BIGGER FASTER STRONGER — THE CORE LIFTS — YOUR TOTAL PROGRAM

By Dr. Greg Shepard

I first developed a core lift concept in the 1960's. The thinking was that some lifts were more important than others. It has proved to be a correct and highly successful concept. Almost all major college strength coaches adhere to a Core Lift philosophy.

It used to be that 10 to 15 different exercises would be selected with 3 sets of 10 reps done for all exercises. It seems silly now but Curls and Squats were given the same emphasis. It is imperative, to reach one's potential, that a small group of total body exercises be selected which are greatly emphasized and that another group of exercises be selected, which would be called auxiliaries.

Naturally, there are different ideas as to what lifts to select for a Core Program. We have five professional staff members at Bigger Faster Stronger from greatly varied backgrounds. We obviously do not always agree. Certainly there is room for debate. We have philosophy discussions which remind me of strategy sessions I used to have in football coaching preparation meetings. Ultimately, your coaching staff must agree on your Core Lifts, just as we have done at BFS.

THE BFS OFF-SEASON CORE PROGRAM

M	W	F
Box Squat	Clean ★Dead Lift	Squat
Towel Bench	Straight Leg Dead Lift	Bench

★ Football does Dead Lifts while all other sports do the Straight Leg Dead Lift.

THE BFS IN-SEASON CORE PROGRAM

SESSION #1	SESSION #2
Box Squat Towel Bench Straight Leg Dead Lift	Squat Bench Clean

As I read programs from major colleges, I can't help but feel sorry for the high school coach trying to adopt the same program. The majority of time, it is far too complicated and because of a variety of differences between the levels of athletes; not applicable to the high school program. I am not saying the major college Strength Program at any University is bad, only that major differences do exist between the two levels.

One huge difference is having the two and three sport athlete at the high school level. There is a maturity factor and also a cost factor. I recently read a book from a great Strength Coach at a great University and to do the same program would cost at least $100,000 to implement the program at a high school. I also know, because I've seen it, you can get too dang much equipment. The kids come in and do a little of this and a little of that. They neglect to work hard on the basics and as a result get all screwed up.

Another idea that I am very much against is the idea of programs by position. Having one program for linebackers, one for tight ends, etc. is really wrong at the high school level. Football is a team game. I want my QB's sweating the sweat as my Tackles. I want them working side by side and encouraging each other. I want team spirit and a feeling of togetherness. I loved it when I heard that top Heisman Trophy candidate, Vinnie Testeverde Benched 325 and Squatted 500 pounds. All I can say is "Go Hurricanes!"

This philosophy really makes things easy for the high school athlete and coach. All football players during the Fall will do the same BFS In-Season program. Then, some will go to basketball, some to wrestling and some will begin the Off-Season program. The wrestlers and basketball players continue with the same In-Season program. The other guys can begin hitting the Off-Season program hard. The same philosophy applies when the Spring Season rolls around.

Another formidable advantage of the BFS Program is that all sports do the same program. Everybody Squats, Benches and Cleans. The only difference is the Straight Leg Dead Lift. It really floors me when I go to a school where the football players Squat, the basketball players do the Leaper, the baseball players do Wrist Curls and the track guys do nothing. I tell you what; it makes my blood boil. Those kids could be striving to reach their potential but instead they can only dream of what might have been.

Finally, both coaches and athletes need to be on fire with enthusiasm to make any program work. We can provide you with the match but you gotta strike it!