

SS: How did you get started in powerlifting?

BS: I started weight training when I was fourteen years old and a freshman in high school. I saw it as something that I had ultimate control over in my life and was hooked from the start. After high school I continued to train and eventually missed the drive I got from competition. In 1995, while going to the University of Florida, I met Mike Blizzard who helped get me started in competitive powerlifting. Initially I competed in bench-only contests. Within a few months I was competing in full meets starting primarily in the AAU. It just happened to work out for me that in 2001 Kieran Kidder held the first WPO meet in nearby Daytona. I couldn't turn down the opportunity to potentially make money doing what I love.

SS: Did you try any other sports first?

BS: When I was in grade school I was in Tae Kwon Do, soccer, and gymnastics. When I started high school I joined the wrestling team which fueled my desire to win. This is where I learned the dedication necessary to succeed in sports. I suffered through intense training, starvation, and running with a garbage bag, sweat, and a solar suit into the early morning hours on a nightly basis to continue to wrestle in the skinny 103 lb. weight class all the way into my senior year. I went to state ranked first, having previously beat the second place finisher, but unfortunately lost in an early round. I even had to run to cut weight after losing because of the possibility of having to make weight the next day. Unfortunately, it didn't matter, I wasn't carried through and didn't place. Although I didn't accomplish my goal of winning the state championship I've never lost the determination and ability to sacrifice, which I learned at a young age. I was also on the weightlifting team, but primarily just to gain strength in the off season for wrestling. I loved lifting from the start, but it wasn't until my wrestling career was over that I began to realize my true potential.

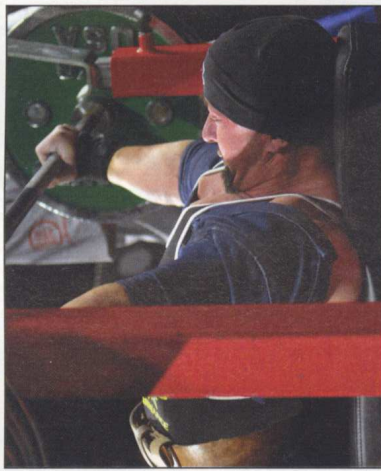
SS: When was your first meet?

BS: I started competing in bench only meets in 1995. Like many lifters, I started out competing raw, then transitioned to single ply in the USPF and AAU, eventually evolving with the sport into the multi-ply gear of today. My first full meet was Buddy Duke's USPF Meet in Adel, Georgia. I competed as a light 165er where my lifts were around a 475 squat, a 330 bench and a 500 deadlift.

SS: What are your best lifts so far?

INTERVIEW

BRIAN SCHWAB as interviewed by Sakari Selkainaho



Brian has repeatedly accomplished amazing things in the bench press to our sport.

SS: What are the major changes you see in the sport since 2000?

BS: Well, the start of the WPO and cash prizes has to be the biggest.

SS: What do you think about the money issues now very common in the powerlifting?

BS: Let me start by saying that I don't compete for the money. I don't think any of us got into this sport to make a living or even a profit. I think the original idea was great. Unfortunately it started out too big too soon and has gone full circle, only to start all over again.

SS: How do you like the format the WPO uses?

BS: I've had the honor of competing in the past 5 Arnold Classic WPO Finals. I've competed in the WPO since its inception. Nothing beats the feeling of being on stage competing against the best of the best with thousands of people watching. It's unfortunate that the best with thousands of people watching. It's unfortunate that last Arnold for the WPO.

SS: You put on some meets yourself. Are you planning on future?

BS: So far we've only held push/pull meets so we could keep them at our location and help promote Orlando Barbell (www.orlandobarbell.com). I would like to begin holding full meets starting with one in the

winter or early spring of next year. We're currently working out the details for finding a larger venue for February.

SS: The results have gone sky high during last five years. Where do you see the limit?

BS: I don't like to think that there's any limit to human potential. The gear has improved quite a bit more recently. Once this settles down the improvements won't be as drastic.

SS: Name 3 most important factors developing a big-A Squat?

BS: 1. Perfecting technique via box squats; 2. Strengthening the glutes and hamstrings via GHRs, GMs, or reverse hypers; 3. Increasing the speed out of the hole via low box dynamic effort work.

SS: B. Bench?

BS: * I plan to have a unique bench training DVD for sale on www.EliteFTS.com and www.OrlandoBarbell.com just in time for the holidays.

For shirted benchers I would say: 1. Perfecting the technique via shirted board work; 2. Increasing speed and force production via dynamic effort work as well as strengthening the lockout via DB tricep extensions, Tate presses, JM presses, or "Schwab's" (a modified version of the JM press using the smith machine), which are beneficial for lifters looking for a safe way to strengthen their lockout without training partners;

3. Shoulder rotation to strengthen the rotator cuffs and prevent injury.

For raw benchers I would say: 1. Increasing pec strength via wide grip benches and dumbbell presses; 2. Increasing dynamic effort work as well as strengthening the triceps via board presses, or the previously mentioned lockout exercises; 3. Shoulder rotation to strengthen the rotator cuffs and prevent injury.

SS: C. Deadlift?

BS: 1. Perfecting technique via varied heights of heavy pulls; 2. Increasing overall back strength via heavy rowing motions, GMs, and reverse hypers; 3. Grip work which is something I need to focus on more.

SS: Name 3 most common mistakes on each lift.

BS: Squat: 1. Lifters never squatting to full depth or below training, which carries over to the same in a meet; 2. Not sitting back enough to fully recruit the hamstrings and glutes; 3. Training too heavy too often, this obviously leads to overtraining.

Bench: 1. Not learning the

(continued on page 10)

Ryan Kennelly - Team MHP Member
World Record Bench
1036 lbs.

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(continued from page 8)

groove of a shirt well enough to touch light weights or rolling on too tight of a shirt; 2. Relying on the shirt too much without increasing raw strength and speed; 3. Not working on injury prevention with a proper warm up and shoulder rotation.

Deadlift: 1. Lifting too heavy too often; 2. Not taking the time to calculate which method (sumo vs. conventional) will work best for them; 3. Improper technique.

SS: Whom do you think are the people you have learned the most from in the sport?

BS: I trained alone for so long and followed a basic bodybuilding routine while focusing on the powerlifts. It wasn't until I read Louie Simmons training methods that I really began to improve. Louie was the pioneer in bringing the Russian methods of training to the United States and has revolutionized the sport. He is also very personable and will talk to anyone anytime without hesitation.

SS: Name some top books about strength training.

BS: I would have to say the NSCA Essentials of Strength Training and Conditioning taught me as much, if not more, than I learned while achieving my Bachelor of Science Degree in Exercise and Sport Sciences.

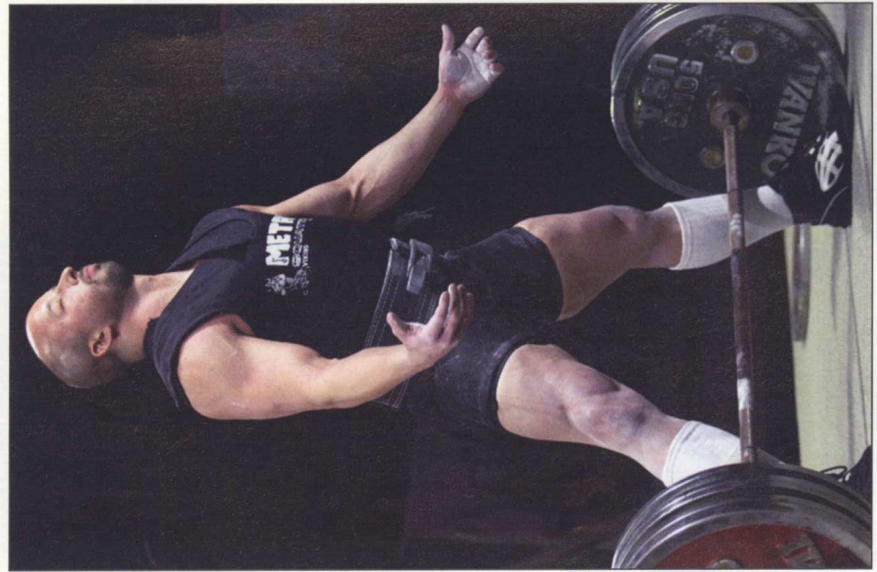
Dave Tate's "Under the Bar" is the most uplifting and inspirational book that I feel a powerlifter could read.

I try to keep up to date by reading training articles online, primarily on www.Elitefts.com, which I feel can be more informative than books that can become outdated.

BS: Name lifters you respect.

SS: In order to really do this question justice regarding the lifters that have influenced me I would like to refer to an excerpt which posted on my Elite training log (www.elitefts.com/brianschwab) the night before the last Arnold Classic:

"I've been competing in the WPO since its inception. In this time I've had the honor of sharing the stage with some of the greatest lifters to ever walk the planet including Ed Coan, Travis Mash, Chuck Vogel, Steve



Brian possesses a quiet but profound determination; that leads to excellence in each lift

Goggins, Paul Childress, and many, many more. I've competed against the likes of Olexander Kutcher, Tony Conyers, Ron Palmer, Wade Hooper, Angelo Berardinelli, Nick Hatch and more. I saw George Halbert bench 733 @ 220 at one of my first meets. Garry Frank broke the all time highest total time and time again. Jeff Lewis squatted 1200. Andy Bolton deadlifted 1005 and I was there. I witnessed larger than life Anthony Clark compete before his unfortunate and untimely death. I had a conversation with Glen Chabot at my first Arnold before he disappeared from our sport. I've spoken with Louie Simmons, the ultimate guru of Powerlifting, on numerous occasions. It was at a WPO meet that Dave Tate gave me the privilege of being one of the chosen few lifters to call

themselves part of the Elite Fitness Team. I've built lasting friendships with some of my competitors including Brian Tincher, my now business partner, Don Petrillo, Brian Strickland, Brad Heck, Joe Mazza and Eric Talmont. I have even accomplished my dream of opening my own Powerlifting Gym, Orlando Barbell, and now have the gift of coaching up and coming Powerlifters.

SS: Name 5 most common mistakes beginners make.

BS: 1. Setting unrealistic goals which cause them to become discouraged when they don't achieve them; 2. Not taking the time to learn proper technique along with thinking that they're going to immediately get huge carryover from the gear. To succeed in this and any sport you need determination and

consistency; 3. Overtraining. More isn't always better. Beginners need to take the time to set a realistic goal and determine the steps necessary to achieve it.

SS: What advice would you give to a novice powerlifter?

BS: Increase your raw strength as much as possible before incorporating too much of the gear. Find an experienced lifter who is stronger than you and learn from them. Plan to compete in a meet to make your training worthwhile but focus on competing against your own PRs. Always open light. It's not what you finish with that counts. Most of all have fun while you're training.

SS: How much differences have bands and chains made in strength training?

BS: I think they've made a huge difference. A common training resistance allows for your body to train with higher percentages with less required recovery time. They also allow for the ability to increase speed with over tension, which carries over to constant speed with increasing resistance. I have found with my own training that they are ideal to use for improving speed, but not as necessary for max effort work.

SS: What is the value of powerlifts in other sports, like football or track and field?

BS: I think training the powerlifts is essential for any sport requiring strength and speed. Athletes need to be strong in order to be successful. The majority of their sport specific abilities will improve by actually playing or competing in the sport. Powerlifting builds a foundation of strength off of which all other movements can be based.

SS: How do people see the value of strength training in their sports?

BS: Any elite pro athlete should be doing whatever it takes to be the best in their sport. Strength training is an essential element for success.

SS: What kind of meaning do you feel personal training and PT's have in strength training?

BS: Just as with Powerlifting, most beginners don't know the proper technique required for (continued on page 12)



Brian Siders - Team MHP Member
World Record Total
2,575 lbs.

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strength training or how important increasing lean muscle mass is for creating permanent changes in their metabolism. It's easy for beginning weight trainers to get discouraged from a lack of progress or get burnt out when they don't see immediate changes. Having a personal trainer will keep them consistent and motivated along with providing variety.

SS: Do you think strength training fits into a commercial gym? **BS:** Strength training is a fundamental characteristic of any commercial gym. Most often people interested in general fitness place far too much emphasis on cardiovascular exercise and neglect to strength train. The majority of commercial gym goers don't realize that strength training is far more important for lasting physical changes than cardio.

SS: How do you see the role of speed in strength training?

BS: The stronger an athlete is, the faster they will be. When dealing specifically with powerlifting, I feel that building a working foundation of speed is crucial for optimal strength. However, after the initial speed has been established the specific dynamic effort work seems less necessary.

SS: How would you use plyometrics for shotputter?

BS: The vast majority of my clients are focussed primarily on attaining general fitness, so I don't have the opportunity to work with athletes as much as I would like. Regardless of this I do have my NSCA CSCS and am familiar with sport specific training methods. I would incorporate 3 sets of 10 repetitions of three lower body plyometric exercises such as box jumps, 2 leg bounding jumps, and 1 leg zig zag bounding jumps after an upper body strength training routine and 3 sets of 10 of upper body plyos such as med ball throws, explosive med ball push ups, and side to side rotation (with more focus on rotational plyos due to the nature of the throw) could be included after a

lower body strength training routine.

SS: How has your own training changed during the last few years?

BS: I've had to adapt my training to a routine that has proven to give me the best results over time. I now focus more on intensity, often only performing two maximal sets on each exercise, and less on duration, and incorporate my gear on a regular basis. I have also geared my training to prevent injury more and more. I now limit my dynamic effort/bench training to once every three weeks.

SS: How do you see change into next few years?

BS: I now know what works best for me and hope to continue to make steady gains utilizing my program with increased training percentages. As the gear, equipment, and training methods evolve and improve I will continue to evolve with them.

SS: What kind of gear do you use?

BS: I use the Metal Ace briefs with the Ace suit to squat with the black Metal knee wraps. I still use my Karin Klein's bench shirt, the same one I've used for about 5 years now. It's been good to me, but I'm continuing to work with Elite on new shirt ideas. I currently deadlift in the Ace as well, but am beginning to train with the King Pro Sumo Deadlifter.

SS: What kind of results do you do RAW?

BS: Honestly, until recently, I would have had no idea. There has been so much hype lately about Raw lifting that I decided to see what I could do. After training while wearing some form of gear on for so long I was interested to see. At my normal bodyweight of around 165 I squatted 525 and deadlifted 545 in training with just a belt. I have these lifts posted, as well as many others, under my name on www.youtube.com. In regard to the bench, I have implied 365 on decline but still haven't rested my raw flat bench max. I would estimate that it is somewhere between 375 and 425.

With training I'm sure I could significantly improve on these numbers but enjoy the equipped lifting too much to put in the time. **SS:** Tell us about your bench press DVD.

BS: Since I've been competitive Powerlifting for over 12 years I've trained using every method possible including periodization, Westside Barbell, and Metal Militia. I've found a combination of these that I feel is ideal to promote continued improvement without injury. I don't want to give away too much, but I can tell you this. My training partners already know my training methods, but guarantee they're still going to buy the DVD. We hope to have it released soon.

SS: What is different in that compared to others on market?

BS: First of all, after watching the DVD the viewers will have a definitive workout plan, regardless of their goals, all, the DVD will have some appealing aspects that I'm amazed no other Powerlifting DVD has included.

SS: What has been your most valuable education for powerlifting?

BS: Trial and error. The period of sticking with what works best for me, which has become a more and more modified five day Westside routine.

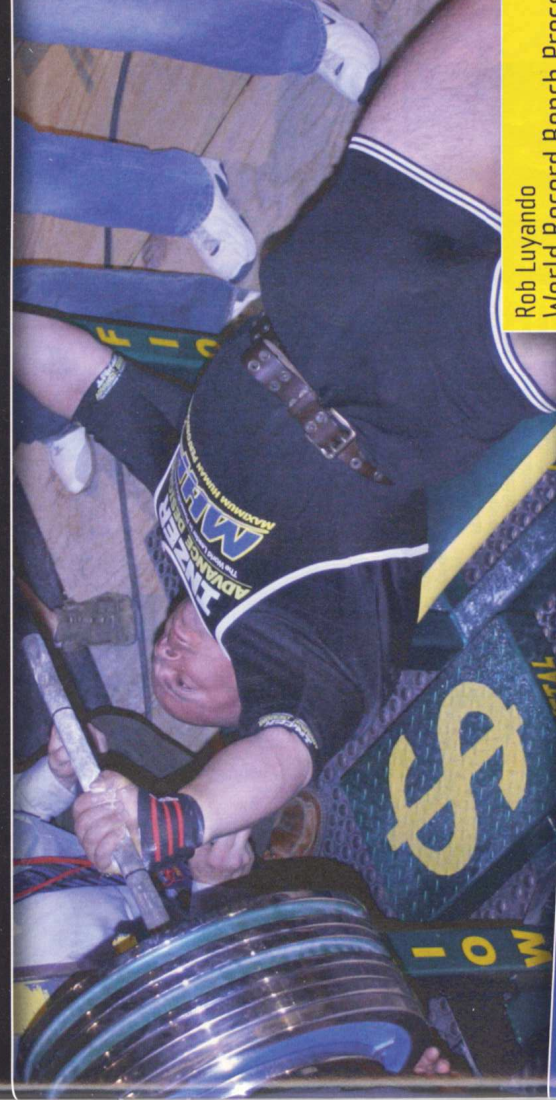
SS: What are biggest errors in coaching in powerlifting today?

BS: I would say pushing

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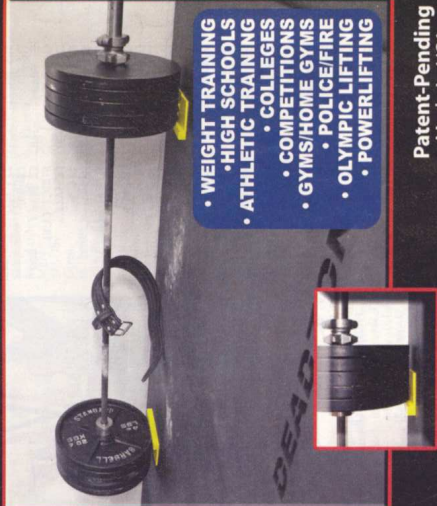
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weight class. Lifters also need to promote a healthy immune system by ingesting enough micronutrients to help with recovery and prevent injury and illness. To be honest, I actually feel like I have more energy and recover better when my diet isn't as clean. I think this is mostly because I just don't get enough overall calories in when I limit my diet too much.

SS: Do you use any supplements?

BS: I'm honored to be sponsored by MHP (www.maxperformance.com) and have greatly benefited from the use of their Macrobiotic MRP, Probiotic-SR, Take Off, Glutamine-SR, and TRAC. I literally take all of these on a daily basis.

SS: I understand many adults recommend their kids not to start powerlifting. What would you say?

BS: I would say they need to better educate themselves on the benefits of strength training for children. Unfortunately, I think lifters of shorter stature like me often give people the impression that weightlifting stunts growth. Admittedly, one of the reasons I began lifting is because I am short, but it certainly didn't make me this way. To me, it seems naive for people to think that something that makes the body stronger could somehow hinder the growth process. In fact, numerous studies now show that resistance training is safe and healthy for kids. It will actually increase the strength of their bones, reduce their risk of injury, and improve their athletic performance for other sports. The old myths need to die.

SS: Brian, thanks for the interview. Any final comments?

BS: Thanks for the opportunity for the interview. I would like to thank my wife Trinity, my training partners, and my sponsors, EliteFTS, MHP, and Karin Klein for helping to get me where I'm at today.

I would like to end with a modified version of a quote I wrote for one of my Elite articles to help explain what it is we do and why.

"Training and development of strength is not a short process. It takes time, effort and sacrifice beyond what most people will ever know. What takes seconds on the platform, takes years of training. One successful PR takes hours in the gym. For every inch the bar moves in a meet, hours of training have to take place. Most people will never understand the desire and commitment it takes to do what we do, nor the feeling of success from victory.
... Stay strong, motivated, and healthy..." **BRIAN SCHWAB**

small business statistics and be successful. I've had to take on a lot more responsibilities than I originally expected, both financially and educationally, by learning all of the aspects of running a business. I'm amazed at how many taxes are involved; sales, unemployment, social security, Medicare/Medicaid, amount to permitting required, occupational, health, studio, food, etc. It's crazy.

SS: Let's talk about nutrition. I see pics of the new Dave on the website, low fat and fit to the bone. How did that get started?

BS: Similar to me, Dave needs to have a goal in order to stay motivated. He's been plagued with injury after injury, which has prevented him from continuing to powerlift. I think it's great that he found a way to apply his determination.

SS: What kind of health value you think this has?

BS: Well, I think decreasing body fat percentages to decrease blood pressure and cholesterol levels is extremely important for increasing longevity and improving quality of life. Now Dave has somehow managed to put back on a significant amount of weight while still keeping his blood pressure and cholesterol down. I'm not sure how he pulled this off but more power to him.

SS: How does this approach affect your performance, generally?

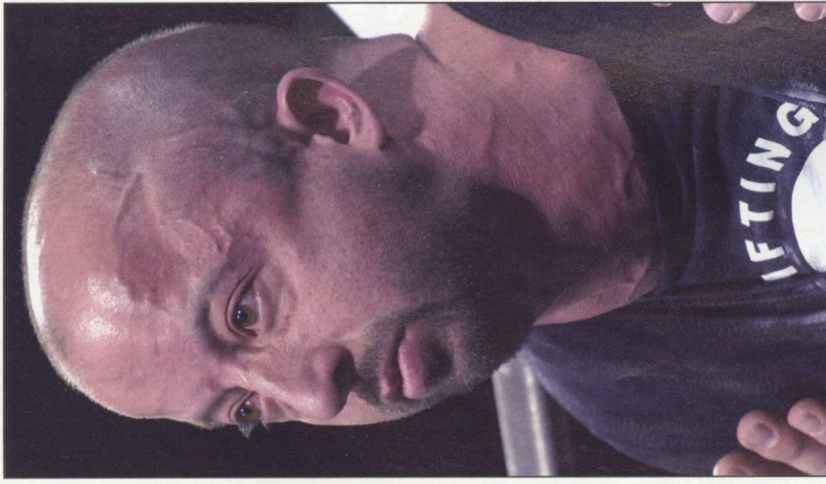
BS: I tend to keep my body fat in the low single digits year round. I'm around 5% right now. This isn't necessarily by choice; I just tend to eat relatively clean. That, combined with training heavy keeps me lean. My blood pressure and cholesterol levels are both very low as well.

SS: What kind of diet do you follow?

BS: I actually have a hard time gaining weight which has been both a blessing and a curse. I do try to take in at least a gram of protein per pound of body weight a day with equal amounts of low glycemic carbohydrates.

SS: How important is nutrition?

BS: This is actually a difficult question. I think powerlifters need to make sure to take in enough macronutrients to increase their lean mass while limiting increases in body fat. This is often easier said than done. Too many lifters feel that bigger is better without taking into account that they are most likely not going to increase their strength at the same rate as their bodyweight. This could make their efforts fruitless when they are less competitive in the next



Brian becoming the best he can possibly be as a lifter. 7148 lb. lifter. (continued from page 12)

lifters through injuries to a point where they have to completely stop training.

SS: What do you think about system strength coaches are educated with in the USA?

BS: I feel similar to them as I do that; this is my passion and livelihood so she's learned to accept and embrace it.

SS: What do you do when you have some time off and want to relax?

BS: It doesn't take much for me to relax. I like to drink beer with my buddies from the gym, watch UFC, and go to the beach.

SS: Did you ever imagine that you could run this all by yourself and no one can do it better?

BS: Well, along the lines of running Orlando Barbell, I now have over ten years of personal training experience, so the revenue from that has helped to keep the doors open. I'm learning the business aspect as I go and feel strongly that we'll beat the

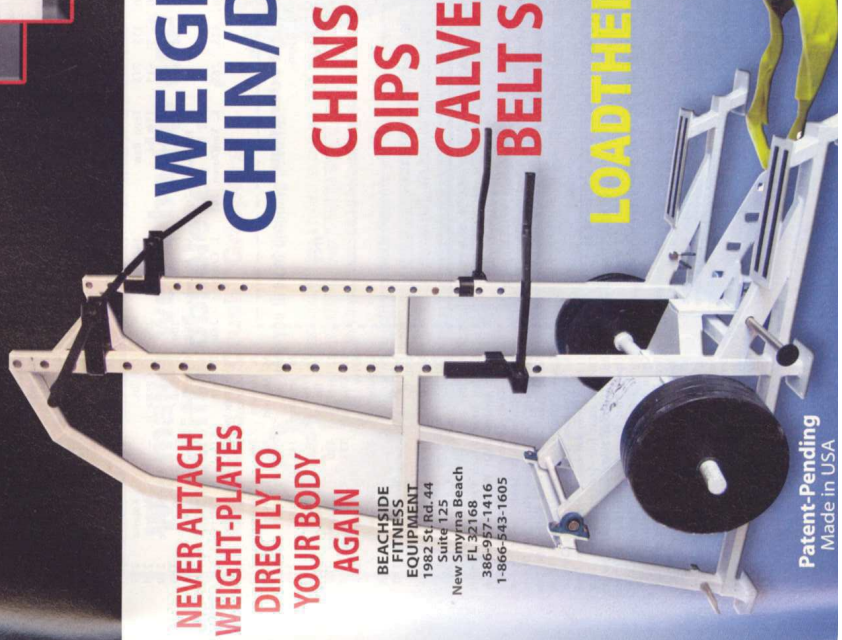
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