

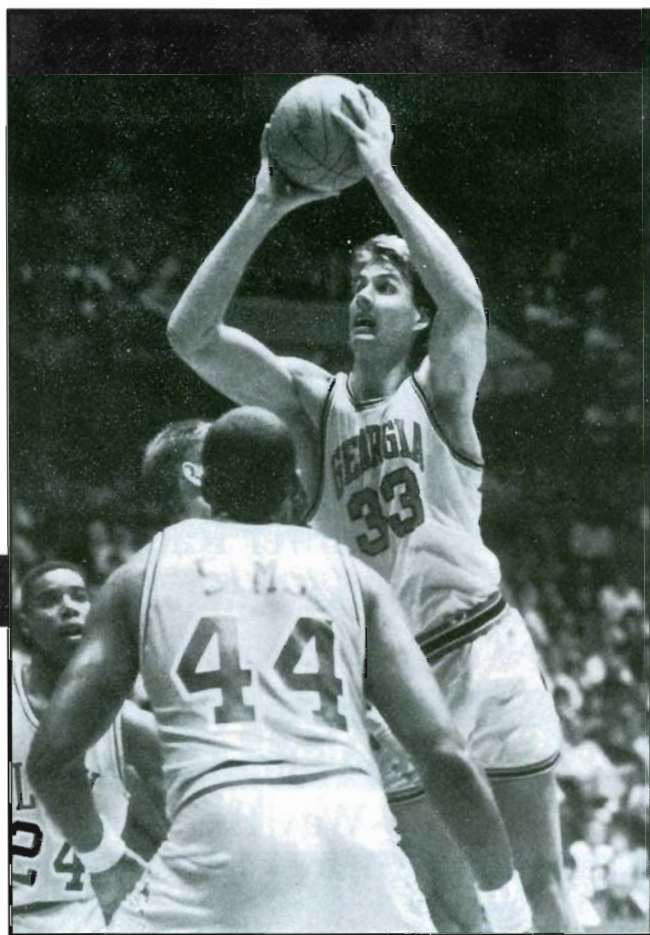
The NBA Revolution

By Dr. Greg Shepard

The explosive growth in strength training throughout the NBA the past few months has been truly remarkable. It is a revolution. There are now 18 full time strength coaches in the NBA. Most of these have been hired for the first time within the last 24 months. The average salary is now over \$50,000.00 per year plus benefits. In fact, the last two strength coaches hired within the last six months have received a salary of \$75,000 and \$85,000 respectively. It is like Division I football schools in the late 1970's. The word is out. Strength training in the NBA is now the in thing.

According to Bill Foran, strength coach for the Miami Heat, there are four teams left who have their trainer handle the strength and condi-

tioning while the remaining five teams have hired a consultant or a part-time coach. How would you go about getting one of these cushy jobs that are left, where you only work with a maximum of 12 elite athletes? First, I'd go directly to the head basketball coach and tell him the facts. "Hey, there are 18 full time strength coaches in the NBA and you should have one too. I can provide a program which will cut down on injuries, reduce body fat, increase size and improve rebounding power. And you know what else? Those players who aren't playing that much should be preparing right now during the season just like it's the off season. They need to have an opportunity to



Alec Kessler Averaged 20 Points and 10 Rebounds Per Game For Georgia

make progress so that when or if their time comes, they will be ready to make a maximum contribution."

What qualifications do you have to have? Do you need to be NSCA certified? Do you even need a college degree? Amazingly, probably not. If you have a little bit of experience and use the above speech, you could be in. One NBA strength coach who was hired recently did not know how to do Power Cleans or how to coach that lift. He did a gutsy thing. He asked our BFS Clinician, Jim Brown, to teach him, which he did. I think it was gutsy because most people wouldn't ask for help -- too much pride. You don't have to have a list of credentials a mile long to land an NBA job. What does a head basketball coach know about strength training or certification? If your experience looks reasonable and you come across well, you might get lucky.

Coach Foran chuckles about how he got hired by the Heat. He was the strength coach for the University of Miami and went to



Alec Can Easily Do 10 Reps With 225 On The Bench Press.

interview for a job that the Heat weren't even sure about themselves. "Coach Billy Cunningham, the Miami Heat Coach, was interviewing me," related Coach Foran. "While the interview was going on, in comes Wilt Chamberlain."

Wilt told Coach Cunningham, "In

"I lifted at Georgia. It had no effect on my shooting touch"

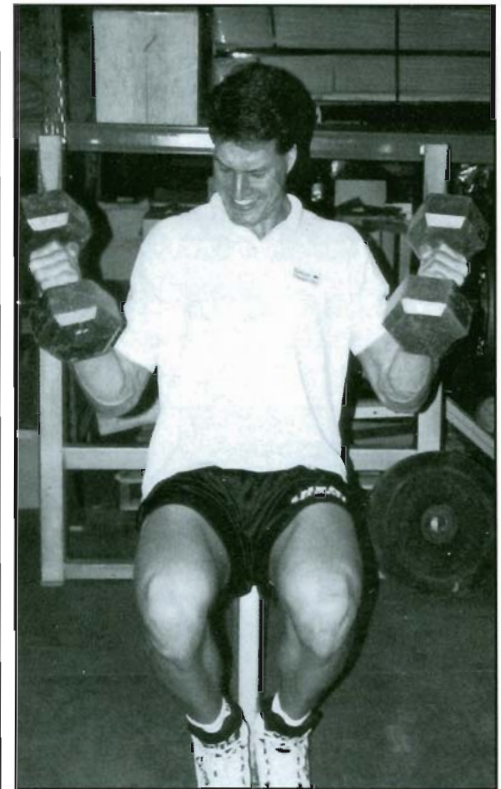
my day, no one lifted but I knew what to do because I was a track athlete. Coach, every basketball player should be lifting. Hire this man." That was about five years ago. Coach Foran was hired and now is organizing an NBA strength coaches association. When the Heat came to play the Utah Jazz last January, Coach Foran and I got together. He trained Alec Kessler, a reserve player at our BFS offices.

We had a great time talking between sets and I found Alec to be an Upper Limit athlete. He was one of those guys waiting for a chance to

play. Up to that time, Alec had only played in two out of 29 games. It was his fourth year with Miami and he'd been a first round draft pick coming out of the University of Georgia. In college Alec was known as a shooter and averaged over 20 points per game along with a 10 plus rebounding average. That feat had been accomplished only one other time in the tough South East Conference.

Miami has put Alec in the center position and it has been a tough transition to always play so close to the basket. However, Alec did not have to make a transition with the weights from college. "I lifted hard at Georgia. It had no effect on my shooting touch. I know there are some players who are a little intimidated by weights but they shouldn't be. I don't know anyone, who once they have gotten into it, that doesn't like it," stated Alec after doing a ten rep set with 225 pounds on the bench.

"Alec is an athlete who has to lift to keep his body weight up," revealed Coach Foran. "We get some guys that are big naturally and they won't lose if they don't lift but not Alec." Another fact about Alec that's worth noting is his pursuit of academic excellence. He was a near perfect straight A student at the University of Georgia and was an Academic All- America. "This man is amazing," continued Coach Foran. "On the plane Alec studies



Alec Doing Great Auxiliary Work At BFS

medical journals. He wants to be a doctor. He told me that by studying the journals now it would give him an edge on grades when he starts taking his med classes. I mean the guy really studies them . . . marks them with a yellow highlighter."

Coach Foran has had great success with some of the other players at Miami. For example. Rony Seikaly, 6' 11" Miami Heat center, has increased his weight from 232 pounds to a lean 252 pounds. Seikaly is only 7.5 percent bodyfat. Grant Long, a 6' 8" player, started out weighing 217 pounds and now weighs 248 pounds at only 8% bodyfat.

The revolution is here. Lifting in the NBA is now serious business. Just ask Luther Wright our 7' 2" 300 pound backup center. He missed one of our weight workouts without a proper excuse and the Jazz fined him \$8,000.00. Also, BFS Vice President Rick Anderson now travels with the team. We want quality workouts even on the road. High schools and colleges should join the revolution . . . those that want an edge that is.....□

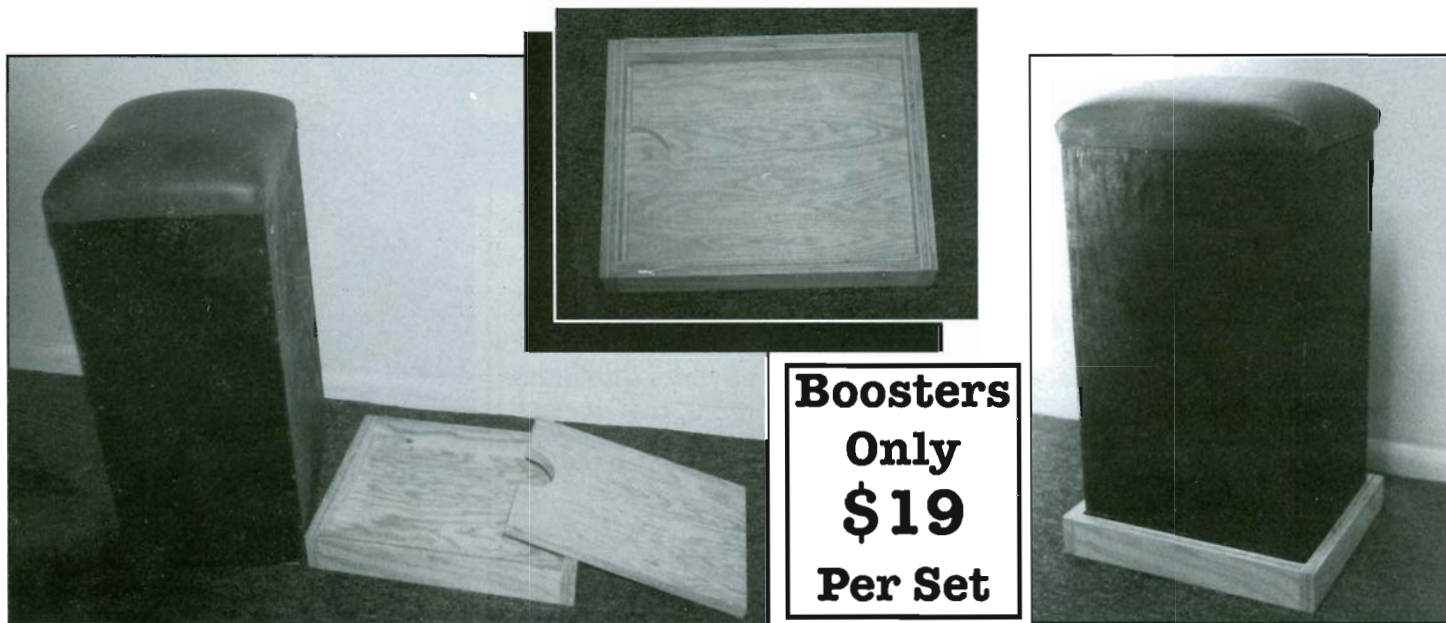


Coach Bill Foran on Left, Alec and Greg Shepard at BFS Corporate Headquarters

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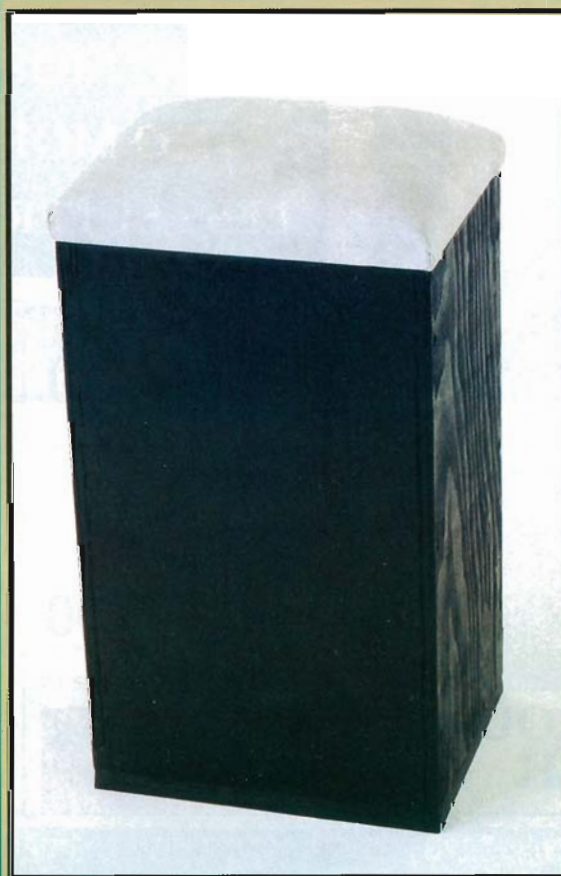
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