

WALT PALMER FIRST

By Greg Shepard

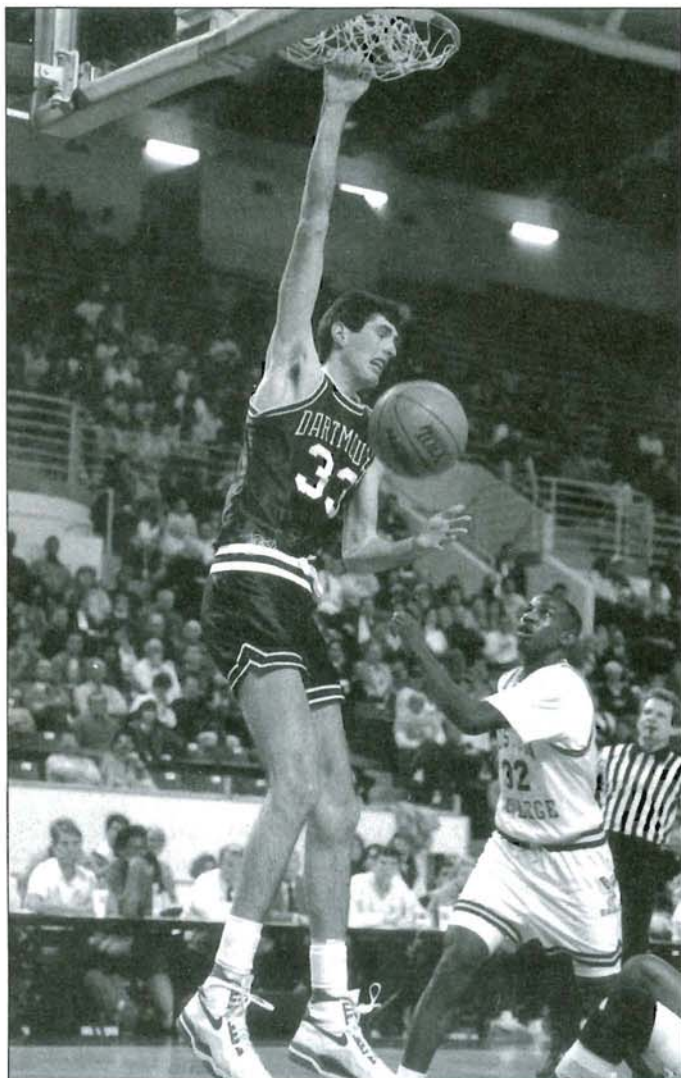
Walt Palmer was the Utah Jazz #1 draft choice this year. After a holdout, the Jazz and Walt came to an agreement in Mid-Summer. The first thing the Jazz coaches require of all rookie hopefuls is to report to us for strength and conditioning workouts. Walt and 7-5 Alan Bannister from England and Arkansas State became training partners. Both Alan and Walt were eager to learn and took to our program like ducks take to water. Walt's only experience had been two years of Nautilus training so the free weights came as welcome and surprising change.

"There is no question that free weights are superior to machines for me," says Walt. "I look forward to my workouts now and take pride in my improvements." Walt has always had a strong work ethic. At Dartmouth, he put in 1 1/2 hours per day during the off-season. That time would include everything from conditioning to basketball skill work. "You've got to put in the time and be dedicated in the off-season," stated Walt. "I feel I worked harder in the off-season than anyone else in the Ivy-League."

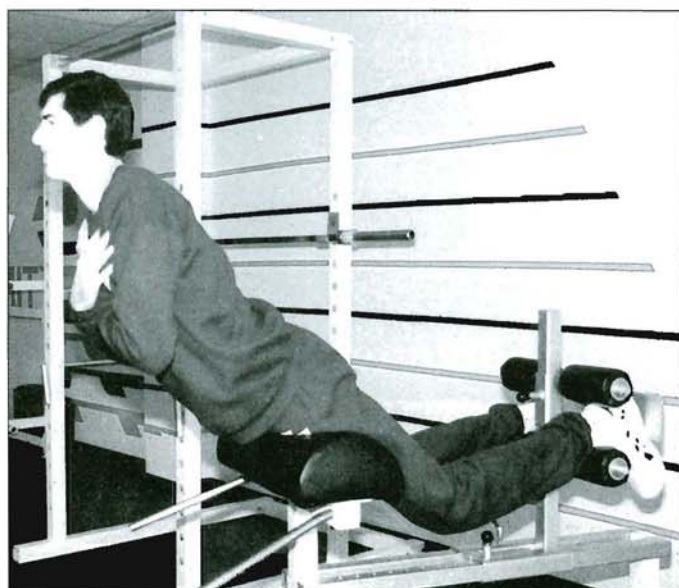
It paid off! Walt averaged 16 points and 6.4 rebounds for Dartmouth last season and blocked 85 shots. He was named First Team All-Ivy and did very well in the post season draft camps. Still, many were surprised at the Jazz drafting Walt number one. However, the Jazz have a reputation of being extremely shrewd with their draft choices. For example, people were aghast when little known point guard John Stockton from Gonzaga was drafted number one. Also, many consider Karl Malone's draft as one of the greatest coups in NBA history. It all worked to Walt's advantage as he signed a two-year contract worth a reported \$500,000 a year.

This is truly amazing when you consider Walt's beginnings in basketball. As a 6-1 8th grader, Walt got cut and immediately became interested in drama. He didn't even try out as a 6-3 9th grader but channeled his energy into the high school play. An astute P.E. teacher told Walt to come out for basketball after the play was over. "If it hadn't been for him my entire life would have been different," surmised Walt.

"I was a huge geek," Walt remembered, "I had a bowl cut. I was into drama and school. I couldn't do a pullup. Athletics weren't my identity. I stayed with basketball because of head basketball coach Dale Bethel. We developed a strong relationship away from basketball. He made it a positive experience." That was at Washington Lee High School in Arlington, Virginia. The high school had 1500 students (9-12). Walt played JV basketball as a 6-7 sophomore and then became a varsity starter as a 6-10 junior and a 6-11 senior. Walt averaged 14 points and made First Team All-League in his junior year. Third Team All-State honors came his final year as

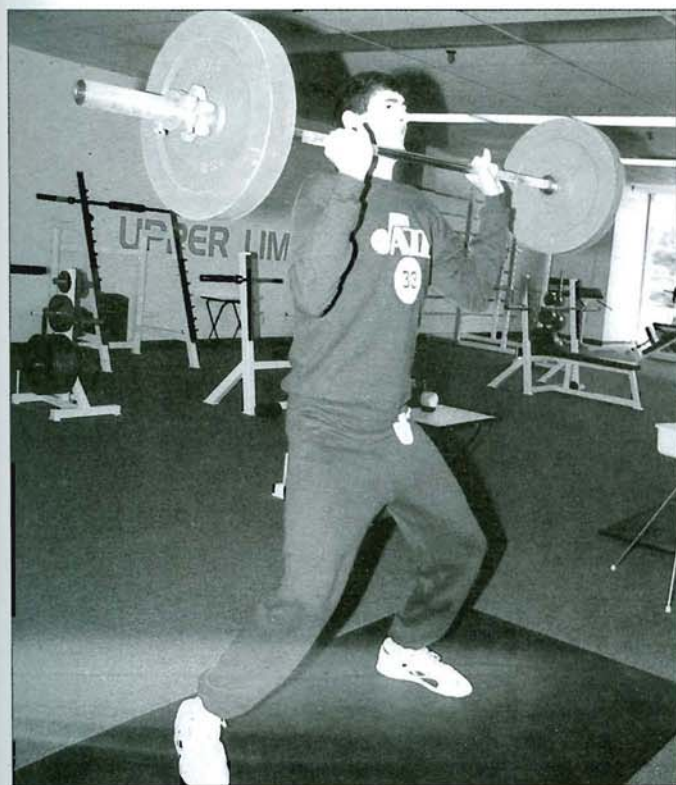


Walt was an Ivy League standout at Dartmouth.



The Glute-Ham-Developer is one of the most important auxiliary exercises for Walt and the Jazz.

UTAH JAZZ DRAFT PICK



Walt picked up the Power Clean technique very quickly.

he averaged 17 points per game.

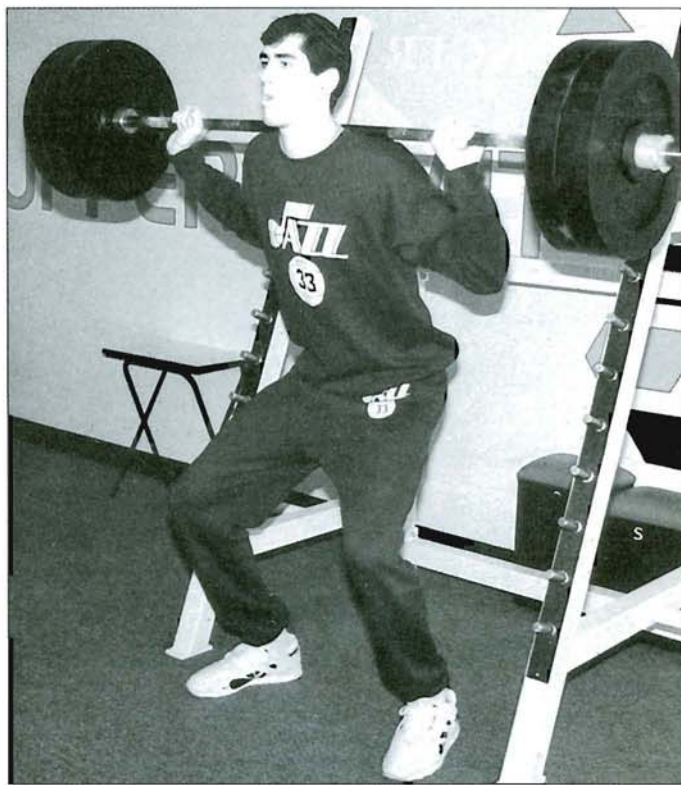
Walt's parents were extremely supportive. "No matter what I did my dad didn't push. He never talked about basketball," related Walt, "but I knew he cared because I always saw him taking stats."

Virginia and Maryland expressed full scholarship interest but Walt had always wanted to go to Dartmouth. Besides the tremendous academics, gorgeous campus and a real outdoors atmosphere, both Walt's father and grandfather had attended Dartmouth.

"My father told me to go to the school of my choice and not to let money play a part in the decision making process," Walt said respectfully. You see, Ivy League schools like Dartmouth don't give athletic scholarships so the expensive \$20,000 a year cost must be born by the individual. "My dad paid for my education at Dartmouth because he planned it since birth. I could have gotten a scholarship someplace else but Dartmouth was where I wanted to go."

Walt's high school GPA was 4.85 out of a 5 point system so he was well qualified for any Ivy League school. At Dartmouth, Walt maintained a 3.0 GPA while majoring in history. Now, if you are paying \$20,000 a year to go to school, you don't redshirt. Walt graduated in four years. He also worked construction in the Summers to assist his father. "I just gave my checks to my dad," explained Walt. "I know it really helped my overall perspective on life."

After the NBA, Walt would like to teach, preferably



When your 7-1, Parallel is a long way to go. Walt accepted the challenge.

in a private high school and coach basketball. "My players would train with a total conditioning program but I'd see to it they knew why they were doing it and make sure they had fun doing it," philosophized Walt. After teaching for a few years, Walt may consider politics. How does Senator Palmer sound?

On the subject of drugs and alcohol, Walt said, "I had such a strong family background that these never became part of my life. My parents don't have it around and I also have a strong aversion to it. No one put pressure on me. If you have a strong identity it helps. No one ever approached me in high school."

At Dartmouth, Walt never joined a fraternity which helped him stay away from negative things. "I've never felt comfortable being lumped in with a group or stereotyped," maintained Walt. "If you say no, you're in control. I like being in control of myself. I never saw drugs but I know they were there at Dartmouth. My friends and I just weren't involved."

Tragically, Walt's mother died of cancer in 1985 but gained comfort in the closeness of all his family members. His uncle is a minister of the United Church of Christ so the strength of spiritual things and family are closely connected and remains ever important.

Walt wanted to make sure that high school players know his inner feelings on big time sports. He concluded, "It is very very important not to get so enamored with it that other things suffer. Experience a variety of positive activities and put your education first."