

# HOW GOOD IS GOOD?

## The BFS Standards Bring Relevance to Achievements

*Many coaches have asked, “Just how did BFS come up with the standards on your posters? Aren’t some of them too high? Aren’t some of them too low? Just how good is good?”*

I first started thinking about standards in 1964 when I trained my first group of high school athletes. I felt, at the time, if twenty football players could Bench Press 200 pounds or more, you could win a state championship. As I shared my idea, others scoffed. “It’s a lot more complicated than that,” they said.

I was naive. They were right, of course, but I also felt that I was on the right track. I just had to dig a little deeper. I began to observe good high school, college and pro football players (San Diego Chargers). I also observed the world’s best throwers (Discus, Hammer, Shot Put).

I always made it a habit to ask these great throwers what they could lift, how fast they could run and how high they could jump. I matched these results with how far they could throw. Sometimes an individual thrower would try to add a lot of weight and strength in order to improve throwing performance. Almost every time with the elite strength/throwing athlete, this strategy did not work. In other words, if a thrower could already Parallel Squat 600 plus, Power Clean 350 plus and Bench 450 plus at a body weight of 270 pounds, would gaining 20-30 pounds while increasing his strength by 15-20 percent make a difference in throwing performance. With a Discus and Hammer throwers, it rarely made a difference and sometimes it actually hurt their performance. With Shot Putters, this increase made only a little difference. The downside was the tremendous stress on the body to make such gains and also the chance for injury. Often agility and speed would be lost. I learned there was a limit on the profitability of strength and weight gains.

By 1970, I had the elite performance standards which I felt were essential to success at the highest level for big men involved in football or track. These standards are still relevant over thirty years later and are as follows:

Parallel Squat 600, Bench 400, Power Clean 350, Dead Lift 600, Forty 4.6, Vertical Jump 35 and Standing Long Jump 10-6. I figured a man with good, but not necessarily great athletic ability, who stood 6-5 could weigh 270 pounds and achieve the above performance standards.

I was a football strength coach at Oregon State (‘65), University of Oregon (‘67) and Brigham Young University (‘71-’73). This helped me fine tune elite standards with skill athletes. I coached at the high school level from 1967 to 1971. At Sehome High School in Bellingham, Washington, we had bunches of athletes who could Parallel Squat 400, Bench 300, Power Clean 250 and Dead Lift 500. We had fifty players run between 4.5 and 5.0 in the forty. These results helped pave the way for the high school standards. A feature story was done on these players in the old Bob Hoffman Strength & Health magazine. We easily won the mythical state football championship. We were the smallest school (1400) in the biggest classification. The other team had minus 77 yards rushing, but, at that time in history, most teams did hardly anything in strength training.

I also coached the throwers at Sehome. We had 11 guys who could throw the Discus between 140 and 180 feet. If you could not throw 155, you were on the JV team. I don’t think any high school before or since can match that.

Those standards gave me a direction and, more importantly, an expectation. Later, through working with Stefan, the Utah Jazz and my partners Rick and Bob, we added the Sit & Reach and Dot Drill standards. We also have improved our ability to accurately test these standards through tools like the Just Jump, Safety Squat, Speed Trap, etc. We also developed standards for women and younger athletes. In addition, we have

a graduated scale of excellence to help all athletes achieve with a step-by-step formula of excellence through standards.

When I coached high school football, I expected every varsity high school football starter and thrower, except some skill athletes, to achieve at least the All-State standards. At the Division- I college level, I would now expect every starting lineman to Parallel Squat 600, Bench 400, Power Clean 350 from the floor, Dot Drill 45 seconds, run 4.6 on defense and 4.8 on offense, Vertical Jump 35 inches on defense and 33 inches on offense, Standing Long Jump 10-6 on defense and 10-0 on offense, and Sit & Reach five inches past the toes.

“If you can’t or won’t achieve our highest standards, you will hold our football team back. If you are a thrower at the college level and you can’t or won’t do at least the defensive lineman starter requirements, you can’t compete at the national level. You see, a thrower is different than a lineman because nobody can make up for your weaknesses. I just can’t say it any plainer than that.”

“Achieving these standards are what we have to do to make our success happen. We will spend the necessary time and effort to get there. I can’t guarantee that we will win a state or national championship. But, I can guarantee that we will never lose because we lack strength, speed, explosive power or quickness. We will be bigger, faster and stronger. We will be extremely confident in that fact. I will do everything in my power to help you achieve these reachable standards. If everyone will do their part, we will physically dominate our opponents.”

Coach Shepard

(From a 1970 speech)