

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## What About Arching In The Bench and What About Supplements?

Dear Bigger Faster Stronger,

I coach in Oregon and about 10 years ago I attended a clinic that Greg Shepard put on. We came back and put a lot of what Greg shared with us to work. We have not become the perennial champions but we do believe we have been able to overcome the lean years because of the extra work done in the weight room by our young athletes. Our injury rate has also gone down.

The reason for this letter is to ask for a favor or two. We have kids who can bench more when they arch. We tell and show them the correct way but they still continue to arch because they, even if short term, can lift more. Is

it possible you give us some advice on this matter? Should we insist that they lift correctly? Is correctly in this case the only way? What resources if any are available to be shown in writing why they shouldn't? Is it possible that it is acceptable to arch?

We have not been a big pusher of diet supplements of any kind in the past. We have preferred to encourage our athletes to eat well balanced diet instead. The problem with this is that a lot of our kids seem to come from houses where this doesn't occur. Our kids come to us and ask what they can do to gain weight and that they have heard about diet supplements. We find that some kids have gone out on their own and pur-

chased different products, some think they work, we are some what skeptical about recommending this. Is it possible in your mind that normal kids can get enough of everything through their diets to reach maximum or acceptable development or should we as coaches be recommending supplements. We hope you can speak to us as fellow coaches on this matter. I have read your Winter 1993 edition of Bigger, Faster, Stronger, which did provide some answers. Thanks.

I really don't know if you or will provide me with some answers but I figured what do have to lose in asking. Thanks for your continued effort to reach the upper limits.

Dear Coach,

Thanks for your letter. Here's my answer to your two questions:

1. **Bench Press:** If you get in our recommended stance, you can't arch. (Wide stance, shoulders pushed down towards the hips making an arch in the lower back.) However, why are we training? TO WIN A FOOTBALL GAME not to Bench Press. Therefore, if a kid gets a bigger bench by arching the hips and believes he is strong, why not? However, purists would argue, you don't get as good of development in chest muscles if you arch. What do we recommend? PUT YOUR ATHLETES IN THE PERFECT POSITION AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT AN ARCH IN THE HIPS BECAUSE IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE ANYWAY FROM THE ABOVE POSITION.

2. **Diet Supplements:** We also do not push a lot of supplements - most are rip-offs. However, because most athletes do not eat right, I put together a new supplement called **Antioxidant and Chromemate Plus**. Most should see a difference. But a kid should NEVER think a pill will do most of the work.

They must always stretch, lift, and work hard on all phases of the program. Our **Weight Gain** is one of the better ones but again its purpose is to add calories by keeping the fat content low.

**Aminos:** Help some kids, others not.

**Accelerate:** Is simply a complex carbohydrate and will do as advertised.

What happens all the time is that a kid will skip breakfast and then ask you what he can do to gain weight. Coaches need to teach their athletes how to eat a great breakfast. I recommend a low fat cereal like Wheaties. Check the label and select cereals that have one or less grams of fat. Use low fat skim milk. Two percent milk derives 38% of its calories from fat! Put some fruit on the cereal like a banana. My personal favorite is to get a canister of fresh, juicy, plump black raisins. They are so much better than a raisin bran type cereal with hard, chemically laden raisins that have a whitish color. Eat your cereal with some good juice and some toast. Now you have got a great breakfast which is very low in fat. A breakfast that will last until lunch time.

One more point. There are only a few places that make food supplements. The

one we use in California, for example, has three thousand companies that make a weight gain. There are four basic plans from which to choose going from cheap to expensive ingredients. All you do is simply put your own label on the can. A company could also choose to come up with their own formula. However, the vast majority do not because of the extra expense, even the very large companies. We chose the plan with the highest expense ingredients. But, you would be surprised at the big names who have chosen the cheaper way.

A company has a product manufactured and then pays a big name to endorse it. Most have no shame when making their advertising claims. So, it is buyer beware. Some of you may have noticed that our ads are very low key. We want your respect more than your money.

The key is to work hard and work smart with a contagious enthusiasm and with the knowledge that any food supplement made by any company only has the possibility of helping a little.

I hope this helps.

Regards,  
Greg Shepard,  
BFS President



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Some athletes don't go down far enough. They think they are, but they lean forward at the waist. They might even argue. Now, they can't! It will aid in their form. Also for those who go too low, usually by going down too fast, the Safety Squat will BEEP at just the right time.

We highly recommend the Safety Squat! You should try at least one. Then, you'll want to get one or two for each Squat Station!