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WRESTLING USA

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What You Should Eat After Weigh-In
& A Day Long Tournament
Problems Arise When You Train
Like A Competitive Weightlifter



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COACHING TIPS

The problem arises when you elect to train your athletes like competitive weight lifters

CONVENTIONAL STRENGTH TRAINING

**Milo...Hercules...Sandow....Anderson...Schwarzenegger.
...Kazmaier...Suleymanoglu...Superman.**

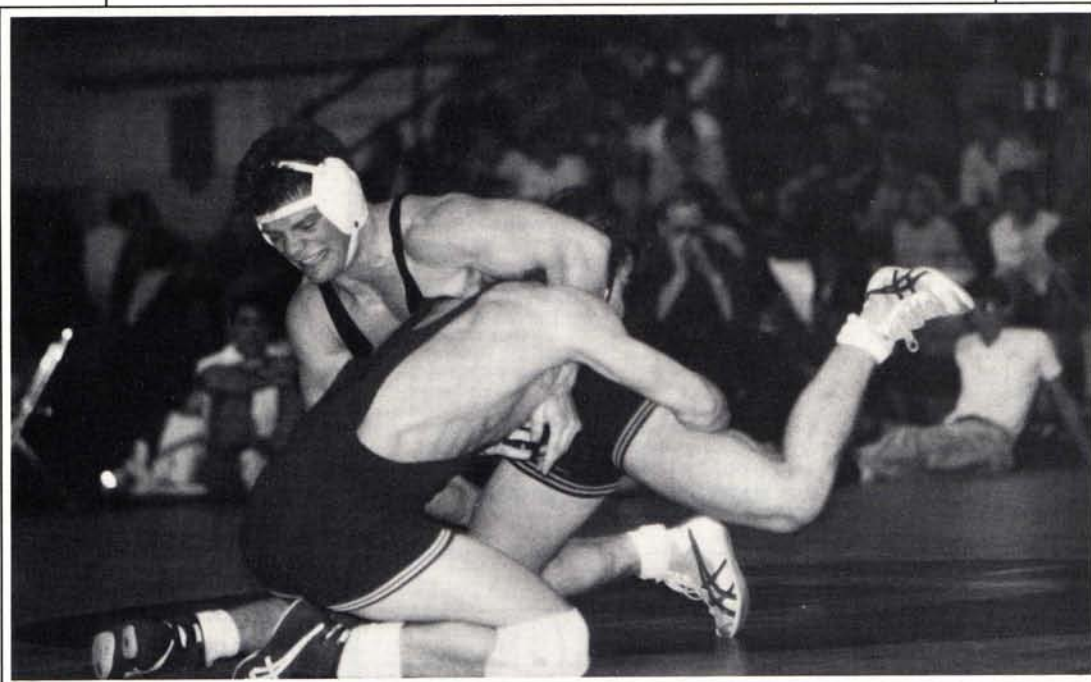
Some are real while a few are imaginary. Nevertheless, all of them are legendary for their feats of strength. In the early 1970's, several universities and professional teams began to realize the importance of strength training and, therefore, sought advice from individuals who appeared to be well versed in this area. This professional became known as the "strength coach." Traditionally, strength coaches have been chosen from the ranks of the competitive weightlifters - the Olympic lifters, the powerlifters and occasionally the bodybuilders. This was only natural since competitive lifters seem to exemplify the highest levels of strength and health. After all, they can lift a lot of weight and generally have decent physiques, right?

The problem arises when strength coaches elect to train their athletes like competitive weightlifters. (For the record, I am a former competitive powerlifter.) Naturally, many strength coaches advocate programs which are familiar to them. Generally, these are programs that they themselves used as competitive weightlifters. As a result, many athletes are now using weightlifting programs under the guise of weight training programs. This is frequently referred to as "traditional" or "conventional" strength training.

Contrary to popular belief, the difference between weight training and weightlifting is more than just semantics. The main purpose of weight training is to reduce your athletes' potential for injury while the second purpose is to increase your athletes' performance potential. But make no mistake about it - weight

Photo - Mike Carpenter (Iowa) grimaces while countering a takedown attempt by Jeff Jordan in the 150 lb finals of the Northern Open. Jordan won the match 5-2.

Photo by
C. Fuller, the
Crossface.



training is primarily an injury prevention service.

Weight training is most often typified by relatively brief sessions of high intensity exercise performed two to three times per week. In general, one or two exercises are designated for the body's major muscle groups. Each exercise is performed for a prescribed number of repetitions, usually 10-15 for the lower body and 6-12 for the upper body. Repetitions are done throughout a full range of motion in a deliberate, controlled manner.

On the other hand, weightlifting (or conventional strength training) is characterized by multiple sets of low repetition movements performed in a rapid, explosive manner. The ultimate goal of weightlifting is to lift as much weight as possible for one

repetition. The conventional strength program usually emphasizes the movements that are performed in competition by weightlifters - the clean and jerk, snatch, squat, bench press and deadlift. From these basic lifts a number of generic offspring have been conceived such as the power clean, squat clean, push press, push jerk, power pull, snatch pull, hang clean pull, ad nauseam. These movements generally make up the so-called "core exercises" of a weightlifting program. Moreover, the ability to lift heavy weights for a one repetition maximum is often used as a barometer to measure potential achievement in the athletic arena.

Conventional strength programs have several areas of major concern that should be addressed in greater detail:


POWER CLEAN, ET AL

The power clean. Many coaches swear by it; many athletes swear at it. Arguably, it is the one exercise most often associated with the conventional strength program. For decades, this movement has been used to mimic certain explosive sports skills with the belief that there will be a positive transfer of motor ability to the athletic arena. Unfortunately, there is absolutely no evidence in the motor learning literature to suggest that power cleans will make you more explosive or otherwise "carry over" to the performance of sports movements. Furthermore, there is no exercise done in the weight room that will have a direct effect on a given sports skill or cause your athletes to become more explosive. Power cleans will only improve your ability to do power cleans...barbell squats will only improve your ability to do barbell squats...and so on. Therefore, many athletes are spending needless time and energy learning useless competitive lifting techniques.

There's no question that this movement can be productive for increasing strength. The biggest concern, however, lies in the inherent risk of injury. Most of the exercises used by competitive weightlifters expose the muscles, joints and connective tissue to excessive forces that can result in numerous traumatic injuries or predispose an athlete to later injuries.

Studies have suggested that weightlifters may be prone to developing spondylolysis. That was one of the conclusions drawn by the American Orthopedic Society for Sports Medicine. During an interview dealing with a recent study, a medical doctor stated, "We believe that spondylolysis represents a mechanical failure caused by the overload of competitive lifts." He continued by specifically mentioning the clean and jerk, the snatch and the deadlift.

The two photographs that accompany this article depict two athletes competing in the Los Angeles Olympics. Please direct your attention to the weightlifter who appears to be doing the limbo with a loaded barbell (Photo 1). This is actually a West German athlete who lost control of the barbell during the initial phase of the clean and jerk. The initial phase is essentially a power clean. Miraculously, this individual was able to walk away uninjured. The other individual wasn't quite that lucky. (photo 2) This U.S. athlete actually hit his head with the bar, collapsed to the platform during the lift and remained lying there for several



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minutes. Eventually, he had to be carried away. The athlete suffered a dislocated right elbow and a strained right knee. (Please note the right elbow and shoulder) Hey, these guys were highly skilled weightlifters who practiced perfecting their techniques for countless hours. Are we going to train our athletes with these movements when the potential for traumatic injury is so obvious? The risk certainly seems unjustified to me.

Barbell squats are yet another frightful story. Besides causing excessive sheer forces in the knee joint, placing on one's shoulder causes compression of the spinal column. This is most evident in the bottom position of the barbell squat, where the anterior aspect of the lumbar vertebrae is compressed. This pushes the intervertebral disks in posterior direction and could result in a herniated or ruptured disk. In fact, research has revealed electromyographical activity of 6-10 times bodyweight in the lumbar region when squatting explosively with as little as 1-1 1/2 times bodyweight! Again, this is another movement that seems to invite injury rather than prevent injury.

SUMMING IT UP

Recently, I received a letter from Lee LaFlamme, a wrestling coach from Wisconsin with 18 years of coaching experience. Lee stated that he has read numerous articles on weight training but noticed that there were many differences of opinion. He added that this can lead to a great deal of confusion. After all, what is right? More importantly, what is wrong? As coaches, it's our task to read information critically and determine what is the most efficient, productive, practical and safest way to train our athletes.

For example, most of the exercises used by competitive lifters can certainly be productive. However, many of the movements can also be destructive. Therefore, your athletes should not train like weightlifters. Coaches who advocate potentially dangerous exercises are doing a disservice to their athletes and may also be setting themselves up for a lawsuit.

In the next issue, a method of strength training will be examined that is more practical and much safer. We'll describe the programs used to train the wrestlers at Penn State, Pittsburgh and Rutgers as well as the 1988 Super Bowl Champion Washington Redskins. □

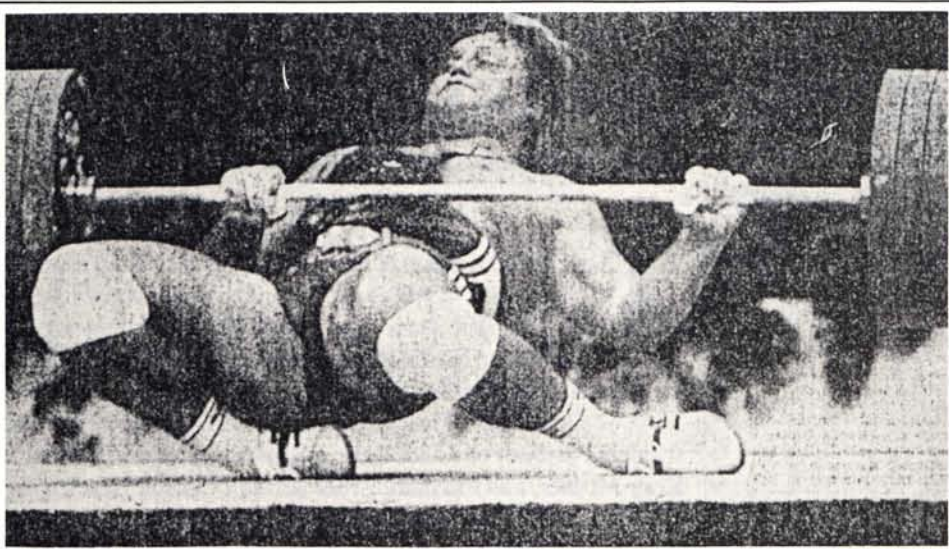


Photo 1

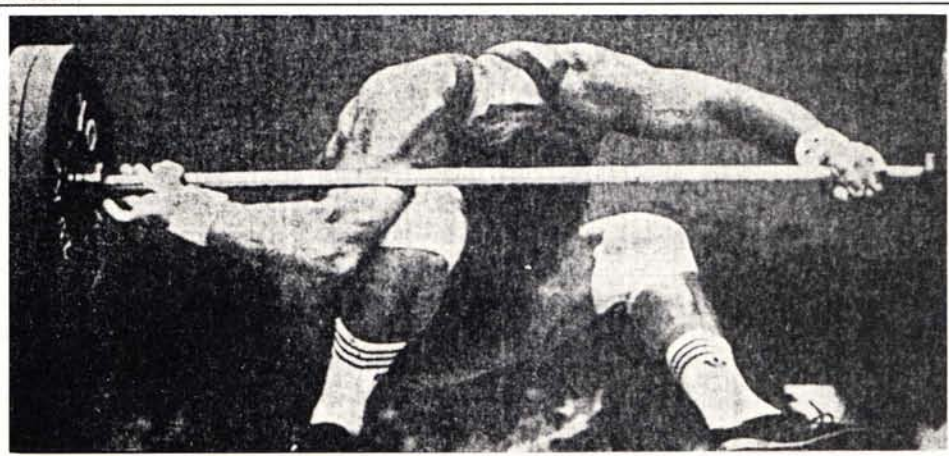


Photo 2

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