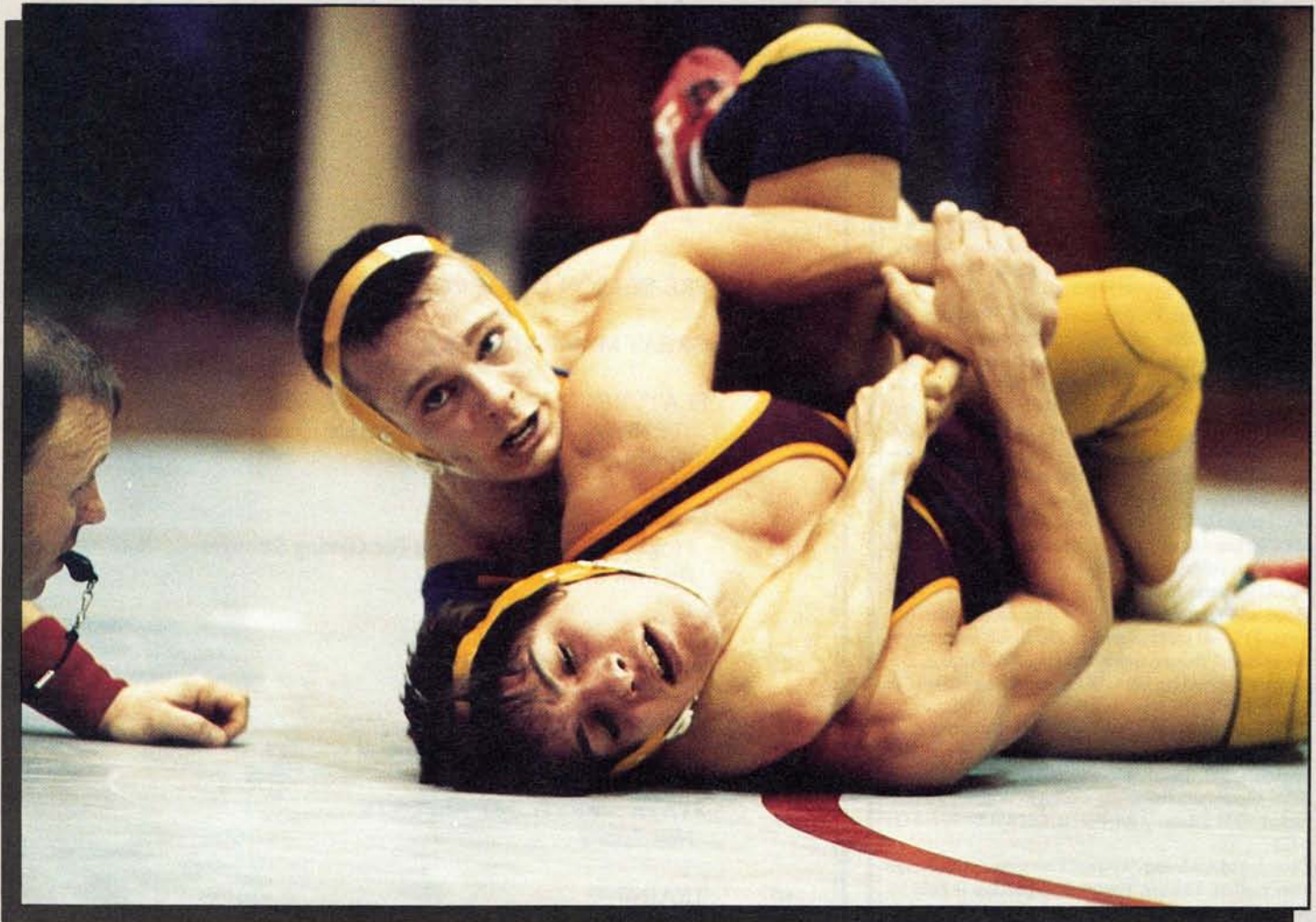




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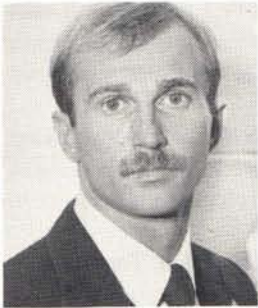
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BY MATT BRZYCKI
Rutgers University

COACHING TIPS

PROGRESSION: A REQUIREMENT FOR GETTING STRONGER

Getting stronger is quite simple. In order for an individual to increase his strength, two things must be present. First of all, there must be a resistance or a "load" placed on the musculature. It doesn't really matter whether the resistance is from a barbell, a machine, a barbell-loaded machine or another human being. Your muscles will not develop one way with machines and another way with barbells. The only thing that matters is that there is an adequate load on the musculature. The next time you watch a wrestling match, see if you can tell which athletes trained with barbells, which athletes trained with machines and which athletes don't lift weights at all. You'll readily see that the type of equipment that an individual trains with has very little to do with how his muscles develop.

The second factor that must be present is progression. Many individuals



neglect to emphasize this very important factor; some fail to consider it altogether! How many people do you know that have performed the same number of reps with the same amount of weights for months and maybe even years? Suppose that today you did a set of leg curls for 10 reps with 100 pounds and a month later you're still doing 10 reps with 100 pounds. It's not likely that you've gotten any stronger. On the other hand, what if you were able to do 11 reps with 120 pounds a month later? In this case, you were able to perform 10% more reps with 20% more weight. That's excellent progress over a period of one month!

The fact of the matter is that in order for a muscle to increase in size and strength, you must force it to do progressively harder work. A muscle must be stimulated (or "overloaded") with a workload that is increased throughout the course of a program. Legend has it that Milo of Crotona periodically lifted a baby bull on his shoulders. Milo's strength increased as the bull increased in weight. Indeed, this crude method of progression was responsible for his strength gains.

Every time your athletes work out, encourage them to increase the weight and/or the repetitions. This can be viewed as a "double progressive" technique (resistance and repetitions). Taxing your muscles in this manner will cause them to adapt to the imposed stress; your muscles adapt to stress by increasing in size and strength. The extent to which this occurs then becomes a function of your genetics.

Each time your athletes attain the maximum number of prescribed repetitions, have them increase the resistance. The progression need not be in Herculean leaps and bounds. Let each athlete increase the load in an amount that he is comfortable with. Fortunately, we can accomplish this more systematically than Milo and his baby bull!! Progressions in resistance should be 5% or less.

Et cetera

As you can see, increasing the functional strength of your wrestlers can be quite simple. Remember, progression is the heart and soul of getting stronger. Certainly, other factors such as intensity, frequency, duration and recovery are important, but progression is an absolute necessity for getting stronger. Ten years from now, progression will be a requirement for increasing strength...a hundred years from now progression will still be required. So, although


the form of resistance has evolved quite a bit from the "bovine state", the concept of progression will simply never change.

(NOTE: For more information on A Practi-

cal Approach To Strength Training, please write: Masters Press, 5025 28th Street SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506 or call 1-800-722-2677) □

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