

Sorry...

No excuses. So here are some: sick. Track Season. Sick. Sick.

So, our little newsletter has failed to remain bimonthly due to my near fatal bout with pneumonia. Not really *fatal* fatal, but it is the easiest twenty-two pounds I ever lost!!!

Let's remember the mission here:

Our mission? To teach everyone:

1. The Body is One Piece
2. There are three kinds of strength training:
 - Putting weight overhead
 - Picking it off the ground
 - Carrying it for time or distance
3. All training is *complementary*.

David Witt's Spring Collection

David Witt

Dave continues to amaze Get Up readers with his prolific writing and the quality of his work...something unusual here for the Editorial Board. Dave is a thrower of all things and a good friend to those learning the sports of throwing.

Editor's Note: During my recent illness, David Witt continued to write articles...and me...nearly daily. Bless him!

Tips for Young Throwers

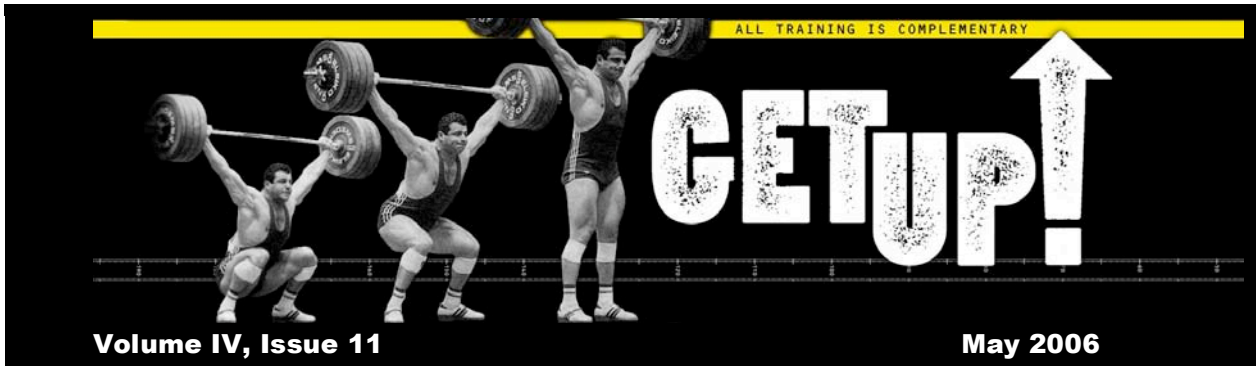
I've written three articles now on tips for coaches and I thought it might be time for me to address the young aspiring high school thrower.

Tip #1. Throw throw throw. Now that you've taken up the ancient sport of athletic throwing, your focus needs to be

on learning the techniques of each event. Why did that skinny kid that looks like a distance runner beat you at the last meet? He had technique. Get some technique of your own. Danek said you need to throw 10,000 throws a year. That works out to be 50 throws a day. Throwing 5 or 6 throws and then going to lift weights isn't going to teach you how to throw. You need to throw. For a high school kid, I say a minimum of 30 throws, full throws, a session in discus, 20 in shot.

Tip #2. Be a student of your event. Ok, now you're wondering who Danek was. Ludvig Danek was a Czechoslovakian discus thrower in the '60's and early '70's. He was the 1972 Olympic Champion. He knew a lot about discus throwing and was a role model for many throwers, including John Powell. Who's John Powell? Only the best technician the discus ever saw, geez, you really need to do some research on your event. Find out who the innovators were, what they did, how they trained. You don't need to reinvent the wheel, learn from the legends of the sport. Better yet, go to discus camp and learn directly from them.

Tip #3. Search and seek out advice. In many school situations, there is no coach that can help you with throwing. You need to seek out advice wherever you can find it. As a young high school thrower, I once went on a trip to Bloomington Indiana one Saturday with the team to an indoor meet. I wasn't



competing, but I figured if I went outside to the discus area I might find some college throwers and get some help. It worked, I met three of IU's throwers and threw with them. They gave me some advice on my technique which I ended up not using, but that's another tip. At meets, ask other throwers for help, the ones that look like they know what they are doing. They are usually in the last flight. Oh, and just because you are a 50 foot shotputter don't think you have nothing to learn from a 45 footer. Sometimes the athlete that gets the most out of their body knows more than the naturally gifted athlete that can just fall down and throw far.

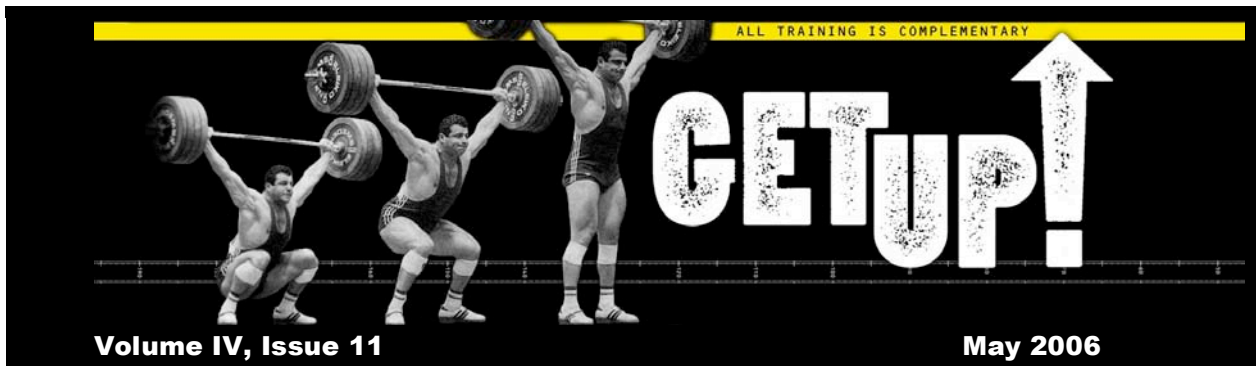
Tip #4. Filter the advice you get. Some advice is good, some is bad. Decide for yourself what will work for you. The throwers for Indiana told me to curl up my left leg as I brought through from the back of the circle to the front. I tried it for a couple of days, but it just didn't work for me. Mike P. in his great article spoke about John saying that people are either completely right, or completely wrong. Someone told him to swing the right leg wide out of the back. So he tried it, then he tried keeping it close. Keeping it close worked for him, he threw farther.

Tip #5. Be coachable. If the coach says do this, then do that. Athletes don't seem as coachable in track as they do in other sports it seems to me. Maybe it stems from the individual nature of track and field compared to football and

basketball. You have to have a higher level of maturity to work on your own in track and field, and you probably will be working on your own in most high school situations. I had an athlete once that absolutely would not do South African drills. SA drills directly carry over into full technique throws, they help a lot of issues. But this athlete would run through tires if his football coach told him too, even if the tires were on fire. Now, I don't know about you, but I've never seen an opposing team throw tires on the field during a football game. I know, carry over of agility is what the tires are for, but follow my train of thought.

There is a local thrower here that won state last year. I've tried to give tips, help out with lifting, lent books, but this thrower isn't coachable. Every one at the local gym has commented on it too. They worry that the thrower's terrible form in lifts is going to cause some serious injuries. I worry that college coaches are going to laugh when they see the thrower's max lifts and then realize that those were done with only a 4 inch range of motion. Yeah, with 4 inches, I think I could squat 1000. If this thrower was coachable, we could add 20 feet to their throw. Who wouldn't want 20 more feet added to their discus throw. I wish someone would tell me what to do to do that, I would listen.

These are my tips for the beginning thrower. Next time maybe I'll suggest



some tips for the intermediate thrower. Keep throwing.

Tips for Coaches part 3

I believe that this will be my third article intended to help coaches, especially new ones. This particular piece comes from some observations I've made over the last week or two.

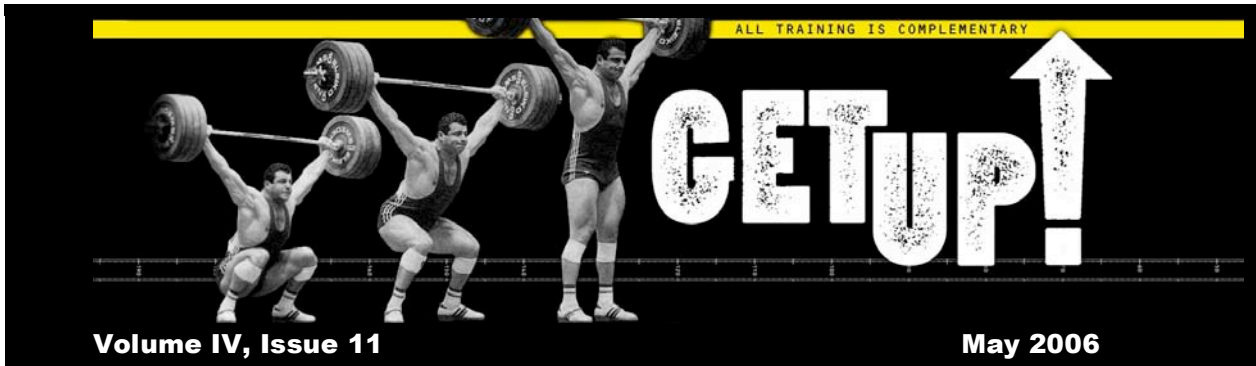
At our track facility for our school, we share the space with the local catholic school team. They are one of the best small schools in the state when it comes to athletics. Last year they had a state champion in the discus for the girls, and in the shot for the boys. Some of my observations come from watching their team workout, mostly because as of yet, I haven't seen my schools throwers out throwing.

First Tip for 2006. Throwers need to throw. For the last couple of years, the school I work for has not sent out their throwers, at least not while I was out there. Many schools have their throwers spend most of their time with the throwers in the weight room, doing their football lifting, and then sending out their "throwers" to get beaten by skinny kids with good technique, especially in the discus. I know, I was that skinny kid.

Seriously, most of the meets, especially my junior year, I was the 6 foot 150 pound kid that wouldn't have even been invited if it has been a weightlifting meet. Some of my

opponents were six and a half feet tall and weighed at least 280, many with beards. I swear that once, as one of these "boys" was getting ready to throw, I saw a 10-year-old kid along the side yell, "throw it real far daddy!" I won a lot of competitions against these behemoths that year, and I doubt if I could have benched my bodyweight. But, I had good technique, and technique goes far. I was smooth, quick, and efficient. What strength I did have went into that discus. Which brings me to...

Second Tip for 2006. The other day, I saw the other teams throwers come down to the ring at about 2:45. There was 4 or 5 of them, and their whole goal was to get done throwing by 3:00 so that they could go run their stadium steps. Each kid took about 6 throws, 4 stands, and 2 pathetic full throw attempts, some of them were only doing the vintage 1920's stand with your none throwing shoulder pointed toward the throw. Now, running steps is important, but in their case, pointless. Let's imagine that each thrower could apply 50 pounds of force with their legs in a throw. These guys probably had 150 pounds of force in their legs, but their technique only harnessed 50 of that. What good is increasing their leg strength to 200 pounds if their technique only still allows them to get 50 pounds out of it? Mike Pockoski spoke to this point in his excellent article a couple of years ago, and I was honored to be the only other author with him in that issue of GETUP!



The point is, those skinny kids are beating the monsters because they can harness all of their energy into their throws. Good technique. Smooth goes far, as John would say.

Stadium step running/hopping could be considered an advanced training method. These things should not be introduced too early. As Dan said in the coaching edition of GETUP!, those things can be detrimental if done too soon. The basics need to come first. Yes Dan, I was also honored to be included in the coaching edition. (Don't want Dan to feel left out here ☺). This all boils down to my final bit of advice...

Third Tip for 2006. Before you start having your athletes doing advanced drills, or the Big 21 program, or anything, make sure that they have a sound fundamental technique in their event. In an ideal situation, and I know how rare that happens, I would have freshman and sophomores spend 90% of their time throwing, learning sound technique. Once that occurs, then they start getting stronger through weights and plyos or whatever. If they have good technique, and can use their existing strength to the maximum, then they can add strength their junior and senior year and really throw far. So my beginning program for a freshman or sophomore would look like this.

Throw, throw, throw, throw, throw, run, throw, throw, throw, throw, throw, throw, lift, throw, throw, throw, throw.

“But”, you may ask, “what about the thrower who has good technique, gets stronger, but doesn't throw farther”?

That is a question the Higher Consortium for Discus Learning has been pondering for years. If you need an answer quick, send more beer.

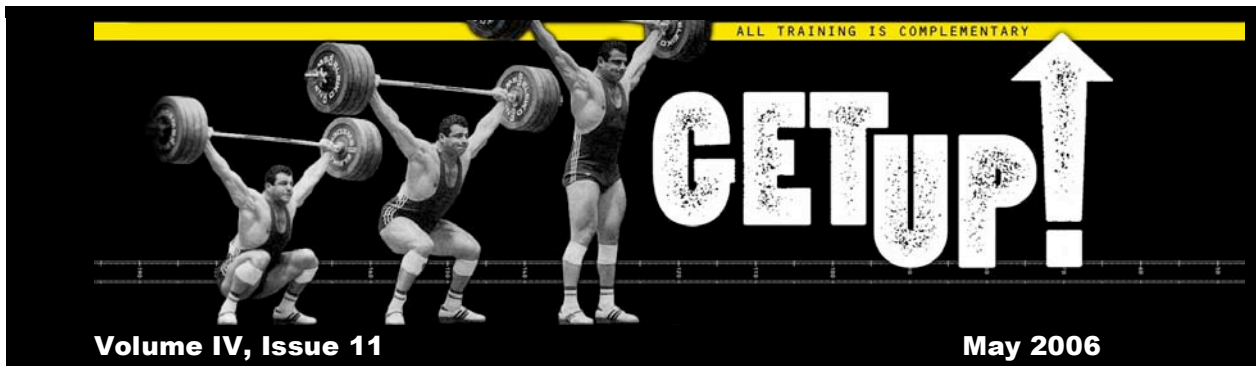
The “Gary Column”

Gary John

The longer you read “Get Up,” the more you think that Dave Witt and Gary John own the newsletter. Well, with back pay, technically, they do. Gary is a master track and field athlete, a Vietnam Vet...with the wounds to prove it, a fine coach and a decent enough person to write for this newsletter!

Everybody loves to get a PR or “personal record” when they are competing. Once you reach masters, you are mostly competing against yourself. However, sometimes, especially when you're throwing, you get one of those “Ohmigod” throws that is just way beyond anything you've done.

Luckily, since I live in Northern California, there are many all-comer's meets in January and February. I like to throw at Los Gatos; I know a lot of people there and it is very friendly. This year, after the first two meets, we



decided to add a master's 25# weight throw. The first week, I improved my PR from 39'1" to 42'6". It was exciting, because another master thrower, Gary Kelmenson and I swapped the lead after each throw. He got me with a 43 on the last throw. Lot of fun.

The next week, it was raining, so we used markers and measuring the best throw of each. On my third throw, the weight just took off. I didn't come close after that the throw. It measured 45'8". Ohmigod!

Like a fool, I went and bought a 25# weight and started practicing. I already own a 35#, which I throw 3-4 days a week for 30 throws. Enough said, the more I threw the 25#, the worse I got. I went to throw over at Berkeley for the next three weeks, because they were having the hammer throw. Ended up throwing the hammer just under 106', that is a 25' competition improvement. Now, I also own my first hammer, I bought one after that first meet. I didn't throw the weight well at all in Berkeley.

Put the weight away for a couple of weeks and started a strength program. Finally got 200 in the bench press, but can now do triples and doubles at 190. Before, I was just trying to get a max and wasn't building a solid base. Threw this weekend in practice and was consistently over 42'. Still, I did get that one throw that we all dream about.

Now, what I wouldn't give to just do it again.

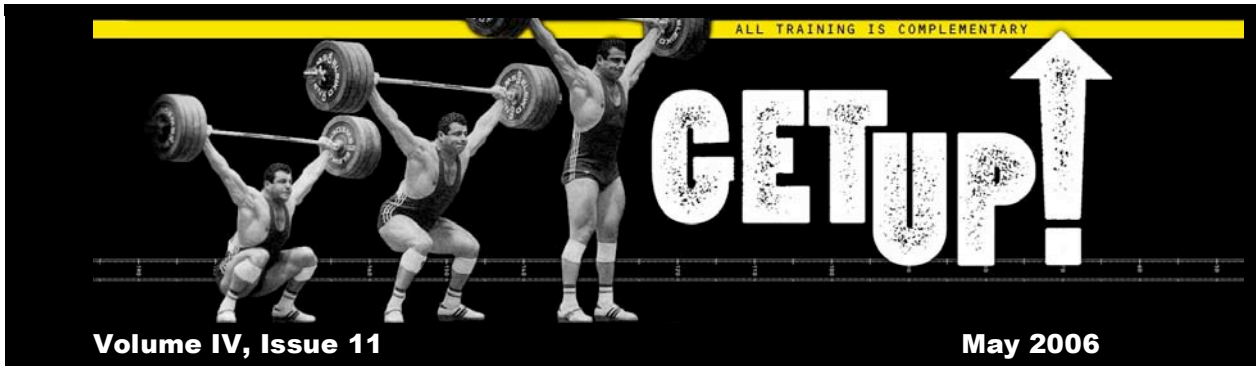
A nagging issue:

In January, right around my birthday, a whole bunch of crap hit the fan. My brother, Dan was ripped by the guru of a fitness website over some sin of omission about an article in T-nation, which Dan is one of their writers. The article was a wiseacre piece and in part of it, poked fun at the fitness website. This guru, who I have met, when Dan gave a free two-hour Olympic lifting seminar, was way off the reservation. When you don't like what is written in the New York Times, you don't attack David Brooks or any other writer.

As a member of this fitness website, I took it upon myself to do whatever it took to get a response for the insults written about Dan. Eventually, the guru did respond and my work was done. I mistakenly thought I'd been tossed from their forums. I was wrong and apologize.

Dan has given freely of his time and knowledge to the whole fitness, lifting and throwing communities. The attacks on his character and coaching abilities were uncalled for and petty. Dan continues to give advice at this fitness website, he is a better man than I.

This has stuck in my throat since the incident. I will defend the honor of my brother. To those who were caught



in the middle of this whole mess, I harbor not ill will. To my good friends at Power & Bulk, I thank you deeply for your support.

Finally, I shall add one more name to a small list of people, upon their death; I shall urinate on their grave.

Stuff I have Learned

Editor in Chief
Daniel John
Friend of animals

Do you want to be humbled? Here is a way to do it:

Start coaching high school full-time!

I can hear myself from a year ago: "I can teach any one to ---fill in the blank---." Now, I am less certain. Here are the big lessons:

1. Kettlebells are the single best invention ever for group training. Sorry. True. We do the following with Kettlebells every day:
 - a. Horn walks (Rock walks)
 - b. Waiter Walks
 - c. Suitcase Walks
 - d. Farmer Walks
 - e. SeeSaw Press Walks
 - f. Deck Squats
 - g. RDL Stretches
 - h. Swings...every variety
 - i. A. little juggling
 - j. Rotating Ab Work

The kbells simplify things and provide a challenge across the board.

2. Pullups...strict pull-ups...are an underrated exercise and few...very few...people can do them well. So do them welll...
3. Clarity is key in training. I no longer mix up reps and sets. If we do 8 sets of 3 in one lift, we do them in all lifts. Otherwise, 90% of the class will do something besides the plans.
4. Go heavy once a week in every area you want to improve. For us, that is a Bench Press (or with one chain, or two chains or...), Front Squat, Deadlift and a quick lift.
5. You need VOLUME with young athletes. 8 sets of 3 is far better than 3 sets of three because 24 reps teaches the move better than nine. Sorry: true. Once a week, get the reps in...I make it a "dynamic" day.
6. Like my sensei taught me: do some simple rolls, cartwheels, and handstands. You will discover...in seconds...that you might have an athlete...or two...you has no idea where their shoulders are!
7. Have the courage NOT to try to kill your athletes but to teach them. You will have to review the basics EVERY single day!
More next time!

Published by Daniel John
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