

THE BFS TOTAL PROGRAM

What is it? How is it different? Where did it come from?

Like most coaches, I have received a lot of help from a lot of different sources when formulating a direction and philosophy. And, like most coaches, I am always looking for ways to improve. The BFS Program is ever evolving. However, as I think about where our BFS Program came from, I would have to single out three primary sources. First, George Frenn, who symbolizes and personifies the throwers in track and field in the late 1960's. Second, Stefan Fernholm, who was also a thrower, brought to BFS all the remarkable knowledge from the old Soviet Union and the Eastern European nations in the 1980's. Finally, the third source is the high school and college athletes I coached earlier in my career from the mid-60's to the late-70's. They were the inspiration for the BFS Set-Rep System.

George Frenn was a Hammer Thrower. His training methods molded him into our nation's best thrower in his day. During the summers in the late 1960's, I would live in the Los Angeles area to be near George. During the school year, I was a football coach in the state of Washington. I had already been a strength coach at the University of Oregon and Oregon State. I had trained some with the San Diego Chargers in the mid-sixties, who were at the forefront of weight training for pro football. I also had lived in Austria for a year and was on an Olympic Weight Lifting team. So, I didn't exactly just fall off the turnip truck. But, when I saw George train, I knew this was it. He had the secret.

Along with George, there were many other throwers who came from all over the country to live in the LA area where they could train and throw all-year round. As a football coach, I looked at these guys and was dazzled. There were at least thirty of them. They weighed an average of 270 pounds and ran 4.6 to 4.7 in the forty. Pro football players, at that time, were far weaker, slower and smaller. It didn't take a genius to figure out who I wanted on my football team. Obviously, the natural question to ask was, "What the heck are you guys doing?"

George was the master, along with Jon Cole, who was a Discus Thrower. Everybody learned from these two guys. All the throwers acknowledged these two as the gurus of their time. George and Jon were also Power Lifters. They would enter meets in the off-season to

keep their competitive edge. They owned all the world records. Even at 242 pounds, they could lift more than the super heavyweights. They Benchd about 600, Parallel Squatted between 850 and 900, Dead Lifted between 750 and 800 pounds and Power Cleaned 400 plus. Athletes from the Soviet Union were even in awe of these two. They came over to our country to observe and learn. We were the dominate force in the world at that time in the throwing events. They wanted our secret.

What was the secret? It was quite radical at the time. Stretch hard, lift with free weights, vary your workout, and concentrate on the big multi-joint lifts that effect the legs and hips. In other words, all athletes should Parallel Squat and Power Clean above anything else. These lifts could be augmented by doing a few, but only a few, auxiliary lifts. The lifting and stretching should be complimented by doing speed and jump drills. That's the big secret.

I took this secret back to my high school. We won the mythical 1970 big school State Championship in the state of Washington. All the opposing team could get was minus 77 yards. I also coached track. I had 11 guys who threw the Discus between 140 and 180 feet. If you could not throw 155 feet, you were a JV guy. I don't believe any high school has ever been able to say that to this day. We had bunches of high school kids who could Bench 300, deep Parallel Squat 400 and Power Clean 250 pounds.

I then went to BYU to be their strength coach. It was at BYU that I did a movie called Bigger Faster Stronger. It was a hit. Now the secret was out nationwide. Obviously, other throwers went all over the country and they spread the secret. Boyd Eply, a pole vaulter, became the strength coach at Nebraska. His track background gave him the secret. Many of his assistants became strength coaches at other universities. The secret was spreading like wildfire. But to me, it was a slow process. It was amazing to me that other coaches from other sports just could not get it.

The NBA did not start getting strength coaches until the 1980's, and with pro baseball it took until the 1990's. Even today, if you took all the high school

athletes in all the boys and girls sports, you would still find less than half doing the secret. It is very simple. If you want to make your success happen and reach your full potential as an athlete, you must do the secret.

Today, about 95% of college strength coaches use the secret in one form or another. The other 5% use the High Intensity System, which is the only other system to survive over the years. This was developed by Arthur Jones with his Nautilus machines. Some great football teams use this system or its variations. Teams like Michigan, Michigan State and Penn State. Obviously, you can win with either system. With both systems, coaches coach with a passion. Both systems have their athletes work hard and both produce results.

As I have studied both systems, I have found one major difference. The HIT (High Intensity) strength coaches focus on training to prevent injuries with a well-conditioned body. Other coaches and BFS who use the secret, focus on performance records. How fast can you run? How high and far can you jump? How much can you lift? How much can you improve in those areas? Personal records are meticulously kept in order to verify that improvement. That is what drives throwers and most athletes. Therefore, even throwers at the HIT schools do the secret. We at BFS are the same way. We constantly measure our performance. We need concrete proof that we are getting better every day.

Stefan Fernholm was a Discus thrower from Sweden who came to BYU to compete at the college level. He broke the NCAA collegiate record and was a past Olympian. Stefan became a part of BFS in the mid-1980's. We owe him a great deal. He bridged the gap between the United States and the old Soviet Union. Stefan was privy and knowledgeable about the Soviet training methods. The Soviets spent hundreds of million of dollars on developing their system. They took the secret in the early 1970's and elevated it to new levels. They took training very seriously. Their coaches, for example, could get a doctorate in discus, sprinting or weight lifting at the University of Moscow.

Stefan took full advantage of this knowledge. I have never seen an athlete like Stefan. For those who saw Stefan, you know I am not blowing smoke. Stefan weighed 273 at a little over 6-1 in height. He could run a legitimate 4.3 forty and Power Clean 470 pounds from the floor. Stefan was flawless in everything he

did. This is what he brought to our BFS table: Flawless technique! My partners, myself and all our clinicians became better coaches and much greater technicians because of Stefan. Perfection became our focus. By all means do the secret, but you had better execute every facet to perfection to put it all together. Leave no stone unturned. Stefan demonstrated this perfect technique in many of our videos. Unfortunately, Stefan died back in Sweden several years ago, but his legacy lives on.

Track is an individual sport. The throwers could train themselves and maybe one or two others at the same time. The Soviet coaches would get nervous if they had to coach more than three athletes at a time. My challenge was to figure out a way to implement all the basic elements of advanced training used by athletes like Stefan, and put them into a package that could be used by multiple teams at the same time. By being able to coach many athletes at the high school and colleg