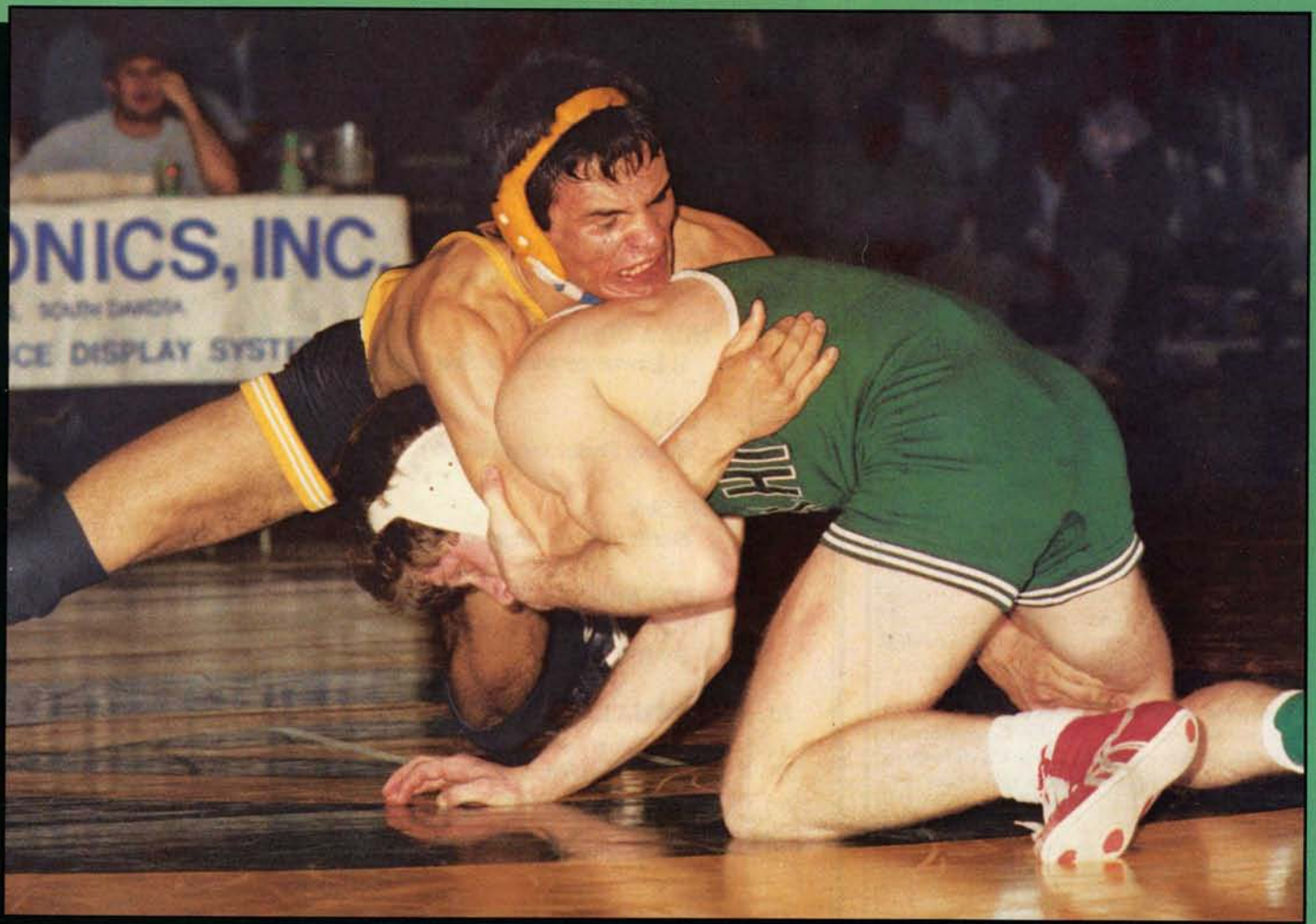


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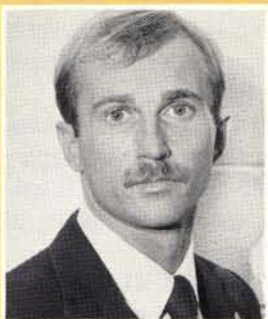
WRESTLING USA



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1988 National Collegiate Wrestling Champions
17th Annual Wrestling Publication Contest



BY MATT BRZYCKI
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Rutgers University

PHOTOS BY
STEVE DUNCAN

COACHING TIPS

The Safe Weight Room - Part II

In your weight room there must be preparation and planning, warning of risks, evaluating athletes for limitations, first aid and medical procedures.

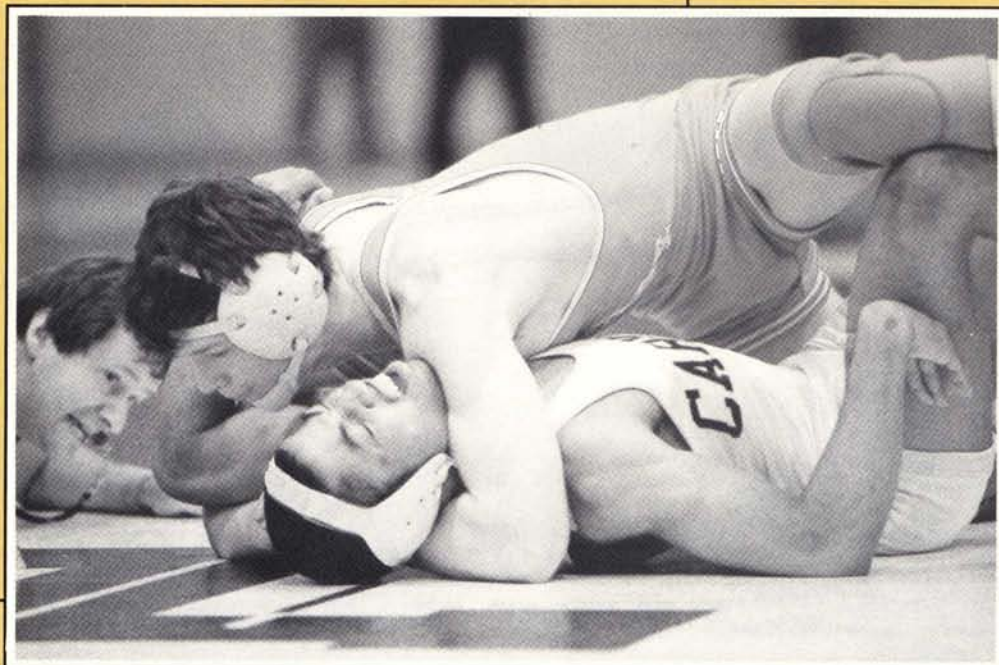
In the first part of this article, negligence and its determining factors were described. Additionally, two of the three main areas of a coach's responsibility in the weight room were discussed - providing adequate supervision and a safe environment. This second part will focus on the third main area of responsibility - the selection and conduct of activities.

SELECTION AND CONDUCT OF ACTIVITIES. This responsibility is divided into preparation and planning, warning of risks, evaluating athletes for limitations, equal pairing of athletes and first aid and medical procedure.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING. You can't simply open the weight room and "wing it." Planning begins with your approach to strength training.

First, your program should be safe. If your main purpose in strength training is to reduce your athletes' risk of injury, it becomes both contradictory as well as unwise to advocate unsafe lifting methods. Require your wrestlers to perform each repetition in a deliberate, controlled manner throughout a full range of motion. Don't allow them to explode with a weight since this exposes their joints and connective tissue to enormous forces which may cause an immediate injury or predispose them to a later injury. Also, avoid any potentially dangerous exercises or activities (such as barbell squats, power cleans, snatches and plyometrics) which place excessive strain on the musculo-skeletal system.

Secondly, your approach should be practical. Asking your athletes to lift four days a week on a split routine while doing 30 sets each



Indiana - Doug Draia on his was to another pin for Portage High School
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workout isn't very reasonable especially if you have 40 wrestlers on your squad. Don't emphasize one repetition maximum lifts either; just because your athletes can lift a lot of weight for one repetition doesn't mean they're suddenly better wrestlers. Remember, you're not training a weight lifting team. In addition, your athletes should not spend an inordinate amount of time bench pressing. Make sure your program addresses all of the body's major muscle groups and require your wrestlers to perform neck strengthening exercises.

Your program should also be efficient. Although split routines, pyramiding, periodization and other competitive lifting techniques are certainly effective, they aren't usually economical in terms of time spent. Your athletes should strive to obtain the maximum results in the least amount of time.

Finally, your program should be productive. It makes little sense to have your wrestlers engage in strength training if your approach doesn't yield favorable results.

There are a few additional points to consider in your planning. You should schedule an orientation meeting or a strength training clinic in which your athletes receive information concerning sound strength training fundamentals. They should also be given instruction in using the equipment properly and safely. In addition, you should explain the potential risks of injury due to utilizing poor lifting techniques (and frequently remind your athletes while they are lifting).

Give your new wrestlers a brief, basic routine when they first start out. This will give them time to adapt to the intensity of your program and enable them to understand more of what they're doing. To avoid possible injury, have your athletes increase their resistance by 5% when they perform the maximum number of repetitions. For instance, if one of your wrestlers is bench pressing 200 pounds, a 10 pound jump would be a 5% increase in weight. On the other hand, if he's curling 40 pounds, that same 10 pound jump would represent a 25% increase in weight, which may invite injury.

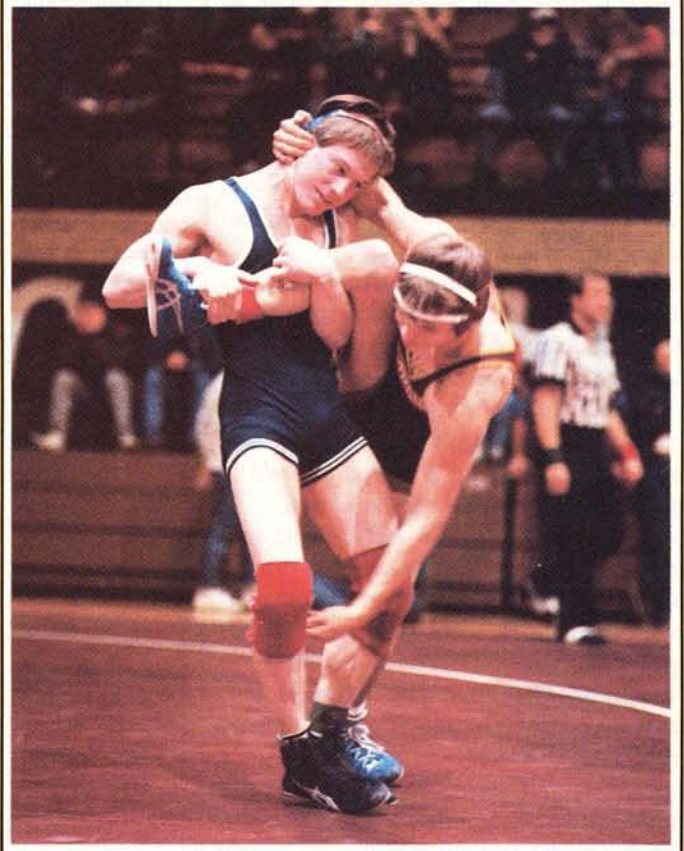
Each coach must determine how many athletes he can adequately supervise based on staff, equipment, time, space and experience. So, don't schedule 40 athletes to lift at the same time in a 1000 square foot facility.

Lastly, don't merely keep abreast of current strength training information - read it critically to determine if it is indeed safe, practical, efficient and productive. Be wary of routines that are based on either personal anecdotes or biased research. You should also keep in mind that some programs are advocated by individuals who stand to profit financially.

WARNING OF RISKS. You may be found negligent if you do not sufficiently warn your players of the risks involved in lifting weights. Your warnings should be clear and repeated as often as is necessary to ensure compliance.

Your athletes can only assume those risks which are inherent to weight training. For example, there's always a possibility that a weight could be accidentally dropped on someone's foot or that someone's finger could get caught in a machine. However, if you do not warn your wrestlers of this possibility they may not be responsible. Furthermore, athletes should not assume the risk of any improper techniques or potentially dangerous exercises which are recommended by their coach.

Although some equipment manufacturers are placing warning labels on their products such as "Keep Hands Away While Machine Is In Use" and "Do Not Use Without



Indiana - Bellmont's 135 lb Paul Gunsett gets ready to deliver Chesterton's Brad Nilson to the mat in the finals of the Mishawaka Tournament. Gunsett won 6-4

Proper Supervision," you must still make sure that your athletes have read and understand the warnings.

Finally, provide your athletes with a written set of rules governing the use of the facility and make sure they understand the content. Persistent disregard for the rules should be dealt with by suspension of lifting privileges.

EVALUATING ATHLETES FOR LIMITATIONS. You have a legal duty to make sure your athletes are physically able to strength train safely. You can use the team physician and athletic trainer as your resources to determine any restrictions on lifting. By all means, require your athletes to obtain a thorough medical examination each year before engaging in a strength training program or a re-evaluation for return after an injury.

EQUAL PAIRING OF ATHLETES. You also have a legal responsibility to pair your athletes so that one person is not placed at a gross disadvantage in terms of size, weight or maturation. Imagine if one of your athletes got injured on the bench press because the partner you assigned was physically unable to spot a heavy barbell. Additionally, matching your athletes properly will decrease the likelihood of one wrestler injuring another during a partner resisted exercise.

FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES.

When performed, this is your most important legal responsibility. Whenever an athlete under your supervision is injured, you must provide

*Use your common sense -
you owe it to yourself and
especially to your athletes*

reasonable medical assistance as soon as possible. This requires basic first aid skills and a system of obtaining trained medical personnel quickly. Unless you are adequately trained, don't go beyond basic first aid treatment. In carrying out this duty, you can be found negligent if you do nothing, if you select the wrong action or if you perform improper medical care.

It is recommended that you review and/or renew your first aid and CPR skills as needed. Keep the telephone numbers of the school nurse and an ambulance near the phone. You should also have a first aid kit in the weight room containing sterile dressings, tape, band-aids, etc. Lastly, an Injury Report should be made in the event of a serious injury.

CONCLUDING REMARKS. The subject of drug abuse merits separate discussion. It is unethical for a coach to recommend or distribute anabolic steroids, human growth hormones or any other illegal drug to his athletes. Distributing illicit drugs is also a felony, coaches. Moreover, deaths directly attributed to steroid abuse are now being documented. If you recommend steroids to an athlete and he develops any life-threatening symptoms, you could be brought to trial and sued because of gross negligence on your part.


It's often said that "anybody can sue anyone for anything." This may be true, but coaches can go a long way in decreasing their chances of being sued by understanding their legal duties and operating their weight rooms in a safe and competent manner. Use your common sense - you owe it to yourself and especially to your athletes.

EDITORS NOTE: Mr. Brzycki will have a regular column in Wrestling U.S.A. You may submit questions concerning strength training. Send your questions to Matt Brzycki, Assistant Strength Coach, Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, Division of Intercollegiate Athletics CN 5061 New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903. ■

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