THE TAKANO ATHLETICS NEWSLETTER VOL. 1, No. 17

This free newsletter is to inform you of events, and thoughts regarding the training of weightlifters and the incorporation of the Olympics lifts and their derivatives into the training of athletes.

Become A Presenter and Share Your Knowledge

Last spring outgoing NSCA Special Interest Group (SIG) chairperson for weightlifting Loren Chiu approached me with the idea of taking over the SIG leadership as he would soon be moving to a new job in his native Canada. I surveyed the board members and decided to take it over as I saw it as an opportunity to spread more good information about weightlifting into the strength and conditioning community and possibly beyond. My vision was to increase the visibility of the sport within the NSCA by compiling a bureau of competent presenters who would be available to speak or present at the NSCA State Clinics.

To this end I am in the process of assembling contact information of volunteers interested in becoming presenters at the state clinics. Right now is a time when there is a considerable amount of interest in either competing in weightlifting or in employing the O-lifts to enhance athletic performance. There is also a great deal of misinformation abounding on the internet. There is a need for good information and the state clinics provide an effective means of putting the knowledgeable coach or practitioner together with interested coaches and participants. Although the financial remuneration is not overwhelming, the experience and the networking opportunities can prove to be invaluable. A presenter with an informative talk or demonstration can enhance his or her credibility and notoriety within the sport and acquire contacts who are in touch with potential athletes or participants.

Although the CSCS certification can add to your credibility with this audience, it is not a necessity if you have a thorough resume within weightlifting or other strength sports. Your presentation should not be a pitch as the audience is not paying to be pitched to. They are seeking good information, and if you can provide it will be a true win-win for everyone involved. If you have any interest in becoming a presenter, or in putting on a clinic please contact me at info@takanoathletics.com. We need to keep getting the word out.

Static Stretches Afterwards

A study published by the UNLV kinesiology department in the September 2008 issue of the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research revealed that static stretching performed before activity sessions severely inhibited the development of power in a group of test subjects composed of both males and females.

"Athletes typically include static stretching as a part of the warm-up, but the evidence is clear that this practice will decrease performance in sports that require explosive movements," according to UNLV kinesiology profession and study co-author Bill Holcomb. "Developing flexibility is importance for reducing sports injury, but the time to stretch is after, not before, performance."

This fits in well with the advice I've offered previously about shortening the warm-up time. Many coaches have athletes spend an inordinate amount of time performing static stretches as part of the warm-up. Not only is this time wasting, but it apparently inhibits athletic performance as well. Supervised training time should be considered precious. The coach should be supervising and overseeing activities that occur during the time span when the athletes energies are at their highest in the workout. Many static stretches, if not all, can be performed when the athlete is less than fresh and without the supervision of a coach. Let's make our workouts more productive.

American Academy of Pediatrics Issues Policy Statement on Strength Training

In April of this year the American Academy of Pediatrics came out with a new policy statement on strength training by children and adolescents. Some of the advice will prove to be helpful to parents, children and coaches, but there are still some areas that should be open to interpretation by professionals.

The statement considers weight training or resistance training safe if performed under proper supervision and with proper technique, but weight training is not recommended for the general population. It is also against competitive powerlifting and bodybuilding, although it later confuses powerlifting with weightlifting.

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For **preadolescents** it recommends that a pediatrician verify that the a child can achieve balance, is proficient in a sport, is disciplined and can follow directions. All of these are open to a fairly broad interpretation.

The study cited recent research that shows that preadolescents can gain strength with weight training with the conclusion being that the gains are due to neurological changes. This is a valid point that should provide some direction for all strength and conditioning practitioners.

Pediatricians are also recommended to ask both the preadolescent and the parent whose idea it is to strength train, whether it is necessary and whether or not there will be appropriate supervision.

There are fewer precautions for **adolescents** but the prevailing theme seems to be that strength training is an appropriate activity for young athletes provided there is proper supervision. The statement goes on to insure that the trainers and facilities have proper credentials.

While many of us in the field remember back to the days when some professional medical bodies discredited all strength training or weight training, it is refreshing to find another organization that objectively views strength training as an appropriate youth activity with the caveat that supervision is the primary factor that insures safety.

Another voice for improved proprioception

I happened across an article written by a David Lemberg (http://total-lifetime-fitness.com/2008/10/08/strength-training-the-magic-of-proprioception/), who wrote a somewhat general piece about the improved proprioceptive benefits from strength training. I mentioned this in my podcast interview on the Strength Power Hour (go to www.takanoathletics.com), and wrote about it briefly in one newsletter. This one benefit of strength training could make the difference between a good athlete and a superb one. Those of you who are trying to tout the benefits of strength and conditioning to a sport coach, an athlete or parents should consider this as a key selling point. It's not something that anyone has made up a test or a metric for, but any athlete who has been in a good strength and conditioning program can attest to the changes that take place on the field of play.

Follow me on Twitter

For those of you who are interested in what I do in order to keep up with the website and what's happening with me as far as the training of athletes goes can follow my activities on Twitter. Just go to http://twitter.com/bobtakano, open up a free account and let me know that you're following me.

Send in any meet or clinic announcements and info for the Training Site Directory

Anyone planning a meet or a seminar should send complete information to me at info@takanoathletics.com in order to get it posted on the events calendar at the Takano Athletics website. We are getting more and more hits lately. Include e-mail addresses if possible. Also anyone with a viable training site and wants it listed in the training site direction should e-mail me with your contact info. Let's make the website a center for information relevant to the weightlifting/strength training community. And don't forget that there are some great articles in the member section for those seeking more information about training, coaching and learning about training routines for top lifters. Check it out at www.takanoathletics.com

The Best Bodyweight

For many athletes interested in becoming world class weightlifters, there will come a time when he or she will have to make the decision of selecting the best bodyweight class for competition. Frequently athletes feel that they can keep their bodyweight low for their height and still compete well with their shorter competitors. Empirical data should prove otherwise. A well trained weightlifter competing in the proper bodyweight class will have a snatch that is within the 78 to 82% range of his or her best clean and jerk. If you are too tall for your bodyweight class your snatch will be significantly above the 82% figure, unless you have poor technique.

If you are fortunate to have a good coach, your coach should figure out your optimal bodyweight class and guide your training and eating in order to reach that class. This is the class at which you will do your best lifting. It will probably put you at a heavier bodyweight than many people would prefer, but it is should just be considered one of the sacrifices that must be made in order to attain championship heights.

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A good case in point is Cao Lei, the women's 75 kg. Champion at the recent Beijing Games. Cao was considered a beauty, very slim during the early days of her career. At 1.68 m (5'6") and 69 kg. (152 lbs.), she was happy with her appearance and felt that she could be successful at those dimensions until she competed against Olympic Champion Lin Chunhong in the 69 kg. Class. It was clear to he that she could never lift comparable weights at 69 kg. A plethora of injuries in 2006 at that bodyweight convinced her that she needed to gain weight.

Figure 1 Olympic 75 kg. champion Cao Lei

The move from 69 to 75 proved to be the right one as Cao earned two golds at the 2006 World's, two more golds at the 2007 world's and a stunning three world record performance for the gold in Beijing.

Remember that the best performances will come from the athletes lifting in the optimal bodyweight classes. Keep you weight too low and your clean and jerk will suffer. You may also get a larger number of injuries and your progress will more than likely slow down.

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