

Four Weeks of Discus Camp

In other words...I'm tired! But, I couldn't resist putting this edition out...there is a bit of information in this one...stuff that honestly will be of historic interest.

During Discus Camp, Doug Dunagan interviewed Brian Oldfield *at length* about training and throwing. Doug's report is a gem.

There are times when I look at this "thing," this newsletter, and find that I am proud of it. This is one of the prouder moments...

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*.

The Brian Oldfield Interviews (Part One)

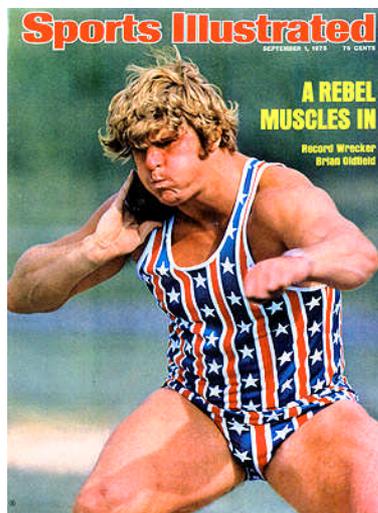
Doug threw for two years at SDSU before the men's program was cut then went into coaching off and on. Had 6 throwers qualify to attend the California state meet in 4 of the last 5 years. Started competing again this year first time since 1992 at the submasters level. Faithful reader of Get UP...

John Powell Camp 2004 Claremont, California

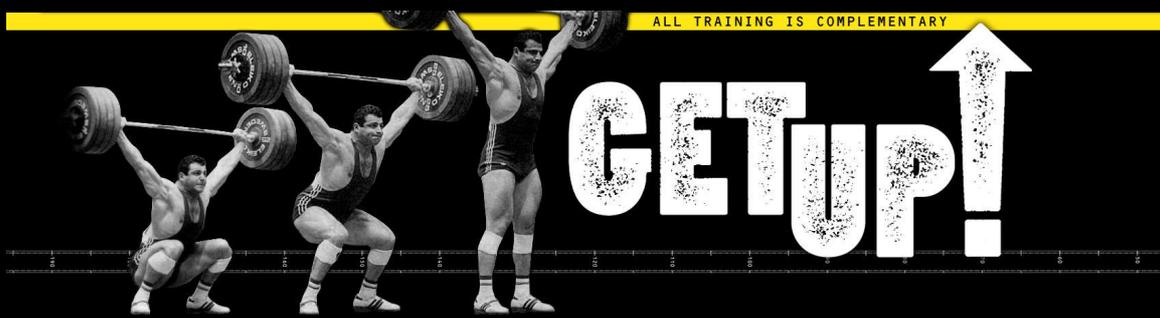
I have been reading about the Powell camp for a couple of years in Dan's newsletters and always wanted to attend one. I got excited when I heard there would be one near me in Los Angeles. Earlier in the year I attended one of John Powell's one-day clinics at the same location, The Webb Schools in Claremont, California near Los Angeles. I expected to get there and hear a few words from John and maybe have a chance to shake his hand and say hi. What surprised me was John spent nearly 30 minutes talking to me during lunch about various topics such as his 20-minute drill and his video. At one

point John did a South African for me with a hamburger in it his hand. I must say that was impressive how he did it with such grace and skill.

As a comparison, I went to see a Mac Wilkens clinic the following weekend. First of all it cost 100 dollars to see Wilkens versus 20 dollars for John's clinic. Second, I had only a chance to shake Wilken's hand and say a handful of words to him before he was off doing something else – not much bang for the buck. Third, as most of you know who read Get Up, John Powell has a system for drills and teaching points for the discus to get people up and running pretty quickly, Wilken's on the other hand spent what seemed hours just discussing his complex entry which is way over the head of most of the 14 – 18 year olds at the clinic.



When I arrived in Claremont I made my way to where registration was being held. As I walked in I saw John Powell already there sitting and Dan John walked in right after me. Now if that wasn't exciting enough, I became giddy when I saw that Brian Oldfield was there also. Brian wasn't listed on the brochure, as John and Dan were so it was a surprise to me to see him. Now I am no sycophant nor am I star struck by any stretch of the imagination, I asked for and



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Close enough to August 2005

got only two autographs in my whole life -Han Solo and Darth Vader, but I digress... I was excited for me; this would be a great opportunity.

I had just this year started to compete again and was having trouble with my shot putting. Having Brian there would give me a chance to get more detail on his technique and perhaps some instruction from the master himself. As it turned out Brian worked with me the whole week and gave me a large amount of his time and energy, to which I am extremely grateful. Having practiced Brian's form of the spin for the week, I know that I left a better thrower and I am amazed that more "elite" throwers have not caught onto his teachings. During one of my sessions with Brian, the editor of this fine newsletter asked me to come away with five things from Brian.

So what follows is a breakdown of some of the things Brian Oldfield taught me about the spin shot put. It is written in a manner as if Brian himself was doing it.

1. Back of the Ring.

Nothing fancy happens at the back of the ring. Very simply, bend your knees, keep your torso upright, and hold your arms up as if doing a behind the neck push press. Brian compares this to the backward "C" position. Begin with a static start – no winding, no bending over. Now, Brian used to start with a wind up but he stressed to me the static start. The throw initiates with a twist of the feet. This twist and the proceeding movement to the South African position develops the X position or the stretch of the abs and obliques.

2. The entry.

Brian gets to the South African position as efficiently as possible along the path of the backwards 7. At this point, I think most coaches would advocate sweeping the right leg wide, driving the right knee up and to the left armpit, and initiating a "jump-turn". However, Brian's technique is to lunge down to the center by dropping the left knee, keeping the right knee

tight to the left, not over striding with the right, and not leaving the ground. His eyes are on the horizon, his chin is not dipped, he is not bent over, his right foot is pre-turned, and he is low to the ground. This is a linear sprint across the ring with practically zero rotation of the body at this point.

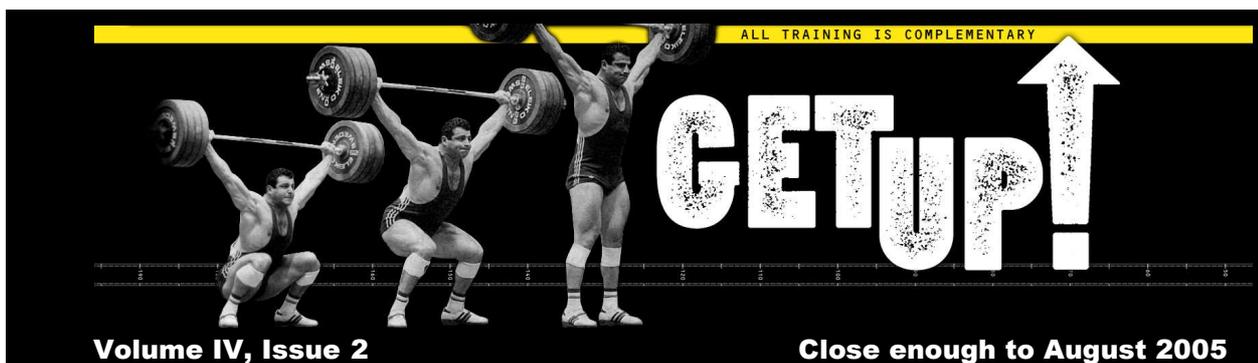
3. The middle.

Brian is now in the "2" position. Again he strives to lower himself even more so during the right foot pivot. Brian wants to increase centripetal force around the vertical axis by having a tight and compact spin by bringing in his levers and keeping his torso upright. He will come out of the "2" faster than when he went in. I liken this to a top. As the top is spinning quickly, there is no apparent deviation of the top from the vertical axis but as the top slows, deviation becomes increasingly apparent.



4. Nirvana.

This is what Brian calls his power position. It is a summation of all the preceding forces transformed into a purely vertical expression. Brian's power position is pretty unique among throwers. Brian works his way down into a low squat position to take advantage of the plyometric reflex. His torso is upright with the center of gravity over his hips without any forward bend or left arm wrap. There is no need to bring the left leg down at the toe board in a stiff or semi-stiff position as is advocated by many. In fact, it is desirable to land with a soft left leg. This allows a shift to the left side and allows one to climb the left leg. At the moment that both feet are grounded he cranks or twists



his feet to a point inline with the backwards seven. As his right foot pivots, Brian now wants to “trick”, as he calls it, the right knee in line with the backwards seven as well. It is now that Brian pulls him self out of nirvana by climbing up the left leg and ripping the left arm down as if he is pulling himself up a rung of a ladder. The belly button extends over the toes of the left foot forming the backwards “c”. At this moment all of his forces are compiled into a vertical jump.

5. The release and reverse.

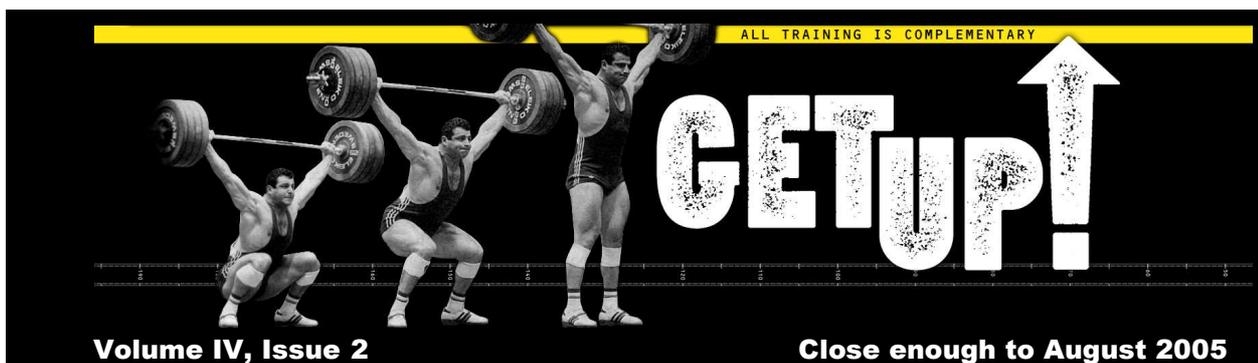
The release is not complex. It is a vertical jump with a switch of the feet. Brian has reached nirvana and is climbing out of it. The right arm “strike” does not occur until after the left arm block and the vertical jump is taking place. If at this point his right arm were paralyzed, the shot would still fly out of his hand and travel a great distance. Brian’s “putting” -some would say throwing- action is unique among many throwers. As he states in his video Brian holds the shot back behind his neck. The path the shot takes in the first phase of release is vertical and is parallel to the spine. Brian’s head and eyes are up and at the point where shot starts to come into view to his eyes, the putting action changes to the second phase - an action that resembles a throw such as with a baseball or football. I liken it to the serve of a volleyball player. The arm action is very much like a server jumping and reaching with the arm for a high serve trying to send it to the opposite back line. The ball rolls

off of the hand starting from the middle of the hand and rolling off the fingers. There is no extra thought put into the reverse – it is occurring naturally by way of proper technique. Brian distributes the force of jumping evenly on both legs so there is no forced rotation of the body for a reverse. Some rotation occurs because, after all, there is a heavy object placed on one shoulder and because Brian reaches as high and as far as he can with his throwing hand. Fouling is of no concern because if you jump straight up gravity will return you to your previous spot.



These are some of the things Brian tried to teach me during the week. I tried to relay the wording and spirit that Brian used to instruct me as accurately as I could. For some points I used cues from his video and for some I added my own such as comparing the upright torso to a top and likening the release to the volleyball serve. In the few days of practicing Brian’s concept of the spin I noticed improvement – even on tired legs. The shot seemed lighter and the throws seemed easier using these principles. Before, I was losing momentum in the ring by using bad form. Some of my faults were:

1. Hopping from the South African to the “2”.
2. Bending forward and tucking my chin in throughout the throw.
3. Over striding in the middle and front of the ring.
4. Braking my momentum by blocking the left leg too soon.
5. Taking the shot out and around my right side at release.



All of these errors sapped power from my throws. I firmly believe all of these errors were caused by me trying following the advice from some of the “elite” throwers and coaches out there. If I follow Brian’s teaching none of these errors will come into play again for me. As John says in his video, “These drills techniques have worked for me and if you practice them faithfully they will work for you. Good luck on your next PR.”

Doug, I’m telling you...this is just some awesome stuff. Your athletes are very lucky to have you. Thank you again...

The Brian Oldfield Interviews (Part Two)

Doug continues with a training overview.

Brian Oldfield’s 1972 Olympic Trials

Preparation At this point Brian was still using the glide. In August of 1971 Brian had a throw of 61’2” in a meet. March of 1972 Brian took 3rd or 4th at the indoor nationals with a throw of 63’3”. His best leading up to the Trials was 67’4”. At the Trials he added 7’9” to his mark he made way back in August 1971. He made the Olympic team with a 69’ throw but had a foul at 72’8”. What follows is the workout that Brian did to prepare for the trials.

This is different from the program listed in volume 1, issue 2. (*Editor’s note: Now, this is unusual...usually, I have to provide the lazy readership...all the editions are free and in one column...how to find these old articles. I like this...*) His lifting was done on Mondays and Thursdays and generally worked with 5 sets of doubles. On the push press and front squat he did triples. Sometimes he did 10 sets because often he felt that his 5th set was the easiest.

Lift	Sets/Reps	Max
Bench	5x2	401
Clean and Press	5x2	364
Snatch (split and squat)	5x2	250
Front Squat	5x3	465 (500 single)
Push Press/ Jerk	5x3	365-450

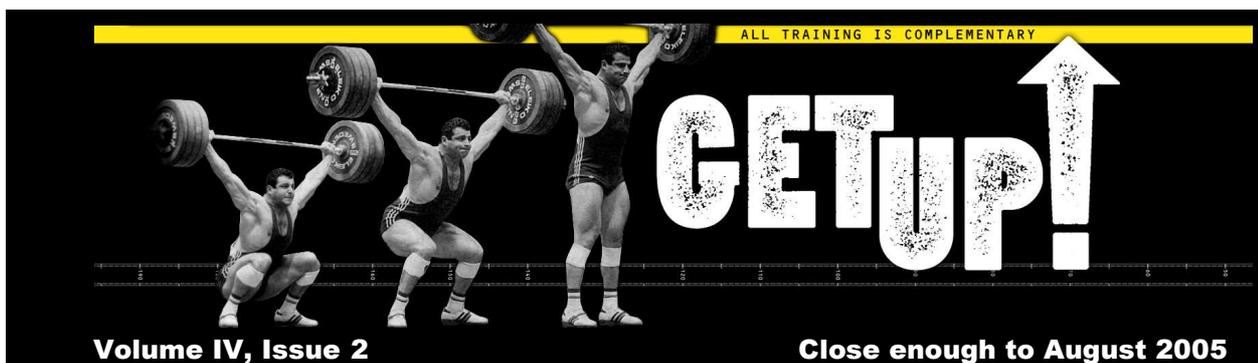
He credits the push press with helping him improve the way that he did. Two more things that helped him improve are his complementary work and his competition. His complimentary work included jumping, sprinting, other sports, and throwing games.

An example of a throwing game is taking throws against a wall. He would work his way up the wall by attempting to not only throw farther but adding more height as well. His competition also provided an impetus for improvement. He worked his way up the list of world record holders, “sawing them off” as he put it, one at a time. “When someone like Brian Oldfield can beat me, I will retire” -Randy Matson after losing the OG-qualification 1972.

From the Editor...My “Four New Ones”

So, I’m sitting in the dentist’s office and I decided to catch up on the comings and goings of the world’s beautiful people. For some reason, my dentist believes that the only magazines worth subscribing to are “Highlights” and “People.” I like Highlights: I’m to the point now that I can look at those two “identical” pictures and quickly pick out the five differences between the two. The five year old sitting next to me was struggling, but I knew that the shoelaces are usually always different. Thumbing through the other magazines, I came to an interesting discovery: it seems that both Tony Bennett and Brittany Spears are doing compilation albums. Bennett’s fifty year retrospective will include materials that worked well with the veterans of World War II while Brittany’s new offering...her “best of” collection...will include four new songs.

You see, the logic whacked into my head a little bit: how can you have a “best of” collection with new material? In fact, why would someone in their early twenties...early, early twenties...even need the “best of” already? Immediately, I decided that I need to share with



the world my “best of” collection. Unfortunately, the only thing I really know about is the sport of strength, so don’t expect my face on the list of “America’s Most Beautiful” any time soon. By the way, I did check the list twice, but I couldn’t find my name.

So, these are my “Four Best.” Enjoy. Number One, and simply the most important:

Write it down! You need to keep a journal. You need to keep a record of what you are doing. I have journals that go all the way back to 1971. In these journals, I am struggling with 65 pounds for sets of eight in the power clean, military press, front squat and bench press. Here is the basic reason you keep a journal:

Try to *only* make the same mistakes over and over again a couple of times.

What? Simply, we tend to repeat our errors. We want to be successful, so we increase our volume and intensity to make the big leap, then find ourselves hurt, injured, and sick. Of course, a week or so after the flu, we hit our personal records. Next year, we do it again...train too hard, get hurt, then improve. By the third year,...well, now it is “fool me twice, shame on me.”

Number Two: Train Outside.

Recently, t-mag asked what was the one thing missing from most modern trainers “quiver.” Simply, we need to go outside and train more. I am famous for my hyperbole, but in this case the following is true: You will NEVER reach your potential if you stay in the cozy confines of your gym. Why? First, you will never ever see anyone else except those in the cozy confines of your gym. If you are the biggest guy at the spa with your guns measuring 15 inches around, you might never be inspired to go beyond your current regime of bench, curl, bench, curl, bench, curl. Recently, I saw a young woman do 21 straight pull-ups and immediately

decided that I certainly had been dogging this exercise.

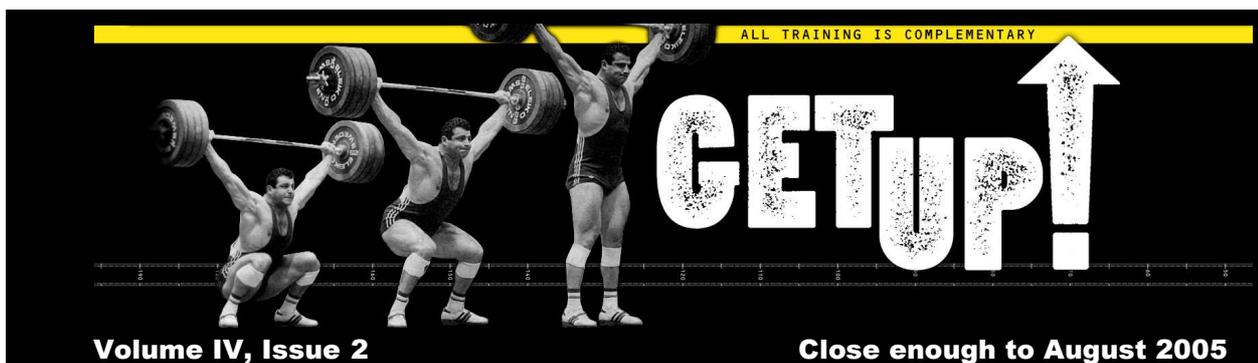
But, when I say train “outside,” I also literally mean...go outside! Get off the treadmill and run in a park. Dump the lat pulldown machine for a set of monkey bars at the park. Drag your bar out into the field and workout. Make a picnic and eat between sets of deadlifts. Carry the bar...loaded...for long distances. Breath fresh air for a while and click off your DVD, CNN, or CDs.

In past articles, I have noted ideas like one dumbbell training which is perfect for training outdoors. Grab a dumbbell or kettlebell, put it on the floor of your car (do not put them in the trunk, they roll around and crush everything; don’t put them on the seat...one stoplight and the weight crashes on the floor...start with it on the floor), drive out to a nice spot and simply invent a workout. Lift the thing as many ways as you can imagine and do as many reps as your body will allow.

I spend the majority of my workouts outside. Certainly, rain makes it difficult with iron, but I have trained in snowstorms and torrid summer days. I keep a towel on the bar, so I don’t burn my hands when I grab it, but it is well worth the effort. Besides, why go to a tanning bed when you can get a golden tan while performing multiple clean and jerks?

Number Three: Be sure to have these books on your shelf:

Leading off the collection, William M. Gaines and Charles Gaines’s book, “Pumping Iron.” Yes, the book. In 1973, buying this book led to instant ridicule. Why, you may ask? Simply, I bought it and everybody made fun of this fact. In 1973, lifting weights led to being musclebound, narcissism and, certainly, the road towards “mixed sexual messages.” I don’t know, by the way, what “mixed sexual messages” means, but that was the phrase used during the period. Historians would be well served to study



this period and perhaps unpack the meaning of the phrase. I think it meant “faggy.”

Inside those black and white glossy pages was the first glimmer of a subculture in America that, well, seemed kind of fun. One guy slept twelve hours a night because “he could hear his muscles grow” in those last hours. And, then, there was this “Arnold” guy. He might be gap toothed with hair issues (note to Arnold: cut, comb and blow dry), but he had something...and a lot of pictures with girls in bikinis. A lot. The odd thing about this book is that most of the lifting people I know owned this book at one time, but have loaned it out or have lost it somehow. Perhaps, this is the Holy Grail of books...we are only meant to glimpse it before it is gone before our eyes. Either that or you shouldn't lend your books to other people.

The other books on your shelf? Easy, these two:

- Arnold: The Education of a Bodybuilder

This is a “no brainer.” I'm not sure what part I like more, the glossed over autobiography (Read the Penthouse Magazine article from the 1970's for the reality...I, ahem, just read the article) or the training program, but the book is just good. It's fun to read. It has good ideas. It needs to be read. Read it!

- Weightlifting: Olympic Style

This book by Tommy Kono is marvelous...not only is Kono an Olympic champion and World champion, but he also won the Mr. Universe title, all on training three days a week! He is a master storyteller and his practical solutions to every issue is spellbinding. What makes the book work so well is the simple intuitive approach to problems. He uses a stick, some rubber bands, and some squat racks to insure that lifters pull the weights high enough...the barbell hits the suspended stick with a “whack” and the athlete knows that the bar was high enough. Simple. Effective. Fun.

(To order the book send a check to Tommy Kono in the amount of \$34.50 (includes shipping and handling) to Hawaii Kono Company, P.O. Box 2192, Aiea, HI 96701)

Okay, three books. Sure, there are more, but what makes these books great are the stories. People, according to G. K. Chesterton, love two things: people and stories. These are great stories about people.

Number Four: Own one movie, “Rocky.” Just Rocky. No Roman numerals after, please. In fact, I could argue that it isn't even the whole movie, just the song. C'mon, you know the one: “Dun dun de de dun de de dun de de dun,” raw eggs in a glass, and the final sprint up the stairs. And, if you saw it on the big screen, I know what you did when you got home: you opened the fridge and cracked a few eggs in a glass and swallowed it down. I also know this: You never did it again. The movie, though, was a shot in the arm to athletics in general...it was no longer just a fad to jog down the street with a towel around your neck, now, you were “in training.” In fact, the music industry developed the concept of the “air guitar” based on the practice of “air boxing” in the movie. Trust me on this one...



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