

WINNING CONCEPTS

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Part One: Give Your Team The Winning Edge

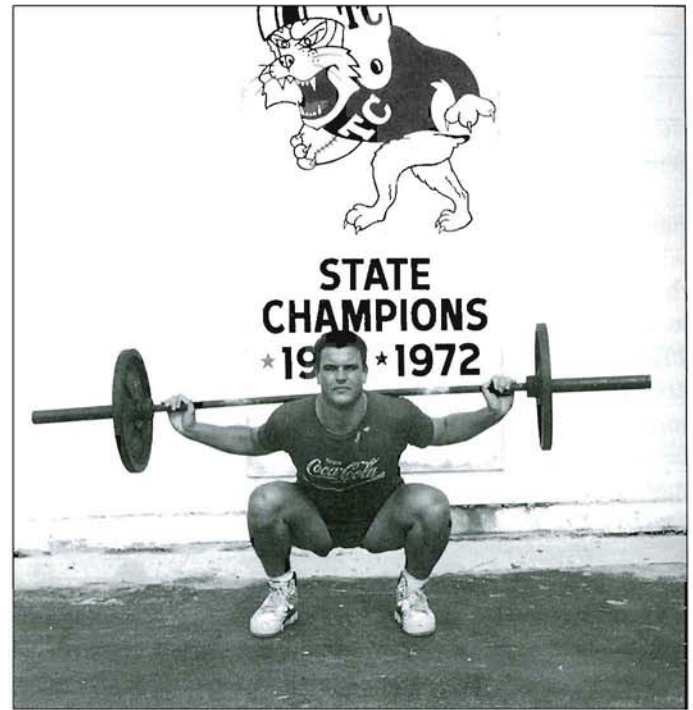
Coaches in high schools nationwide are searching for a winning edge over their opponents and many have turned to strength development in search of this edge.

The coaching staff at Trigg County High School in Cadiz, Kentucky agree this is the place to find the winning edge and have studied and worked very hard to develop the best strength and conditioning program possible for our team. We may lose a game, but we never want to lose because our opponent was physically stronger or more powerful than we were.

Trigg Co. is a school of fewer than 400 students and plays in the tough West Kentucky Conference. Over half the teams on our schedule are larger in number, so we must have a superior program in order to be physically able to compete. We have given our strength program top priority and insist that all our players be involved. I believe the key to our program is that it is built around solid concepts and not on gimmicks and machines. Too many coaches are searching for gimmicks. Gimmicks do not win on the football field and they are no better in the training room. Basics both on the field and in the weight room yield the best results. The purpose of this article is to share some important concepts and tips I have learned through study and experience. Adhering to these concepts has enabled our football team to place in the top three 7 years in a row at the state powerlifting meet.

The first important concept deals with Machines vs. Free Weights. The answer is simple; stick to the iron. Machines come and go as all gimmicks do, but free weights are always found in solid programs. I know of one particular university which has two weight rooms. One is full of machines to impress recruits, the other is a free weight room. This is where the players train. Machines have their purpose, but it is not sport-strength development. With free weights the athlete must balance the weight and use many muscle groups. Machines isolate, but in a game muscles are not isolated. Sports training must be done with free weights.

An area of primary concern for high schools is time management-what to do in a limited time frame. College routines with 15-20 exercises and 3 or 4 variations of those will make your head spin and are just not practical for high school athletes to follow. This problem is compounded by the fact that many athletes participate



Train Multi-Joint Major Muscle Groups

in two or three sports. Here time management becomes even more critical.

The first step to proper time management is to spend the time necessary to study your sport and determine what its physical requirements are. Then decide what is important and what you must get done in a limited amount of time. The bottom line is that what you, as strength and conditioning coach, stress and teach is what the kids will do. Here are some helpful tips and concepts dealing with time management.

I. Be Sport Specific. Remember your goal is not to develop bodybuilders, it is to physically develop athletes so they can perform their sport better. Keep this in mind as the other concepts are explained.

II. Train All Phases. Sports require more than just strength. They also require flexibility, speed, and agility. Find time to work all areas even if you have to sacrifice some weight room time. Flexibility must be done every day. We do this before we lift. Speed and agility development can be stressed on days you are not in the weightroom. Also include jumping (Plyometrics) in your total program. These improve speed, power and explosiveness.

III. Train Multi-Joint, Major Muscle Groups. These are what athletes use when they participate in a sport. Those involved in the Trigg County lifting program do very few auxiliary or assistance exercises. We give top

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priority to multi-joint exercises that work the major muscle groups and simply do not have time to isolate single joint groups.

If your team has time available, be careful with auxiliary exercises. Remember, you are not training body builders, you are training athletes. Isolation exercises promote overtraining by fatiguing the athlete with very little sport benefit. Stick to the multi-joint exercises such as Bench, Incline, Squat, Dead Lift, Pushpress, and Clean. These are our core exercises.

Auxiliary exercises we do like are Dips, Neckwork, Leg Curls, Stiffleg Dead Lifts, and Leg Press. A good rule to follow is to ask – "How will this help my sport?" If it has no great value – leave it out. Be sure to take into account exercises that will prevent injuries. Auxiliary exercises that help strengthen injury prone areas are the ones we like.

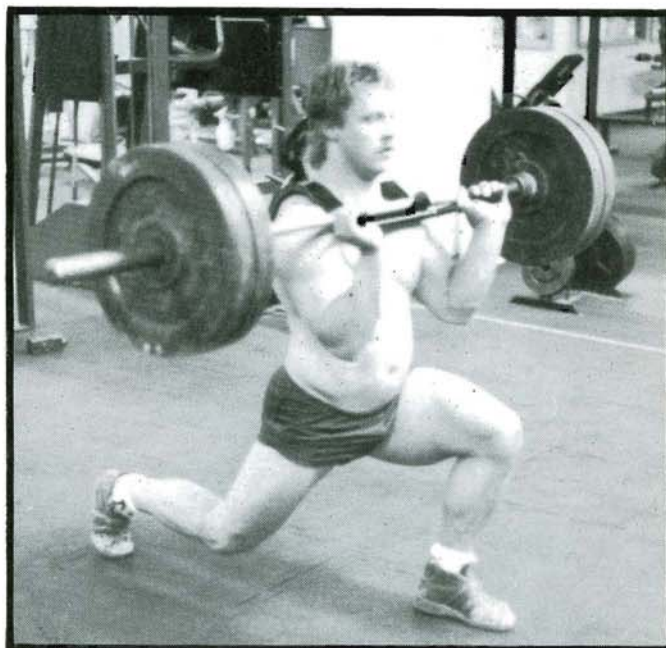
IV. Power Development. This may be the most important concept. Football is not strength, football is power. Power is a combination of strength and speed. It is the amount of force an athlete can deliver. It is how hard they can hit. It is the ability to run over your opponent and score or stop the ball carrier in his tracks. Power is developed by strengthening the power zone. The power zone is from the lower back to the knees (low back, quads, hams, glutes). Strength in the power zone is built by squatting correctly and with exercises such as the Dead Lift. Now combine this power zone development with explosive speed. To do this use the Clean, Push Press, and Box Jumps. Power is best developed with six or fewer reps. Be careful not to set the weight at a level which is too heavy or the speed aspect is gone from the exercise. Cleans are the best. They involve all joints and total body mass explosiveness. When a player blocks or tackles, he uses his entire body explosively. Power development trains football players for what they must do on the field.

If you really want to stress power development with your team then you should do power quotients. P.Q.'s are the most important test result for a football player. Here is the formula for, calculating a power quotient for your players: square root of Body Wt. X square root of V.J. By doing this we can determine who on our team can deliver the greatest force. This is what football is all about.

WINNING EDGE GUIDELINES

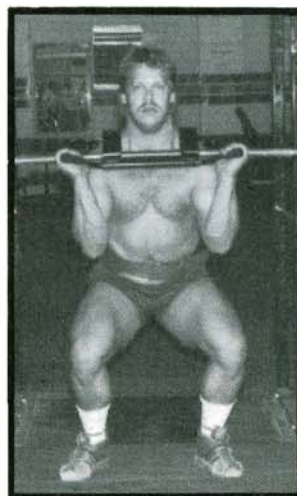
- I. Use Free Weights
- II. Train Like An Athlete
- III. Train All Phases: Flexibility, Agility, Speed, Plyometrics
- IV. Train Multi-Joint, Major Muscle Groups
- V. Train More For Power

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