more exercises like curls, upright rows, presses, etc., each with equal importance, you are on the WRONG TRACK.

SHOULD I DO MORE THAN JUST LIFT?

To be on the right track, your program should be a balanced total program. Running, agility, flexibility and technique work should be included with your lifting program. You can't spend all your time in the weight room. You should not train exactly like a champion body builder or powerlifter if you plan to be a great football player. Flexibility and agility work can be done every day. While technique and running can be done 3 or more times per week. Lifting is normally done 2 - 4 times per week. If you are doing upper body lifts one day and lower body the next and do this six days per week, like a body builder, you are most likely overemphasizing the lifting part of your program and thus on the wrong track.

WHAT ABOUT NEGATIVE RESISTANCE?

Negative resistance is fine for powerlifting but athletes must be very careful of extensive use of negative resistance. It seems athletes might get stronger with a bar but unlearn that vital ability to create a maximum summation of force. Negative resistance training will put an athlete on the wrong track.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

There will be many fads, systems and more machines in the future. I strongly advise to let others be the guinea pigs. Coaches are now much more
Continued on Page 68



Sean's Basketball Coach at Blackhawk High School in Pennsylvania also happens to be his dad, John Miller.

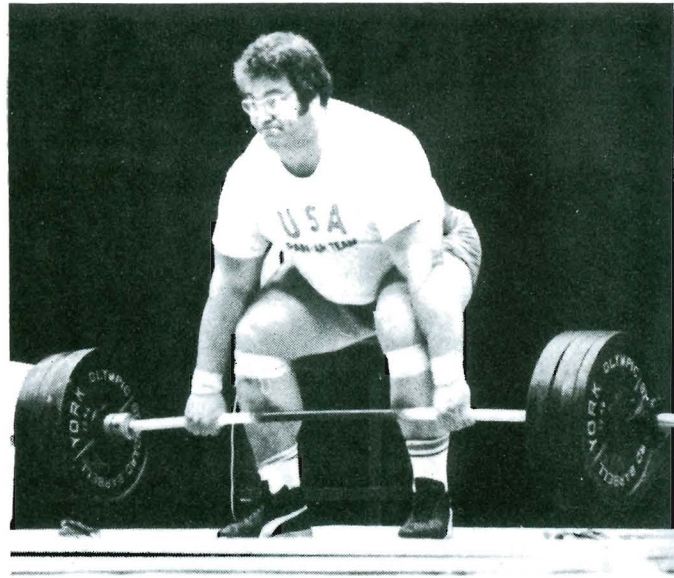
summer camp, Pat Rooney and Mike Kinger came back and showed Coach Miller the program. Since then, his players have worked very hard on this program and needless to say, Coach Miller has been one of the most successful basketball coaches in Pennsylvania. The future looks bright because Sean has transferred to Blackhawk High School for his sophomore year to play for his dad.

Sean started the BFS Program last April and in just 10 weeks increased his vertical jump 8 inches and added 10 solid pounds of bodyweight. Coach Miller invited me out for a BFS Clinic in May and so I had a chance to work with Sean personally. For those of you doing the BFS dot drill; Sean started out at 75 seconds and is now down to 45 seconds. Sean says he really likes it for developing quick feet.

As Sean begins this basketball season he is now 5'9½" 140 lbs. and can touch the rim! His lifts are as follows:

Bench 175
Squat 255
Box Squat 315
Clean 140

There certainly is no crime in being a wimp but it is a tragedy to stay a wimp. Overcoming wimpiness is easy compared to developing athletic skill and ability. Sean Miller has possessed the characteristics of a winner for a long time. One of his rules is to spend an extra ½ hour each day. Sean states, "The BFS program has really helped me and weight training has been the best thing that has happened to me." Sean has overcome his weakness with flying colors in a very short time and his goal of college ball at North Carolina draws even closer. Sean and his dad enjoy a very special relationship and they both together keep life, family and school in a great perspective. I want to wish Coach Miller and Sean the best and hope Coach Miller will forgive me; you see Sean can now "take" the old man.



History's strongest athlete: Ken Patera Clean and Jerk 501! Photo by Bruce Klemens.

sophisticated and will be harder to get fooled with a gimmick. In the past, systems like isometrics, exer-genies, machines, functional isometrics, circuit training, wires, cables, and systems which promise quick and easy results have not put coaches on the right track. However, I am confident our BFS program will be better in 1990 than it is now. It is certainly better now than five years ago. Improvements have primarily come in the area of technique and motivation. Ingredients for change and improvement should always be compatible with our right track guidelines.

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT?

Motivation and technique are most important! You can be following a right track program perfectly but if techniques are not taught correctly and a coach is not present to supervise, encourage and motivate, then that program is doomed to failure. I also believe a coach can institute a program which is not on the right track and if it is taught correctly and if the program is coached with fierce intensity with motivation and his athletes believe, then that program will be successful. However, it is just a whole lot easier to be successful if you're on the right track.

BFS OPEN CLINIC

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