

BFS



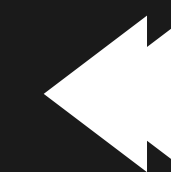
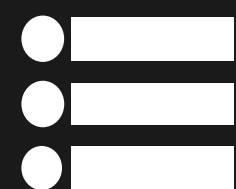
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Sustainable Success at Bangor

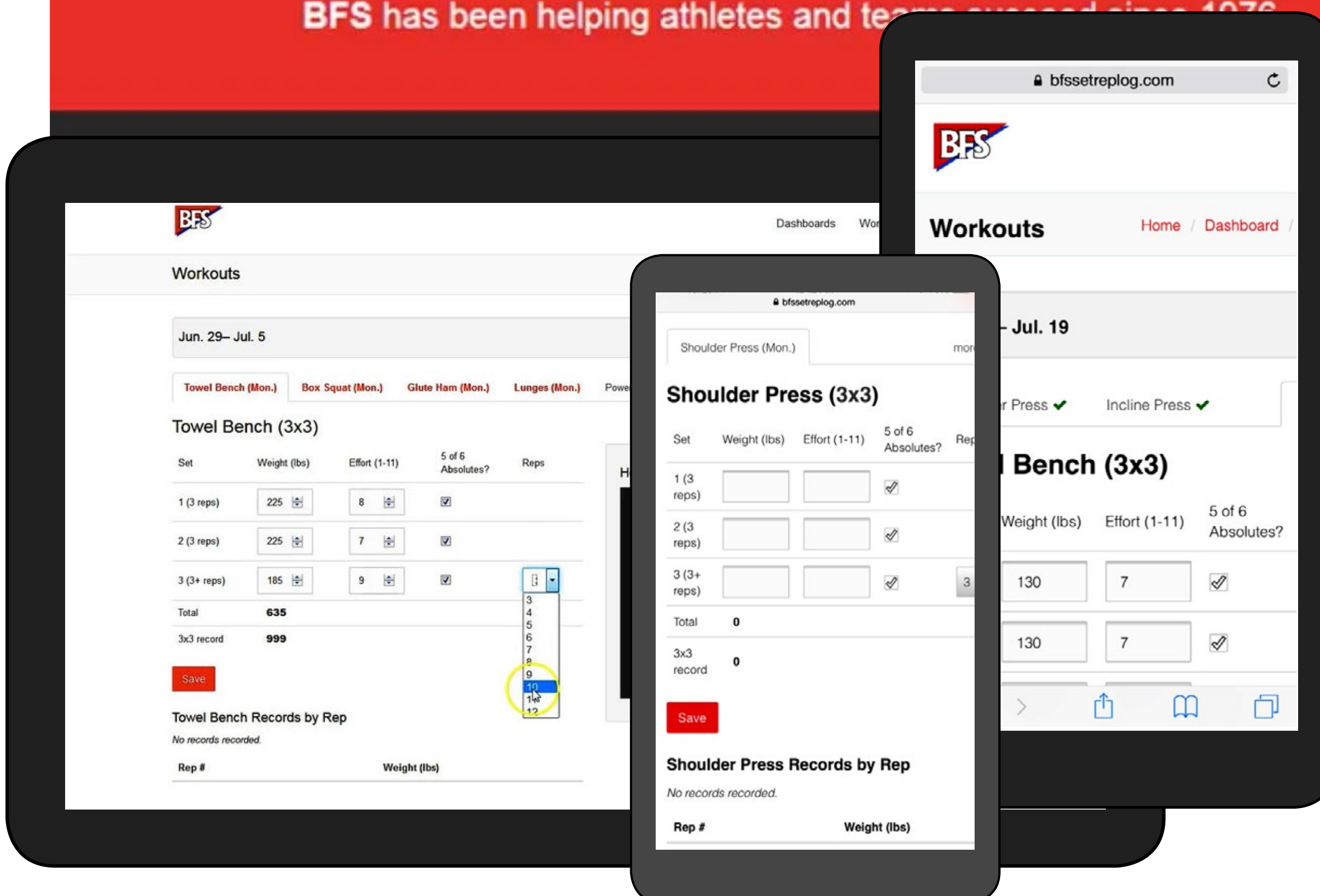
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Up Front

Stretching the Truth

One challenge I have been facing in working with sports coaches in my area is having them understand that not all research can be directly applied to sports performance, or for that matter should be. Let's take stretching.

The majority of young athletes I've worked with over the past year come from programs that do not have their athletes stretch on a regular basis. When I've asked them why, the answer I get is that static stretching makes you weak and slow – an argument that is easy to prove.

Using a vertical jump device such as the BFS Just Jump and Run, have an athlete test their vertical jump, then have them stretch their legs for about 10 minutes. Test their vertical jump again, and you'll find that they will probably have lost an inch or more in the jumping ability. Because the vertical jump is a test of power and the ability to initiate movement, the conclusion is that stretching before practice or a game will adversely affect performance. Let's look at the research.

In 2012 the Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine published a review of 106 articles on static stretching. The authors said that stretches performed for 60 seconds or more longer could reduce power and strength if they were done

immediately before the activity. Two points. First, the studies showed that stretches lasting 30 seconds or less may not have a significant effect on performance. Second, the effects wear off – stretches performed after practice or in the morning may not have any influence on power or strength. If it did, then how to you explain that the fastest men and women in track and field stretch?

Can stretching prevent injuries? Consider that a study published in 1982 in the American Journal of Sports Medicine found that link between muscle tightness lower body strains and tendinitis (overuse) injuries. Tendinitis is one of the most frustrating types of injuries for an athlete because one of the common recommendations is to stop playing sports.

In an observational study involving 10,393 Australian basketball players (3421 men and 6972 women) during competition, the researchers found that the number of significant ankle injuries was 3.85 per 1000 participations (such as a practice). The average time missed from practice was 2.2 weeks. The researchers found that those who did not stretch before playing their sport were 2.6 times more likely to injure an ankle compared to those who did stretch. That's a pretty strong sales pitch for stretching.

For over 40 years BFS has recommended that all athletes stretch, and we still believe so. Yes, we

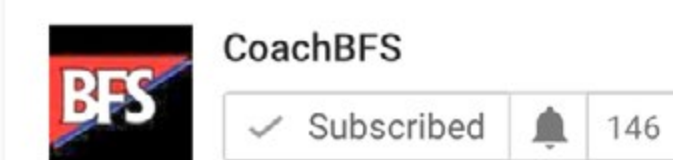
accept the research that says that a long session of static stretching immediately before practice or a game may adversely affect performance, but that certainly doesn't mean stretching has no value. Stretch after practice, stretch in the evening, or even stretch in the morning. Just stretch!

Kim Goss, MS Editor in Chief, BFS magazine

kim@bfsmail.com 



BFS Stretching For Speed, Hip Flexor Flexibility Exercises



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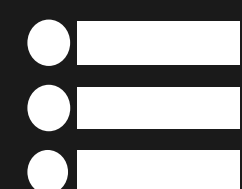


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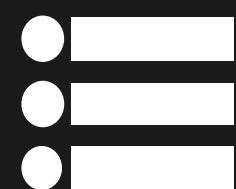
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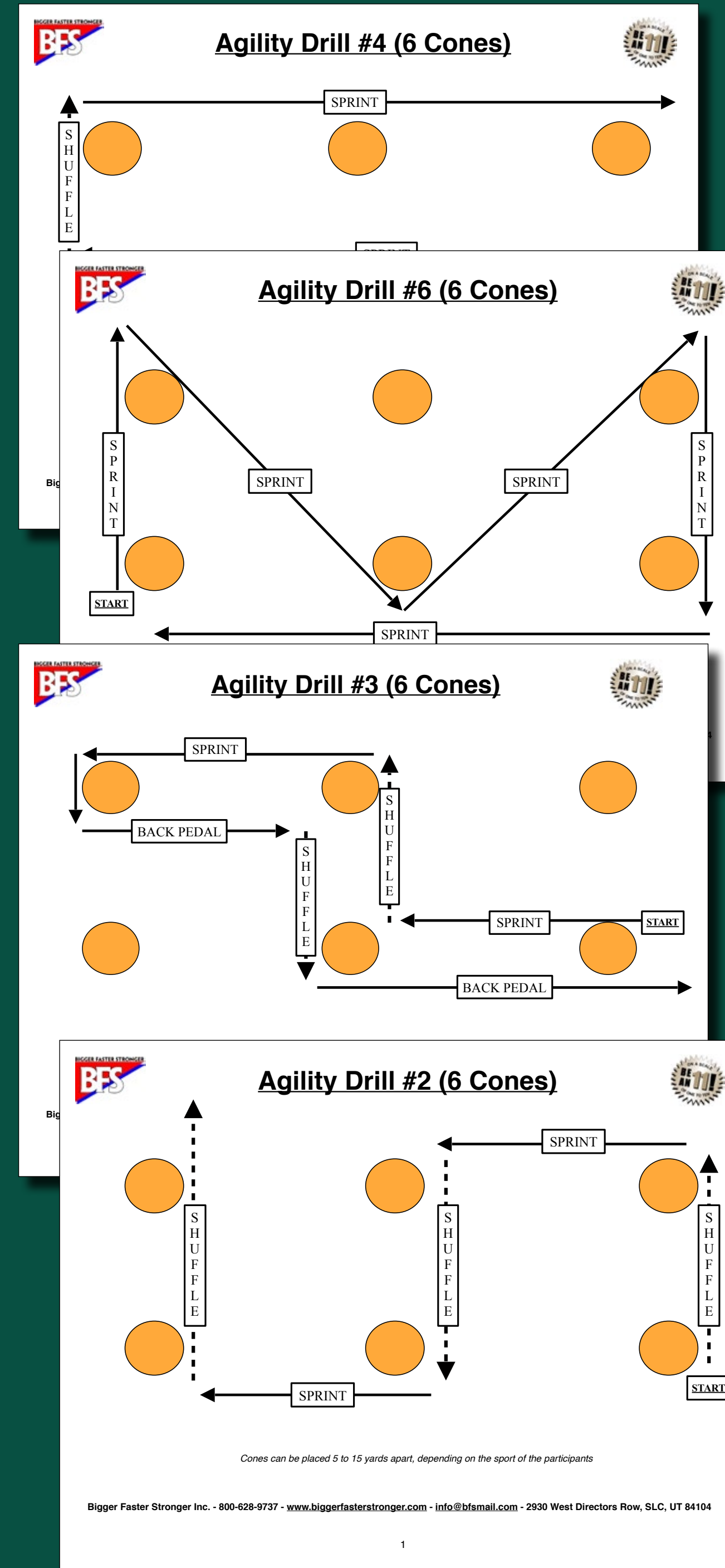
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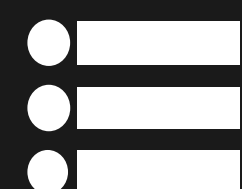
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Get a Grip!

The earliest reference we could find about the wrist roller exercise device was one called the Red Devil, created by physical culture advocate called Professor Orleck. In 1938, an advertisement appeared in Strength and Health magazine about a wrist roller device that promised to help you develop a powerful “handclap” that “...will help you gain success if you are a professional man.” A little over-the-top, but the point is that a wrist roller is a valuable piece of exercise equipment that has been around a long time – and with good reason.

The wrist roller is a simply yet effective tool for developing the forearms. The device is simply a bar with a rope attached, and at the end of the rope is a hook that enables you to attach a weight. The user simply turns the bar and to roll the weight upward; the more weight is used and the more sets are performed, the harder the exercise. Because the forearms are used in many exercises, wrist rolling is generally performed at the end of a workout as a “finisher” exercise. A typical workout might be 3-4 reps of 2-3 sets.

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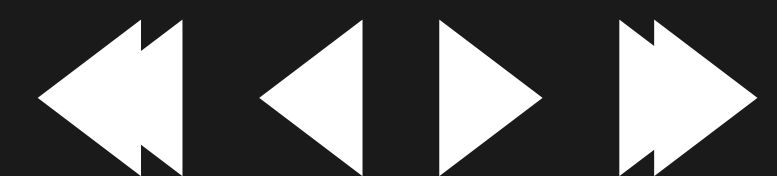
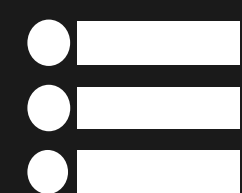
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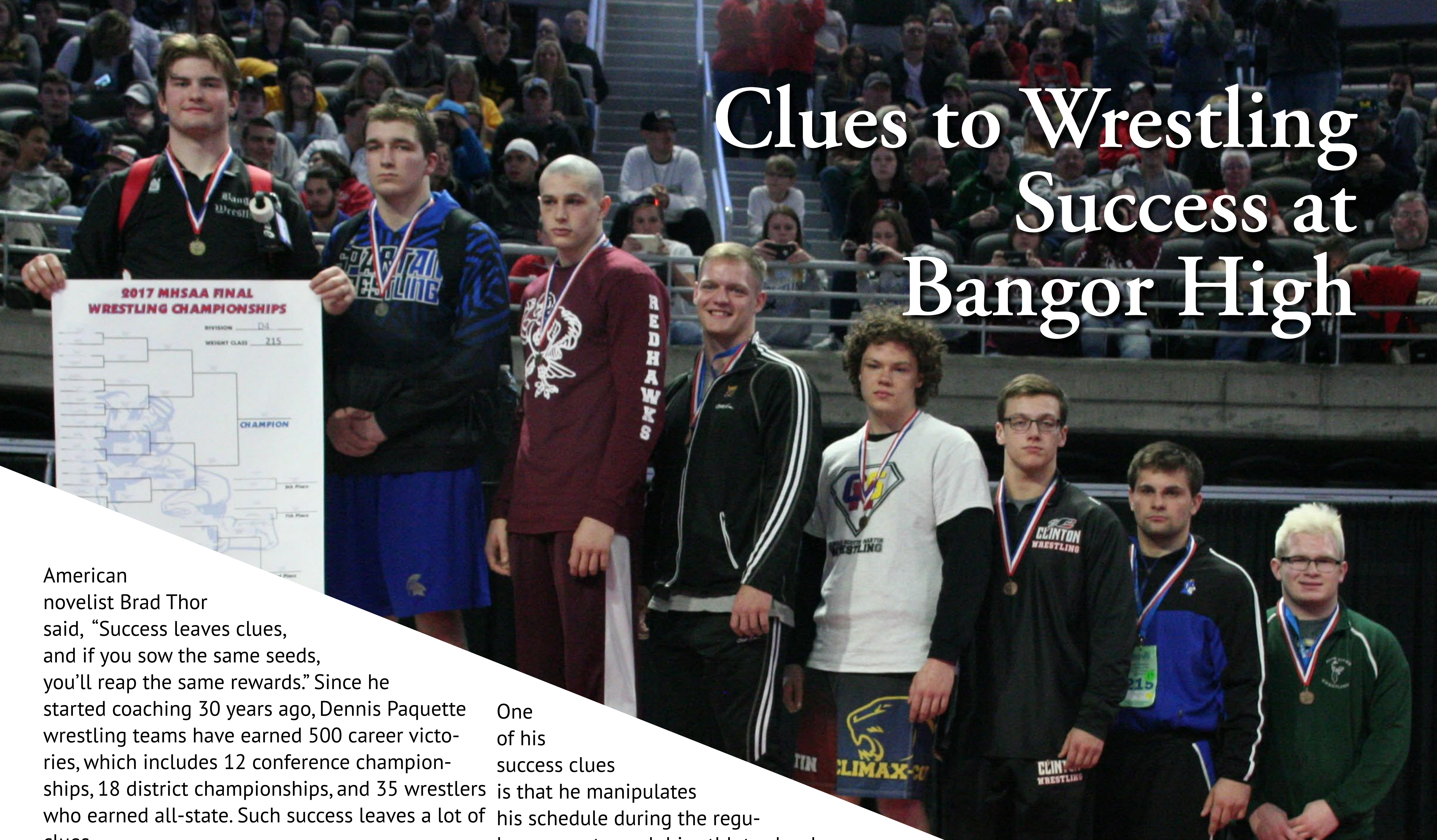
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Clues to Wrestling Success at Bangor High

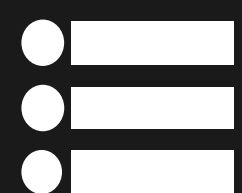


American novelist Brad Thor said, “Success leaves clues, and if you sow the same seeds, you’ll reap the same rewards.” Since he started coaching 30 years ago, Dennis Paquette wrestling teams have earned 500 career victories, which includes 12 conference championships, 18 district championships, and 35 wrestlers who earned all-state. Such success leaves a lot of clues.

Twenty-eight years Coach Paquette took over as head wrestling coach at Bangor High School in Bangor, Michigan, where he also serves as CEO.

One of his success clues is that he manipulates his schedule during the regular season to push his athletes harder. “We wrestle in the smallest division in our state, and we wrestle up so we can get better competition so our wrestlers will be better pre-

pared at the end of the season.” This year, for example, his team finished with a 15-9 record, but won their district title and advanced six wrestlers



BFS Program

to the regional championships and two in the state, one becoming state champion.

Another success clue is that Banger athletes get a head start on their athletic development because the BFS Readiness Program is taught in the PE classes in their middle school. “By the time they get to high school they understand the terminology used in the weightroom and have a base of good technique to build on.”

Although there is a trend for many parents to have their kids play one sport year-round, requiring that they go to sports programs outside the school, Paquette does not believe this practice is in the best interest of most athletes. “We’re a small school, 311 kids, and we encouraged our kids to play multiple sports – we especially like three-sport athletes.”

“I do not believe that high school sports should be considered a minor league for colleges. The athletes who are good enough to play in college, we’ll get them there – but it’s not our job to get them ready for college sports but to make certain they have a well-rounded, quality high school experience. You can play soccer year-round and you can go to personal trainers, but if you lack division 1 talent, your extra work can only make up so much of that. For the small percentage of kids that extra work can help them reach the next level. But that’s not the focus of



Coach Paquette’s wrestlers have one 12 conference championships and had 35 wrestlers earn all-state honors.

BFS Program

high school focus, and it shouldn't be. I think we just need to promote to provide experience for the kids in high school and the parents feel you need to do this to get them to the next level. Again, a lot of division 1 college is determined by genetics.

Regarding outside training facilities, Paquette doesn't believe that workout outside of the school is as beneficial as working inside with our team. "I think working with your team is most beneficial, and by having a structured unified program, such as by using BFS across the board, from middle school up through high school with every team, that makes it easier to kids by three-sport athletes because all the kids are using the same terminology. And we can all work together to build a better student-athletes and a better person."

As for the strength of the sport of wrestling, Paquette says it has evolved in many ways over the past several decades. They use a weight monitoring system that involves determining bodyfat percentages so coaches can determine what a healthy bodyweight would be for an athlete. "We've taken huge strides to move away from the stories you heard in the 70s and 80s about kids riding stationary bikes in a plastic suit – that stuff doesn't happen anymore. Also, if a wrestler goes up a weight class because he puts on muscle and he's stronger, he's going to be more effective than if he became weaker and



2017 State Champion Devon Kozel.

BFS Program



Head Bangor High Wrestling Coach Dennis Paquette scored his 500th victory this year, making him one of the winningest coaches in Michigan wrestling.

went down a class.” He adds that when kids focus excessively on making weight, they are not as focused in practice on their skills to become success on the mat. “We go to practice to get better, not to lose weight.”

As for the issues of skin infections with wrestlers, which was an issue that attracted a lot of public attention in the 90s, he says parents now have little to worry about. Paquette says that they sport as a whole has encourage better hygiene practices, such as cleaning wrestling mats before and after each practice with the appropri-

ate cleaning products – he admits that in his era as a wrestler, often mats were only cleaned once a week. “We also encourage our kids to shower after practice and wear clean clothes every day, but such hygiene practices should not be considered a wrestling issue, but a sports issue.”

For coaches who have wrestling programs that are struggling, they would be wise to consider what Coach Dennis Paquette has done to earn 500 victories, along with numerous team and individual titles. Success leaves clues. ▶

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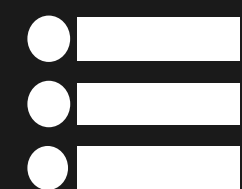
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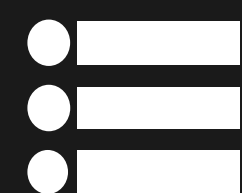


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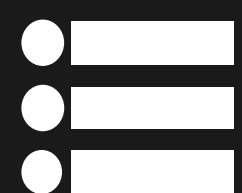


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The Mind, The Body, and Optimal Performance

Dr. Anne Shadle



Being in the zone. Focused. Engaged. In a state of flow. Optimal zone.

All of these describe moments of performance where your mind and your body are connected.

Both the mind and body must be on the same page so that an athlete can deliver their best performance. This is what all coaches and all athletes want, yet many athletes struggle with being able to get into their zone. Coaches too, are often frustrated when their athletes are not engaged and appear to be “zoned out”. The question is, how do we dial in our focus so that our mind and our body work together to deliver our best performance?

A few key items are needed which are described by the following acronym:

P.E.R.F.O.R.M.

P - Present Moment

E - Engaged

R - Ready

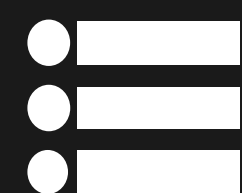
F - Focused

O - Optimal Zone

R - Resilience and Grit

M - Mind is where it needs to be!

Present moment. First and foremost, the mind must be in the present moment. If the mind is wandering thinking about the last play, a mistake that was made, or feeling regret about something that happened in the past, our mind has taken us out of the present moment. If our mind is thinking about the future or has anxiety about the future, thinking things like, “What if we don’t win? What if I make another mistake? What if I drop a catch? I hope Coach does not pull me out of the game,” our mind is not focused in the present. When our mind is thinking about the past or the future that does not help us to perform in the present moment. Performance happens in the present moment. A scattered mind=scattered body, whereas a focused mind=focused body. Focus on the present moment.



BFS Feature Story

Engaged. Being engaged and focused during practice and during competition to allow for optimal performance. Engagement has been defined as, a psychological state where individuals are absorbed by and focused on what they are doing (Seligman, 2011; Fordear, et. al., 2011). The experience of “flow” is referred to as a high level of engagement or in the sports world we know this as “being in the zone” (Csikszentimihali, & Jackson, 2000).

Readiness is the foundation needed not only physically but mentally. Just as we warm up the body physically, we must also warm up the mind mentally. Our mental warmup can begin the night before, the morning of or as we drive to the competition. Mentally preparing by reviewing our plays and our strategy allow us to be mentally and physically ready to compete.

Focused. When we are focused on the present moment, engaged, and mentally ready we are focused. Staying focused and committed to the process allows us to work our edge. This means pushing past our own mental and physical barriers. It has been said that “nothing grows in the comfort zone.” Be focused. Work your edge. Push your comfort zone.

Optimal Zone. Listen up, athletes and coaches! Each person is unique and how each person gets into their “zone” is going to vary. Athletes, your

homework is to find out how to get into your zone. Coaches, learn how to best support your athletes in helping them find their zone. For some, this may mean relaxing in silence far away from the team. For others, they may need to energize themselves with their pump up music on their playlist and talking with their teammates. Try some different approaches and see what works to help you and your athletes find your zone.

Resilience and Grit. Angela Lee Duckworth shares that, “Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future day in and day out, not just for the week, not just for the month but for years and working really hard to make that future a reality.” Having resilience, bouncing back, staying mentally and physically strong allows us to practice and develop our grit.

Mind is where it needs to be! Pulling all of this together. USCO Sport Psychologist Peter Haberl asks his Olympic athletes the following question, “Can the athlete put the mind where it needs to be to perform?” Some days this is easy to do, other days this is an enormous challenge. Each day in training and each time we compete we have the opportunity to practice learning about how to get our mind where it needs to be to perform.



FOR WOMEN ONLY

Kiley Allosso was our 2007 BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year. She carried a 3.933 GPA in high school and earned a field hockey scholarship at Boston University.

Scholarships for Women: Come and Get 'Em!

How young women athletes can earn money for school

BY LAANNA CARRASCO, MA

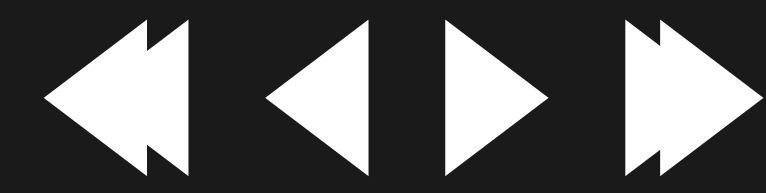
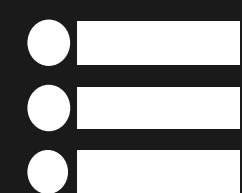
The dream of getting a college athletic scholarship can be a powerful incentive for gifted young female athletes. I was 12 years old when my YMCA basketball coach suggested that I might be able to get an athletic scholarship to college. For female athletes, the goal of having their college bills paid by playing the sport they love is a great motivator, and there are more opportunities for women to be funded and has produced numerous opportunities for girls to have part of their college education paid for by their sports participation.

And that's the catch. Only a small percentage of the most elite female athletes get a full scholarship to college – the vast majority of men and women who receive scholarship money have only a portion of their bills paid for by the athletic department. College coaches are skilled at stretching their American field hockey player who chose to attend the University of Louisville in Kentucky on a partial scholarship. “After my freshman year they bumped my scholarship up to 75 percent,” Avila says, explaining how her hard work paid off financially. It paid off athletically as well when Avila was named a collegiate All American and member of the U.S. Under 21 National Team.

Avila is one example of the many female athletes who benefit from work-

The BFS Magazine has many articles in its archives that cover how important the mental side of training is for all athletes.

Buddha said, “The mind is everything. What you think, you become.” This is true, and following the **PERFORM** system will help you and your athletes prepare your mind and body to “win” in those big moments. ▶



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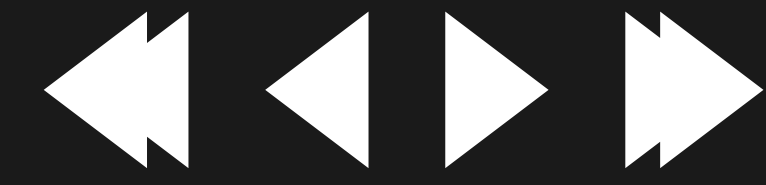
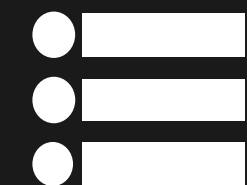
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BFS Program

How I learned more from training 9-year olds than from training pro athletes

By Dr. Peter Gorman



As winter training slowly come to an end, athletes eagerly await the start of a new season. Nowhere is this more apparent, than in the sport of Baseball. The boys of summer are once again ready to set new records, and, hopefully, replace any previous disappointments with cheers and thrills. This goal of achievement relies heavily on the fact that, the winter training program was fundamentally sound and efficient in correcting weaknesses and forging new strengths.

The winter training program has to realize that, like most sports, Baseball is a “True Agility” sport. Every movement on the field is decision-based, which, in essence, is the definition of True Agility. This requires not just great physical ability, but also great cognitive ability. Decision-based movement requires that you:

Recognize: The ball was hit left, the athlete must recognize that. Or, the pitch is coming, recognition again starts the process. Our mental engagement begins with recognition of the stimulus.

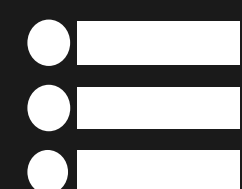
Attend: Once the stimulus is recognized, the athlete must attend to it. This is the “think” part of the game, as you observe the target in motion, predicting where it is headed. The ability to do this is, arguably, more important than any physical attribute

Decide: The athlete attends to the stimulus, while suppressing any distractors (no room to start right and then go left... too many moments would be wasted), and, then, decides what action is the right response.

Accept: Once you decide, your mind and body have to accept that decision by having the brain tell the body what to do.

React: once the stimulus is accepted, the athlete must now move and react to it. Yes reaction is physical, but it is based in a cognitive process. The efficiency of the athlete’s cognitive process, from recognition to reaction, is known as the athlete’s Speed of Processing (SOP).

How many coaches or trainers know the actual SOP of their players. It is amazing that terms like “bat speed,” or “exit velocity,” or “60-yard time” are thrown around with oohs and aahs. If we do not know the athlete’s SOP, then the fastest bat speed or 60-yard time might just be other wasted statistics. Remember SOP is the time between Recognition and Reaction. If SOP is slow, then Reaction is slow.



BFS Program

If Reaction is slow, then the athlete plays slow, and “slow” is often “too late.” Fast bat speed, but slow in pulling the trigger... you are out. Fast 60-yard time, but the athlete is slow to react to the pitcher releasing the pitch... you are out.

The Functional Movement Screen (FMS) states this very clearly: “First move well, then move often. Moving well speaks to quality of movement and speed of processing (cognitive function). While moving often is not simply quantity but rather the capacity and adaptation that allow brain and body to function cohesively and optimally for life and sport.”

An efficient winter training program must understand the importance of cognition, and must be able to evaluate and correct any physical imbalances. It is well understood that all position players must be able and agile in all directions. Speed of left leg must equal speed of right leg. Left-to-right acceleration must equal right-to-left acceleration. Anything less than this would create a favored side, and the need to compensate. How erroneous would it be to tell a player he has better range in a given direction, without giving him the reason and the way to fix it?

This past winter I had the privilege of working with baseball team of 9-year olds from my hometown of Mahopac NY. I say privilege be-

cause, in my 37 years of sport science I have had many professionals, Olympians and World Champions come through my doors. The dedication these 9-year olds showed to learning and developing was second to none. At our first team meeting we discussed 3 important facts:

Correct Imbalances. Physical evaluations would be aimed at correcting weaknesses and imbalances. An athlete is only as strong as the athlete’s weakest link, Fix weaknesses before developing strengths. This eliminates the need for the athlete to compensate. Train the true athlete, not the compensatory process.

Train SOP. A fastball can reach the plate in 400 milliseconds, and the time to swing is approximately 175 milliseconds. This leaves only 225 milliseconds to recognize, attend, and react to the pitch. It was decided to train every athlete’s SOP, to faster than 200 milliseconds... quite a challenge for ballplayer of every age and ability.

Team first. Every athlete has a unique set of strengths and weaknesses. Help your team mate first... and create bonds that will last forever

Once the rules were set, we agreed on a Team statement: “Maybe no one on the Team will make it to MLB, but one thing is for certain...

every athlete one day will graduate from the minor leagues of childhood, to the major leagues of adulthood... Let’s help each other be the best at this.”

Being a USA Baseball contributor, a BFS science board member, a certified Microgate trainer, and a certified BrainHQ trainer, I made sure each child was evaluated and trained according to their standards.



The incredible gold standard USA Baseball evaluation was performed for each athlete. This included game speed accelerations to determine the leg speed of each athlete, and the athlete’s accelerations (both right and left). Broad jump was performed, not just along a tape measure, but in a modular OptoJump system so that contact time could be measured. This gave us a reactive strength index, so that we could ensure that, with training, each athlete’s flight time was improving, while their contact time was going down. The DRIFT protocol by Microgate was performed so that the power, contact time, and

most importantly dynamic control of each leg of the athlete could be recorded in a series of 5 unilateral jumps. Physical reaction time was recorded by pairing a Microgate WITTY SEM countdown system with WITTY timing photocells to produce results accurate to a millisecond. Each athlete had their gait tested – both shod and barefoot. This gave the examiners the ability to make sure that each athlete’s sneakers were actually helping to reduce or eliminate any asymmetries in the movement cycle.

We tested true agility by using Microgate WITTY Semiphores in a 4x4 box at two different levels of cognitive load. Total times were recorded and compared under each cognitive load. Any slowing of physical movement due to increased cognitive load was then baselined.

By employing validated published tests from BrainHQ.com, actual brain Speed of Processing was recorded for each athlete to show double decision, eye for detail and single decision ability. This is where we recorded the greatest changes in athletic ability. At the beginning of the program average SOP was approximately 600 milliseconds for each athlete. At the end of 12 weeks of training, average SOP improved to a super-fast 86 milliseconds. Remember what we said before, you need at least 200

milliseconds to see and attend to the fastball. The hitting coaches noticed the difference on the field. They reported that the athletes were understanding and picking up the ball sooner, and their “sense of game” was becoming clearer, which is a big advantage when called on to bat. Of great importance was the fact that BrainHQ, allowed us to track each athlete’s cognitive ability. If, at any time, an athlete’s SOP slowed, questions were immediately raised about rest

“What the mind perceives, the body achieves... eventually. The gap delay between perception and achievement is your reaction time. If your brain speed is slow, then you will be slow no matter how physically prepared you are.”

— Dr. Peter Gorman

Athlete Performance Initiatives, USA Baseball

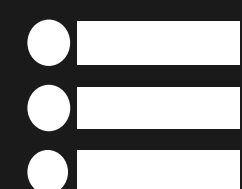
and fatigue. This same understanding of SOP could be applied to contact sports where words like “CTE” and “concussion return to play” still prevail at an alarmingly high rate. Monitoring SOP has to be standard procedure for all.

The BFS Science lab was used extensively. BFS 6 Absolutes were employed at all training stations, both static and dynamic. Stand tall, eyes on target, big chest, etc. helped everyone in per-

forming their needed training tasks. The BFS balance protocol was performed and monitored for each athlete. This ensured improved balance over time, and the avoidance of over-training. BFS Absolutes were combined with FMS corrective movements through all arcs of motion. It was constantly emphasized to... train the true athlete, not the compensatory process.

We used a slant board to make determinations of strengths and weaknesses for each position of the foot strike. Proprioceptive ability was monitored, to ensure improvements in Ground Contact Time (GCT). Any athlete displaying any inefficiency was fitted with non-orthotic inserts from BarefootScience.com. We observed that this product helped with the balance ability of each athlete in an amazingly short amount of time. This led to improved performance that was objectively measured.

As strengths and weaknesses were determined, proper training interventions were employed for their correction. Knowing that you are only as strong as your weakest link, our athletes had a burning desire to understand their results and to improve upon them. No sense in building strength on an unstable foundation. Identifying and fixing weaknesses became the mantra of the program.





We started hearing from coaches parents and other observers that the players “hitting the cover off the ball’ or about how they were “reacting faster” and “getting to position faster.”, I was very proud of our Team, when parents started to come to me and said things like... “It’s no longer a struggle to get home work done,” “he seems to understand and get it better,” “behavior and bed time are no longer a commotion” or “he is setting a better example for his younger siblings.” These comments struck home to the idea... we are preparing the children for the game of life... Baseball is just the vehicle we are using to do so.

I think head coach Sacco summed it up the best when he said... “You know you’re doing something right when your boys would rather come to do their training than go to a birthday party

or something else. They want to be here, they see the improvements they’ve made and they compete against each other here so intensely, while always understanding it’s Team first. I see the level of quickness when we go the batting cages and the tremendous agility when reacting to ground balls and other drills. I’ve talked to parents who tell me how much better their child is doing in the classroom and at home. With what I’ve seen in the short few months, I firmly believe every sports program at any level (boys & girls) should be doing this training. Just the brain training alone speaks volumes and is great for knowing when an athlete can or is able to return to play after an injury. I can’t say enough how great I think this program is.”

In summary, twelve 9-year old youth baseball players were trained for 12 weeks this winter at the Microgate USA headquarters. Seeing how the sport of Baseball is a True agility sport, it was decided that a comprehensive cognitive and physical training program had to be employed. Understanding cognition and speed of processing were very important to a successful program. Remember, what the mind perceives, the body eventually achieves. This gap delay between perception and achievement is the athlete’s reaction time. Yes, the athlete needs great explosive ability to react, but if SOP is slow, reaction will be slow – no matter how well trained the explosive part is.

Being able to evaluate and train at game speed was very important, for a successful program. The game should never be the trainer. Training at high demand must be closely monitored. Objectively understanding the movement ability of each athlete and correcting it, as needed, helps significantly in injury prevention and movement efficiency.

I would like to personally thank USA Baseball, Bigger Faster Stronger, Microgate, Barefoot Science, BrainHQ, FMS and my great staff for their involvements in this great program. Thank you to Anne Shadle PhD, whose understandings on the cognitive side of sport, makes everything blend so seamlessly. Most importantly I would like to thank the coaches and especially the athletes, whose dedication and determination made this the most enlightening training program I have ever seen at any level. Much was learned and many will be helped because of it.

As we all learn and share ideas, the impossibilities of today will fade, and the achievements of tomorrow will be greater than ever. 🚩

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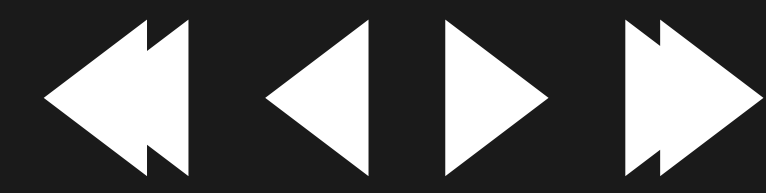
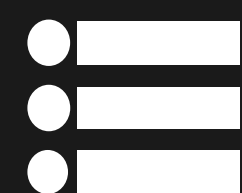
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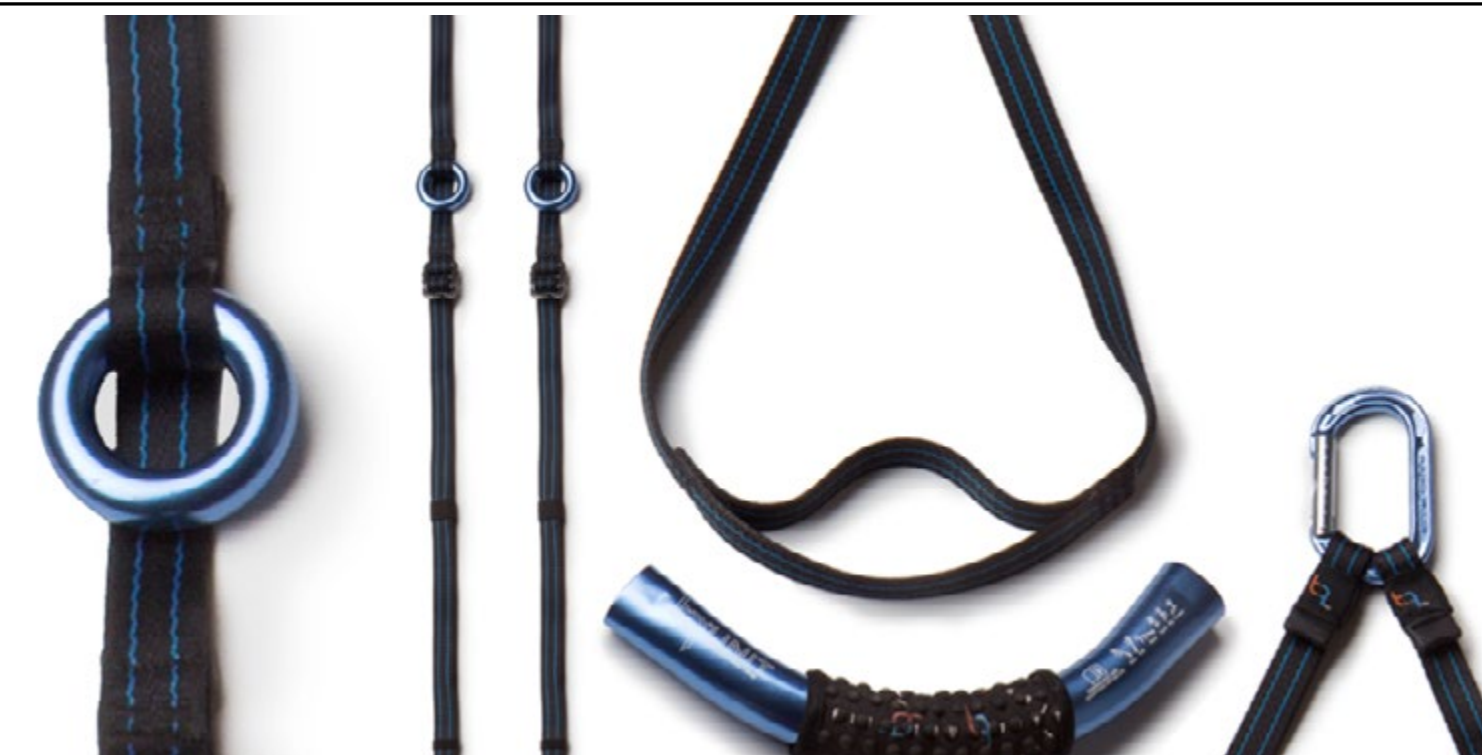
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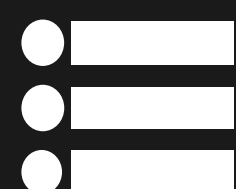
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