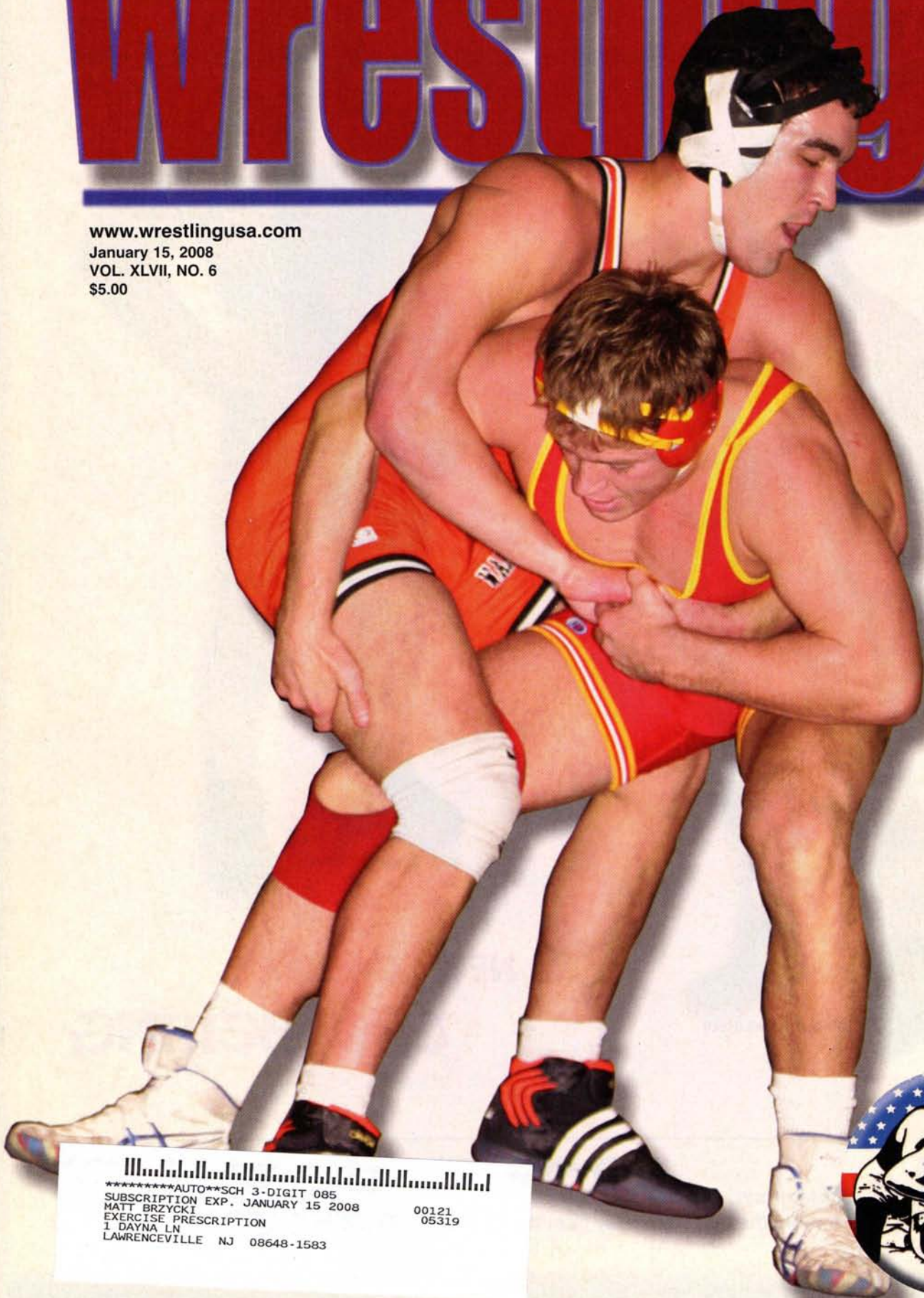


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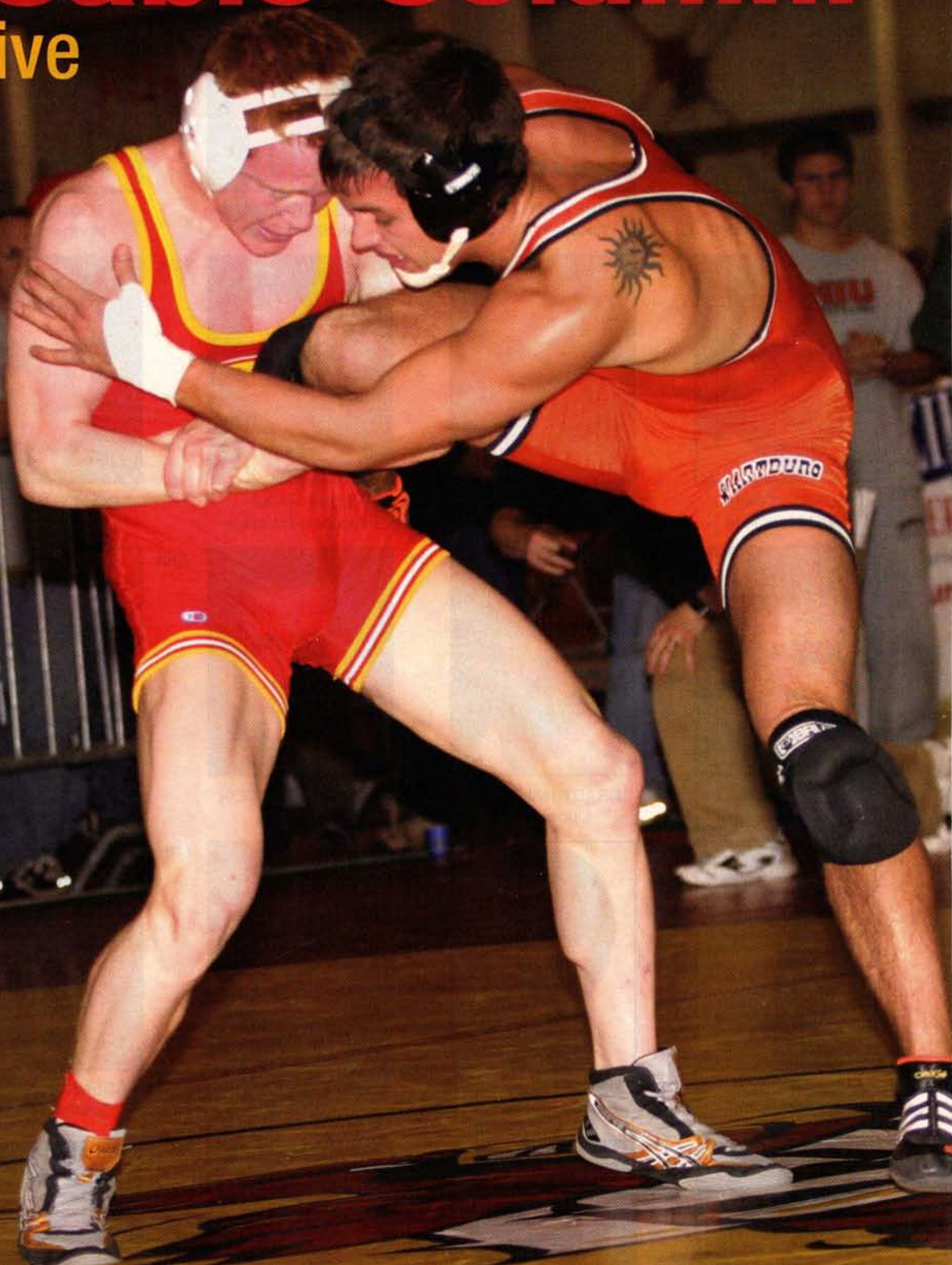


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The Cable Column: An Effective Tool for Strength Training



By Matt Brzycki



2007 Cyclone Open Finals - 157 lbs. Cyler Sanderson (Iowa State), has a single leg on Aaron Wernimont (Wartburg). Sanderson decisioned Wernimont 8-5. Photo by John Johnson.



One of the most under-utilized pieces of equipment in the weight room is the cable column. Yet, this one machine allows you to train most of the major muscles in your body.

EXERCISES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Numerous exercises can be done with the cable column. Here are specific descriptions for more than a dozen exercises that you can do with this machine to address the muscles of your torso and mid-section.

Upright Row

This multiple-joint movement targets your trapezius (upper portion), biceps and forearms. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a bar. Reach down and grasp the bar with your hands spaced slightly narrower than shoulder-width apart and your palms facing you. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Straighten your arms and place one foot slightly in front of the other. To do the exercise, pull the bar up until it is just below your chin. (Your elbows should be slightly higher than your hands in this position.) Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arms flexed) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arms fully extended).

Lateral Raise

You can train your middle deltoid and trapezius (upper portion) with this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a handle. Reach down and grasp the handle with your left hand. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Turn your feet so that your right side is facing the machine. Position your right hand on your right hip. Hold the handle near the left side of your body with your palm facing your leg. Straighten your left arm and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. To do the exercise, keep your arm fairly straight and raise the handle sideways until your arm is parallel to the floor. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arm parallel to the floor) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arm near your side). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body.

Front Raise

This single-joint movement isolates your anterior deltoid. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a handle. Reach down and grasp the handle with your left hand. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Turn your feet so that your back is facing the machine. Position your right hand on your right hip. Hold the handle near the left side of your body with your palm facing the machine. Straighten your left arm and place your right foot slightly in front of your left foot. To do the exercise, keep your arm fairly straight and raise the handle forward until your arm is parallel to the floor. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arm parallel to the floor) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arm near your side). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body (with your left foot slightly in front of your right foot).

Bent-Over Raise

Your posterior deltoid and trapezius (middle portion) are targeted with this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a handle. Reach down and grasp the handle with your left hand. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Turn your feet so that your right side is facing the machine. Slide your feet away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack. Bend your hips and legs and lean forward at your waist. Position your right hand on your right thigh just above your knee. Hold the handle so that your left arm is across your torso. Straighten your left arm and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. To do the exercise, keep your arm fairly straight and raise the handle sideways until your arm is parallel to the floor. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arm parallel to the floor) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arm across your torso). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body (with your left hand on your left thigh just above your knee).

Internal Rotation

This single-joint movement involves your internal rotators. Adjust the pulley so that it is approximately even with your elbow. Grasp the handle with your left hand and turn your feet so that your left side is facing the machine. Slide your feet away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack. Position your right hand on your right hip. Place your left elbow against the left side of your torso and bend your left arm so that the angle between your upper and lower arms is about 90 degrees. (Your left lower arm will be approximately parallel to the floor.) Position the handle away from your mid-section and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. To do the exercise, pull the handle to your mid-section without moving your elbow away from the side of your torso or changing the angle of your arm. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (the handle near your mid-section) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (the handle away from your mid-section). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body.

External Rotation

You can work your external rotators with this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is approximately even with your elbow. Grasp the handle with your left hand and turn your feet so that your right side is facing the machine. Slide your feet away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack. Position your right hand on your right hip. Place your left elbow against the left side of your torso and bend your left arm so that the angle between your upper and lower arms is about 90 degrees. (Your left lower arm

will be approximately parallel to the floor.) Position the handle against your mid-section and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. To do the exercise, pull the handle away from your mid-section without moving your elbow away from the side of your torso or changing the angle of your arm. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (the handle away from your mid-section) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (the handle near your mid-section). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body.

Bicep Curl

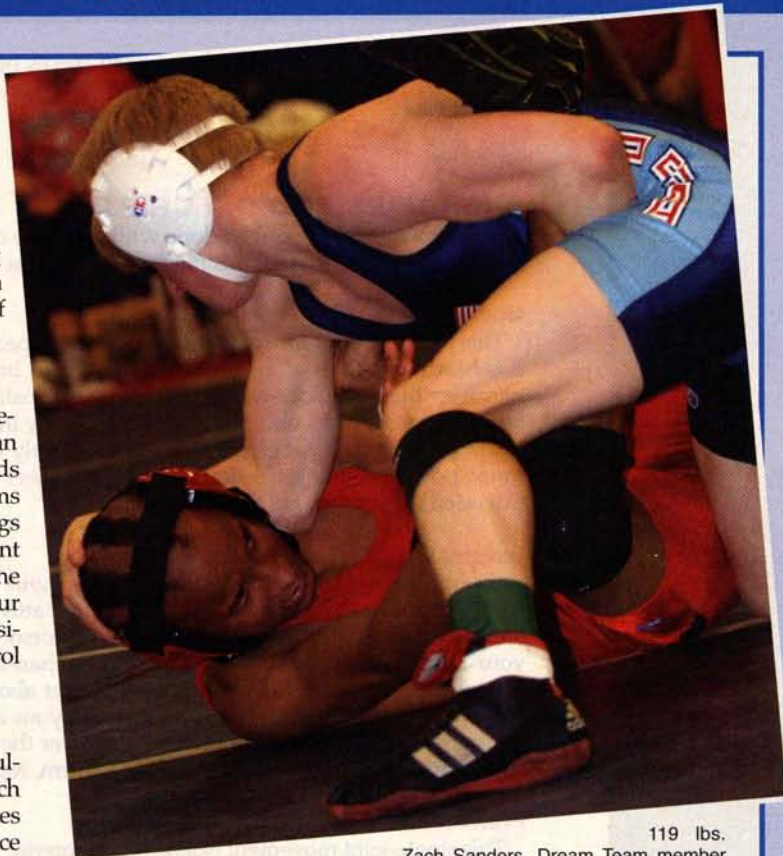
Your biceps and forearms are involved in this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a bar. Reach down and grasp the bar with your hands spaced slightly wider than shoulder-width apart and your palms facing away from you. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Straighten your arms and place one foot slightly in front of the other. To do the exercise, keep your upper arms against the sides of your torso and pull the bar up until it is just below your chin by bending your arms. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arms flexed) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arms fully extended).

Tricep Extension

This single-joint movement works your triceps. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the top of the column and attach a bar. Reach up and grasp the bar with your hands spaced about 4 - 6 inches apart and your palms facing downward. Step backward and place one foot slightly in front of the other. Pull the bar down until your upper arms are against the sides of your torso. To do the exercise, keep your upper arms against the sides of your torso and push the bar down by straightening your arms. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your arms fully extended) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your arms flexed).

Wrist Flexion

You can work your wrist flexors with this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a bar. Reach down and grasp the bar with your palms



119 lbs.
Zach Sanders, Dream Team member and 5x State Champion (Minnesota) uses his signature ankle pick on Cordell Longstreath for the 5-2 victory. Photo by Wyatt Schultz.

facing away from you. Lift the bar, sit down near the end of the back pad of a bench (or a chair or stool) and place the back of your forearms directly over your upper legs. (The bench should be positioned away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack.) Place your thumbs underneath the bar alongside your fingers and spread your hands about 4 - 6 inches apart. Lean forward slightly so that the angle between your upper and lower arms is about 90 degrees or less. Your wrists should be over your kneecaps. To do the exercise, pull the bar up as high as possible by flexing your wrists. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your wrists flexed) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your wrists extended).

Wrist Extension

This single-joint movement uses your wrist extensors. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a handle. Reach down and grasp the handle with your left hand. Lift the handle, sit down near the end of the back pad of a bench (or a chair or stool) and place the front of your left forearm directly over your left upper leg so that your palm is facing down. (The bench should be positioned away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack.) Lean forward slightly so that the angle between your upper and lower arms is about 90 degrees or less. Your left wrist should be over your left kneecap. To

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do the exercise, pull the handle up as high as possible by extending your wrist. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your wrist extended) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your wrist flexed). After performing a set with your left arm, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body.

Finger Flexion

Your finger flexors are targeted with this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a bar. Reach down and grasp the bar with your hands spaced about shoulder-width apart and your palms facing you. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Position the bar in front of your thighs and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. Straighten your arms and allow the bar to roll down your hands to your fingertips. To do the exercise, keep your arms fairly straight and pull the bar up to your thumbs. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your fingers flexed) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your fingers extended).

Crunch

This single-joint movement involves your rectus abdominis and iliopsoas. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the top of the column and attach a rope handle. Reach up, grasp the rope and kneel on the floor. Pull the rope down so that your lower arms are against the sides of your head. Bend forward at the waist so that the angle between your torso and the floor is about 45 degrees. To do the exercise, pull your torso toward your upper legs. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your torso flexed) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your torso extended).

Side Bend

Your obliques and lower back are used in this single-joint movement. Adjust the pulley so that it is near the bottom of the column and attach a handle. Reach down and grasp the handle with your left hand. Stand upright by straightening your legs and torso. Turn your feet to the right so that the left side of your body is facing the pulley. Slide your feet away from the machine so that the weight you intend to lift is separated slightly from the rest of the weight stack. Position the handle near the left side of your body with your palm facing your leg and spread your feet about shoulder-width apart. Place your right palm against the right side of your head. Without moving your hips, bend your torso to the left as far as possible. To do the exercise, bring your torso to the right as far as possible without moving your hips. Pause briefly in this mid-range position (your torso bent to the right) and then lower the weight under control to the starting position (your torso bent to the left). After performing a set for the right side of your body, repeat the exercise for the other side of your body (with the handle in your right hand).

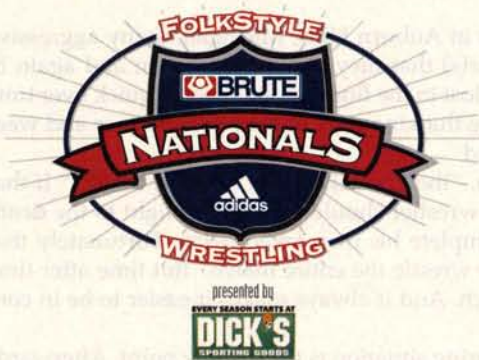
THE LAST REP

Clearly, the cable column is an effective tool for strength training. If anything, it will provide variety to your workouts. Do not underestimate its value in your strength-training program.

Matt Brzycki has authored, co-authored or edited 16 books on strength and fitness including four that are devoted to wrestling. The four are available at all major bookstores or through Cardinal Publishers Group (800-296-0481).

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