



Q1

Can you give us a bio and background on your education, sports background, experiences, where are you located?

I played basketball in college. When I finished, I didn't have a degree because I had credits from five schools in four years and not all the credits transferred. Therefore, I transferred back to the University of Southern Mississippi. I had started out at Southern Miss. and wanted to finish my degree and go to graduate school hoping to get my Masters in Exercise Science with the long term goal of being a strength coach. Funny thing happened however. Upon graduation, my old coach, James Green had an opening on his staff and talked me into getting into coaching basketball. At this time I was wary of coaching basketball. When I was finished playing I had the opportunity to go play in Germany, but I had some injuries and I was burned out. My dad coached for 36 years, it was all I had really known, and I wanted to see what else was out there. However, Coach Green is persuasive, and I have an incredible amount of respect for him, so I felt that I owed it to him to try. So I started coaching basketball and worked on my masters whenever I had time.

I originally thought I would try it for a year, as I had the notion of moving back to my home town and opening a facility of my own. Well I fell in love with the game all over again. In my third semester of grad school, 9 hours from finishing my degree, I switched majors to Sports Administration because in college basketball coaching, this is the best degree to have, regardless of the level of coaching. And, frankly, it is a very good degree for someone getting into any aspect of sport. Southern Miss. has one of the oldest and most respected Sports Administration degree programs in the country. So all in all, I feel it worked out great.

I stayed at Southern Miss. for 3 years and during the summer of 2004, I took a high school coaching job, and while I enjoyed it, I liked the college level better. I did not return this year as I am considering several different ventures ranging from returning to the college level in the spring, to opening a facility and even pharmaceutical sales position - believe it or not. I've got a lot on the table right now.

Q2

How did you get into the Strength & Conditioning?

My freshmen year in high school I started on the varsity basketball team. I was 6 feet tall and weighed every bit of 140 pounds! The next spring/summer I started lifting, and while I added some size, I also grew 3 inches! Therefore, I was more or less a taller version of my old self. I was around 6 feet 3 inches and 160 pounds. Still pretty thin! The next summer I started really getting into lifting. I started trying different programs and I started conscientiously eating more and really increased my strength. My junior year the weight made a difference; I had grown another inch and was 10-15 pounds heavier. By my senior year I had written a research paper on strength and conditioning for my senior paper and had really become interested in what worked, what didn't and why and became really curious as to what

professional and olympic athletes were doing. My senior year I was 6 feet 5 inches 180 pounds; pretty thin, yes, but also, for a 6-5 point guard on the high school level, bigger than most. There are plenty of 6-5 college athletes who are only about 180-190 lbs.

By this time I was pretty much hooked on strength and conditioning. I was reading all sorts of books (good and bad), and it was really helping me improve my on-court abilities. However, in June before my freshmen year in college I was injured and still trying to train - it didn't work. In the end, I had to have shoulder surgery in order to repair torn cartilage. I was in a sling for 3 months, dropped down to 165 pounds and was miserable. The physical therapists and then athletic trainers at Southern Miss. were ok, but I quickly decided that it wasn't enough. So since I couldn't workout with my team, I started spending time researching injury rehab and everything I could find on the shoulder. What I found was astonishing. Current thinking about the shoulder, i.e., overhead work, behind the neck presses, etc. goes against information we have on kinesiology and biomechanics. I quickly told them my shoulder was fine and I was ready to go. They cleared me and I started practicing, but I would go to the gym at night and rehab my shoulder, and I was still getting ice, heat, and EMS treatments on it as well. This is when I really starting researching strength, the different things effecting it, rehab, etc. My shoulder got healthy but not being able to condition during the summer, it was physically a tough adjustment to the Division I level. It was December before I got my legs back. And we ran so much I think I might have been 170-175 by the end of the year. However, from April to August the next year I went from 170-175 up to 205 pounds and then 210 by the time the season started. I was bigger, stronger and quicker than I had ever been. The next year I fluctuated between 210 and 220, and felt that was my ideal playing weight. By my junior year in college, I could write a program better than our supposed strength coach. Eventually, a few teammates and even a few athletes from other sports had figured it out. In the spring and summer I had a personal training enterprise going on in the school's weight room. It was great for me, athletes were getting results, and I was allowed to make mistakes and correct them – this was definitely a time of learning for me. After I was finished playing I continued to lift and periodically work with athletes.

Q3

What do you see as the biggest misconception or fallacy you see being promoted today?

Wow, I don't know that there is just one. Before you could point out two or three such as overemphasis on aerobics, but now the industry is so big; with so many self appointed experts and so many different "methods" (with varying degrees of legitimacy) that it's akin to trying to get a '57 Buick running that's been sitting in a junk yard for 20 years. Where do you start? If I was to narrow it down to a single thing, I feel most trainers, coaches, etc. have gotten away from getting athletes strong! They've been told, it doesn't matter how strong you are you have to be fast and agile, or you're not training an athlete for a weight lifting contest, blah, blah blah. To an extent those statements are all true, BUT strong athletes are better athletes. Make an athlete strong, then it is easy to train any other strength/athletic qualities, as everything we do is determinate on strength. However, in my opinion, many trainers and coaches have bought into "non-strength" methods because they simply can't make athletes strong. Be it a lack of knowledge, laziness or whatever, I rarely see things in weight rooms that impress me like they use to.

Q4

What is the state of commercial gyms / fitness trainers right now?

Terrible! I could gripe about it for a few days, but I'll just say that most of them don't apply the most basic, single most important concept about exercise - the Overload Principle. I've seen trainers who don't even keep up with sets and reps.

Q5

What was the funniest thing you've ever seen in a commercial gym?

Oh, I could write a book. The best though was this Korean guy who always came to the gym at the University. He never touched a weight and he did these full body sit up/toe touches. He had long floppy hair, and would do these things for 20-30 minutes. When he was done, he would proceed to whip all comers in ping pong.

Q6

What is the state of University Strength programs right now?

It's a little better but, over the course of the last 15-20 years most have gotten into the rut of primarily using and focusing on the bench, half squat, and the reverse curl with momentum that they call the power clean. Over the last 5 years, more and more coaches are using things like towing with long bungee cords (a relatively useless exercise) and their "conditioning" sessions are adapting things from SAQ programs. SAQ stands for Speed Agility Quickness. Basically these systems are useless. An athlete can use them for months on end and see little improvement in speed, agility or quickness. They would be much better served if they would attempt to increase their deadlift by 50 pounds. Anyway, more schools are incorporating those type systems in with their typical weight routines. And of course, you still have schools using HIT methodology. Basically, at the university level you see a lack of emphasis of training the low back, hamstrings, and lats along with complete lack of attention to structural balance as it relates to the athlete, their weight program and the sport. These problems are usually only addressed by the athletic trainers once the athlete is injured. I've seen so many injuries on the college level that are preventable. I'm not talking about the running back who gets hit by three linemen in the knee at the same time, but the corner back that has shoulder problems that culminate in him having trouble raising his arms to deflect a pass.

Q7

Who do you see making the most impact in the Strength industry right now? Who are the leaders right now / or who has been and continues to be a leader?

Actually, this is one bright spot in the industry, I think there is a great core group of young knowledgeable strength coaches who are just starting their careers. They are not making too big a difference industry wide right now, but I think in twenty years, the industry will be better off because of them. I would say however that Charles Poliquin is clearly an industry leader, love him or hate him, he's single handedly changed the role of what a strength coach is. He stays as current on the research as is possible. I stay current, and he continually talks about things that I have to go look up or research further and no other coaches are doing that to my knowledge. I really think that the future of body composition control will eventually be changed by his biosignature modulation methodology. One thing a lot of his detractors fail to understand is that Charles continually has statistics run on all of his athletes. He looks at everything from their response to a set/rep scheme, to a particular supplement(s), to their diet make up, to their performance. In his book "Secrets of Soviet Sports Fitness and Training," Michael Yessis describes the Soviet Sport system and how so many details of the athletes lifestyle were taken into account. It's a dream for the strength coach, though not totally realistic in all circumstances. A lot of misconceptions exist about the Soviet system in that it was not their selection of sets and reps or exercises that made them so good. It was their attention to the whole athlete and the entire training system, not just training in the gym and on the track. In a sense that is what Charles is doing but he's taking it to a new level.

Also, while in the past I have been negative concerning most certification programs. Obviously some are just bad. Get an American Red Cross CPR certification, some cash and a pulse and you can get certified from some organizations But Charles is actually taking results into account. In his certification process, in order to reach the top level, you have to coach a world class athlete. That only makes sense. Too many strength coaches and experts don't get results. Results are what count in sports and too many can only boast that they took a football player from a 225 to a 315

pound bench in 4 years. I don't know how wide spread his certification may become, and I don't contend that one must go through it to become a top notch coach or trainer, but don't discount the bottom line. You must get results. If you are not getting results with your clients or athletes, you need to reevaluate yourself.

Another person who in my opinion is an industry leader is Paul Chek. He's taken more crap than anyone in the industry. I don't agree with him on every point, but the guy gets results when others can't, and he is always professional. He offers quality information for the most part and he is an incredibly nice and patient guy who gives freely of his time. I don't know that he's ever not answered an email. He also, has developed his own certification process and network of trainers, who use his system - that is impressive. Also, it's said that the greatest flattery is imitation. Paul has been copied maybe more than anybody. All of the "functional training" weirdos who want you to perform one legged overhead squats with one eye closed have basically stolen and bastardized a lot of Paul's information simply because they didn't know what they were doing in the first place.

Another leader would have to be Dave Tate. He promotes and uses Louie Simmons' system, but frankly I first heard about Louie back in '95 or '96. Dave has taken it to a new level. Also, having taken some classes in marketing and in particular sports marketing, all three of these individuals, and particularly Dave, have done things that frankly, some college marketing classes can learn from. But what can you say about Dave though. You never here a negative word about him and right now, I don't know if there is a system of training as widely used as Westside. You can't log onto a forum or discussion board anywhere and not see discussions about it. In fact, I would say there is not a system as inappropriately or misused as Westside as on most discussion forums you see guys who are trying to use it and just have it bass-ackwards.

There are a few others that are not as well known, but these are the three that have the biggest internet presence and that is where information is going to come from in the 21st century. Others worth mentioning however are Charles Staley from a training standpoint and Will Brink from a nutrition perspective. Also T-Mag (love or hate them) has become the standard by which other training web sites will from now on be measured.



The latest meet, certification seminar, clinic, conference that you went to – what was the latest “innovation” you took away from that experience?

It's actually been over a year since I last went to a strength coaching seminar. There have been a few I wanted to go to, but could not work my schedule out. I would have loved to have been in Canada last weekend for the SWIS Symposium, but my Grandmother had her 90th birthday! I go to several basketball coaching clinics per year, and last spring I went to a sport psychology seminar set up by an old professor. We used to talk a lot and he's very sharp, but he actually requested that I come as there were some other professors or clinicians presenting things that were new. Now, I have a love hate relationship with sports psychologists. I think many simply try to capitalize on athletes wanting every edge possible, but there was some really great information about why some athletes do certain things and why some are motivated and some are not and how to deal with it. I really enjoyed it.

As far as taking things from them, seminars are great. Everyone should go to them. For one thing, rarely will there be anything worth learning in an entire seminar. But if nothing else, you can learn some things not to do. For example, one year at the Final Four, I went to a strength coach's clinic as he was talking about training basketball players. Anyway, the guy was an idiot. I won't name a name or school, but his school hasn't won a conference championship in any sport in a while despite having plenty of resources. I didn't learn anything about how to better train a basketball player, but I did learn how to build a great sand pit if I ever have a facility and feel I need one. Granted it cost \$10,000, but if I ever need one I know how to build it. It had a drainage system and everything!

The point is - go to them. Be discerning, don't believe everything you hear, but virtually everyone has something to offer. I went to one about 5 years ago and honestly, the best presenter was a HIT guy. I obviously don't support HIT, but he has some great tips on how to make certain exercises more difficult. He talked about how to make slightly different alterations in form in order to make an exercise more effective for an athlete or easier for an injured athlete etc. Basically be discerning but have an open mind. Seminars are great too because financially you can't beat them. A lot of people will gripe because a seminar is \$250-\$500, but you learn enough information in a weekend that it would

normally take 3+ years of reading books and literature.

Q9

Where is the future of the Strength industry going?

Well, I'm not really sure as to the direction, but I do see it getting better. The web has made the transfer of quality information more accessible to not only the junior exercise physiology major, but also Joe Average. Now, bad information is more readily available as well, but just in the last 2-3 years the number of quality websites has increased almost ten fold. The field has a tendency to go through cycles not unlike other industries. I hope within the next 5 years we will see things reverting back to emphasizing getting athletes strong. I'm confident this will happen, because the results or lack of results from athletes not improving their strength will be realized. I think this will also be facilitated by greater emphasis in strongman type training as it is growing in popularity. The Air Force Academy has an entire weight room field with various implements. They even have kegs with different weights in them filled with sand, water, etc.

Q10

Give me a quick list of your top 5 exercises for developing power/speed/foundation.

1. Snatch Grip Deadlift from the podium - Nothing develops the posterior chain like it. I was a fan of the movement before, but after going to a Charles Poliquin seminar I gained a new found respect for it. It was a seminar devoted to strength and speed training, and he constantly harped on increasing the strength of the posterior chain. He said before he got started that he would be talking about it a lot, and before he was interrupted every ten minutes about exercise selection, he said the answer is snatch grip deadlift from the podium. It's hard to beat. As an athlete, once you can perform 5 reps at double your bodyweight, you've attained a respectable amount of relative strength. It's also great with chains.

2. Pull/Chin Ups - Most athletes suffer from weak lats and upper backs. Most people don't realize that strong lats help everything from pressing strength to running speed to shoulder stability. If college football players were simply required to perform just 5 reps of bodyweight pull ups, shoulder injuries would decrease by half.

3. The Incline press (Bar or DB) - If this was the standard lift used by college and pro football teams rather than the bench - shoulder injuries would go down as it would force athletes to train their shoulder in multiple planes, just like they play. It's also more difficult to cheat and is more specific to a greater number of sports.

4. Full Squats - The knees were made to full squat and it brings results like no other movement. Half ass squats bring about half ass results. Also, a "full" squat is not parallel! If you're not sure that you're low enough, your not! If your butt hits the floor you've gone too low.

5. Power Snatch - I choose the power snatch over the power clean because chances are the trainer or coach might actually have a clue about what he's doing. Everybody has heard of a power clean, but for everyone I've seen performed well, I've seen 200 performed terribly. If they know what a power snatch is, chances are they know how to teach it and use it properly. Also, despite what some think, it's easier to teach in my opinion. It's more naturally athletic than the power clean in my opinion. Also, for speed development, assuming the athlete has a degree of strength, you can't beat it. If you have an athlete that needs to improve their first two steps or their vertical jump - this the movement.

Crap only 5.....well, if it's got to be 5, I guess I'll have to take those - At least for most athletes, most of the time.

Q11

What 5 websites do you go to everyday?

Mail.com, Drsquat.com, Yahoo.com, Ultimate-Guitar.com, and about 1-2 dozen newspapers from all over the country.

Q12

What was the latest book you read related to the industry?

Not sure how related it is, but I read a book about child development. A lot of athletic characteristics can theoretically be affected during a child's formative years. It wasn't the most interesting book, but it answered a few questions.

Q13

What was the latest DVD you watched related to the industry?

I have not watched any in a while, but there are a few I am interested in buying. On top of my list is a DVD by John Paul Catanzaro about proper warm ups. He's a relatively young strength coach from Canada, and I have always found him to be thorough, informative, and knowledgeable. That's one thing I think will improve the industry and a direction the industry is headed. DVD's can be produced faster and much cheaper than VHS tapes. Therefore you're starting to see more and more of them.

Q14

Anything you are promoting right now?

Not at the moment, but I might have some things coming up that I've been working on. It's funny; I actually have not "worked" since June but have been busier with different things than when I was going to work everyday. Only thing is, I'm going to have to go back to work before too long.

Q15

How did you first hear about the Diesel Crew?

I suppose you or Rick mentioning it on the Dr. Squat forum, but it's referenced all over the web. You guys have done a great job in developing it and have filled a niche with your Global Grip Challenge.

Q16

How can people get a hold of you? What is your site, email, etc.?

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