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JULY/AUGUST 2012 #145 • $5.95

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JULY/AUGUST 2012

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Exercise Instruction
Character Education
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Weight Training,
Weight Room
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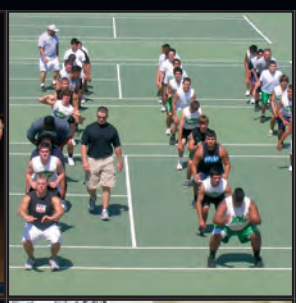




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Be an 11 Seminar • 2 Day Total Program Clinic • In-Service Weight Room Safety Certification

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RETAIL PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES	CAMP PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES
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2 DAY TPC: $3500	$3,500
WRSC: $2,695	$995
TOTAL: ~~$8,695~~	YOUR TOTAL: $5,745

Save Over $2,900!

WRSC: $199 per coach over 5

Camp: $40 per student over 50

Implementation package

Valued at over $3,500 the implementation package contains equipment, instructional materials and ongoing support to allow you to take charge of your program immediately after the conclusion of your Championship Camp!

Includes:
Complete Weight Room Evaluation and 2D weight room layout design, Set Rep Logs, Youth Training Bar Package, Total Program DVDs, Be An 11 books, camp t-shirts, 4 month magazine subscription for all athletes and students attending, WRSC Support for certified coaches and much, much more!

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B BFS Championship Camp 2 Days, 50 Athletes $4750

Product # 800B

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Pricing and Savings

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2 DAY TPC: $3500	$3,500
TOTAL: ~~$6,000~~	YOUR TOTAL: $4,750

Save Over $1,200!

Camp: $40 per student over 50

Implementation package valued at over $2,500. Includes Set Rep Logs, Weight Room Evaluation, Total Program DVDs, Be An 11 books, camp t-shirts and much, much more!

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$3745 Product # 800G

Pricing and Savings

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BE AN 11: $2,500	$2,500
WRSC: $2,695	$1,245
TOTAL: ~~$5,195~~	YOUR TOTAL: $3,745

Save Over $1,400!

Be An 11: $25 Per student over 50

WRSC: $249 per coach over 5

Implementation package worth over $2,500.

C Be An 11, Coaches WRSC 1 Day Total Program Clinic,

50 Athletes & 5 Coaches: $5245

Product # 800C

Pricing and Savings

INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES

RETAIL PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES	PACKAGE PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES
BE AN 11: $2,500	$1,250
1 DAY TPC: $3000	$3,000
WRSC: $2,695	$995
TOTAL: ~~$8,195~~	YOUR TOTAL: $5,245

Save Over $2,900!

Be An 11: $20 per student over 50

1 Day TPC: $20 per student over 50

WRSC: $199 per coach over 5

Implementation package valued at over $3,000. Includes Set Rep Logs, equipment, Total Program DVDs, Be An 11 books, WRSC Support and much, much more!

H Coaches Weight Room Safety Certification

10 Coaches Minimum

$4190 Product # 800H

Pricing

INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES

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$299 PER COACH +1,200 DEPOSIT

Total: $4190

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WRSC: $299 per coach over 10

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2 Day Total Program Clinic: Up to 12 hours of Hands on Strength & Conditioning Training for Athletes & Coaches, Core Lifts, Auxiliary Lifts, Speed, Plyometrics, Flexibility, Nutrition, Program, etc... Coaches only break out session starts off the clinic to ensure you are able to immediately put the total program in use for your team. In a 2 day clinic, a BFS instructor will come to your school and show you how to unify your athletic program to ensure athletes will progress, year-round. The two-day clinic permits more hands-on instruction and additional time for our clinicians to answer your questions to make this a more complete, personalized experience.

1 Day Total Program Clinic: Up to 6 hours of Hands on Strength & Conditioning Training for Athletes & Coaches, Core Lifts, Auxiliary Lifts, Speed, Plyometrics, Flexibility, Nutrition, Program, etc... Coaches only break out session starts off the clinic

Be An 11: Up to 3 hours of Character Education, Goal Setting, Team Building Activities, Championship Attitude Activities, Community Support, Unification, etc… See **page 13** of this magazine to learn how a Be An 11 seminar can inspire your teams and student body!

WRSC: (In-Service or Regional Certifications Available) A BFS Weight Room Safety Certification provides a minimum of 8 hours of Hands on Teaching Protocols, Program Implementation Details, Safety & Liability Details, Weight Room Evaluation, Core Lifts, Auxiliary Lifts, etc… WRSC includes one year of online video training support. See **page 48** to learn more!

Options to cover your unique situation

D Be An 11 Seminar, 1 Day Total Program Clinic

50 Athletes: $4250 Product # 800D

Pricing and Savings

INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES

RETAIL PRICE: 50 STUDENTS	PACKAGE PRICE: 50 STUDENTS
BE AN 11: $2,500	$1,250
1 DAY TPC: $3000	$3,000
TOTAL: ~~$5,500~~	YOUR TOTAL: $4,250

Save Over $1,200!

Be An 11: $20 per student over 50
1 Day TPC: $20 per student over 50
Implementation package valued at over $2,400. Includes Set Rep Logs, equipment, Total Program DVDs, Be An 11 books, and much, much more!

E 2 Day Total Program Clinic, Coaches WRSC

50 Athletes & 5 Coaches: $4745 Product # 800E

Pricing and Savings

INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES

RETAIL PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES	PACKAGE PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES
2 DAY TPC: $3500	$3,500
WRSC: $2,695	$1,245
TOTAL: ~~$6,195~~	YOUR TOTAL: $4,745

Save Over $1,400!

2 Day TPC: $25 per student over 50
WRSC: $249 per coach over 5
Implementation package valued at over $2,400. Includes Set Rep Logs, equipment, Total Program DVDs, WRSC Support and much, much more!

F 1 Day Total Program Clinic, Coaches WRSC

50 Athletes & 5 Coaches: $4245 Product # 800F

Pricing and Savings

INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES

RETAIL PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES	PACKAGE PRICE: 50 STUDENTS 5 COACHES
1 DAY TPC: $3000	$3,000
WRSC: $2,695	$1,245
TOTAL: ~~$5,695~~	YOUR TOTAL: $4,245

Save Over $1,400!

1 Day TPC: $25 per student over 50
WRSC: $249 per coach over 5
Implementation package valued at over $2,400. Includes Set Rep Logs, equipment, Total Program DVDs, WRSC Support and much, much more!

I 2 Day Total Program Clinic, 50 Athletes $3500

Product # 800I

PRICING INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES
2 Day TPC: $25 per student over 50
Implementation package worth over $1,500.

J 1 Day Total Program Clinic, 50 Athletes $3000

Product # 800J

PRICING INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES
1 Day TPC: $25 per student over 50
Implementation package worth over $1,500.

K Be An 11 Seminar 50 Athletes $2,500

Product # 800K

PRICING INCLUDES TRAVEL, AIR FARE AND EXPENSES
Be An 11: $25 per student over 50
Implementation package worth over $1,000.

Package Details and Information: All camps and clinics offered come with implementation packages containing instructional materials, many worth more than $3,000. For complete details on these packages and what you can expect from your camp, clinic or seminar visit **www.biggerfasterstronger.com/camps**. Here you will also find helpful hints and instructions on what you can do to prepare for your BFS clinics.

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A Message from BFS *Editor in Chief Kim Goss, MS*

The Next Level of Athletic Fitness

On May 12 I attended the eighth annual National High School Power Clean Championships. This was the fifth one I attended – it's an event I always find inspiring and worth promoting.

This year BFS sponsored two athletes to enter this competition: sisters Brittanie and Abbie Mastricola from Wautoma High School in Wautoma, Wisconsin. Brittanie is the recipient of the 2012 BFS Weightlifting Scholarship; she faced a major challenge from competitor Melissa Bowler. At the weigh-in Brittanie came in about a pound lighter, so Melissa would have had to outlift Brittanie by an increment of five pounds to beat her.

Brittanie Mastricola (left) and her sister Abbie with their first-place awards at the 2012 National High School Power Clean Championships.

Brittanie finished with a personal record of 135 pounds, a national record, forcing Melissa to try for a personal record of 140 pounds; it was close, but it wasn't Melissa's day. However, Melissa is a junior, so expect her to be back next year and in record-breaking form. That'll be great to see.

The meet director and founder of this competition is Val Balison, a high school strength coach and former national weightlifting champion and American record holder. "The reason I initially decided to hold this competition was to help our student-athletes set high goals in the clean, which I believe should be a basic exercise in all high school weight training programs," says Balison. Many of the winners of this meet have gone on to compete in national weightlifting competitions. Balison's inspired idea for this meet continues to inspire young athletes to excel, and in this country the sport of weightlifting could use a lot more good ideas.

Shortly after this issue goes to press, the Olympic Games will be held in London. Countries such as Russia and China will be able to send 14 athletes each, seven men and seven women. However, because the US has been doing relatively poorly in international competitions, the US will be able to send only one man and two women to the Games. What went wrong?

The decline of US lifting is due to several factors, one of which is the fact that those who design strength training programs are becoming increasingly reluctant to include any overhead lifting. At the high school level many coaches believe the risks of doing snatches and jerks outweigh the benefits, and some coaches are simply not comfortable teaching them. At the college level what I'm hearing is that many athletes come out of high school with shoulder injuries that prevent them from performing such lifts. All these problems have one solution: education.

Young athletes need to learn proper lifting techniques and use balanced strength and conditioning programs. Overemphasis on any single lift, especially the bench press, is certain to create muscular imbalances that will make the shoulder more susceptible to injury. This is why with the BFS program, athletes bench press only once a week.

Am I saying that using the BFS program in high schools will help create a resurgence in Olympic lifting in this country? No, I wish it were that simple – but as with Val Balison's unique power clean competition, it would be a very good start.

Kim Goss, MS
Editor in Chief,
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BFS Program

Feature Stories

Training and Equipment

For Women Only

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Photo:Steve Kinslow

Photo: OU

Records Fall at Power Clean Championships

Las Vegas has earned another nickname: Power Clean City! On May 12th, strong male and female high school athletes from across the country came to Bonanza High School in Las Vegas to compete in the 10th Annual National High School Power Clean Championships. As happens every year this event is held, young athletes broke several records.

In the men's heavyweight division Joe Graen repeated as champion and tied the national record with 350 pounds, which is the heaviest weight ever lifted in this competition. Also of note was 187-pound-class winner Brandon Xapanya, who made 320 pounds and came soooo close to making a national record of 330. These two competitors have the potential to become top Olympic lifters if they decide to pursue that sport.

In the women's division, Brittanie Mastricola flew in from Wisconsin and added 30 pounds to the national standard to edge hometown favorite Melissa Bowler by 5 pounds. In the 165-pound class for women, Jassa Gunn made the heaviest power clean in the history of the event with a national record of 170 pounds.

The top five competitors in each bodyweight class were awarded lifting trophies, and each competitor received a meet T-shirt. Meet director Val Balison once again pulled off a great meet, and we expect many more record-breaking performances at the 2013 meet.


Joe Graen

National Women's High School Power Clean Results

May 12, 2012, Bonanza High School, Las Vegas, Nevada


Brittanie Mastricola

WT CLASS	NAME	SCHOOL	WT LIFTED	
128	Brittanie Mastricola	Wautoma	135	**national record*
	Melissa Bowler	Bonanza	130	
139	Abbie Mastricola	Wautoma	110	
152	Kailani Killebrew	Foothill	145	
	Lauren Gill	Union	135	
165	Jassa Gunn	Scappose	170	**national record*

Women's Team Winner: Wautoma

National Men's High School Power Clean Results

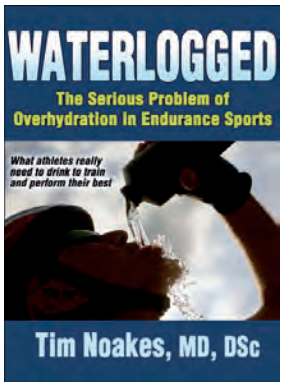
May 12, 2012, Bonanza High School, Las Vegas, Nevada

WT CLASS	NAME	SCHOOL	WT LIFTED
110	Brian Catano	Chaparral	180
	Jesus Ramirez	Global	145
	John Bland	Chaparral	130
	Alejandro Llamos	Global	125
123.5	Eric Sorto	Chaparral	230
	Sonny Salazar	Bayfield	215
	Anthony Peralta	Sunnyside	215
	Alex Herrera	Bonanza	200
	Drew Crays	Arbor View	125
136.5	Blake Asuncion	Durango	250
	Jordon Price	Chaparral	240
	Dominic Martinez	Sunnyside	235
	CJ Smith	Arbor View	215
	Adam Kirosingh	Coronado	210
	Vythand Alagappan	Pittsford	190
	Gerhel Murao	Durango	170
152	Chris Friedrich	Green Valley	250
	Nick Gilbert	Durango	230
	Carlos Lozoya	Durango	225
	Ian Sandrey	Bayfield	225
	Brandon Truchard	Bonanza	225
	David Hita	Durango	220
	Justin Alpha	Chaparral	215
	Zach Wythe	Foothill	215
	David Urquidi	Bonanza	215
	Alfonzo Martinez	Global	195
	Jeremy Reavy	Foothill	000
169.5	Jordon Ozosky	Bonanza	280
	Jay Rivera	Chaparral	265
	Matt Lestarge	Chaparral	250
	Pat Natali	Arbor View	245
	Andrew Babcock	Bonanza	230
	Donald Barranco	Global	225
	Kevin Cruz	Global	185
	Edison Aviles	Global	165
187	Brandon Xapanya	Green Valley	320
	T.J. Pazell	Bayfield	295
	Curtis Montenegro	Bonanza	290
187 *(cont)*	Grayson Schillereff	Scappose	280
	Tony Nieves	Durango	275
	Jacob Manning	Arbor View	270
	Fabian Bell	Durango	270
	Jeff Robinson	Bonanza	265
	Jovanni Bucco	Global	260
	Jesus Solis	Bonanza	255
207	Brandon Flihan	Palo Verde	310
	Shai Gomez	Green Valley	295
	Marcus Williams	Durango	290
	Spencer Stewart	Bonanza	290
	Mac Smith	Arbor View	000
	Nate Ligon	Las Vegas	000
231	Arie McQuig Jr.	Durango	310
	Gene Germain	Durango	305
	Sam McAloon	Green Valley	285
	Nick Testani	Pittsford	285
	James Querubin	Arbor View	275
	John Kalderon	Durango	270
	Juan Santoyo	Bonanza	255
	Lou Testani	Pittsford	255
	Luke Thompson	Arbor View	245
	Izek Davis	Union	200
HWT	Joe Graen	Pittsford	350*
		**ties national record*	
	Tyrell Crosby	Green Valley	315
	Will Hernandez	Chaparrel	310
	Thomas Newton	Arbor View	310
	Bing Lin	Durango	300
	Ben Rush	Durango	285
	Robert Alvarez	Barstow	285
	Bryan Querubin	Arbor View	280
	John Viscarra	Global	255
	Tim Laverty	Sunnyside	000

Men's Team Winner: Chaparral

BOOK REVIEW:

Waterlogged:
The Serious Problem of Overhydration in Endurance Sports



Human Kinetics is a leader in providing coaches with the latest in practical, scientific-based and often unique publications to help athletes achieve physical superiority. They've done it again with *Waterlogged: The Serious Problem of Overhydration in Endurance Sports* (Human Kinetics, 2012). In this heavily researched text, human performance expert Dr. Tim Noakes, who has run in more than 70 marathons or ultra marathons, discusses the latest research about dehydration in athletics. Says Noakes, "The driving force in writing this book is a desire to reposition the commonly held belief of proper hydration so that it is consistent with the research and more effective for today's and future athletes and fitness enthusiasts." Run to your nearest bookstore and pick up a copy, or order through *www.humankinetics.com.*

Who Will Win the Heisman?

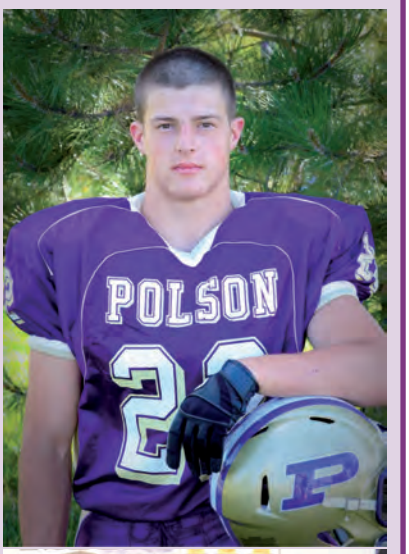
With college spring ball completed, national sports writers have already been making their predictions on who will win this season's Heisman Trophy. Two players on the short list also happen to have appeared on the cover of *BFS* magazine: running back Marcus Lattimore of South Carolina (Nov/Dec 2011) and quarterback Denard Robinson of the University of Michigan (Nov/Dec 2010). It's been a while since a Heisman Trophy winner appeared on the cover of *BFS*, but that situation could change with these two talented young men.

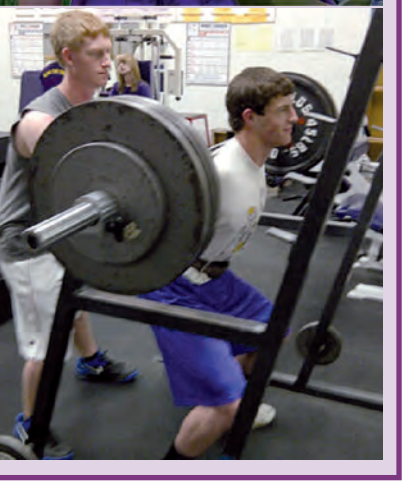
PLAYER PROFILES

BFS Player Profile: **Colton Lenz**

Colton Lenz attends Polson High School in Polson, Montana, where he is regarded as a leader with all the right stuff. As a junior, Colton exceeded all four requirements for All-American status on his BFS core lifts. He cleans 240 pounds, bench presses 285, squats 435 and deadlifts 475. Colton is a two-year letterman on the varsity football team and a member of the National Honor Society with a GPA of 3.97.

When not in the weightroom, he spends time tutoring middle school students, working as an assistant youth pastor, and supporting his fellow athletes as their biggest fan during his off-season. His weights coach Don Toth says Lenz possesses extraordinary leadership and social skills "and has all the right qualities coaches look for in a leader." Lenz was recently elected as the senior class president for the 2012–13 school year. Lenz says growing up in Montana has been ideal for Colton, as he is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys his summers doing physical labor as a ranch hand.





BFS Player Profile: **Lindsay Paige Simpson**

Lindsay Paige Simpson was named the 2012 NCHSAA Female Athlete of the Year for her outstanding achievements in volleyball and basketball. She attended Franklin High School in Franklin, North Carolina.

Simpson was selected for the Blue/White All-Star game and the NCHSAA East/West All-Star game in basketball. She has earned eight varsity letters and has been named player of the year in the 3A WNCAC conference four times in volleyball and basketball. She broke many school records at Franklin High school in basketball, with a career high point total of 2,697 points, single-game high total of 48 points, and 1,643 career total of kills in volleyball. Lindsay has been named player of the year in two varsity sports for the past two seasons in volleyball and basketball and has earned MVP for both spots eight times. She also earned a full athletic scholarship to play basketball at Western Carolina University.

Carrying a 3.8 GPA, Simpson is a North Carolina Scholar and has earned many other honors throughout her high school years. "Lindsay's dedication in the weightroom, as well as her heart and drive, has helped her excel on and off the courts," says Franklin head volleyball coach Anna Shields.

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Coming Next Issue

The September/October issue of *BFS* magazine is our special women's edition and will contain special articles about athletic fitness programs for young women, along with inspirational stories. It will also have the winners of the 2012 BFS High School Male Athlete of the Year. Check it out!

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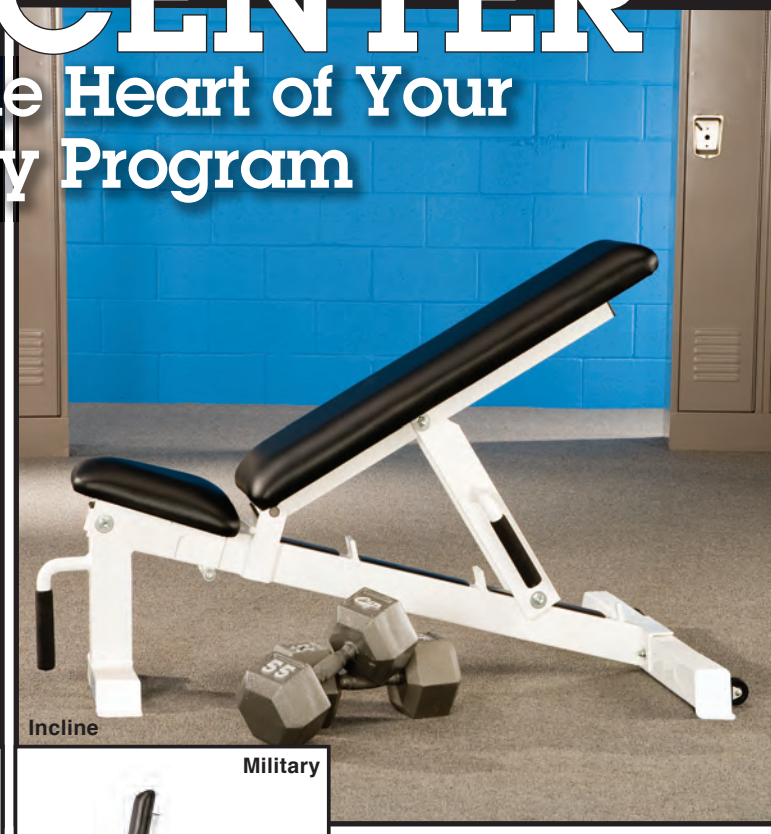

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- Built sturdy for your strongest athletes

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- l-67" w-48" h-57"

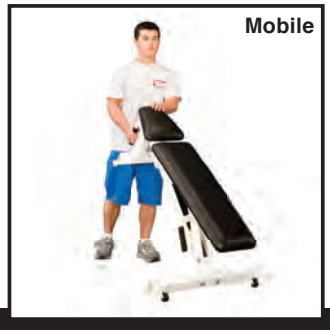
Flat

Military

Military (shoulder press)

Flat

Decline



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Flat Bench With Incline

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- Easy to move with handle and wheels

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- l-51" w-30" h-18"

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2012 BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year

Jessica Marie Staggs is one powerful young woman

Photo: Jim Ellis, *Miami News-Record* (Oklahoma)

What do cheerleading, track and field, basketball, powerlifting and academic excellence have in common? Answer: Jessica Marie Staggs, the recipient of our annual award for exceptional high school student athletes.

Staggs just graduated from Wyandotte High School in Wyandotte, Oklahoma, the school that we named the 2012 BFS High School of the Year and featured in our May/June 2012 issue. Just as Wyandotte has a program that produces success in many sports, Staggs' high school experience is characterized by all-around excellence in the classroom as well as in athletics.

Staggs completed her studies at Wyandotte with a 4.03 GPA and ranked fourth in her class. She's now enrolled at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami, Oklahoma, in a two-year program of childhood education development with an immediate goal of obtaining a two-year certificate in that area. "I love kids, and hope to eventually be able to open a daycare center," says Staggs.

As for athletics, Staggs has always been involved in sports. She competed in nearly all the sprint events available to her; she excelled in the long jump, with a best jump of 15 feet 10.5 inches, making it to the state meet this year, and earned a position in the 4x100m relay. She also played on the basketball team and supported all the teams as a cheerleader. And then there's powerlifting.

Staggs had participated in the BFS program to condition her for other

Staggs is a multi-sport athlete who has competed in track, basketball and cheerleading at Wyandotte High School.

sports, although Wyandotte coach Scott Martin recalls that she appeared "frail" to him when she first came into the weightroom about a year ago. As soon as Staggs started lifting weights, Coach Martin observed that she rapidly became extremely strong. Although Staggs admits that at first she was concerned about getting bulky, this was not the case – in fact, after a year of training her bodyweight only fluctuated within five pounds – and she found she liked the lifts. Asked about the contrast between cheerleading and powerlifting, Staggs replies, "In cheerleading you have to be peppy and upbeat, and in powerlifting you need to get angry – it's a very different mindset."

When Staggs thought she was good enough to compete, she found that the only way to do that was to compete with the boys team. So that's what she did, and she became the first female competitor in the Oklahoma Football Coaches Association powerlifting meet in March 2012, taking fifth in the 123-pound class with a 525 total. Eventually she joined the Natural Athlete Strength Association (NASA), a drug-free organization that holds powerlifting and other strength competitions.

With NASA she has competed in the 114-pound bodyweight class (her natural weight, as the boys meet she competed in started at 123 pounds), and at the national high school championships she set national records in the squat (209 pounds) and bench press (104 pounds), then deadlifted 225 pounds for second place overall. All these lifts are performed with the assistive gear used in many powerlifting meets. She also power cleaned 115 pounds and power pressed 104 pounds as part of a NASA competition called "power sports," in which she is a national champion. In training, Staggs' best lifts now include a 230 squat and a 225 deadlift for 7 reps. Staggs plans to continue in the sport and says that part of her attraction to it is that all the competitors are very supportive of each other.

In describing her experience living in Wyandotte, she says that it is a typical laid-back small town where many of the kids grow up together from elementary through high school. "Everybody knows everyone and knows each other's business," says Staggs.

Photo: Jim Ellis, *Miami News-Record* (Oklahoma)

Staggs has established national records in powerlifting, and has squatted and deadlifted more than 100 pounds over her bodyweight.

Asked if school was easy, she said that her success is due not so much to a grueling homework schedule as it is to her practice of paying full attention in class. Outside the classroom she spends much of her free time on outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing and rafting; she also has been involved with Wyandotte's Student Council, the Future Farmers of America and the National Honors Society. Television is not a big influence in her life, and she likes to cook and listen to country music. She has two brothers (Rocky, age 26; and AJ, age 13) and one sister (Abigale, age 20); all are athletic. She likes spending time with her family, which is a good thing, as she has 19 cousins and they frequently get together for family activities.

Staggs is a well-rounded student athlete who carried a 4.03 GPA and is working on a certificate in childhood education.

Martin describes Staggs as an overachiever who makes the best use of her talents. "Every success that Jessica has achieved, she's had to work hard for – nothing has come easy." Her motivation and discipline have paid off at extremely high levels, both in athletics and in the classroom, and BFS is proud to name Jessica Marie Staggs as the 2012 BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year. BFS

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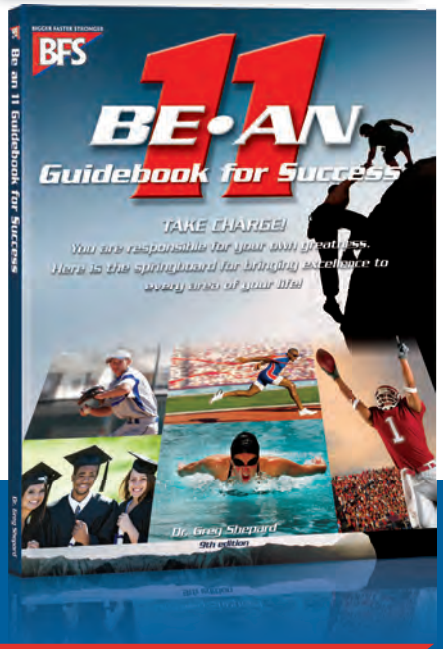

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Conway Springs High

Training with the Best

A look at a powerful football team that intends to stay on top

Photo: Nate Jones, Wellington Daily News

In 1999 *BFS* published an article about the success of the football program at Conway Springs High School in Conway, Kansas. It was an amazing turnaround story, because when Mark Bliss stepped in as head coach, he inherited a program that had had only one winning season in seven years. Bliss's restoration program began by installing an aggressive weight program that used many BFS principles. It was a good move.

The following year the team finished 11-1 and made it to the semifinals of the Class 3A State Championship. Says Bliss about that game, "It gave us a good taste of what it feels like to play in front of 6,000 to 7,000 people. The fire had been started and nothing was going to stop the burning. They continued hard in the weightroom with visions of the next year's state championship in the backs of their minds, and they knew they had to work harder than ever to achieve this dream." And they did just that, going 13-0 in 1998 and winning the school's first-ever Class 3A State Championship. But that's not the end of the story.

They also won in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2008 and 2011 – seven titles in all! They even had a string of 62 straight wins beginning in 2001. According to current head coach Matt Biehler, who took over the program in 2009, the 2011 Cardinals were strong on both sides of the ball. Their single wing offense averaged 52.6 points per game, averaging nearly 400 yards a game rushing; their defense grabbed 21 interceptions and 17 fumbles and held their opponents to 9.8 points per game and 3.7 yards per play! Biehler says that support of the student body and community has been a tremendous blessing, and during playoff games the motto for the community is "Last one out of the town turns the lights out!"

Along the way, Biehler, who was an assistant coach when the Cardinals won that first breakthrough state championship, has been instrumental in developing one of the most physically strong teams in the country. Last year eight of their players bench pressed 300 pounds, 10 power cleaned 300 pounds (with a school record best of 360; and one 190-pound player at 345!), and 10 players squatted 400 pounds. Several athletes from Conway have gone on to the next level with college scholarships.

"Our strength program is a critical

area in the success of our football team," says Biehler. "We have four strength and conditioning classes every day for 56 minutes. Each class has 25-30 athletes involved. I currently run the daily strength classes, but we have four assistant coaches dedicating time and passion to our summer program in preparation for the fall."

In addition to the high school program, Biehler says his staff works with the feeder middle school athletes, focusing on getting them a head start by teaching proper lifting technique and also working with them on speed, jumping and agility. "We will have 150 seventh- to twelfth-grade athletes preparing during our summer workouts." Biehler says that with this program the older players "take the younger players

Tom Phillips Photo

Head football coach Matt Biehler

Football photos Nate Jones, Wellington Daily News

14 – Tanner Wood
52 – Trenton Ebersole

9 – Brian Doffing

14 – Tanner Wood
22 – Jordan Ast
40 – Cory Misak

14 – Tanner Wood
22 – Jordan Ast

Cardinals

The Cardinals had 10 players clean over 300 pounds last season, with a best of 360 pounds.

under their wing," and he believes this environment has helped avoid the hazing and bullying problems faced by many other schools.

Although known for its football dominance, the Cardinals have enjoyed success in many other sports. Here are their state titles:

- Girls Volleyball: '97, '00, '01, '02, '05
- Girls Track: '00, '01
- Boys Tennis: '04, '05, '12
- Girls Basketball: '01
- Men's Track: 1951
- Girls Powerlifting: '08, '09, '10, '11
- Boys Powerlifting: '10, '11, '12

As for advice he would give to new high school football coaches to help them emulate the success at Conway High, Biehler says, "Develop a philosophy for your program and the type of outcomes you desire, then try to absorb as much information as you can that you can implement into your program."

Biehler recognizes that because of the program's success, they need to keep their momentum by using a different strategy from when Coach Bliss took over the program. Then, they were underdogs, but now, as he says, "We're not going to sneak up on anyone." These days, Biehler acknowledges, they have to be wary of complacency in training. "We tell our players that our opponents will be gunning for them and will put up their best game. So we also tell them, 'Tradition never graduates,' because it's hard to get on top, but it's even harder to stay on top!" BFS

Since 1998, Conway Springs High School has won seven state championships and has had a string of 62 straight wins. Shown is the 2011 team.

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Photos by Judy Gorton

Girls Lacrosse Steps Up at *VVS High School*

These athletes are using BFS to succeed in the fastest sport on two feet

Two years ago Duey Weimer took over the girls lacrosse program at Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School in central New York. This area of the country is considered a hotbed of lacrosse, and unfortunately the school's first season three years ago ended with zero wins. But with a positive attitude and sound conditioning program, head coach Weimer is confident his Red Devils will soon be hot stuff.

"The team's progress isn't necessarily shown in their record. Last year's average point differential was seven points; this year the team won three games and the differential was just two points," says Weimer. "Our players are competing against teams with years of experience versus months of experience for us; however, our girls' athleticism continues to improve along with stick skills!" What made a big difference was BFS.

"We began using BFS last year, and fully integrated the Beat the Computer program this year," says Weimer. "Our players have totally bought in; they work hard and intensely in the weightroom, strive for as many personal victories as possible, and desire to improve during the off-season."

Weimer's success comes from coaching girls sports as closely as possible to the way he coaches boys sports. "Physically there is little difference in the way you train boys and girls, although with girls you worry about their ACLs so you need to do a few

special things in the weightroom to prevent this type of injury. I've found that the girls are just as receptive as the boys to the high-energy coaching approach I used when I coached football."

VVS has two main weightrooms, and although it often works out that the boys and girls train in separate rooms or at separate times, Weimer says they all do the same lifts and follow the principles of the Six Absolutes.

Weimer says that the system works smoothly and that the girls don't have a misconception that lifting weights will make them bulky. Weimer says he explained to the girls the myths of weight training, "and they found that although they were training like the boys, they were getting different results in terms of physical development."

Taking the Field

If there is a single word to describe what Coach Weimer feels about lacrosse, it's "energetic." "They say lacrosse is the fastest game on two feet, and you really don't realize that until you play it. It's an up-tempo game, extremely similar to basketball, soccer and field hockey, and it can get very physical – so you need strength, speed and endurance. I've found it to be one of the most enjoyable and mentally challenging sports to coach because there is a plethora of new and innovative schemes and strategies involved, compared to sports such as football and basketball with their long documented histories, so it's difficult for other teams to scout you. And you come up with new ideas every day."

Weimer believes that one of the problems that many coaches make is believing that lacrosse is primarily an aerobic sport. "There is an aerobic component, so we work that into our daily drills and individual work, but

The Red Devils compete in central New York, a hotbed of lacrosse.


Allison Holmes


Emily Vallee


Kristina Gorton

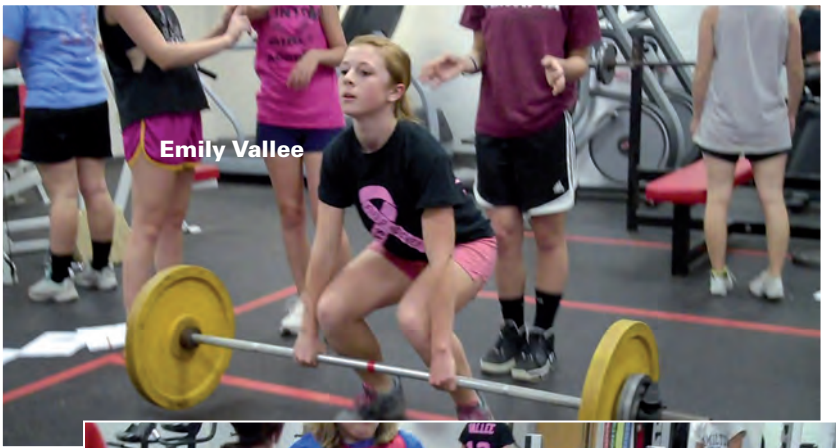

Kyli Towner

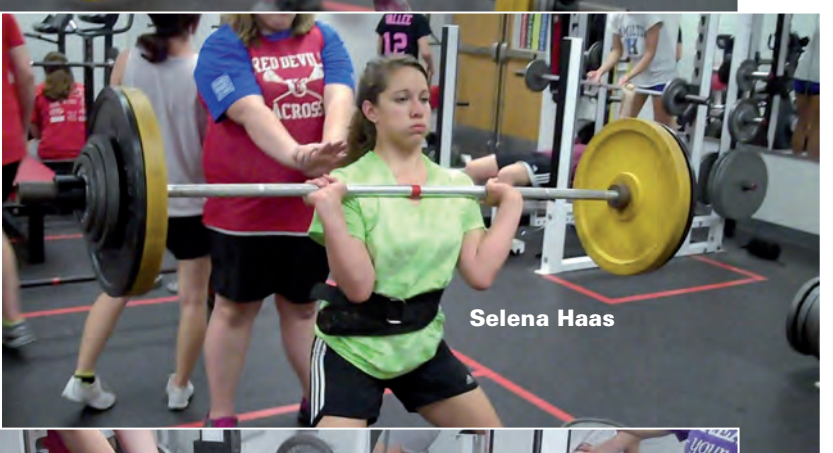
even with that it's more of an interval type of workout." With that exception, Weimer follows all aspects of the BFS program, and he guides the athletes in the weightroom with the Beat the Computer program.

One special aspect of Weimer's program is what he calls "victories for motivation." From everything to being the first one out on the practice field to adding another rep to max weight in the bench press, Weimer and his coaching staff acknowledge every aspect of success. "Even with our stretching program if we see an athlete doing a specific exercise exceptionally well, we yell out to them a victory – last season our girls earned about 9,400 victories as a team."

Weimer learned about the BFS program from his college roommate and says, "He told me how he did it in high school and saw good results. So I looked into it, read the book, and one day decided to drive to Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and take a BFS certification."

One thing the seminar reinforced to Coach Weimer was the idea that all teams have exceptional athletes who essentially cancel each other out, so one of the best ways to achieve success in team sports is to work on developing the average athletes. "When I took over this program, we had a lot of average athletes, but they are not average anymore – all our players can hold their ground in a defensive stance and keep up with the speed of the game. We're a young program, and our opponents are recognizing our potential already – we owe a lot of that success to the BFS program!" BFS


Emily Vallee


Selena Haas

Coach Weimer follows all aspects of the BFS program, and encourages his athletes to set personal records every workout.

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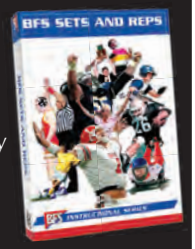

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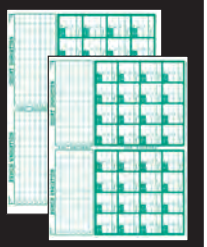

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BFS Vice President John Rowbotham is carrying on Coach Shepard's vision of teaching young athletes the right way to lift for physical superiority.

The Right Track

Timeless insight into the most effective way to train young athletes

BY **DR. GREG SHEPARD, BFS FOUNDER/CEO**

*(**Editor's note:** Although Coach Shepard wrote this article for coaches and athletes 28 years ago, the ideas are still relevant today. Why? Because they work!)*

This year [1984] at a BFS clinic a coach asked, "Why isn't there just one right program? I get confused with so many philosophies." I don't think we should ever sit back and be content with one "Right Program." We should always be searching for a better way to do things. However, strength training has progressed to the point where we can now say this program is really good and that one isn't so good.

The purpose of this article is to determine what constitutes correct training principles by answering six basic questions. This will enable coaches to determine if they are on the right track.

Question #1: Free Weights or Machines?

This is now practically a dead issue. It is estimated that only about 3 percent of our universities now use machines as their primary source of strength building for power sports such as football, basketball, and track and field. Most universities went through their machine stage in the 1970s and found that free weights worked better. So, unless a school is loaded with a winning tradition where talent is abundant and motivation is not necessary, machines should not be used. A few major universities do fit that description and use machines as their primary training source.

A word of caution about parents, boosters and alumni. Because of extensive advertising of machines, it is generally considered by those groups that machines are necessary. Often great sums of money are offered to make sure the school has the best equipment. I would like to make two points regarding this situation. First, some schools are getting so much equipment – including free weights and machines – that there is a danger of athletes doing too many things and not concentrating on the basic power movement lifts. Second, instead of spending thousands for an

arm or chest machine, a coach could better spend that money on motivation with a BFS clinic and derive far greater benefit. You're on the right track if you use free weights!

Question #2: What Kind of Lifts Are Best?

The greatest success comes when an athlete emphasizes the basic power movement exercises and then does several auxiliary exercises. There are a number of power movement lifts, and a strength coach usually will concentrate on three or four. The squat and the power clean seem to be the two favorites. Others are the bench press, incline press, press lockout, deadlift, front squat, power snatch, hang clean and dumbbell clean. But if your athletes are doing ten or more exercises such as curls and upright rows, each with equal importance, you are on the wrong track.

Question #3: Should I Do More Than Just Lift?

To be on the right track, your strength and conditioning program should be a balanced total program. Running, agility, flexibility and technique work should be included with your lifting program. Your athletes can't spend all their time in the weight-room, and you should not train them exactly like champion bodybuilders or powerlifters if you plan for them to become great players in a sport such as football. Flexibility and agility work can be done every day. While technique and running can be done three or more times per week, lifting is normally done two to four times per week. If you are having your athletes do upper body lifts one day and lower body the next and if they do this program six days per week like bodybuilders, you are most likely overemphasizing the lifting part of your program and are therefore on the wrong track.

Question #4: What About Negative Resistance?

Negative resistance training methods are fine for powerlifters, but other athletes must be very careful of excessive use of negative resistance. Athletes can get stronger with these training methods but may unlearn the vital ability to create a maximum summation of force. Negative resistance training will put an athlete on the wrong track.

Question #5: What About the Future?

There will be many more fads, systems and machines in the future. I strongly advise you to let others be the guinea pigs. Coaches are now much more sophisticated and are not easily fooled with gimmicks. In the past, systems such as isometrics, Exer-Genies, machines, functional isometrics, circuit training, wires, cables, and systems that promise quick and easy results have failed to put coaches on the right track. However, I am confident our BFS program will be even better in 1990 than it is now. It is certainly better now than five years ago. Improvements have come primarily in the areas of technique and motivation. Ingredients for change and improvement should always be compatible with our right-track guidelines.

Question #6: What Is Most Important for Success?

Motivation and technique are the most important factors. You can be following a right-track program perfectly, but if techniques are not taught correctly and a coach is not present to supervise, encourage and motivate, the program is doomed to failure. I also believe that even if a coach institutes a program that is not on the right track, if they teach it correctly and with motivation and fierce intensity so their athletes believe in it, they can make it successful. However, it is a whole lot easier to be successful if you're on the right track! BFS

Weight training is key to athletic success, but a total conditioning program involves many other elements, such as agility, flexibility, and endurance training.

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Photo: Malcolm Carmichael/Alpine Canada

Alice McKennis rips to 8th in her first World Cup race since breaking her knee in December 2010.

Upper-Level Testing and Training with Optojump

How technology is improving the way we train Olympic athletes

BY **ERNIE RIMER, BS, MED**

Optojump Next is a timing and measurement system that uses infrared light-emitting-diodes (LEDs) to assess a variety of gait and jump actions. At the Center of Excellence (COE) in Park City, Utah, we use our 10-meter-long Optojump system for three main purposes:

1. Daily field testing
2. Off-season training monitoring
3. Rehabilitation

We use the Optojump to assess the performance of our athletes on a daily basis. Every day an athlete intends to perform a resistance training session, they will stand in the Optojump and perform a triple broad jump. The triple broad jump is a common test used to assess power. We instruct the athlete to perform three consecutive jumps while minimizing ground contact time and jumping as far as possible. To encourage safe jumping movements, we disqualify the effort if the athlete lands the third jump with their hips below the knees. The athlete gives the best effort they can give, and we use the result to determine how hard the athlete will train that day.

Interestingly, we see significant day-to-day fluctuations in each athlete's triple jump performance. If the athlete's jump distance is below their average, we prescribe a light day. If the athlete jumps within their average ability, we prescribe a medium day. If the athlete jumps beyond their usual ability, perhaps achieving a personal best, then they can expect a heavy training day that may lead to further personal records.

By tracking day-to-day fluctuations in the triple broad jump, we can also monitor an athlete's progress throughout the year. It's easy to track progress with the lifts with tools like the BFS Set-Rep Log Book, but what about monitoring other explosive movements like jumping? Unfortunately, most laboratory and field testing devices do not allow coaches to quickly assess large numbers of athletes. The Optojump is the first

tool that allows us to test dozens of athletes within minutes. It has become an essential component of our work at the COE. It sits in the middle of our floor and we never turn it off because we use it every day. Over time we can see the progress each athlete has made.

Of course, every coach wants to see their athletes succeed, but what happens if an athlete suffers an injury? How do we know when an athlete is ready to return to play?

At the USSA [United States Ski & Snowboard Association] we use each athlete's personal records from before their injury as an indicator for "return to snow." Injured athletes must demonstrate that their fitness is within 98 percent of their previous healthy abilities before they can compete again.

Coach Ernie Rimer

Additionally, when the injury involves one of their legs, each athlete also must show that the previously injured leg is just as strong and powerful as the uninjured limb.

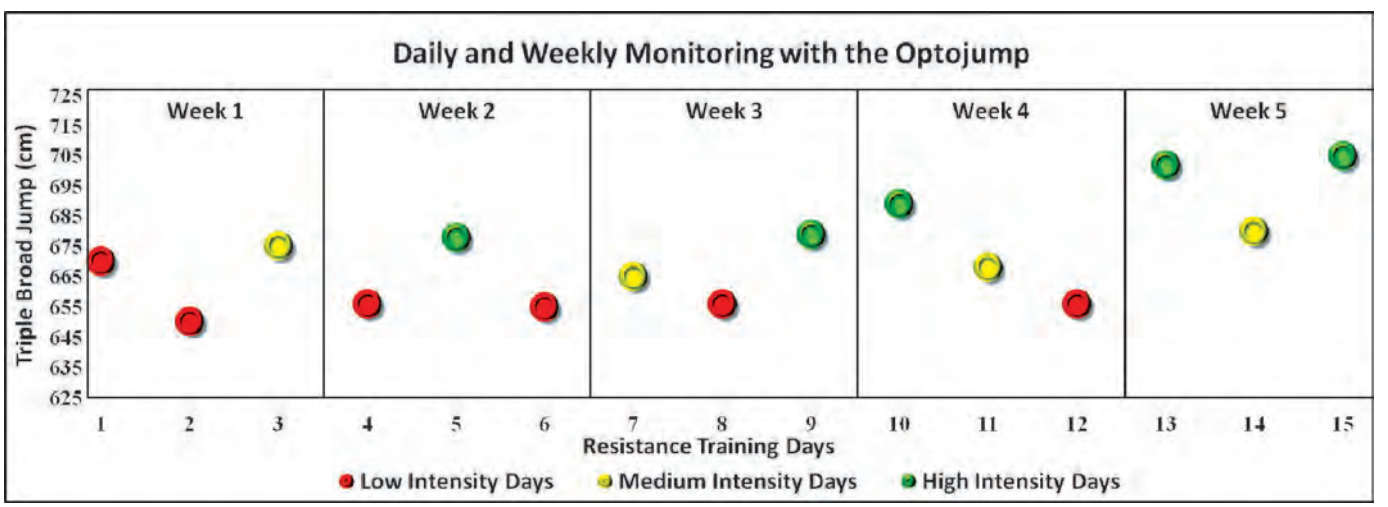
We are fortunate to have an array of advanced equipment to assess our athletes, but most gyms in colleges and high schools do not have access to such equipment. They must rely on field tests. For instance, athletic trainers at a high school may use an athlete's personal best records in the six core lifts to assess their readiness to play.

There are major limitations when resistance exercise performances and other field tests such as the vertical jump are used as indicators for return to play. Here's why: During an exercise such as the back squat, the muscles of the ankles, knees, hips and spine work together to lift the weight. If a rehabilitating athlete suddenly ties their personal record, it's possible that all of the other working joints are working harder to compensate for the injured joint.

When undergoing field tests, rehabilitating athletes can often reach their previous healthy abilities and usually find symmetry between both legs. However, even when the athletes accomplish these criteria, their coaches may see that the injured leg still has a deficiency. We may not know what the deficiency is, but from the naked eye we can see there is a difference.

The Optojump is the first tool that allows us to test dozens of athletes within minutes.

Using the Optojump, we can detect and verify that difference. We have begun to explore the use of a single-leg triple jump to assess an athlete's ability to return to sport. In the single-leg triple jump, the athlete



Each day, athletes perform a triple broad jump. We use a red-light, yellow-light, and green-light system to determine their daily intensity. A below-average jump is indicated by a red light; the athlete will focus on endurance and technique. An average jump is indicated by a yellow light; the athlete will train with moderate loads. An above-average jump is indicated by a green light; the athlete has the freedom to break personal barriers. Additionally, we can use each daily performance to track an athlete's progress over time.

will jump three times with the same leg and will land with both feet after the third jump. Again, we discourage unsafe actions by disqualifying an athlete's effort if they land with their hips below their knees.

During rehabilitation, skiers and snowboarders commonly match their single-leg jump distances, but the Optojump shows that the injured leg spends more time on the ground to jump the same distance. What this means is that we need

Photo: Malcom Carmichael/Alpine Canada

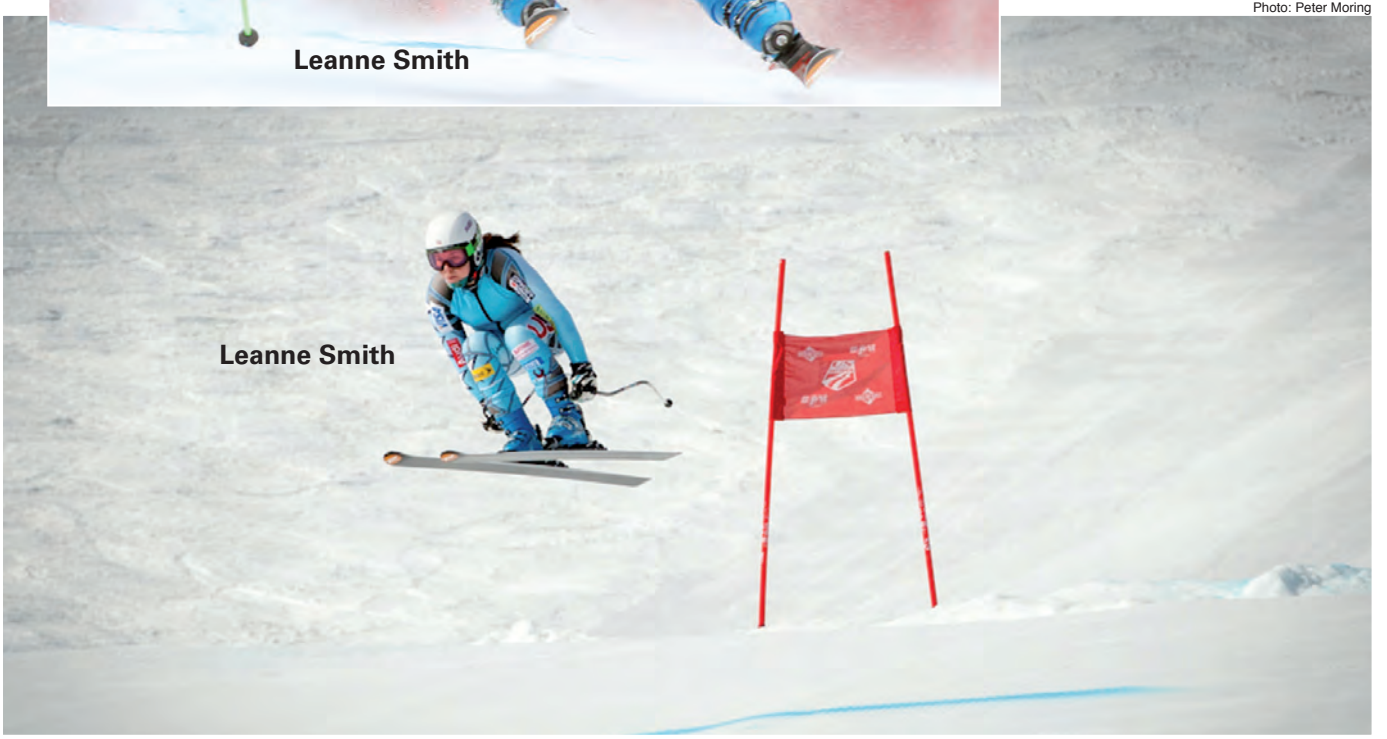
Laurenne Ross

Photo: Malcom Carmichael/Alpine Canada

Leanne Smith

Laurenne Ross looking for speed in the final downhill training run in Lake Louise and Leanne Smith soaring during super G training at Mammoth.

Photo: Peter Moring



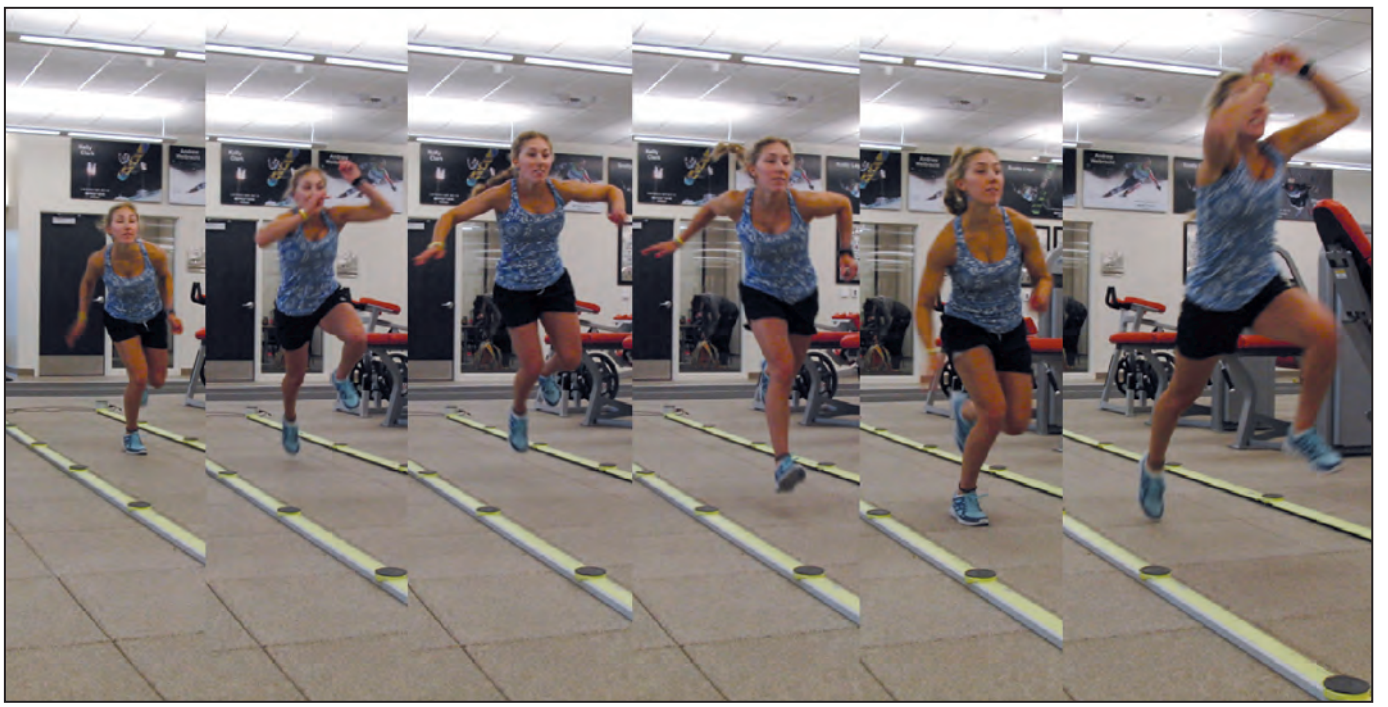
Leanne Smith

to spend a little more time before we let the athlete play again. In other words, the Optojump gives us a closer look at an athlete's left and right leg symmetry.

Daily assessments help us make immediate decisions about the workout. We monitor training progress by keeping track of the athlete's triple jump performances through the weeks. Finally, we use single-leg contact time and jump distance to help us evaluate an athlete's readiness to return.

These are just three applications we have been using with the Optojump, but it is capable of assessing many other attributes. Recently, representatives from Optojump came out to Park City and helped us program approximately 20 new field tests that we think may be relevant to skiers and snowboarders. As we experiment with these new field tests, we hope to see many exciting applications in the future. BFS

The United States Ski & Snowboard Association (USSA) is the national governing body for Olympic skiing and snowboarding sports. Located in Park City, Utah, the Center of Excellence (COE) is the official training center for these American athletes. The training facilities at the COE have a variety of state-of-the-art laboratory training equipment, including the Optojump Next.



US Ski Team racer Foreste Peterson performs a single-leg triple jump before her summer workout at the Center of Excellence in Park City, Utah.

Foreste Peterson performs a triple jump (two legs).

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BFS is committed to advancing every coaches and teacher's ability to track the improvement of their students and athletes. On November 1, 2011, BFS opened the "BFS Science Lab" with Dr. Peter Gorman, President of MicroGait USA, at his facility in New York.

"This will be a great addition to the BFS organization," says BFS President Bob Rowbotham. Look for more details about this exciting facility in future issues of BFS and on our website, www.biggerfasterstronger.com

Using top quality BFS equipment and the OptoJump system the BFS Science Lab is developing systems and protocols to continue the advancement of youth training and performance!

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WHY ENDURANCE ATHLETES NEED BFS

Mountain View High School in Utah excels in distance running and was featured in our March 2011 issue.

A different perspective on training for distance

BY **KIM GOSS, MS**

It's been said that the most sport-specific training an athlete can do is their sport itself, and endurance athletes have taken this to heart – often to the extreme. After all, if you look at the body types of distance runners, swimmers and cyclists, often they don't display much muscle mass. For this reason, many distance athletes and their coaches don't see the value of pumping iron.

Years ago, it was understandable that endurance athletes were unaware of the benefits of weight training for their sports. In fact, in the 1980s, when I was an editor at Runner's World Publications, there was very little scientific research available about the benefits of weight training for endurance athletes. As such, the strength training programs at the time were not very aggressive, and many athletes and coaches did not believe they needed to invest the time and effort in a more serious weight training program.

Today, however, considering all the relevant studies that have been done in the last 30 years, it amazes me that so many endurance athletes still do not accept weight training as an essential method to improve performance and also reduce the risk of injury. Distance runners, swimmers and cyclists will all benefit from pumping some iron. In fact, if you check out YouTube, you'll see a video clip of Lance Armstrong performing power cleans, dumbbell step-ups and lunges – that's a strong testimonial right there!

It's been proven that weight training can improve aerobic capacity. In a study published in the December 2011 issue of *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science in Sports*, cyclists participated in a 16-week weight training program. The cyclists who weight trained improved endurance capacity in a 45-minute time trial and in their rate of force development; the control group did not make these improvements. Further, the weight training group decreased their fat mass by an average of 2 percent, compared to the control group, which lost an average of 0.8 percent.

US Speedskating photo

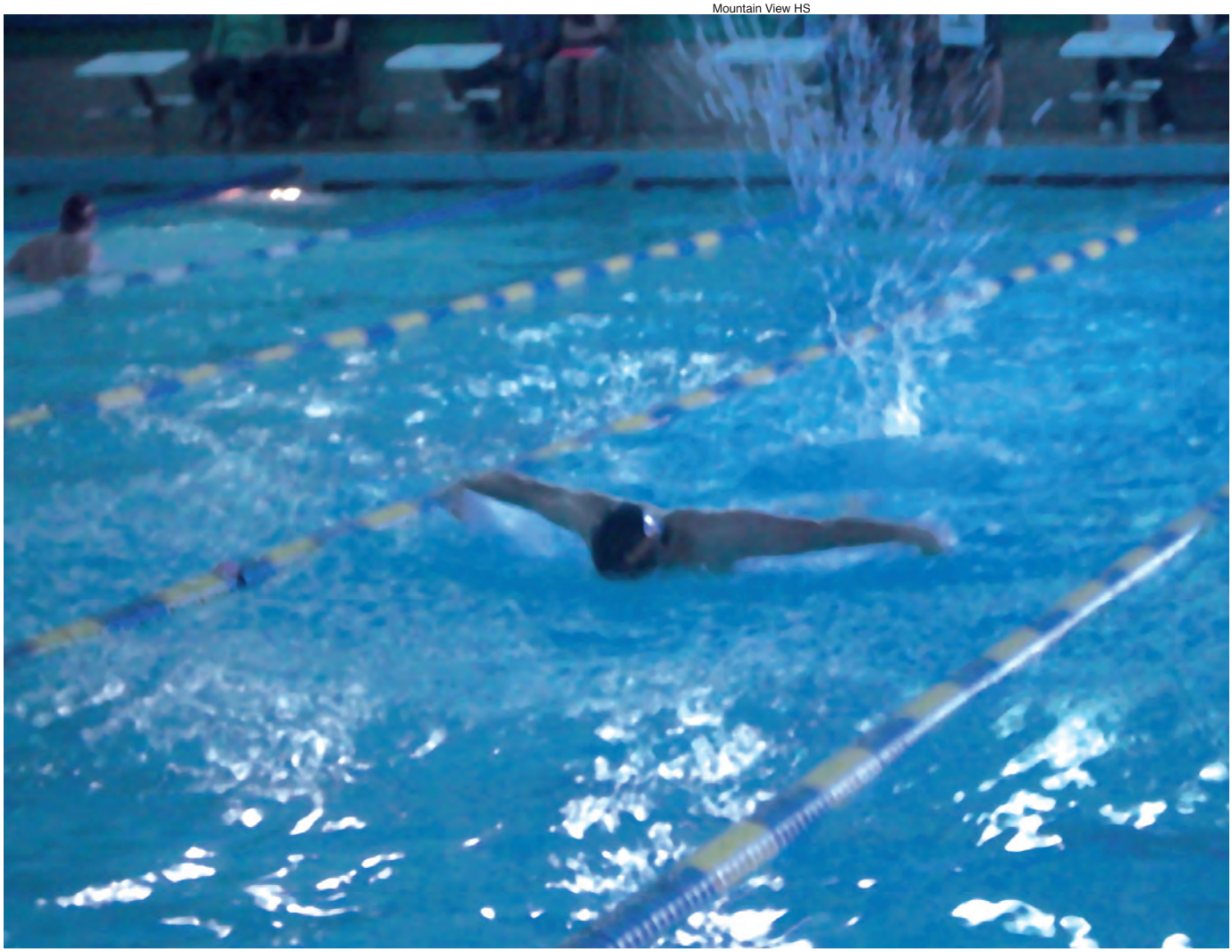
Olympic champion and world record holder Chris Witty has competed in five Olympics, four in speedskating and one in cycling.

The Speed Equation

Consider that aerobic capacity is only one aspect of performance for an endurance athlete. Another critical factor is being able to apply large forces for longer periods. In fact, this is exactly what the research on Lance Armstrong's training reveals – that it enables him to generate a higher level of leg power for longer periods.

The relationship between speed and the ability to apply more force for a longer period is not limited to endurance events. Take, for example, one of the most famous sprinting events in history: the 100-meter sprint final in the 1988 Olympic Games. In that competition Ben Johnson ran 9.79 and Carl Lewis ran 9.92, but when you break down the race you find that the fastest 10-meter sprints for both men was 0.83 seconds – what made the difference was that Johnson could maintain his top speed for a longer distance. Although Usain Bolt did run a 10-meter split of 0.83 seconds at the 2008 Olympics when he ran a world record of 9.69, that was for only 10 meters – again, the difference

Mountain View HS



Even endurance swimming events can benefit from a sound weight training program.

in performance at the higher levels is being able to maintain a high level of force production for a longer period.

One interesting aspect of Armstrong's training is that he was able to increase his ability to produce force for a longer period without significantly increasing his bodyweight. This makes sense because exercises such as power cleans and step-ups don't produce strong eccentric (lowering/negative) contractions. Eccentric contractions are more closely associated with increases in muscle mass. This is where it gets tricky, as athletes in shorter distances need more muscle mass to perform at the highest levels.

One interesting aspect of Armstrong's training is that he was able to increase his ability to produce force for a longer period without significantly increasing his bodyweight.

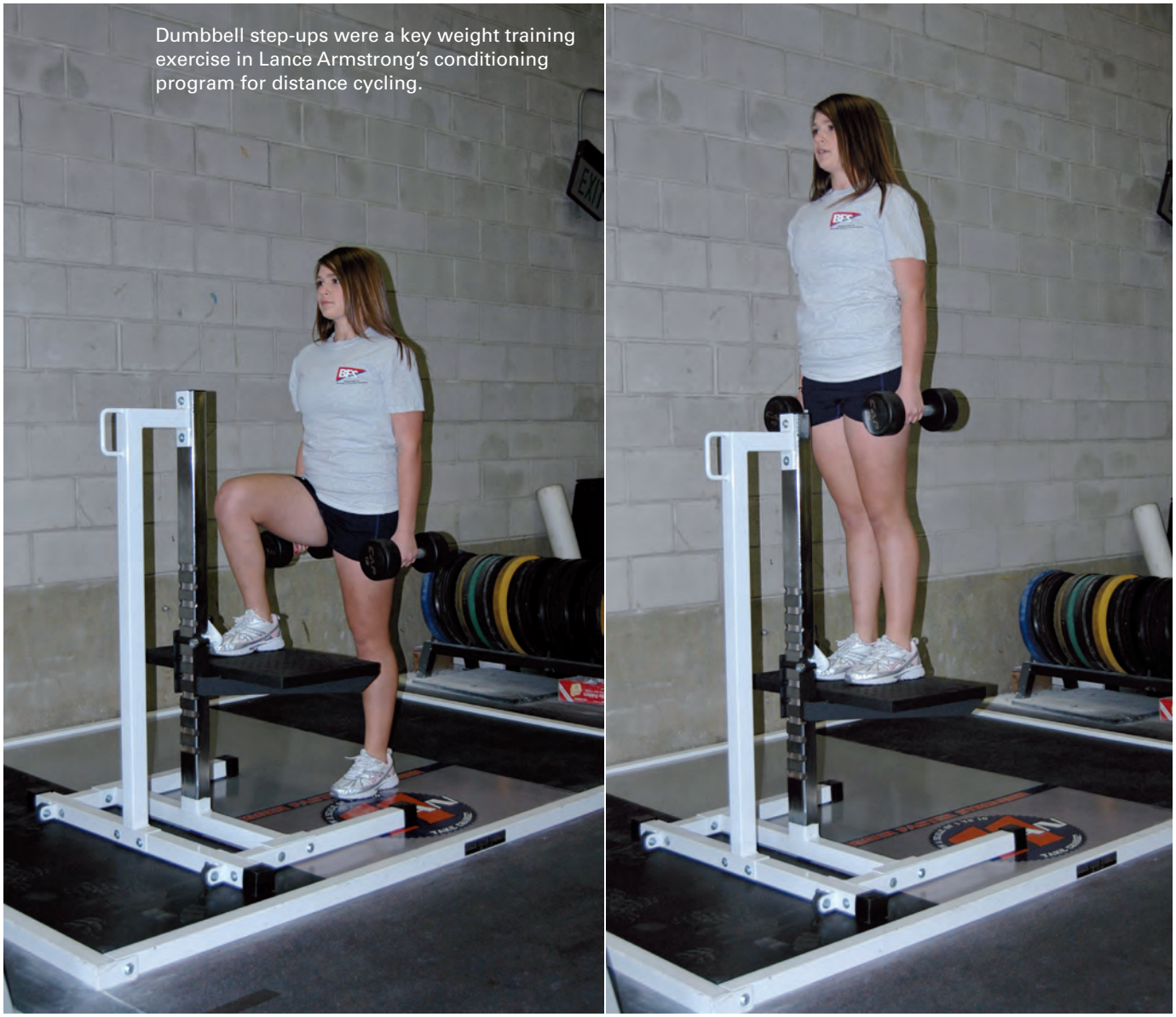
In a study published in July 2005 in *The Journal of Experimental Biology*, the authors examined the physical qualities of the world's fastest 45 runners at eight distances (100 to 10,000 meters); the runners performed these times in international competitions between 1990 and 2003. The researchers found that the sprinters in the 100, 200, and 400 meters carried the most muscle mass; and that runners in the shorter distances "were generally more massive than those in longer ones."

There are other reasons that weight training is a must for endurance athletes. Swimmers often develop a round-shouldered posture, as the emphasis in most strokes is on internal rotation of the shoulder. Having an imbalance between the internal and external rotators of the shoulder can lead to shoulder impingement syndromes.

Likewise, because cycling doesn't work the legs through a full range of motion, muscular imbalances occur that can cause knee problems. Doing full squats, lunges and the BFS hip flexor stretch can help prevent these problems. Further, the postures that occur in cycling, such as neck hyperextension, can result in neck and back pain, so it's advisable to minimize the risk by doing lower back exercises, such as the straight-leg deadlift and glute-ham raise, and neck exercises.

Finally, consider that at the high school level most athletes compete in multiple sports. If endurance athletes do not perform weight training during their preseason as well as in season, this neglect will adversely affect their performance in their other sports. Training year-round on a total program is one reason that athletes who use the BFS program tend to perform so well in all sports and are more resistant to injuries.

The evidence is obvious – endurance athletes need to hit the gym and take weight training seriously just like other athletes. And for kids who are new to sports and athletics, the BFS total program is a great place to start. BFS



Dumbbell step-ups were a key weight training exercise in Lance Armstrong's conditioning program for distance cycling.

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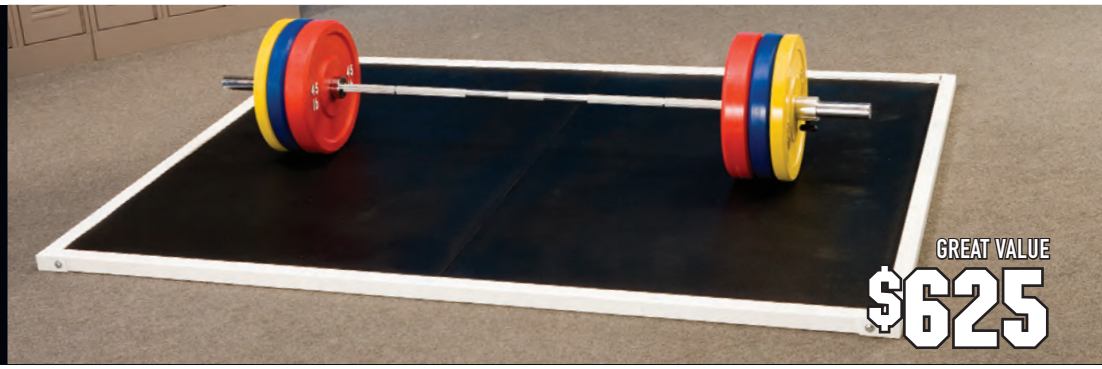

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The ABC's of *Box Jumping*

The safest and most effective ways to perform this great exercise

Lusia Angilau photo by Steve Kinslow.

BFS has been saying it for nearly four decades, and finally the message is going mainstream: "Box jumps work!" Not just a way to make athletes more powerful, box jumping is a fast, efficient method of conditioning for physical fitness. Let's take a closer look.

Box jumping is associated with the concept of plyometrics. The late Russian sport scientist Yuri Verkhoshansky is considered the founder of plyometrics as a means of sports training to improve athletic performance.

In the 1950s Verkhoshansky was a track coach who coached jumpers at the Aeronautical Engineering Institute in Moscow. Due to Moscow's harsh winters and small indoor training facilities, Verkhoshansky had to be creative to improve the athletic ability of his athletes in the off-season. Although weight training was not generally accepted for jumpers at this time, this coach thought differently.

Verkhoshansky believed weight training would be valuable for jumpers due to the stress of the jumps in athletics – in the takeoff for the triple jump, for example, the stress could reach up to 660 pounds. To replicate this stress, he tried having his athletes perform heavy half squats, but he found that the lower back was the weak link and the lift caused back problems. He also tried leg presses, but because athletes at that time had no access to the appropriately designed machines we have now, they had to balance a barbell on their feet – obviously a dangerous practice.

As a solution, Verkhoshansky found that he could create a safer training effect with less stress on the spine by performing jumps off platforms. These jumps would increase muscle tension and create a release of elastic energy stored in the muscles and tendons during landing. He called this type of exercise "shock training," but in the US this exercise was put into a larger category called plyometrics. Likewise, in the US an "aerobics" class involves more than just aerobic training, as often stretching and abdominal training are also performed.

Verkhoshansky's methods worked, and 12 of his athletes achieved the prestigious level of "Master of Sport" in the 1960s; in 1964 one of his athletes, Boris Zubov, broke Soviet and European records in the sprint events. Verkhoshansky eventually left coaching to focus on scientific research and on teaching his training methods to other coaches. In fact, US researchers have confirmed Verkhoshansky's work.

In a paper published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Science Research* in 1992, researchers reported the results of a six-week study on the effects of squatting and plyometrics on the vertical jump. The group that performed only the squat increased their vertical jump by 1.3 inches, the group that performed just plyometrics increased it by 1.5 inches, but the group that performed both squats and plyometrics increased their vertical jump by 4.2 inches!

Photo by Action Sports Photography.

Even in soccer, the ability to jump high gives an athlete an distinct adavantage. Shown is Sean Wright of Reeths-Puffer High School in Muskegon, Michigan. The school was featured in our March/April 2006 issue.

Although Verkhoshansky's shock training methods are better than half squats, they are extremely hard on the body and must be used conservatively. However, there are other forms of box jumping that can be used for conditioning, activities that Verkhoshansky would call "preparatory plyometrics." For example, standing in front of a box and simply jumping up and landing on the box creates a strong contraction of the leg muscles, but because the athlete drops only a few inches before making contact with the box, there is minimal stress on the joints.

Of course, the height of a box chosen for this purpose depends upon the level of the athlete – which is why the smaller BFS Readiness boxes (which start at just 10 inches) are ideal for children, untrained athletes, individuals coming off injuries, and even senior citizens. For high-level athletes, BFS offers a challenging 42-inch box.

Anatomy of a Plyo Box

BFS CEO/Founder Dr. Greg Shepard introduced the BFS Plyo box nearly 30 years ago. To enhance the stability of the exercise and facilitate box jumping drills involving forward movement, BFS's boxes have a nonslip landing surface and a pyramid shape. This design also reduces the weight of a box and allows the boxes to be stacked upon each other to reduce storage area; the hand holes placed near the top make it easy to move the boxes.

Although lightweight steel plyometric boxes are available from other exercise equipment companies, the problem with those is that an athlete's feet can easily get caught in an open plyometric box. With a solid box such as the ones BFS offers, the feet simply slide down if the athlete does not jump high enough to complete the exercise.

A variety of box sizes is necessary to train all levels of athletes. The triangle shape enables the boxes to be stacked to save space – in contrast to the square box shown above.

To properly run a plyometric box jumping program, coaches should make sure that athletes have access to boxes of various heights. Whereas the standard plyometric box for high school athletes is 20 inches, for middle school athletes, heavier athletes and athletes at a lower skill level it's best to start them on 10-inch Readiness boxes. Also, spotters should be used when attempting jumps of greater difficulty, and nothing should be placed on top of a plyometric box. Rather than purchasing higher boxes, some coaches will place thick bumper plates on top of plyo boxes – but this dangerous practice places the athlete at a high risk of injury.

To learn more about the BFS Plyometric Box Jumping Program, order a copy of the BFS textbook, *Bigger Faster Stronger,* and the BFS DVD *Plyo Box Jumping*. This program is a great method to increase athletic and physical fitness. BFS

The BFS Readiness boxes start at 10 inches to accompany beginners or less-explosive athletes.

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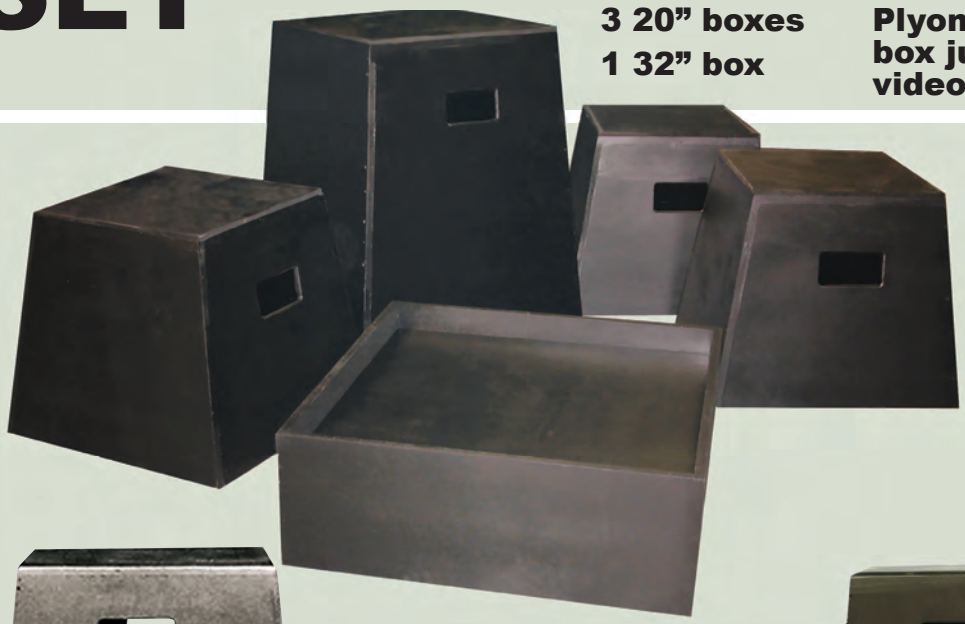

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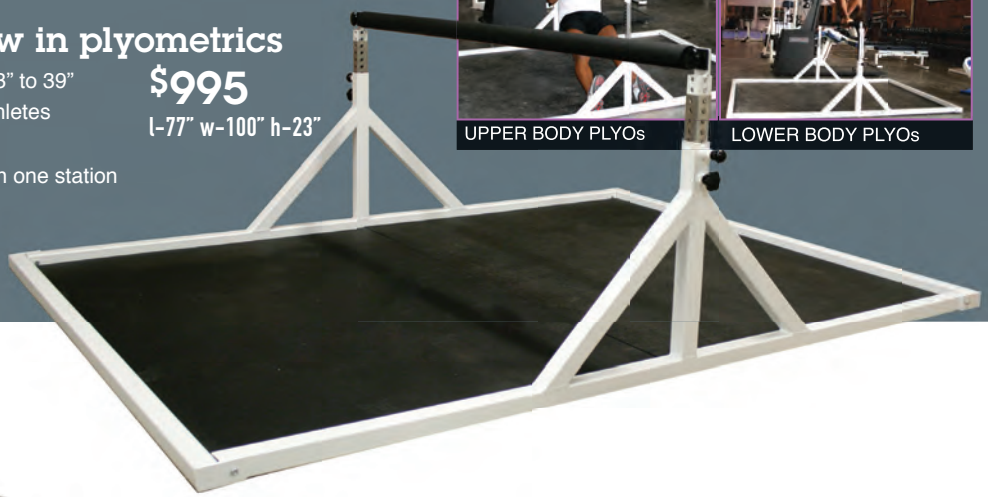

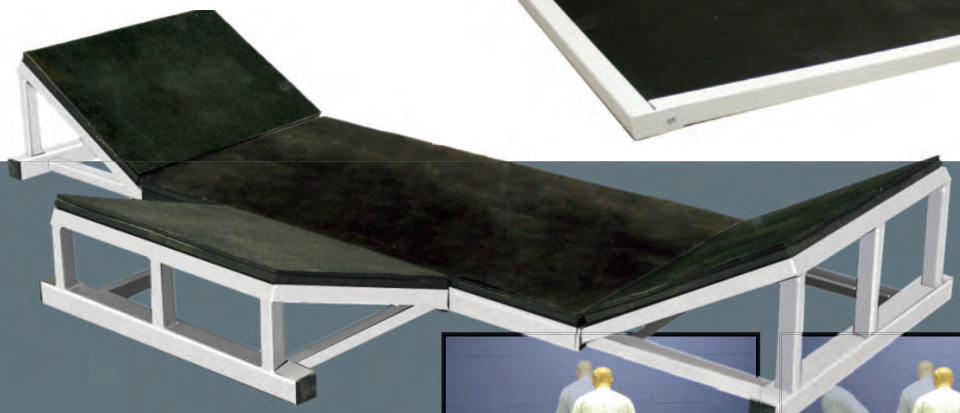

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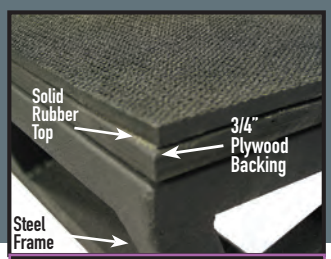

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Nikki Gnozzio has worked hard to earn a position as a college strength coach.

Breaking Barriers: Women in Strength Coaching

Strength coach Nikki Gnozzio is changing perceptions in her profession

BY **LAANNA CARRASCO, MA**

You could call them your secret weapon. Or your quiet iron. They are strength and conditioning coaches, and they work tirelessly to provide the building blocks to get athletes bigger, faster and stronger and to keep them injury free.

Nikki Gnozzio is one of those coaches whose influence reaches beyond training her athletes to reach new levels of physical excellence. Like many strength coaches, Gnozzio helps build mental toughness, camaraderie and teamwork among her players while giving them skills to excel in a future career, whether in the athletics world or outside of it.

Gnozzio took the physical tools and inspiration she experienced as an athlete in a college weightroom and transformed them into a career making other athletes better. A First Team All Mid-American Conference field hockey player at Ohio University, Gnozzio is now an assistant strength and conditioning coach at Providence College (PC), in Providence, Rhode Island. She chose to become a strength coach because she has always enjoyed lifting and was highly influenced by her own strength coach at Ohio, Sonny Sano.

"He always motivated me to train hard and enjoy the training for more than just preparation for my sport. I absolutely loved every minute in the weightroom," Gnozzio says, adding that strength training is her calling. One of the things Gnozzio enjoys most about her job is that she gets to know and train almost every athlete on campus (of which there are over 300), something sport coaches don't get to do.

PC's strength program is designed so that athletes do a team lift at least once a week, with additional small group or one-on-one training sessions to work on each athlete's particular needs. This means Gnozzio trains the men and women equally, and she says that having confidence in her knowledge of exercise science and technical experience performing and teaching the more difficult lifts have allowed her to excel as a coach.

. . . a recent report found that nearly 85 percent of Division 1 strength and conditioning coaches are male.

Being a female strength coach is a somewhat unique situation; a recent report found that nearly 85 percent of Division 1 strength and conditioning

coaches are male. However, Gnozzio's co-assistant at PC is a woman, Natalie LaSalle.

PC head strength coach Ken White says that he hired both women because they were the best candidates for the job. White provides a strong base of support for his assistants by mentoring, teaching and encouraging them to excel in coaching the athletes.

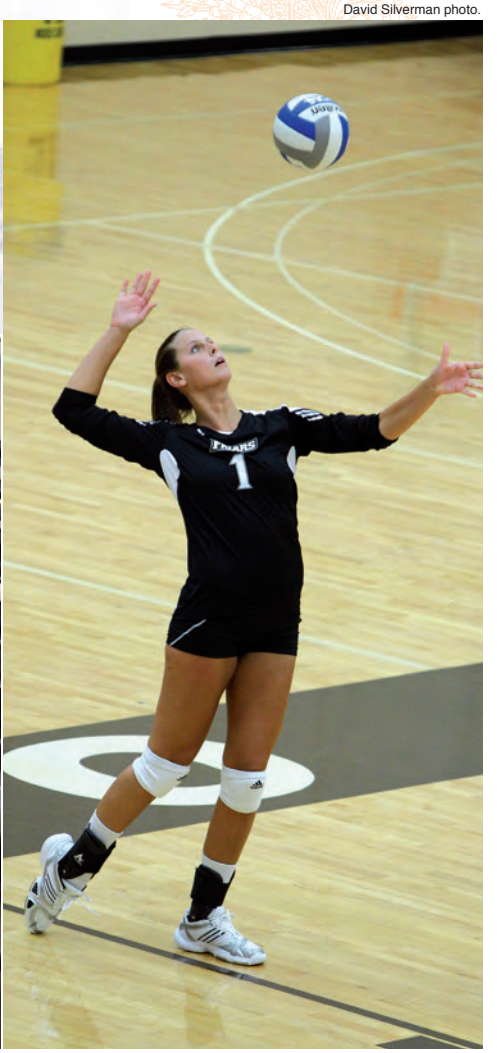
"Coach White instilled in me a confidence to believe in what I am doing and to try to improve a little bit every day," Gnozzio says, adding that her experience negotiating the demands of being a student-athlete has helped her to connect and relate to her athletes. "Knowing what it is like to

Providence College Athletics photo.

David Silverman photo.

Lauren Fletcher (volleyball), Jen Abrams (softball) and Justin Gates (ice hockey) are a few of the athletes Gnozzio has trained at Providence College. Gnozzio is shown working with Gates, along with (l-r) Abrams, Laura Veharanta (ice hockey) and Fletcher.

David Silverman photo.



University of Ohio photo.

Gnozzio was a scholarship field hockey player at Ohio University and is now training in weightlifting, representing the Team BFS Weightlifting Club.

be midway through the season, lifting, taking exams and staying on top of the little personal life you have, is something you can't learn from a book but is extremely valuable when designing a strength program," she says. This ability to coach athletes with compassion, along with her education (she holds a BA in Sports Management and an MA in Coaching Education, and she did course work in counseling), her technical knowledge of basic strength movements and her ability to power clean, snatch, squat and bench press impressive weights means she can "walk the talk." Anyone who may have questioned her expertise is soon won over by the effectiveness of her methods in the weightroom.

A recent study on the role and effectiveness of female strength coaches found that mentorship and technical knowledge are two factors that are helping women successfully cross the gender

So You Want to Be a Strength Coach

If you are interested in pursuing a career in strength and conditioning at the college or high school level, here are a few tips to join the women who are leading the way:

1. Start lifting in a program such as BFS at a young age so that you learn to perform and teach the more technical lifts such as the squat, power clean and snatch correctly.
2. Train regularly and develop your own strength and conditioning so that you can "walk the talk."
3. Get a college degree in the exercise sciences. This is essential if you want to be a college strength coach because you will need to become a certified strength and conditioning specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association in order to get a job at a university, and a prerequisite to take the test is a bachelor's degree.
4. Volunteer or intern with a high school or collegiate strength program as soon as you can. Develop your coaching style and résumé by learning from as many coaches as possible.
5. Plan to get a graduate assistanceship in the strength and conditioning program at the university you go to for graduate school. This is an important step to getting a full-time position as an assistant.
6. Try to find a mentor coach who has successfully coached athletes. Learn from them and cultivate the mentor-mentee relationship.
7. Develop a network of coaches, sports administrators and, especially, other women who also have a passion for excellence in sports and strength coaching.
8. Once you have a BA, get a master's degree in the exercise sciences or a related field. All strength coaching positions prefer you to have an MA, and getting one will put you on a level playing field with male candidates for jobs.
9. Go to coaching seminars and conferences. Although it may be intimidating to be one of a handful of women out of hundreds of men at a training clinic, the experience is critical and you will be forging the way for other women.
10. Show your passion for training and for coaching. A commitment to excellence and hard work and a love of helping athletes will go a long way to establishing yourself as a coach.
11. Have confidence in your abilities and don't let anyone discount you in the strength and conditioning field because you are female.
12. Understand that strength coaching requires hard work and long hours. It's not uncommon to start coaching athletes at 6 a.m. and not finish until 7 or 8 at night during the school year. On the other hand, you may get summers off, or work much shorter hours when many students are away from campus.

barrier in the college weightroom. The study also found that although women have an increasingly important presence in the weightroom, they are still very much a minority and, unfortunately, advancement opportunities are scarce.

The main concern for a female strength coach in the NCAA is the difficulty in advancing to a position as head coach, particularly at schools that have a football program, since the head strength coach typically works with the football team. Gnozzio mentions her goal is to be a head strength coach someday, but she adds that there are currently no female head strength coaches except at all-women schools. Still, Gnozzio thinks it is a reasonable goal if she finds an athletic program that is as supportive as the one at PC. "Every generation of females in this industry needs to keep doing their part to reach gender equity," she says, acknowledging that it won't happen overnight and "will require time, perseverance and hard work."

There are select instances of female head strength coaches. For example, in 1984 Meg Ritchie-Stone was hired as the head strength coach at University of Arizona, making her the first woman ever to be appointed as head strength coach of a Division 1 university. Presently, Andrea Hudy is head strength coach for the University of Kansas men's basketball team and holds the title of Assistant Athletic Director of Sports Performance, making her essentially a head strength coach, although there is a male director of the football strength program at KU.

Another obstacle for female strength coaches in the NCAA is the view that male teams will perform best with a male strength coach. Correct or not, a study on Division 1 athletes' attitudes toward male and female coaches found that the male athletes would prefer working with a male strength coach no matter how qualified the female might be. "The results were very disheartening and made me nervous," Gnozzio says about her feelings after she read the article in college. "Luckily, in my personal experience it hasn't been a problem," and she adds that what it really comes down to is athlete coachability and the respect that athletes have for their coaches.

Head strength coach Ken White with Gates, Veharanta, Gnozzio, Abrams and Fletcher.

Gnozzio suggests that making athletes comfortable training with a male or female coach depends on finding a coaching style that will fit each athlete and team. "If we as coaches are genuinely there to improve our athletes, they have no problem accepting us and using us as a tool to help them reach the next level," Gnozzio says.

The authors for the study on gender preference, Magnusen and Rhea, suggest the responsibility to change male athletes' perspective toward female strength coaches lies with athletic departments to help diminish bias towards female coaches. Magnusen and Rhea also suggest that male athletes be exposed to female strength coaches earlier in their sport experience – both valid suggestions.

The responsibility lies just as much with the women who want to be coaches. "I know I have a better chance of changing what I do than what other people do," Gnozzio says, suggesting a very proactive method of change. "A lack of women in any field can be based on how females perceive a position, not just on how men perceive the field to be."

There's no doubt that as more and more girls grow up strength training in programs such as BFS, they will develop the technical skills and love for being strong and fast. With this background and the growing presence of women coaching in college weightrooms, girls and young women will feel the freedom to pursue a career in strength coaching. By looking at how the personal training industry has evolved over the past decade, it's clear that women have a passion for fitness and strength.

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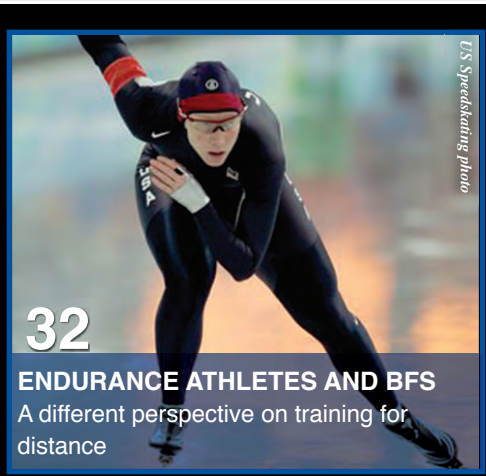

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