

MAKING THE TRANSITION

GRADUATING FROM THE BFS READINESS PROGRAM

By Dr. Greg Shepard

My thirteen-year-old son Matt was on the BFS Readiness Program for about nine months during his 7th grade year. He began last fall with just the 45-pound bar. Matt benched, squatted, and cleaned with this poundage for two sets of ten reps. If his technique was great and he was able to do his two sets of ten, then he was allowed to increase five pounds.

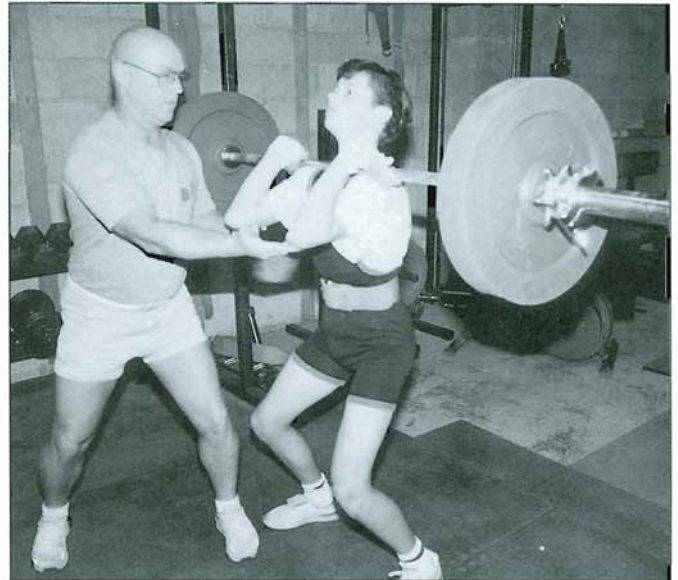
It was great for me as a father, as a coach, and as the president of Bigger Faster Stronger to see the progress take place. Teammates from Matt's 7th grade football team also came to go through the BFS Readiness Program. Matt and two others graduated by June.

To graduate, an athlete must parallel squat 145 pounds for his 2 x 10 reps, bench 105 2 x 10 (or do it with 90 percent of body weight), and finally clean or hang clean with 105 (or 90 percent of bodyweight for 2 sets of 5 reps).

It was a struggle for Matt. On December 10, 1987, he missed his 2 x 5 on the hang clean with only 85 pounds. He also missed 80 pounds on the bench in December. I was surprised on the squat. Matt got the 145 2 x 10 mark on the parallel squat on February 15, 1988. However, to graduate you must attain all three requirements. It took Matt until May to get 100 pounds on the bench and clean for 2 x 10 and 2 x 5, respectively. Since Matt weighed only 110, we used the 90 percent requirement and, hence, the 100-pound level was used for graduation. The hardest requirement of the three was the bench press, but Matt finally achieved graduation toward the end of May 1988.

It should be noted that Matt was a quarterback on the 7th grade football team, a forward on the basketball team, and threw the shot and discuss in track. He stretched, sprinted, and did plyometrics on a regular basis. Matt also worked on the skills of passing, shooting a basketball and throwing on a regular basis in track. He competed in several weightlifting competitions and qualified for the junior nationals in July.

The transition from the BFS Readiness Program (Gold Book) to the BFS Standard Program (Grey Book) was easy. The first week you do 3 x 3, so you begin each lift with the graduation poundage. Thus, the parallel squat was begun with 145 pounds, while the towel bench, bench, and clean were begun with 100 pounds. For the box squat we looked at our Readiness Program record, which was 195 pounds for 2 x 10. Thus, we began our first set of three reps with 195 pounds.



BFS clinician Jim Brown working with 7th grader Matt Shepard. Matt's best power clean was 135 pounds.



Matt accepting his national championship award in weightlifting for 12-13 year olds in the 123-pound class. Presenting the award at the Boca Raton, Florida, meet was Gene Baker, national director of weightlifting for the youth development program.

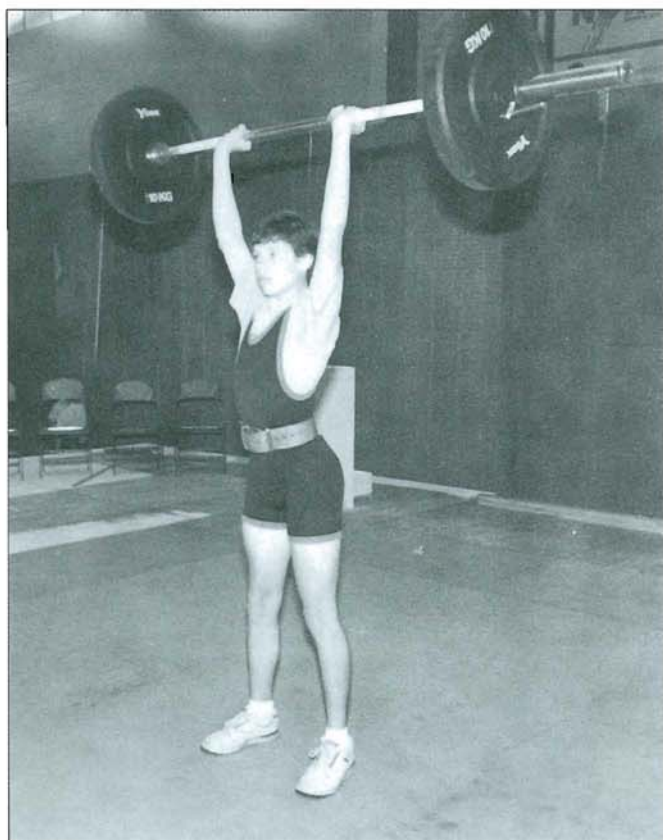
Obviously, the first set was accomplished in fine style. From there, we just followed the rules as outlined. You go up, down, or stay the same depending on how you feel.

Also, we filled out our Rep Records on pages 17-19 from our Readiness Program Book. Those have already been established, so you can start breaking records from the very first day.

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Matt has jerked 115 pounds.

It's a lot easier than most coaches think.

Matt's confidence and abilities took some major jumps. As of July 15, the official end of his 7th grade year, his marks were as follows: Bench, 125; Clean, 135; Snatch, 82 1/2; Clean and Jerk, 115; and Squat, 205. His body weight jumped from 100 to 125 pounds. In August, 1987, Matt could barely throw a wobbly, 10-yard pass. He can now throw an accurate, 35-yard pass with a quick release. Obviously, I'm real proud of him.

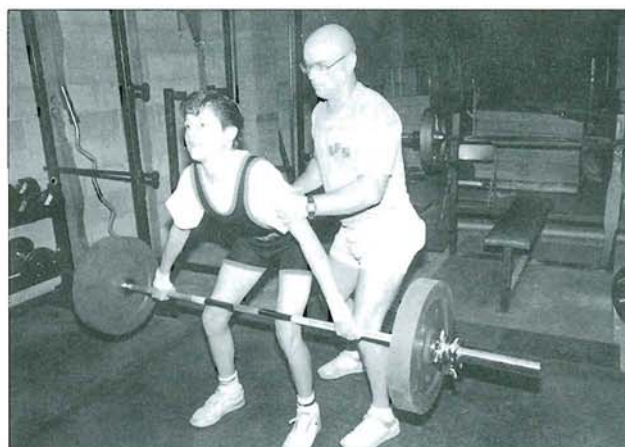
It is also obvious that every junior high school should offer this program, or something similar. The weight workout for groups takes only about 30 minutes twice per week. An individual takes even less time. The teaching of our BFS 1-2-3-4 flexibility program is easy and it's easy to do. A lot can be done at home. Teaching sprinting technique and plyometrics are also easy. The main thing is to consistently reinforce correct form. Much of the program can even be taught in conjunction with other physical education units, like basketball or softball. So much can be accomplished with only five minutes per day of teaching time. Go for it. Catch the Vision!

Now one final thought on Matt. During a workout in late July we walked the track together. Matt seemed a little down. I put my arm around him and said, "Son, am I pushing you too hard? If I am, just tell me to back off."

He replied after a moment of thought, "No, Dad, just keep pushin." I hugged him a little tighter. "Let's knock off a little early tonight. How 'bout a milkshake?"

Matt grinned and nodded. After all, he's only thirteen.

OLYMPIC WEIGHTLIFTING A GREAT IDEA!



BFS Clinician Jim Brown coaching Matt Shepard on the Power Snatch movements.

We at BFS strongly recommend that all coaches get involved in Olympic Weightlifting. It's a fun and challenging sport. The Olympic Lifts also help build an athlete's explosive power. The vast majority of coaches are intimidated by the Snatch and Clean and Jerk. I used to be like that. However, I found out that an athlete can compete very well on the Snatch by doing a Power Snatch. You don't have to drop down with your butt one inch from the floor. A Power Snatch is similar to a Power Clean in many respects. The Clean and Jerk is even easier. Just do a Power Clean like most athletes are already doing. Then dip, launch the bar upward, split the feet explosively, and you have the jerk part of it.

Hardly anybody Olympic Lifts anymore so you don't have to do much to get national recognition. For example, a 16-year-old, 165-pound athlete can be ranked in the top 25 in the nation with a 135-pound Snatch and a 200-pound Clean and Jerk. If an athlete weighs over 181, it's even easier! Just Snatch 135 and Clean and Jerk 170 pounds.

What you read is not a misprint. It's that easy. What it means is that every high school has the capacity of having every member of a 10-man team ranked in the top 25 nationally. Obviously, that can do wonders for your program, not to mention the increased self-concept improvement for the individual.

HOW TO GET STARTED

Bigger Faster Stronger is initiating a Three-Phase Program to help coaches get started in Olympic lifting Competition.

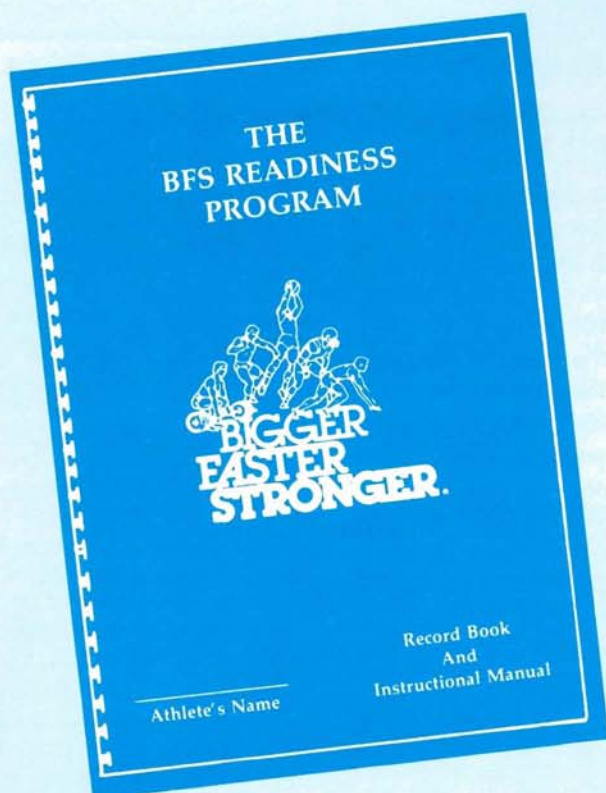
Phase I: The High School Clean and Jerk Competition.

This competition phase lasts six weeks beginning next February. This program is funded by a grant from the U.S. Olympic Foundation. All you do is Clean and Jerk during a

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READINESS PROGRAM

RECORD BOOK AND VIDEO



THE BFS READINESS PROGRAM

Our BFS Readiness Program has met with great success for four full years. This pioneering program emphasizes the importance of Great Technique. In fact, you cannot increase in weight until the athletes perform every rep with the approved technique guidelines. This prevents excessive loads from being placed on young frames. An easy way to get an edge on your opponents in high school is to prepare and motivate the junior high athlete. The BFS Readiness Program does just that! Each athlete should have the Record Book and see the Video. It will help a class, or an individual, visually understand what to do.

Dr. Greg Shepard, BFS President

ALSO ON VIDEO CASSETTE

See Jimmy, a 13 year old,
and
Coach Shepard go completely
through the BFS Readiness
Program.

VHS & BETA

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BFS Cassette Program on Page 8

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