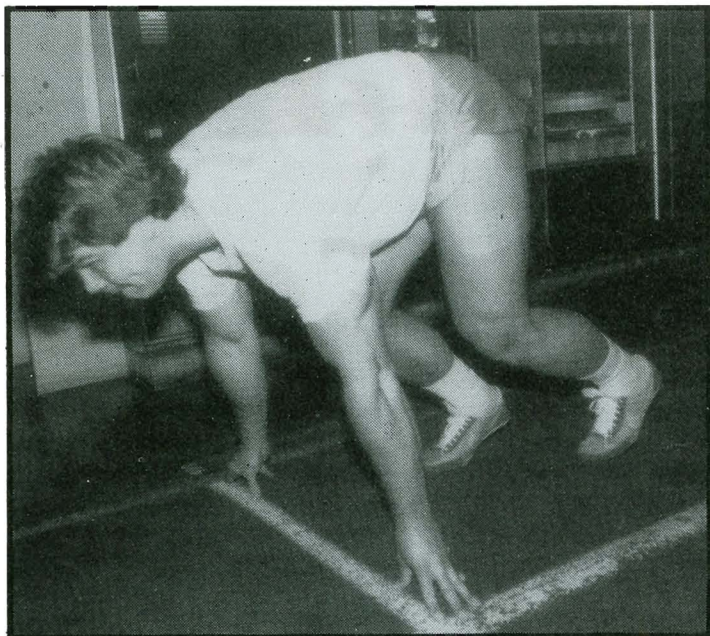
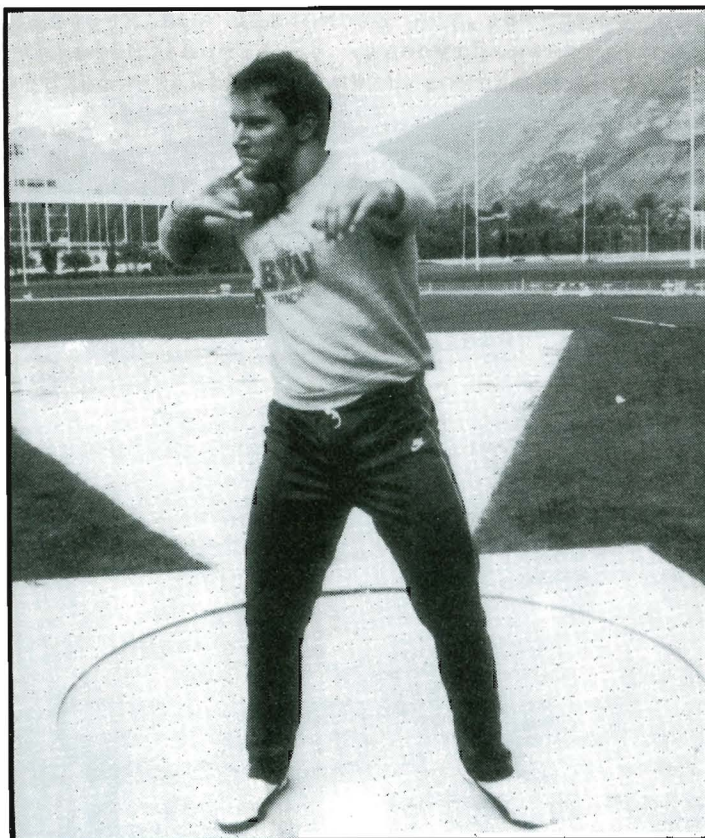


BEYOND MAN'S UPPER LIMITS

By Dr. Greg Shepard



Stefan Fernholm had 12 Pro Scout 40 times between 4.32 and 4.38. At 6-1 and 265 pounds this places Stefan "Beyond Man's Upper Limits." He is one of the world's Top Discus Throwers.



Soren Tallhem is from Sweden like Stefan Fernholm. Soren runs nearly as fast, throws the Shot 70 feet and High Jumps nearly 7-0 feet at a bodyweight of 250 pounds.

It was a bright sunny day in mid September of this year. I wanted very much for this day to be special. We had already postponed the testing day once. However, today Stefan Fernholm was sick with the flu, but we decided to go ahead anyway and board the plane to Denver with our camera crew. We were going to the Denver Broncos and have Al Miller, their new strength coach, and Stan Jones, the defensive line coach, test Stefan Fernholm, an amazing athlete from Sweden.

Last year we featured Stefan as the "World's Fastest Big Man." We received hundreds of positive comments and yet, I sensed doubt by some coaches at the accuracy of the reported 4.3 forty time by this 6-1, 265-pound man. After all, in this issue, we feature some of the greatest college football linemen in America. And they cannot come close to Stefan's standards. I guess I really can't blame those who doubt.

The final blow to my tolerance came this past July at a state coach's convention where I spoke about athletic strength training and talked about the amazing feats of "Throwers." I talked about a group of white guys who could run and jump as well or better than running backs or wide receivers who weighed 50 to 100 pounds less in bodyweight. A college track coach just kind of gave me a polite non-believing smile and stated, "Well, I'm just going to keep on recruiting black sprinters and not do squats or work in the weight room." It was then I decided to actually film Stefan being timed and tested by professional football coaches. The Denver Broncos were chosen to do the testing and Stefan was to demonstrate the meaning of "Beyond Man's Upper Limits."

I picked Stefan from a group of eight white Swedish Discus, Shot and Hammer throwers. He was to represent this great group of athletes. Besides Stefan, stories about two of the other Swedes have appeared in previous BFS journals: Soren Tallhem pictured on this page and Ex NCAA record holder in the discus, Goran Svenssen. These eight athletes from Sweden range from 250 to 275 pounds in bodyweight and run the 40 in the incredible time of between 4.3 and 4.6 seconds. They all came to Brigham Young University to throw. None of these superb athletes will play football. Because there are so many throwers that attain these upper limits from the small population of Sweden, I must rule out that genetics is the main reason for their physical superiority. Sweden has less people than Los Angeles County. It most likely has to do with their training methods. I want to know about those training methods. That is why Stefan Fernholm is now a member of our BFS Staff. He is now sharing those training methods through a brand new video cassette and "Upper Limit" BFS clinics. (See page 7)

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It might be interesting to note that the origin of the BFS program dates back to the 1960's when I worked with the greatest throwers in this country. Of course, vast improvements have been made since those times, but the essential ingredients remain the same.

Anyway, on with our story. As we entered the Denver Bronco practice facility, Coach Miller and Jones were waiting for us. It was agreed that we should do the forty yard dash first. It was to be run on grass which Stefan did not like at all. Then, he was ready. The clocks were started precisely when Stefan exploded from his start. His powerful legs churned violently towards us as grass flew from his cleats. The clocks were stopped the instant he blazed past the finish line. Coach Miller and Jones looked at each other in awe. They both agreed, "Stefan Fernholm was the fastest big man they had ever seen." Definitely Beyond Man's Upper Limits!

I really value their opinion. Coach Jones has been a pioneer in the strength coaching profession. He served a dual role with the Broncos since 1967 as strength coach and defensive line coach. Al Miller was recently hired from the University of Alabama to be the new strength coach for the Broncos. Both have had many years experience and have seen many of the great athletes in this country.

The next test was the vertical jump. No false or lead steps are allowed in the Bronco testing procedure. Stefan reached up and the end of his fingertips touched seven feet seven inches. Then Stefan bent down and his massive 31 inch thighs surged his 265 pound body upward. He touched 10 feet 7 inches. Stefan had just registered a 36 inch vertical jump! A new Bronco record!

Coach Jones remarked, "I thought I knew what man was capable of doing. I'll now have to rearrange and reevaluate my thinking of what the upper limits are of athletes." Coach Miller agreed and stated, "I've never seen anything like it. He's the best I've seen."

Then we went to the triple standing long jump. Stefan again broke the Denver Bronco record as Stefan leaped over 30 feet. The last test was the medicine ball throw which has been a favorite test of Coach Jones. He has done it for years and has kept accurate records of all players. The record was 26 feet. Stefan wasn't sure about this test as he had never before thrown a medicine ball. He sat down and with legs spread wide with his heels on the line and let the big ball explode from his chest. It soared out 28 feet 4 inches! Another Bronco record! And thus a remarkable day was completed.

Stefan Fernholm has Ten Guidelines for Upper Limit Training. They coincide beautifully with our BFS Training Concepts. Stefan's Upper Limit Training Guidelines are discussed and demonstrated on our new video cassette. They are as follows,

I. Free Weights Must Be Used. Stefan feels machines are only good possibly for some auxiliary lifts.

II. The Legs and Hips are the Foundation of Strength and Power for an athlete. Stefan does a Parallel Squat with 820 pounds, a Power Clean with 420 pounds and a Reverse Grip Clean (Power Curl) with 380 pounds.

III. Flexibility exercises must be done every day.

IV. Sprinting must be done on a regular basis.

V. Jumping Drills or as we say in America "Plyometrics" must be done on a regular basis.

VI. Technique Training: Every athlete must spend time on the technique of his sport on a regular basis. Stefan spends many times twice a day throwing the Discus. The secret of Stefan's great abilities may very well be due to his throwing which can certainly be classified as explosive plyometrics.

VII. Auxiliary Lift Selection: Based on the ability of these exercises to help an athlete WIN in competition.

VIII. Consistency: Athletes must be committed to making every workout. An athlete can take no more than 4-6 weeks off per year.

IX. Intensity: An athlete must be totally serious about every rep of every set. You can never wimp through a workout and fool around.

X. Keeping Records: Stefan has kept very accurate records on everything for the last nine years. This also helps him decide on when to vary his workout to prevent a plateau and to strive for greater heights.



Long time Denver Bronco Defensive Line Coach and Strength Coach, Stan Jones measures the 40 yards and prepares to time Stefan.



Stefan Fernholm running a 40 on the Denver Bronco's practice field.