



# IRON GAME HISTORY



VOLUME 3 NUMBER 3

April 1994

## Another Big Man Gone

Two weeks ago, we got the news of the death of Matt Dimel, a superheavyweight powerlifter. Matt was only thirty-three, and his passing at such a young age brought to mind how many of our supers have left us too early. Too early. Within the last decade or so, we have lost, among others, Iceland's thirty-two-year old Jon Pall Sigmarsson, who won many world championships in "strongman" competitions; Gary Aprahamian, the four hundred pounder from New York who wanted so desperately to be massive and strong yet who died in his twenties; Chuck Braxton, the popular Master's lifter who suffered a fatal heart attack at the age of fifty-three in the warm-up room just before a meet; and O. D. Wilson, the enormous powerlifter/strongman who was near the top of both of his favorite sports when he suddenly expired.

None of these giants died accidentally, in the manner of Dave Pasanella, who was killed in a car crash. All died of what are sometimes called "natural causes," yet it seems all too clear that most, if not all, of these men died earlier than they otherwise might have died had they not had such a passionate love for size and the strength size confers. Deaths of this sort are not unprecedented in the Iron Game, of course. Louis Cyr, the 5'9", 320 pound marvel of strength from Quebec was only forty-nine when he died which was three years older than the age at death of his former stage partner and companion-at-table, Horace Barre. Their lesser known contemporary, the splendid backlifter Henry Holtgrewe, was just a few years older, fifty-four, when he was laid to rest. Another leviathan who failed to even approach the biblical promise of three score years and ten was the renowned Austrian Karl Swoboda, who died at the age of fifty. Nor should we forget that had it

not been for kidney dialysis and the miracles of modern surgery, a similar fate would have befallen the legendary Paul Anderson in his late forties.

What are we to make of this seemingly contrary situation, in which so many of our largest and strongest men die so young? Would not their phenomenal strength provide protection against the ills which beset normal men? In the world of fantasy, perhaps it would. In the real world, however, the apparent answer is no. Apparently, the very obsession which drove these men to exceed the size they were genetically programmed to be—added to the fact that they were all programmed to be far more massive than an average man—made them vulnerable to the sorts of physical problems which brought them down—strokes, heart attacks, kidney disease and so on.

In the old days, of course, the overeating which helped to produce the abnormal size of giants like Cyr and Barre was sufficient by itself to create premature problems. Now, however, those obsessed with ultimate size and strength have another, equally deadly tool at their disposal—anabolic/androgenic steroids. And the combination of habitual overeating and anabolic/androgenic steroids is particularly deadly. It would, in fact, be fair to say that a very real occupational hazard for a steroid-using superheavyweight is an early death. All of which makes the term "natural death" ring with such grim irony when it is (mis) applied to some of our late brothers.

It has been argued that those who took such risks did so knowingly, and that they died doing what they loved. That—to paraphrase the song Billy Joel wrote for Frank Sinatra—"they did



it their way.” Therefore—those who make this argument say—we should not pity these men.

However, even though I understand these arguments and even though I heard and succumbed for a time to the same siren song which proved to be the undoing of these big men, I still pity them. I pity them because of the things they missed, many of which perhaps, they hadn’t lived quite long enough to fully appreciate. Simple things like the fellowship of friends and family; or good music; or the majesty of a storm; or physical passion; or the thrill of sports; or even a favorite food. Not that the men didn’t experience these things, only that their experience was so much more limited than it might have been. Had they lived longer, nature would probably have blessed them with more wisdom, wisdom which would have helped them to place a truer value on things, to realize that there is a time for maximum strength and size and a time to move on.

I’m also saddened by the deaths, because I knew most of these men and now they are lost to me, lost to the Game. I went once to the home of Wayne Bouvier, who had died some months earlier,

to speak to his family. I had travelled to Germany with Wayne in 1982—the year he won the national powerlifting championship as a superheavyweight—to attend the World Championships, and he told me how upset his father was because he had admitted to his father that he used steroids. “I hated to tell him, but he and my mother were really worried about my weird behavior and aggressiveness. They thought I was going crazy.” On my trip to Michigan to see the Bouviers, Wayne’s father told me that on the night he died, Wayne had come home late from the gym with a bag of cheeseburgers, sat down on the living room floor, complained of a splitting headache and then gradually began losing the power of movement, and of speech. “He went so quickly,” his father said. “I held him til the ambulance arrived, but I think he was dead before he reached the hospital.” Wayne was only twenty-nine when he died in his father’s arms.

Mr. Bouvier gave me Wayne’s lifting belt, and it has a prominent place in our collection. I see it every day and every day it reminds me that obsession has a price.

—Terry Todd

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*Iron Game History* is published by the McLean Sport History Fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin. Address: Terry and Jan Todd, The Todd-McLean Collection, Room 217, Gregory Gymnasium, The University of Texas at Austin, 78712. Telephone: 512-471-4890. Fax: 512-443-0381

U.S. Subscription rate: \$20.00\* per six issues, \$35.00\* for twelve issues, \$50.00 for twelve issue McLean Fellowship membership, \$100.00 per twelve issue McLean Fellowship's subscription (Additional information can be found on page 24.) Address all subscription requests to: *IGH* Subscriptions, Room 217, Gregory Gym, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 78712.

\*Canada and other foreign subscriptions add \$5.00 (U.S.) per six issue subscription. Back issues: \$4.00 each.

*Iron Game History* is a non profit enterprise. **Postmaster:** Please send address corrections to: *Iron Game History*, Room 217, Gregory Gymnasium, The University of Texas, Austin, Texas 78712. (ISSN 1069-7276)



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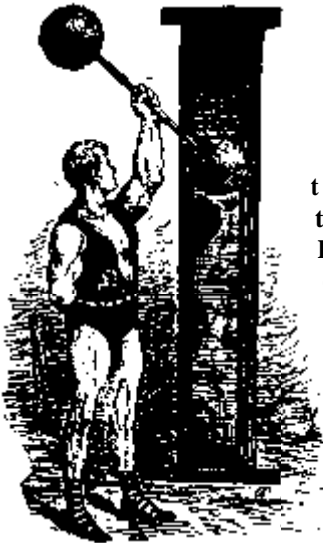
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David Chapman

## SANDOW'S FIRST TRIUMPH

Excerpted from:  
David Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent: Eugen Sandow and the Beginnings of Bodybuilding* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994)



It gives us great pleasure to present to our readers this chapter from David Chapman's new biography of Eugen Sandow. Those of you who have read David's series of historical articles in *Iron Man* know, already, that he is a fine researcher, a skillful writer, and a dedicated student of the history of the Iron Game. A school teacher in Seattle, Washington, Chapman has worked on this

biography of Sandow's life in his spare time for the past decade. His decision to use an academic publishing house like the University of Illinois Press meant several extra years of work for Chapman, as he had to go back and document all his sources and quotations. However, the book which he and the University of Illinois Press have subsequently published is a real boon for the Game. Now, for the first time, we have a documented history of the life of Eugen Sandow at our disposal. Copies of *Sandow The Magnificent* may be ordered for \$26.95 through your local bookstore or by contacting the University of Illinois Press at 1325 South Oak Street, Champaign, Illinois, 61820; Tel: 217-333-0950.

Appearing at the music hall attached to the Royal Aquarium in Westminster were two outrageous athletic charlatans: Sampson and Cyclops. They had put together a popular act involving feats of strength and trickery. To make their performance seem more credible, Sampson, the brains of the partnership, loudly announced each night that he would pay anyone foolish enough to try it one hundred pounds sterling if he could duplicate the feats of his "pupil" Cyclops, and £500 if anyone could duplicate his own feats. To Attila,

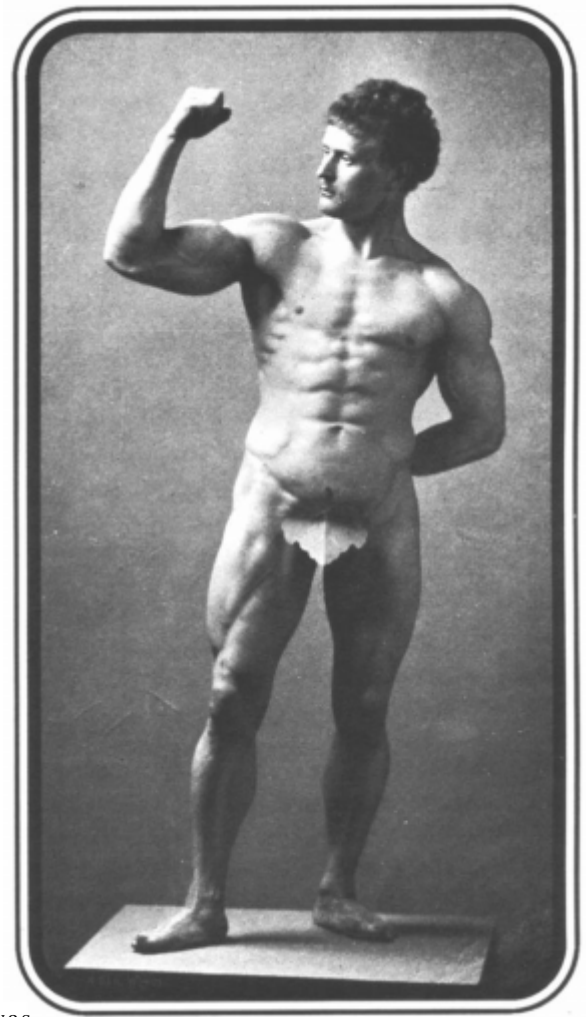
who had by this time started his own physical culture studio in Bloomsbury, Sampson's

offer was too good to pass up. He sent for Sandow who was then in Italy, encouraging him to come to London and take up the challenge.

As Attila well knew, it was a common tactic for vaudeville strongmen to issue dares from the stage for anyone to come up and attempt to duplicate their feats. This was a fairly safe offer, for most strongmen had devised tricks that were nearly impossible for uninitiated amateurs (and professionals too, for that matter) to perform. These feats often included tricks of dexterity, strength, and acrobatics that would foil even the mightiest athlete if he were unused to the materials or lacked a carefully tuned sense of balance.<sup>1</sup>

Their opponent in this case, Charles A. Sampson, was a man who was even more slippery than the average professional Hercules. He was born on April 16, 1859 in the French city of Metz in Lorraine. Eventually, he emigrated to America where he took up residence in Detroit, Michigan. The strongman was well formed and muscular, but obviously not so powerful as he tried to make his credulous fans believe. Sampson once reported that his great strength came about as a very literal bolt from the blue. At the tender age of fourteen he was struck by a tremendous flash of lightning. The boy languished on his sickbed for six months, and when he eventually recovered Sampson found that he had acquired an almost superhuman strength.<sup>2</sup>

His appearance at the Royal Aquarium, however, was not





THIS CARTOON OF THE SAMPSON / SANDOW MATCH APPEARED IN A PROMINENT BRITISH NEWSPAPER IN 1890, AND WAS REPRINTED IN *HEALTH AND STRENGTH* ON DECEMBER 3, 1938.

his first venture upon the boards of the British music hall. Prior to this he had appeared at the Canterbury Theatre of Varieties where he claimed to lift overhead a barbell boldly marked 2,240 Pounds—one imperial ton! The bell rested on two large barrels. As a gesture of his honesty, Sampson invited several members of the audience to come up and try to lift the enormous weight—all unsuccessfully. After this, Sampson's manager gave a long, flowery speech explaining the great degree of difficulty involved in this trick. Then following a long drumroll and suitable grimaces and false starts, the strongman slowly and painfully raised the bell higher and higher until he held it at arm's length above his head.

When he returned the weight to the barrels, he was always greeted with a thunderous ovation. He might have gotten away with this ruse, except one night someone tried to lift the barbell after Sampson had finished, not before when they were invited to. It seems that while the manager was giving his long introductory speech, two secret holes were opened in the weight and the heavy sand inside was drained into the barrels on which it rested.<sup>3</sup>

Despite this brush with exposure, Sampson did not retreat from the theatrical scene; he merely regrouped his efforts and came up with new "feats of strength." Throughout his career, he had gained

a reputation for harness lifting, and one of his first efforts at this involved lifting an elephant. The ponderous creature was put on a large wooden platform over which a sturdy scaffolding had been constructed. The strongman then dramatically mounted the scaffold and placed a leather harness over his head connected by chains to the platform below. After much grunting and theatrics, the platform was slowly raised six or seven inches above the floor. Sampson would then collapse, letting the platform and pachyderm plummet the few inches to the stage as attendants rushed to give the strongman a few whiffs of *sal volatile*. One night though, Sampson collapsed, but the platform mysteriously remained suspended in mid-air. The management thought best to ring down the curtain unceremoniously.

In 1891, two years after his fateful match with Sandow, Sampson had apparently improved his harness apparatus, for he succeeded in convincing some important people who should have known better that he lifted two large bay horses and two accompanying hostlers whose combined weight added up to 3,809 pounds. Several weeks later he claimed to have lifted an astonishing 4,008 pounds. Despite the best efforts of many people (Sandow included), no one could say for sure how the wily Sampson engineered these feats of legerdemain—for they certainly had nothing to do with real strength.<sup>4</sup>

Several years earlier, Sampson had met and hired a strapping young Polish wrestler who called himself "Cyclops". His real name was Franz Bienkowski, and he looked every inch the oldtime vaudeville strongman. He was heavyset with a thick, bull neck. He shaved his head and had gracefully curling mustaches. His greatest claim to fame was the supposed ability to tear coins in two. There are many who believe this was another sleight of hand and that no one could mangle coins the way Cyclops claimed he could.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the case, he was a perfect foil for the clever and volatile Sampson: he was strong looking and not too bright. So with these colorful and unusual characters poised to attack it is little wonder that the ensuing battle attracted unusual attention both in the close circle of performing strongmen and in the public at large.

As soon as he had made the channel crossing, Sandow contacted his old master, Attila, who immediately started preparing him for the upcoming contest. One of the first stops Sandow had in London was at the prestigious National Sporting Club. Attila knew that since his young charge was virtually unknown in England, it would be necessary to obtain a few credentials before scoring his future victories. That way he would have a little moral and political backing should the need arise.

By the time Sandow and Attila attempted to gain allies there, the venerable NSC had been in existence as an informal body for many years. The Club came into being when prize fighting was one of London's most popular sports. The Prince Regent was a member of a rowdy NSC coterie called "The Fancy" which often came afoul of the law, but the Prince's attendance

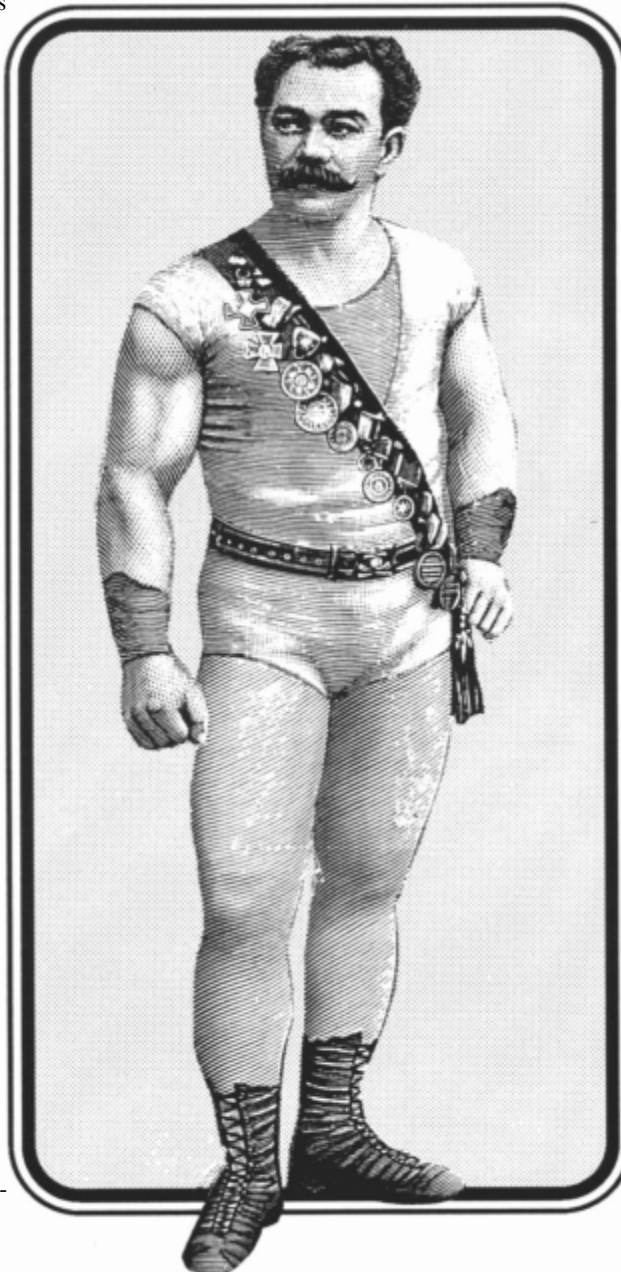
at their boisterous assemblies prevented the magistrates from having them all imprisoned.

Despite the antics of the royal reprobate, the society's more reputable members gradually attempted to turn boxing into a respectable sport.

Thus, the organization was officially founded in 1891 with this purpose in view. It enforced the rules of its most famous member, the Marquis of Queensberry, stamped out fixed fights, and by the turn of the century awarded the Lonsdale Belts to fighters of merit. Perhaps appropriately, the club's headquarters are still on the boulevard named after their erstwhile protector, Regent Street.<sup>6</sup>

With Attila acting as his interpreter, Sandow arrived at the National Sporting Club and asked to present his case before the director, Mr. John Fleming. The members of the club greeted the two courteously but without enthusiasm. No one could quite believe that Sandow had the strength to defeat such well-known strongmen as Sampson and Cyclops. Fortunately, Sandow was able to perform one of his most convincing (and most frequently used) acts of strength: he spied one of the members who displayed the greatest girth and then lifted him bodily from the floor and gently placed him on a nearby table. Fleming was pleased with the display, but became even more fervent when the young East Prussian stripped off his clothing and his magnificent physique became apparent to all.<sup>7</sup>

After attending several of Sampson's performances, Attila and Sandow were ready to make their move. On the evening of October 29, 1889, Fleming and other members of the National Sporting Club took a box at the Aquarium and waited until the Frenchman made his nightly challenge. Apparently, Sampson was no



SANDOW'S MENTOR, PROFESSOR ATTILA (LOUIS DURLACHER), IN AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE *NATIONAL POLICE GAZETTE* IN 1893.

less amazed than the audience when Attila arose and announced that he had a challenger who was ready to take on Sampson immediately. No doubt seeing little bank notes rapidly flying away, Sampson attempted to squirm out of his predicament. He did not know who this young man was, and how dare he take on "The Strongest Man on Earth"? Sandow would have to beat Cyclops first, only then would he submit to a contest. But just to show that his heart was in the right place, Sampson handed over £100 to the manager of the theater, Captain Molesworth, for safe keeping. This was not at all satisfactory to Sandow, Attila announced. He had come all the way from Italy for the £500, and for nothing less. Sampson proclaimed that he was in the right and refused to budge from his position. There the situation might have remained had it not been for a hastily arranged compromise between Fleming and Molesworth. Sandow would compete against Cyclops first, then if he was victorious he would go against his master at a later date. Reluctantly, Sandow and Attila agreed.

With the stipulations finally settled, Attila, Fleming, and the entire NSC group trooped onto the stage along with their man, Sandow. The audience by now was getting impatient with all these claims and counter-claims. It cannot be said that Sandow had the sympathy of the galleries; this was soon to change, however. Sandow came on the stage dressed in a fine suit of evening clothes specially prepared to be ripped off at once. Underneath he wore an athletic costume complete with tights and Roman

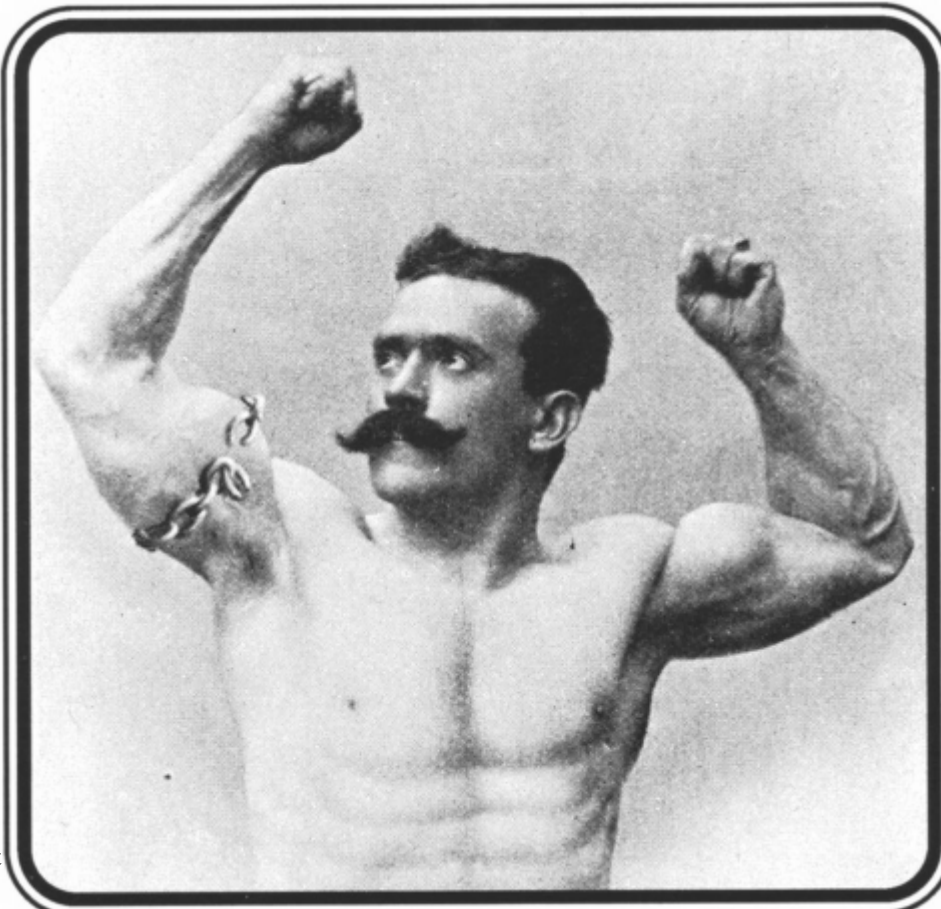
sandals. To make his appearance seem even more debonair, he also donned a stylish monocle. Keeping this bothersome item in its proper position is said to have caused him more trouble than he was to experience in his contest with Cyclops.

As he came on stage, thanks to the monocle, Sandow tripped over some of the weights and other properties on stage causing a great deal of derisive laughter to come from the hall. The mood of the audience quickly changed, however, when he finally got rid of the pesky eyepiece, ripped off his foppish evening dress, and revealed a beautiful, well-formed, athletic physique. Sampson and Cyclops were also visibly moved by this revelation.

Finally the contest began in earnest. Cyclops picked up a 150 pound dumbbell and then another weighing 100 pounds and pressed them both above his head. Sandow responded by lifting the 150 pounds once and the 100 pounds twice over his head. The challenger had thus won round one almost effortlessly.

Test two was presented again by Cyclops who jerked a 220 pound barbell overhead using both hands. Much to the delight of the audience, by now switching their allegiance to the young underdog, Sandow was able to press the same weight as his rival using only one hand.

The third test was a "press on back." Cyclops got down on the stage floor on his back and slowly lifted a barbell weighing 250 pounds into the air. Sandow was able to duplicate this feat easily. Since the last test had been successfully completed and since Sampson and his



THIS RETOUCED PHOTOGRAPH, FROM HIS BOOK, *STRENGTH*, SHOWS CHARLES SAMPSON SUPPOSEDLY BREAKING A SOLID-LINKED STEEL CHAIN BY FLEXING HIS BICEPS.

pupil did not seem able to think up any new stunts, Fleming and the other NSC members concluded that the contest was over and that Sampson must pay his debt. Not so, complained the fiery-tempered showman. Sampson explained loudly that before a true test of strength was complete it had to include a measure of endurance. Therefore, all the stunts had to be performed over and over again until only one man remained. The audience, however, had different ideas; they had no desire to sit in their seats and be bored to death waiting for one of the men to collapse. It seemed obvious to them that Sandow was certainly the equal, and probably the superior of Cyclops.<sup>8</sup>

"Cries and counter-cries were heard" reported a witness, "and a soldier made himself conspicuous in the gallery by the animated manner in which he took the part of the newcomer, and by taunting Sampson with having lost his money."<sup>9</sup> While all the commotion was going on, Sandow quietly sat down to rest.

The turmoil was finally calmed by Molesworth who announced that since he was the stakeholder, he would make sure that justice was done. Could Sampson name some final test that would decide the issue once and for all? Sampson agreed reluctantly. Cyclops stepped forward and picked up a dumbbell marked 150 pounds in his right hand and a kettlebell weighing 100 pounds in his left. He slowly lifted the dumbbell overhead twice, then let it crash dramatically to the floor of the platform.

Shouts of "Don't do it; don't try it; you have already won your money!" greeted the young athlete as he came forward and felt the weight of the ponderous dumbbell.<sup>10</sup> He smiled suavely in response to the warnings as he poised the heavy bell in the right hand and grasped the other in his left. Then, almost effortlessly, Sandow raised and lowered the bell not twice but seven times amid thunders of applause.

Once more Sampson flew into a paroxysm of indignation and chagrin but to no avail. The £100 prize money was handed over to the young German with the promise of another meeting to determine whether Sandow was superior to Sampson or not. Sandow had been victorious in the first battle, but the war was far from won.

After their triumph over Cyclops, Sandow and Attila retired home in order to plot their next moves. Because they had seen several of Sampson's performances, they knew that one of his favorite tricks was the breaking of chains which he would wrap around his arm and then burst by muscle contraction. In order for this feat to be accomplished well, it was necessary to have trick chains that fit perfectly. So after nosing around for a while, they found the maker of Sampson's chains in a little street off Leicester Square. Not only were they able to get chains that were perfectly molded to Sandow's arm, but they also arranged for the maker to be present in the audience at the Aquarium on the night of the contest in order to verify that these chains were exactly the same kind and quality as the ones Sampson used in his act.<sup>11</sup>

By all accounts the scene at the Aquarium on the night of Saturday, November 2, was something akin to a madhouse. The news had spread throughout the sporting world of London that something big was in the making.

Large groups of people crowded around, trying to get in to see the contest between Sampson, the self-proclaimed "Strongest Man on Earth," and the young, virtually unknown German lad. It was reported later that tickets were being sold from £1 to £5—one source even put the top price at 50 guineas.<sup>12</sup> "The beauty of the turnstile system was well illustrated," remarked the reporter from the *Daily News*, "for without these revolving barriers of iron the eager multitude would probably have carried the place by storm."<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the curtain rose. Sampson came to the footlights, dapper, radiant in medals, tights, and dainty boots, and smiling with confidence. He made a little speech, the first of an unforgivable series delivered or attempted before the evening ended. He wanted fair play; he offered £500 to anyone who would come on the stage and perform the feats he performed. Never mind where such a man came from; let him appear. But to Sampson's relief and the audience's amazement, no one came forward. Where was Sandow? Sampson paced nervously back and forth across the stage waiting for his adversary, but no one appeared. Sampson again made a short speech stating that he did not want the challenge money, that he would donate it to charity, and besides he was cold, there was a draft in the hall. Again he paced back and forth.<sup>14</sup> Finally, he swung his cape around with a flourish and was about to skulk off stage when a great commotion arose caused by a group of men vaulting over the side-box onto the stage. It was the National Sporting Club group again, led by Fleming. They had been trying to gain entrance into the theater all the while, but because of the huge throng outside and a doorman who stubbornly refused to open the stage door for anyone, they had been delayed. If it had not been for Sandow who broke down the door, they might still be waiting outside.<sup>15</sup>

At last Sandow entered. There was general cheering at seeing the young German. The two judges for the evening were both peers of the realm: the Marquis of Queensberry, the originator of the rules of boxing and the nemesis of Oscar Wilde, and Lord de Clifford, an avid sportsman of the day. It can only be imagined what sort of mental state Sandow was in—he had just barely missed the entire action. Yet he never gave the impression of being perturbed in the slightest. "Phlegmatic" was how he was described.<sup>16</sup>



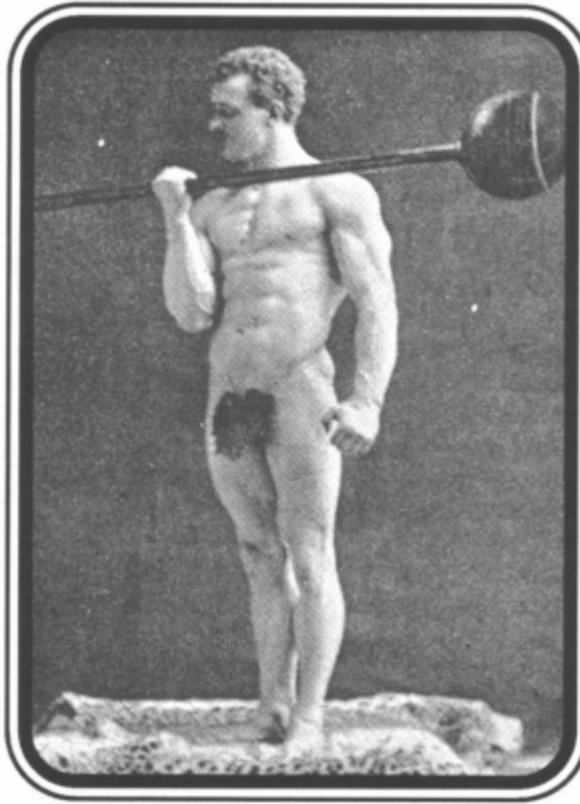


“A beginning might never have been made,” remarked a reporter, “but for the judges, who decided that Sampson must do the feats of strength he was in the habit of doing every night.” As a result of this move to get things rolling, some wag in the front stalls shouted out. “Ah, I always said the House of Lords was a useful institution.”

Sampson began the exhibition with iron pipe bending. He used his chest, leg, and arms to bend the pipe and then straighten it back again by blows. He did the work gracefully and swiftly. Sandow labored more, was clumsy, and took more time, but eventually he performed the task. Upon completion of this first feat, Sampson made a few loud and disparaging remarks about his opponent’s apparent difficulty in performing the job. But the audience remained firmly on the side of the challenger—besides, as Molesworth announced, Sandow had never done the trick before in his life.

Then came the feat of breaking a wire rope fastened around the chest. Sampson performed it with the ease of one accustomed to the trick of twisting the ends of the wire strands together. Sandow was obviously unacquainted with the knack, and it was only after the audience shouted a few instructions and several fruitless tries that he succeeded. “It was a splendid effort of strength. The man seemed like to burst in his effort to obtain the requisite expansion of chest.” When at last he was able to break the iron rope, most of the audience leaped to its feet and cheered raucously.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps a little overconfident, Sampson next proceeded to his forte: chain breaking. He put one on his own forearm and coolly offered another to Sandow. It was obviously too small for the German, and he rejected it with a gesture of contempt. To everyone’s surprise, Sandow brought out a chain of his own from his pocket and, true to his word, the chain maker was in the audience and was happy to verify that the chains were exactly the same as those used by Sampson. In order to verify the strength of his chains even further, Sandow passed them to members of the audience, taking them back at last from a pretty woman who sat conveniently near the stage.<sup>18</sup> The spectators may have been satisfied, but not the explosive Frenchman “The unfortunate Sampson protested, gesticulated, argued trod the



IN THIS ILLUSTRATION FROM *SANDOW'S SYSTEM OF PHYSICAL TRAINING* (1894), SANDOW'S IMPRESSIVE MUSCULARITY IS READILY APPARENT.

deck, and generally cavorted around.” But all this was to no avail, for Sandow was able to break his chain as easily as Sampson.

Sampson was clearly outraged that his rival had so easily beaten him at his own game. He ranted and raved to the audience until they shouted him down. Then he turned his attentions to the judges, but with equal success. Finally, amid much hubbub, the judges said that they would declare Sandow the winner of the contest if the German would perform some further proofs of strength on his own. Accordingly, he first lifted a stiffened and upright man from the ground and then did some crowd-pleasing feats with an improbably large dumbbell weighing 150 pounds.

All this time Sampson was throwing one of his frequent connivance fits. Someone shouted from the stalls offering Sampson £50 if he could duplicate any of Sandow’s feats. But by this time he had had enough. Sampson grabbed his cape and stalked off the stage in a frightful huff. Finally, the only one left was Sandow. The judges duly named him the winner. He said a few words of thanks in German, and the eventful evening was over.

Unfortunately for the vanquished strongman, there was a clause in Sampson’s contract which stated that if he were ever defeated after one of his nightly challenges, then his contract with the theater would become null and void.<sup>19</sup> It is no wonder then that Sampson carried his protests of unfairness off the stage and into the press.

As it turned out, however, there were other reasons for Sampson’s vociferous outbursts, but they were not destined to be revealed for another five years. For now he had to be content with writing to every newspaper he could think of pleading for another chance, another match with the upstart German. However, the theater-going public was beginning to wonder if Sampson really was “The Strongest Man on Earth” or not.

Sampson had another reason for acting the role of the slighted hero: there was still the matter of the £500 prize. This had never been paid to Sandow, despite the ruling of the judges. For a man who often resorted to lawsuits on the flimsiest pretexts, Sandow strangely declined to press the matter in the courts. He meekly settled for an award of £350 paid to him by the Aquarium management. But all

thought of litigation was put aside in the excitement of the moment. Sandow was victorious. That was all that mattered.

Shortly after this, Sampson quietly left town. With the cheek of the professional charlatan he took up his strongman act in various cities in the United States and Europe. In 1893 he turned up in Michigan, where among other things, he claimed to have lifted the heavy cannon in front of the Detroit City Hall.<sup>20</sup> In 1895 he published a self-serving book called *Strength* in which he made many extravagant claims of Herculean power.

During the year 1898 he surfaced again in the Russian capital, St. Petersburg, still proclaiming himself "The Strongest Man on Earth." True to form, he continued to use a number of fancy tricks, trying to convince the gullible public that he was as strong as he said he was. One person who was not convinced was the great wrestler and strongman, George Hackenschmidt, "The Russian Lion." Hackenschmidt showed up at one of Sampson's performances and easily exposed his tricks. After the show Sampson tried to talk the Russian into returning with him to London and there challenging Sandow to another match—this time with a much more formidable partner. But Hackenschmidt refused, and there the matter rested.

The Russian again encountered Sampson in 1904. By this time Hackenschmidt was residing in London, making a living as a wrestler. Sampson called at his home and Hackenschmidt immediately saw that Sampson was suffering severe financial hardship. The older man asked the Russian Lion for a loan of £10. He was willing to put up his weights and other paraphernalia as collateral for the loan. Hackenschmidt agreed and handed him the note, and Sampson duly deposited all of his equipment in the basement of the house. That was the last the Russian ever saw of him, for sometime after that Sampson managed to get into the house, take back the equipment, and leave town for good. He disappeared from sight, finally fading mercifully into the murk of history.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile the youthful, twenty-two year old victor was reaping the benefits of instant celebrity. "When we left the Aquarium after the contest," Sandow wrote, "the great crowd followed us cheering, and the four-wheeled cab into which we got, was lifted up by these enthusiasts. The crowd cheered us all the way to my rooms."<sup>22</sup> Newspapermen clamored to interview him, everyone wanting to know more of this remarkable young man. Sandow—probably on the advice of Attila—maintained for a moment the fiction that he was not interested in the slightest in a music hall career, but this was just a ploy to raise the stakes with the theater managers. By the time he went to bed that night, Sandow had a contract to appear at the Alhambra Music Hall for the very generous sum of £150 per week. Attila was paid the less magnificent sum of £30 per week and agreed to act as mentor-cum-manager to the burgeoning star. Sandow had taken another step on the long road to greater glory. He must have found it very difficult to sleep that night.

## Notes:

1 Even with these precautions, many a stage Hercules was occasionally caught unawares. Later in his career, Sandow, himself, fell victim to this tactic. In 1893 he offered a prize of \$1,000 to anyone who could duplicate his lifting feats. Unfortunately, a burly Swedish lifter, Hjalmar Lundin, took him



at his word, jumped the stage and reproduced every lift. A nervous and embarrassed Sandow declared that the lifts were not done in "as perfect form" as he had done them. Thus the prize was denied the challenger despite the vociferous hoots of the audience. Siegmund Klein, "Sandow—Truth and Fiction," *Strength & Health* (December 1948), 32. Also see David Chapman, "Gallery of Ironmen: Hjalmar Lundin," *Ironman* 51(October 1992), 146.

2. C.A. Sampson, *Strength: A Treatise on the Development and Use of Muscle* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1895) 38-42.

3. Leo Gaudreau, *Anvils, Horseshoes, and Cannons, I* (Alliance, Nebraska: Iron Man Publishing, 1975), 165.

4. *Ibid.*, I: 167.

5. Gordon Venables, *Mighty Men of Old* (York, Pa.: *Strength & Health*, 1940), unpaginated [22].

6. Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert eds., *The London Encyclopaedia* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 535.

7. William Pullum, "Strong Men Over the Years," a foreword to *The Amazing Samson As Told By Himself* (London: Samson Institute, 1926), 12-13.

8. *Ibid.*, 13-15.

9. Quoted in G. Mercer Adam, ed., *Sandow's System of Physical Training* (New York: J. Selwin Tait & Sons, 1894), 49.

10. *Ibid.*, 50.

11. Pullum, "Strong Men Over the Years," 17-18.

12. *Ibid.*, 18.

13. Quoted in Adam, *Sandow's System of Physical Training*, 55-56.

14. *Ibid.*, 56.

15. Eugen Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It* (London: Gale & Polden, nd.), 96-97.

16. Adam, *Sandow's System of Physical Training*, 58.

17. *Ibid.*, 58-60.

18. Unidentified clipping dated July 2, [1893], in Attila's personal scrapbook. Todd-McLean Collection. The University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

19. Pullum, "Strong Men Over the Years," 21.

20. Sampson, *Strength.*, 49.

21. George Hackenschmidt, "Charles Sampson: King of Showmen and Knave of Strongmen," *Mr. America* 5(June 1962), 68-72.

22. Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 98-99.



# John Carroll Grimek: The Nonpareil

Jim Murray

There was seldom a dull moment at the *Strength & Health* magazine office in York, Pennsylvania, during the early 1950s. York, at the time, was clearly the world center for weightlifting and allied activities. The United States had the world championship weightlifting team and the champions gathered at the York Barbell Club's battered old gym on North Broad Street to prepare for national and international competition. And bodybuilders from all over the U.S. and the world would spend time at York to get training tips from the dominant bodybuilder of the era, John Carroll Grimek (JCG).

John and I shared an office and, in lulls between preparing issues of *S&H*, JCG would regale me with accounts of his long experience in the Iron Game. He had been national heavyweight lifting champion and a member of the 1936 Olympic weightlifting team, and had placed third in the national championships as a heavyweight in 1940 while weighing only 183 pounds. That was the year he won his first Mr. America contest. JCG had tried to make weight to compete in the 181-pound class, but had too much muscle to lose and decided to compete as a heavyweight against Steve Stanko and Louis Abele, each of whom weighed about 225 (Anything over 181 was in the unlimited heavyweight class in those days). Despite the debilitating effect of taking off about 20 pounds, John still pressed 285 pounds, which was 102 pounds over his bodyweight.

Here's a tidbit that will surprise a lot of Iron Game fans: after a start in weight training during which he practiced all the standard barbell and dumbbell exercises of the time, John Grimek concentrated on competitive weightlifting, and from 1932 until after he won the 1940 Mr. America contest he did no bodybuilding! He

practiced snatches, cleans and jerks, squats for leg strength, and a lot of cleans and presses for general strength and to focus on shoulders and arms. He did repetitions of complete cleans and presses, lowering the weight and cleaning it before each press. With a clean before each press, JCG worked up to as much as 275 pounds for repetitions. With that kind of training, he developed the outstanding physique that won the 1940 Mr. America contest

Barbell men of the 1930s and '40s had minimal special equipment. Mostly they just lifted barbells and dumbbells in very basic exercises. There were no benches with uprights to support barbells preparatory to bench pressing, so there was little if any bench pressing done. There were squat stands, and Grimek did a lot of squats—with no knee wraps, special suits or other aids, and using a comfortable foot spacing about shoulder width.

Not only was JCG's training different—much more basic than that of today's bodybuilder—but so was his diet. As I see today's bodybuilders spending big bucks on special diets and exotic supplements, I recall John telling me about his diet during the Great Depression. "I often subsisted on bread and coffee," JCG laughed. "High Protein diets? We often couldn't afford any protein!"

Grimek, like most weightlifters/bodybuilders of his day, couldn't devote full time to what was—in those days—a hobby interest. His superior genetic endowment allowed him to pack on muscle from any strenuous activity. We would discuss some of the questions that were sent to his "Your Training Problems" section in *S&H*. In planning his answer he would refer to something he had done that worked well and I would kid him: "John, if you went over in a corner of the room and did push-ups you'd have had results most of us couldn't approach using every piece of equipment in the gym."

JCG was a man with incredible bone structure—eight-inch wrists on a frame just a little over average height, 5'9". He also had large ankles but surprisingly small knees, which added to the massive appearance of his muscular legs. Although he failed to make the 181-pound limit in 1940, John could usually control his weight in superb condition between 181 and the 221 he weighed when he



JOHN GRIMEK'S EXCEPTIONAL FLEXIBILITY HELPED TURN THE TIDE FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF WEIGHT TRAINING BY ATHLETES.

PHOTO COURTESY: JIM MURRAY

won his second Mr. America contest in 1941.

I had seen JCG for the first time at the 1941 Mr. America contest. He had an indefinable quality that allowed him to stand out in a line-up of the nation's best built men, but what I remember most vividly was his grace and athleticism, despite his massive musculature. He was late in preparing for the contest, having stayed with his close friend, Steve Stanko, who was having difficulty making lifts that had been easy for him in training a few weeks earlier. John was doing his best to encourage Steve, who was experiencing mysterious leg pain. (Stanko had begun to suffer from phlebitis, a vascular disorder that was to end his weightlifting career just as he was beginning to reach his potential. Steve was never able to compete in Olympic lifting again after the 1941 national championships.)

The Mr. America contest was under way and JCG was just changing into his trunks when his name was called. He ran from the dressing room, leaped lithely up to the boxing ring where the lifting and posing were contested, and smoothly glided into his artistic muscular display. From that moment, the only question was—Who will win second place?

John was thirty-one when he won his second Mr. America title, resulting in a rule being passed that winners couldn't compete

again—since it seemed he would go on winning forever. When I joined him on the *S&H* staff in 1951, he was forty-one and I was astounded to see the superb condition he had retained at that “advanced age.” I was only twenty-five at the time and like most young people, thought anyone over forty was “old.”

That was nothing! In his eighties JCG retains beautiful proportions, with rounded, youthful-looking muscles. In the 1970s and '80s my work would often take me to Washington, D.C., and on the way home I would stop at York to see my old friends at the York Barbell Company. I remember walking in one day when John—then in his early 70s—was in the middle of a workout. He was performing repetition squats to bench level very easily with a weight of more than 300 pounds. In his mid-eighties John at last moderated his exercising a bit to pedaling a stationary exercise bike an hour a day and working out with a barbell loaded, he said, “to less weight than I used to warm up with.”

While I was at York, JCG was always experimenting with equipment, trying exercises other bodybuilders practiced. A Steve Reeves visit in the late 1940s resulted in a Rube Goldberg long pulley exerciser being rigged up as a rowing-type lat pull device. There was a pulley high on the wall at one end of the room and a long cable

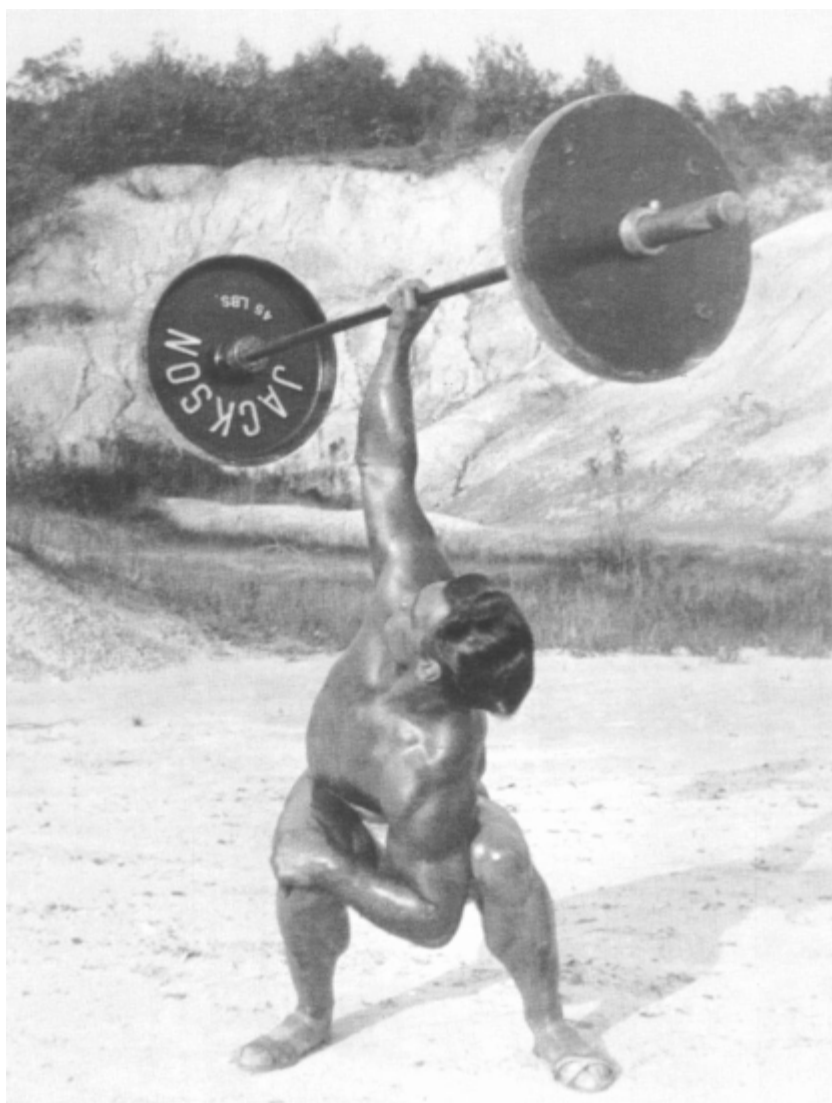
from a stack of barbell plates through the pulley to a double handle attached to the other end. It reached past the farthest of the three lifting platforms in the gym. John would brace his feet against the platform and perform countless reps, dragging the weights up the wall and producing what could have been a sideline business with toothpicks that were ground off the wooden wall.

Another memory of JCG's training during the early 1950s: our office was right next to the big open gym on the second floor of the old York Barbell Company building on North Broad street. Late in the afternoon I would hear what sounded like a blacksmith hammering a piece of metal on an anvil. I knew then that the work day was over and John was pumping out dumbbell presses on a very slightly inclined wooden bench in the gym. We used solid dumbbells and he would warm up with something light, a pair of fifties and sixties. He lowered the weights well to the side, touching the inner globes to his shoulders, stretching his deltoids and pectorals, then pushed them up and in, tapping them together at the top of the movement. It was the rhythmic tapping as the globes contacted that made the hammer-and-anvil clanging that summoned us to exercise.

Incidentally, at that stage of his career, JCG was doing many sets of high repetitions. I don't think he counted them, just going by the feel of the exercise, but he must have been doing from twelve to twenty reps per set as he worked up to a final set or two with a pair of overweight hundreds (about 104 pounds each) that had been rejected for sale at the York foundry because they were too much over

their stated poundage.

In addition to experimenting with strength and muscle building exercises, John would try stunts that tested his flexibility. For a massively muscled man, he was surprisingly flexible and could sink into a full split to demonstrate that his legs weren't "musclebound." The dangers of "muscle-binding" were of concern to many in the Thirties and Forties. In fact, it was Grimek's demonstration of flexibility that prompted Dr. Peter Karpovich, the Springfield College physiologist, to conduct studies proving that strong, weight trained muscles contracted faster than weaker muscles. even those of non-weight trained athletes.



IN THIS EARLY PHOTO TAKEN BEFORE GRIMEK JOINED THE YORK BARBELL TEAM, HE IS SHOWN WITH A JACKSON BARBELL SET. NOTE THE HEAVY TAN.

PHOTO: TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION.

When I began to exercise with weights in 1939, everyone warned about the dangers of muscle-binding. I could see that getting stronger was helping me in football and throwing the javelin, but I was still worried about restricted mobility. As a result I did all kinds of stretching exercises. One I did with weights was to hold a barbell overhead with a wide grip, lower it all the way down behind my back, and "curl" it back to my shoulders. It was sort of like a gymnastic dislocate motion with a curl behind the back. One day I was doing the exercise in the York gym and worked up to 95 pounds, using a collar-to-collar grip. John was intrigued. With no previous practice on the exercise, he easily worked up to 120 pounds, demonstrating that his heavily muscled shoulders were flexible as well as strong.

There was a lot of laughter during workouts in the York gym during the 1950s. Grimek,

Steve Stanko, and Jules Bacon—all former Mr. America winners—were constantly needing each other and anyone else in range, and there was an occasional practical joke. One of their favorites was to jolly an unsuspecting visitor into a lift with the “Deadlift Bar,” an innocent looking Olympic barbell on the end platform. The bar was standard—forty-five pounds—but two of what appeared to be forty-five pound plates had been poured heavy at the foundry and machined to seventy-five pounds each. There were a couple more overweight “forty-fives,” but the bar on the end platform started at 195 pounds, not 135. One day big Jake Hitchins was working out with us and the Mr. America trio went to work on him.

“Jake,” Bacon said, “you have big arms. What do they measure?” Jake proudly responded that they taped eighteen and a half inches. “But are they strong?” Stanko wanted to know. Grimek chimed in on Jake’s side. “Sure they are. Show ‘em, Jake. Show ‘em how easily you can do curls with 135,” pointing to the overweight barbell. Poor Jake! He couldn’t begin to curl the 195. Then the trio became solicitous. “Don’t you feel well, Jake? Maybe it was something you ate.” “Or something you didn’t eat; have you had your vitamins?”

The only time I remember the deadlift bar backfiring on them was when they challenged Ken MacDonald, the Australian heavyweight—an innocent visitor!—to try a 225 clean without a warmup. The deadlift bar was resting on the platform loaded with what appeared to be a pair of forty-fives on each end. The inside “forty-fives” weighed seventy-five each and the outside pair weighed fifty each. Actual weight 295. MacDonald crouched, secured his grip, and began to pull. When he felt the added poundage he smoothly turned up the power, pulling in the barbell as he dropped neatly into a squat and completed the clean. All the humorists concentrated on whatever exercises they were doing at the time. MacDonald never commented on the weight. He just sat it down nonchalantly



JOHN GRIMEK, SHOWN HERE WITH THE RECENTLY DECEASED ED JUBINVILLE, WAS HONORED IN 1986 BY THE OLDETIME BARBELL AND STRONGMAN ASSOCIATION FOR A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT IN THE IRON GAME. JOHN WAS A UNANIMOUS CHOICE OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE WHO INDUCTED HIM DURING ASSOCIATION'S FIRST AWARDS DINNER. GRIMEK IS EIGHTY-ONE IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY JAN TODD.

and quietly went on with his workout.

Before I joined the *S&H* staff John had been coaxed out of retirement a couple of times, once to defeat Steve Reeves in the 1948 Mr. Universe contest and again to beat back a challenge from Clarence Ross in the 1949 Mr. USA contest. You see, John was a private person, charming and friendly one-on-one or in a small group, but somewhat uncomfortable when he became the focus of attention from a lot of people he didn’t know. In recent years he has become much more extroverted, to the extent that he and Angela enjoyed ball-

room dancing weekly over a period of years. He could enjoy this, possibly because he wasn’t the center of attention as Mr. America/Mr. USA/Mr. Universe.

To see John Grimek as he is today, you would have had to attend his big fifty year wedding anniversary April 13, 1991. John and Angela had been married fifty years on October 20, 1940, but they hadn’t been able to find a suitable place for the big party until six months later. So there they were, John at eighty-one—the genial host welcoming old friends from far and near—and dancing up a storm with Angela as though they were a couple of teenagers!

It happened that April 13, 1991, the day the Grimeks had their belated anniversary, was my sixty-fifth birthday, and I can’t remember enjoying one more—even when Jane and my sons, and several friends, surprised me with a spectacular belly dancer on my 60th! This was a gathering of the Iron Game fraternity—a couple hundred people, young and old, who shared the same interests and many recalling the same memories of the Good Old Days. There was Bill Pearl from Oregon, Leo Stem from California, Vic Boff from Florida, Dave Mayor from Philadelphia, Ed Jubinville from New England, Jules Bacon and John Terlazzo from right there in York, and many, many others from all over the country.

And there were the Grimeks, the perfect hosts, making us all welcome as *we* enjoyed *their* anniversary!



# The PGA Tour's Traveling Gym— How It Began

Terry Todd

The scene that day in the small gym was, in most ways, unremarkable. The year was 1985. Two men stretched, one rode a stationary bike, three others lifted weights, another did sit-ups and one simply stood by and observed. The mood, as it is in most of the thousands of gyms around the U.S., was relaxed and rather clubby. Talk about the weather, sports, and even the relative merits of a Walker hound and a Black and Tan — this from a Tennessee boy — was interspersed with more exercise, greetings to new arrivals, and some good natured ribbing about each other's lack of flexibility.

One of the ways, however, in which the scene, if not remarkable, was different was that the men using those facilities were all professional athletes, some of them very highly paid athletes. But so what — most pro athletes have been looking for Mr. Goodbody by conditioning themselves in gyms for some years now. Ask any professional playing football, basketball, or baseball. Or ask any of the *de facto* pros in track and field. For most highly paid athletes, gym training is a year-round, in-season-out-of-season thing, most pros being understandably reluctant to forfeit an edge to either a competitor or to Father Time.

These were not, however, your everyday big-time athletes, most of whom are usually initiated as boys into the world of liniment, wind-sprints and bench presses; these men were from a sport steeped in tradition and resistant to change—a group of athletes for whom the word “conditioning” has usually referred not to their bodies but to their hair. These men were professional golfers.

One of the men in the gym was the legendary Golden Bear, Jack Nicklaus, and he was training in a traveling fitness center—a sort of spa on wheels. During this particular week, the mobile gym was set up on the hallowed grounds of the Augusta National Golf Course, home of the Masters and scene of Nicklaus' electrifying come-from-behind victory the following year — 1986.

But how did Nicklaus come to be in this sweatshop-on-wheels? And what did the time he spent there have to do with the fact that after five years of disappointing play, he suddenly found himself—at the age of forty-six—hitting the ball farther and straighter and putting with regained confidence?

The actual germ of the idea that led to the traveling spa dates back to 1980, when a man by the name of Lanier Johnson was a subject in a research project aimed at determining the effects of weight training on middle-aged, basically inactive men. An avid golfer, Johnson was initially concerned that weight training would hurt his game by making him tight or causing him to lose his “touch.”

“I guess I was a victim of my background,” Johnson will say, smiling, “but I'd always heard lifting would mess up your game. But the ten weeks or so of hard training I did not only didn't make me lose flexibility, it actually made me more flexible and it also helped me by giving me ten or twelve extra yards off the tee.”<sup>1</sup>

Johnson was then an executive for Diversified Products—a large Alabama sporting goods manufacturer—and after his experience with the weights percolated in the back of his mind for a couple of years, he began to consider ways in which fitness training or conditioning could be introduced into the change-resistant world of professional golf. To this end he began to visit the PGA Tour whenever he could: and, as time went by, it became clear that it was the PGA Tour to whom he must sell his bold concept. So he set himself the task of building the strongest possible case before making a formal presentation. First, he decided to go to the top sports medicine people in the U.S., since he had been unable to find any specific golf-related fitness research. And as he asked around to find who those top people might be, a name kept surfacing — Dr. Frank Jobe, team physician for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

One of the people who had spoken of Dr. Jobe to Johnson was Terry Forcum, the 1984 professional long distance driving champion, who told Johnson that Jobe had already done some preliminary research work on the muscles involved in the golf swing. Armed then with this fact, plus the related fact that the sports of baseball and golf were somewhat similar, Johnson decided to go to Los Angeles and visit Dr. Jobe at his sports medicine complex.

Johnson made the trip in the spring of 1983; and it was the first of many, as a relationship quickly developed between his company and the Biomechanics Lab at Centinela Hospital, which Dr. Jobe co-directed. The crux of the relationship was that Diversi-

fied Products agreed to fund a certain number of basic research studies into the physiological intricacies of the golf swing and the way to train to improve the golf swing. The next step in Johnson's quest—now that he had a solid agreement with a prestigious sports medicine facility—was to convince the leadership of the PGA Tour that it would be in their best interest to work with Dr. Jobe and his staff to jointly develop a mobile training facility which would travel from Tour site to Tour site and thus enable the golfers to have state of the art training facilities and supervision. What happened to Johnson next is the sort of thing which often happens in stories involving a quest—the Gods smiled on him and he had the good fortune of encountering a man who had the background to really understand. The man was Dean Beman, who was then the Commissioner of the PGA Tour.<sup>2</sup>

"Back when I was playing on the Tour in the Sixties," Beman recalled, "I used to work out a lot, and I was just about the only guy on the Tour who did. I really didn't know what to do, but I did push-ups and also carried a sledgehammer while I did my roadwork. And when I could, I even carried a set of barbells with me in my car on tour. And I'm absolutely sure it all helped me with distance, control, and endurance. I'm only 5'7" and I needed help to compete with the other players."<sup>3</sup>

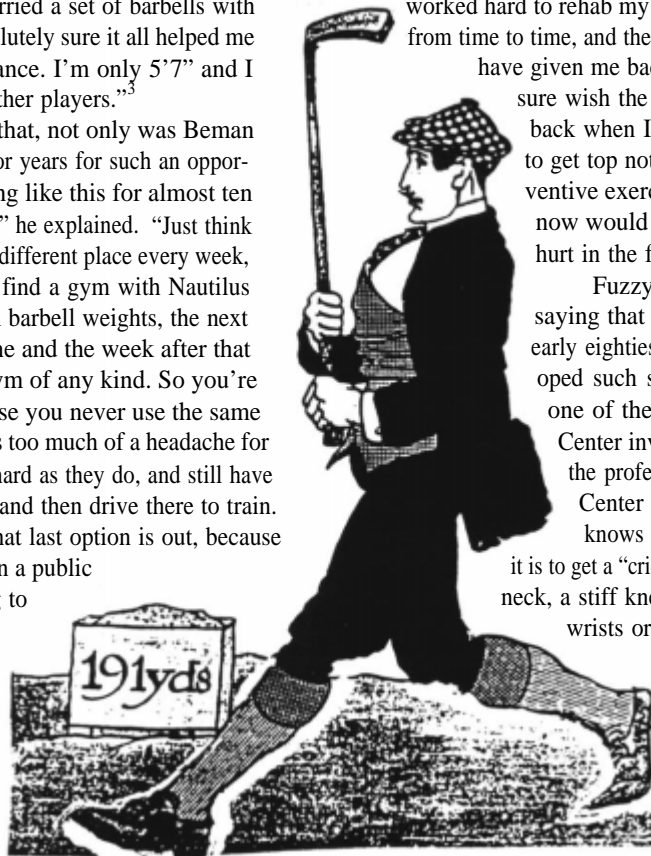
With a background like that, not only was Beman ready to talk business, he'd hoped for years for such an opportunity. "I'd wanted to do something like this for almost ten years because the need was so great," he explained. "Just think about it. If you're a pro, you go to a different place every week, so one week you might be able to find a gym with Nautilus equipment, the next week one with barbell weights, the next week one with some other machine and the week after that you might not be able to find a gym of any kind. So you're likely to keep yourself stiff because you never use the same equipment often enough. Also, it's too much of a headache for most guys to play, then practice as hard as they do, and still have the time and energy to find a gym and then drive there to train. And for the well-known players, that last option is out, because they'd never get a chance to train in a public gym. Imagine Jack Nicklaus trying to train in a public gym. Plus the fact that most of the guys wouldn't know what to do once they got to a gym since they've never had a chance to learn.

"But even though we've understood the need for a good training facility, the legis-

tics and complexity of it required such a large financial commitment that we'd never found a way to make it all work. But when Lanier Johnson came along it allowed us to do it right. The way it worked is that Diversified Products funded the basic research by Dr. Jobe. Diversified Products also funded the PGA Tour's purchase of the traveling Fitness Center and they gave us a grant to pay the salaries of the men who staff the Center. In return, we provided the people for the research and we helped co-ordinate the whole operation. And now that we've gotten started with it, I'm more convinced than ever that it's the best thing to come along for the PGA Tour since I've been Commissioner."<sup>4</sup>

Strong words, even for an old Iron Gamer, but to hear some of the Tour pros talk, not too strong. Listen to Ray Floyd, a regular, early user of the traveling fitness center. "A few years ago my back really began to give me trouble. And about that same time, I'd also noticed that I wasn't hitting the ball nearly as far as I had when I was younger. And the two things together really hurt my game. But I've worked hard to rehab my back, and I'm playing good golf now from time to time, and the extra strength and flexibility I've built have given me back most of the distance I'd lost. But I sure wish the Fitness Center had been on the Tour back when I got hurt, because I'd have been able to get top notch help immediately. In fact, the preventive exercises all the players are doing in here now would probably have kept me from getting hurt in the first place."<sup>5</sup>

Fuzzy Zoeller echoed Floyd's sentiments, saying that if the Center had been around in the early eighties he would probably never have developed such serious back trouble himself.<sup>6</sup> Indeed one of the primary components of the Fitness Center involves the rehabilitation work done by the professional staff members who go with the Center around the country. And anyone who knows much about golf understands how easy it is to get a "crick" in the back, a tight shoulder, a "wry" neck, a stiff knee or a problem of some sort with the wrists or hands and how easily such problems can upset the regal cohesion of a Tour—level golf swing. This being the case, it's easy to understand that now, when such problems occur, the players can turn to the Fitness Center. It was, in fact, no accident that Nicklaus spent





part of every evening during the 1984 Masters in the Center, exercising and being treated by the physical therapist. Early in the '84 season, several players besides Nicklaus were on record that the only reason they were able to play at all in one tournament or other was because the Center was available. And, as the seasons wore on, and more big names were "saved," the benefits to the network bosses, the advertising execs, the Tour site sponsors and, of course, the fans have been enormous.

The Center itself—the site of all these high-tech goings-on—was housed in an oversized, customized forty-five foot trailer which expanded on each side to a width of seventeen and a half feet. Inside was a wet bar, a whirl-pool, a massage and therapy room, a giant TV screen, an excellent sound system, a computer, a sitting area, and, of course, the exercise area itself. Strictly off limits to anyone but PGA Tour players, the Center was usually set up at a Tour site by Monday, depending on the drive between sites, and it remained in place and available from early morning till early evening through Sunday afternoon. In 1984 — that first year — the Center was available at thirty-seven of the forty-two PGA tournaments in the continental United States.

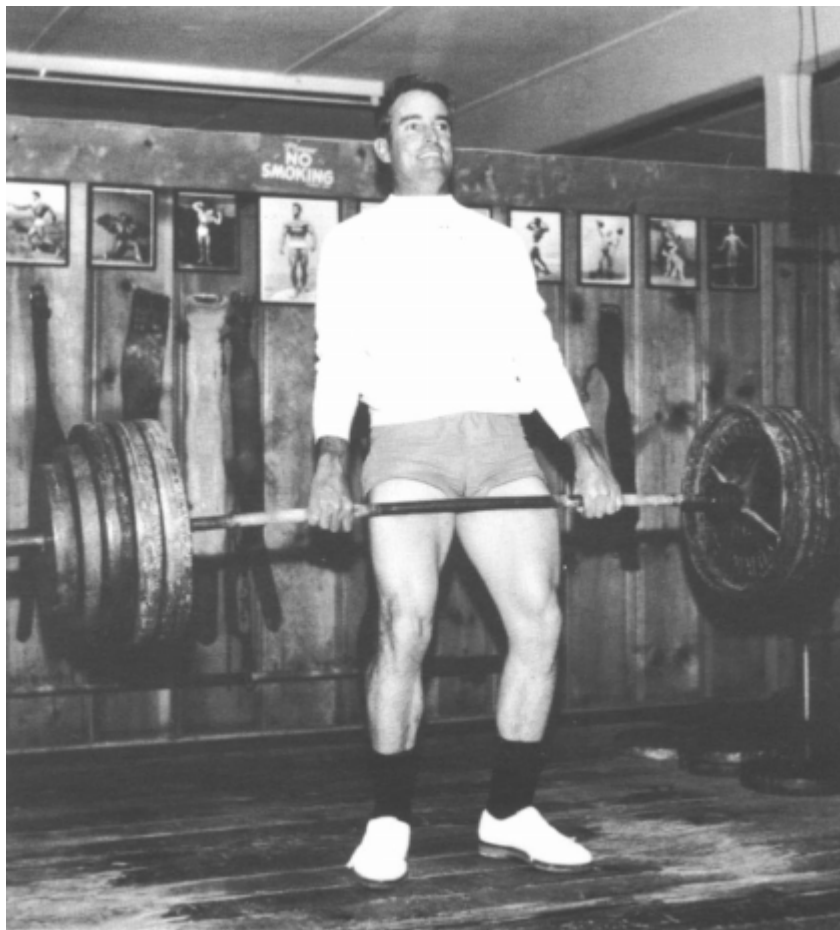
The way the Center worked was that players would come in and be put on an individualized fitness program by one of the staff members. This program was then fed into the in-house computer so that whenever a player returned, he'd

know what he did last time and what he should do that day. The Center's computer was linked with one at Centinela so Dr. Jobe could have instant access to each player's progress.

Almost all of the eighty or ninety players who were then using the Center on a fairly regular basis went through a thorough physical conducted by Centinela Hospital in the early part of 1985 and most of them were given tailor-made training routines based on the results of the tests. The testing included various strength and flexibility measures as well as a maximum stress test using an electrocardiogram, an oxygen consumption test and an underwater weighing procedure to determine the percentage of bodyfat each player had. Later, each player received a detailed analysis explaining how he stacked up against the other players and what his goals should be in

terms of improvement in these various areas. That same season a test was done to determine how much progress — individual and collective — had been made.

The specific exercise routines the golfers used were determined by Dr. Jobe's team of specialists at the Biomechanics Lab at Centinela. And this is where the basic research into the golf swing proved so valuable. This research began with a process called electromyography, which includes the placing of wires into the muscles of a particular area of the body in order to determine — as a physical act like a golf swing is done — the intensity and duration of the electrical impulses



FRANK STRANAHAN TRAINED WITH HEAVY WEIGHTS THROUGHOUT HIS SUCCESSFUL AMATEUR GOLF CAREER. DEADLIFTS WERE ONE OF HIS FAVORITE EXERCISES.

PHOTO: TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION

which occur in that area. In addition, ultra high speed filming of the golf swing is done to better understand the sequence of the swing. Together, these techniques allow a sports scientist to more clearly understand which muscles are used in the swing, how much they are used and exactly when they are used. The techniques also allow any biomechanical imperfections in a swing to be seen with more precision as the swing is broken down into hundreds of segments.

As in any research study of this type, human beings were needed. and in the fall of 1984 eight people volunteered to begin undergoing this somewhat uncomfortable procedure. Most of the eight were Tour players, and they included Tom Kite, Howard Twitty and Tom Purtzer, but several average golfers were also included to determine if they might have significant variations in either the swing or the patterns of electrical activity in the muscles, or both. One of the primary purposes of this procedure was to learn whether any muscles were particularly important to the swing so that specific exercises could be recommended to develop these muscles. And in testing the shoulder and upper back area, which was the first area studied, one of the things Dr. Jobe learned was that the rotator cuff muscles of the shoulder were very active.

How this information can translate into improved performance was explained by Hank Johnson, a thoughtful, well-spoken teaching pro in Tuscaloosa, who was the first of the eight research subjects tested.

"Once I learned that the rotator cuff muscles were involved so much in keeping the right arm in the correct position as it comes to the top of the backswing. I reasoned that the specific rotator cuff exercise Dr. Jobe recommended might help some of my students reach that position more naturally. And the way my students reacted was even more dramatic than I'd expected. Not only did the ones with whom I worked who had this problem improve the positioning of the right arm throughout the final part of the backswing, but they scored lower, and that's why I'm so excited. Quite simply, it gives me and other teaching pros tools we never had before to scientifically improve a player's game. It's an historic breakthrough."<sup>7</sup>

Not everyone, of course, shared this opinion, as the fear of becoming "musclebound" kept some players on the golf tour frightened of doing any kind of special conditioning work. One such player was Lee Trevino, who — when asked his opinion in 1985 — first said no one his age who had a twenty-six year old wife needed any exercise. But then he added "Look, this whole thing with the fitness trailer is just a fad. It won't last because golfers don't need

muscles. Muscles can hurt a golfer. They can do all that lifting they want but it won't help them score better. Golfers are born, not made. And another thing, by the time I practice, play, and practice some more, I don't want to do any exercise. I want to have a beer."<sup>8</sup>

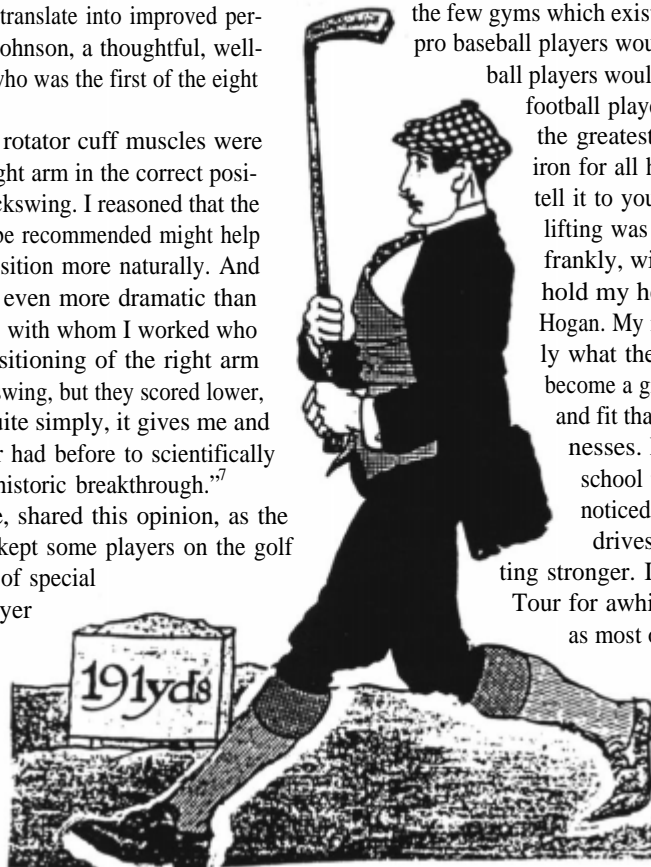
But Trevino's partner in the booth, Vin Scully, a longtime observer of both baseball and golf, disagreed. "It'll happen just like it did in baseball. In the old days, ballplayers didn't train. Now they do. They come in the Spring strong and fit. When you have this kind of money on the line, the guys will be looking for that edge."<sup>9</sup>

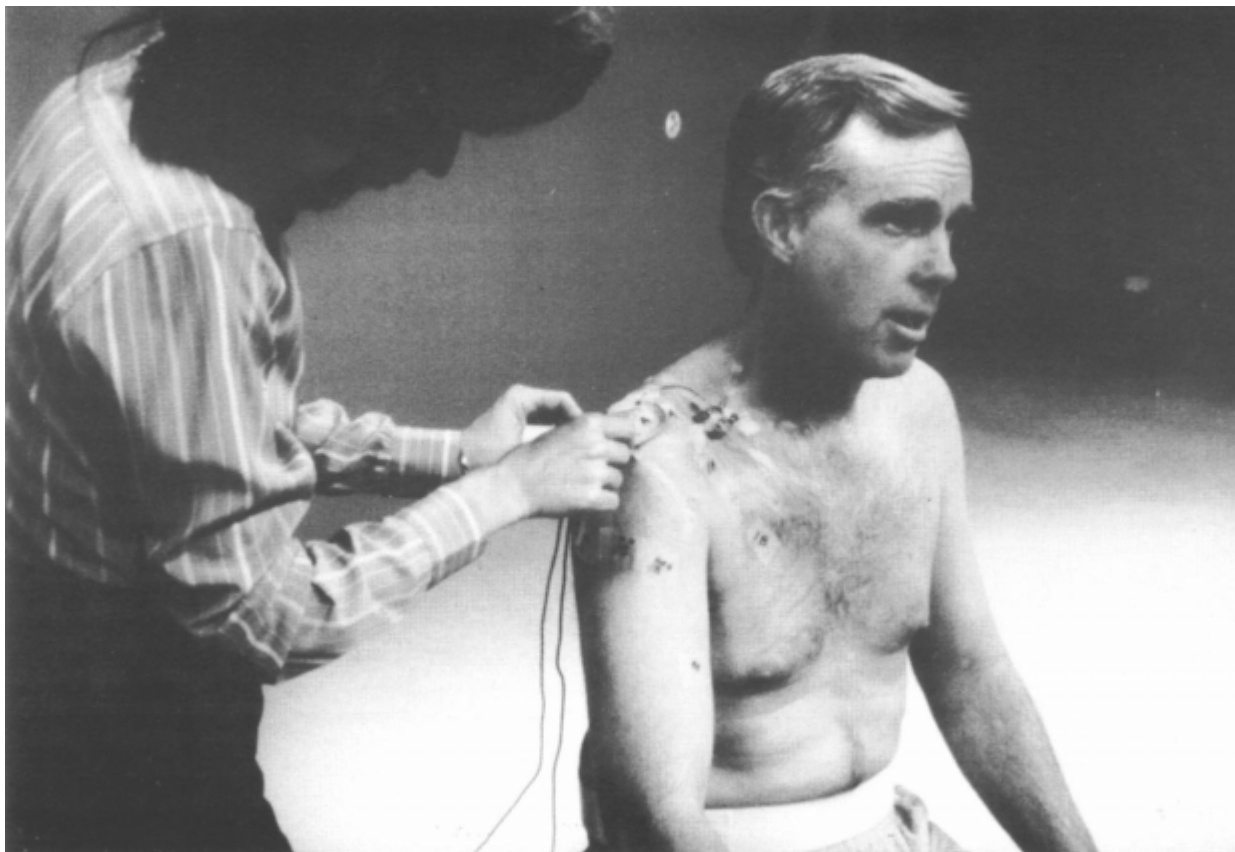
As to what sort of edge this will ultimately turn out to be, it might be instructive to consider the opinions of a former Tour player who, based on the increasing importance of conditioning in other sports, may have been no less than fifty years ahead of his time. The man is Frank Stranahan, who still lifts weights or runs every day.

In the decade after World War II, Stranahan was the finest amateur in golf, winning four Tour events and seven national titles in amateur competition. Besides that, however, the 5'9", 180 pound Stranahan was a terrific weightlifter, surely one of the strongest few men in his weight class in the United States in the early 1950s. And he took his weights with him wherever he could, or sought out

the few gyms which existed back then. Thus in the days before pro baseball players would touch a weight, before pro basketball players would touch a weight, and before even pro football players would touch one, here was one of the greatest golfers in the game hauling on the iron for all he was worth. It was unheard of. "I'll tell it to you straight," Stranahan explained, "My lifting was an enormous advantage to me. Quite frankly, without it, I'd never have been able to hold my head up with the likes of Snead and Hogan. My natural talent for the game wasn't nearly what theirs was, but I was so determined to become a great golfer that I made myself so strong and fit that I could overcome some of my weaknesses. I started lifting when I was in high school to help me with my other sports but I noticed that it really put some distance on my drives. And through the years I kept getting stronger. I was even the longest driver on the Tour for awhile. But I was almost twice as strong as most of the other men and I got that way by

doing full body exercises with heavy weights—things that make your whole body strong. I'm glad to see the PGA Tour has a place for men to train but unless I miss my guess what they've got now is only going to be an appetizer.





TUSCALOOSA GOLF PRO HANK JOHNSON SERVED AS A SUBJECT FOR ONE OF THE BIOMECHANICAL STUDIES OF THE GOLF SWING JOINTLY SPONSORED BY DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTS AND CENTINELA HOSPITAL. HERE, JOHNSON IS BEING WIRED WITH ELECTRODES TO MEASURE THE MUSCULAR ACTIVITY IN HIS SHOULDER.

PHOTO: TODD-MCLEAN COLLECTION

What will probably happen is that once the players begin working with light weights and see they don't get musclebound or develop short muscles, which is what I used to be warned against — what baloney!— they'll begin to experiment with the heavier lifts for their major muscles and then it'll be every man for himself and look out, par."<sup>10</sup>

An interesting bit of corroboration for Stranahan's theory of distance through strength came from Commissioner Beman, who tells the story of a sixty-seven year old man he put on a basic weight program in the early 1960s. The man added thirty yards off the tee and cut five strokes off his game. But forget thirty yards. What would happen if a touring pro improved his distance ten yards with no lack of accuracy. Hank Johnson maintains that this would take as much as a stroke off a player's score, an advantage which would mean more money in the bank.<sup>11</sup>

Other advantages golfers can expect from the conditioning programs designed by Dr. Jobe are increased flexibility — which can effect both distance and control — and increased endurance, which can be critical, especially on the fourth hot day of a tournament. John Mahaffey spoke about this last point in 1984, saying,

"Early this year, after I'd been working hard for about six months on my conditioning program, I shot two of my best rounds on the last day of a tournament. It was unusual for me, and I think that's significant. I've played for sixteen years now on the Tour — I'm thirty-seven — but after all this work I'm in better shape now than I was when I was twenty-five. My best years should be ahead of me."<sup>12</sup>

Mahaffey and many other Tour golfers got a headstart on the 1985 season by installing exercise equipment in their homes— wall-mounted exercise machines, free weights and stationary bicycles. In the opinion of Dr. Jobe, this equipment is invaluable, because it allows the players a chance to prepare for the Tour in the off-season, and also allows them to continue their individualized exercise programs during the weeks they take off from the Tour each year.<sup>13</sup>

Tom Kite had such a package in his home in Austin Texas, and he shared the enthusiasm of the other golfers. "The weight machine and the bike are great," he said in late February of 1985, "because they allow me to not miss any work when I'm at home. I'm really committed to the program, which is why I volunteered to be one of the research subjects. I think many of the guys know they should be doing something but we just didn't know what to do or

where to go. But Dr. Jobe and his staff are so professional that everyone has confidence in them. They're bringing us all along very slowly, too, so as not to scare anyone or make anyone sore. I've never seen the guys on the Tour so excited about anything as they are about the Fitness Center."<sup>14</sup>

But as excited as John Mahaffey was, Lanier Johnson was even more excited, to see what had been wrought by his vision and hard work. Johnson was also happy—in the way only a true lover of a sport could be who had been able to provide a real service to that sport. Johnson had a good idea whose time had come and he was able to bring the idea to vivid life. "There were two main reasons I wanted this to all work out," Johnson explained the year before Nicklaus' win at the Masters. "For one thing, I really believed that if we could find out which exercises golfers needed and how to do them that tens of thousands of average golfers all over the country would benefit by having fewer injuries and by enjoying the game more because they played better. But the other reason was more personal and had to do with the best known veterans on the tour, particularly Jack Nicklaus. I'm like most fans; I think Jack's the greatest player we've ever had and nothing would make me happier than to think that something I did might have helped add a year or two to the big guy's prime. To any of their primes. And that's really what we're talking about here. It's a fact that as we age we get weaker and less flexible and a weaker and less flexible golfer is going to have less distance off the tee and less control. But exercise can turn that around. At least for a while. I know because it happened to me. And I think it's going to happen to Jack."<sup>15</sup>

Prophetic words. But Johnson knew when he spoke them that Jack Nicklaus had already outfitted a special room back home in Boca Raton with the same machines used in the traveling Fitness Center. And he also knew that Nicklaus was absolutely serious about wanting to regain some of the flexibility and power he had as a younger man.

In a sense, flexibility and power — along with endurance — are the goals of the conditioning programs of all the best athletes in the world regardless of age or sport. Young athletes lift weights, run, and do stretching exercises in order to increase their power, endurance, and flexibility. Older athletes lift, run and stretch in order to either enhance these characteristics or, at least, to maintain them. In either case, a good conditioning program can work wonders on any athlete — young or old, novice or pro, male or female, rich or poor. One thing on which coaches, athletes, and

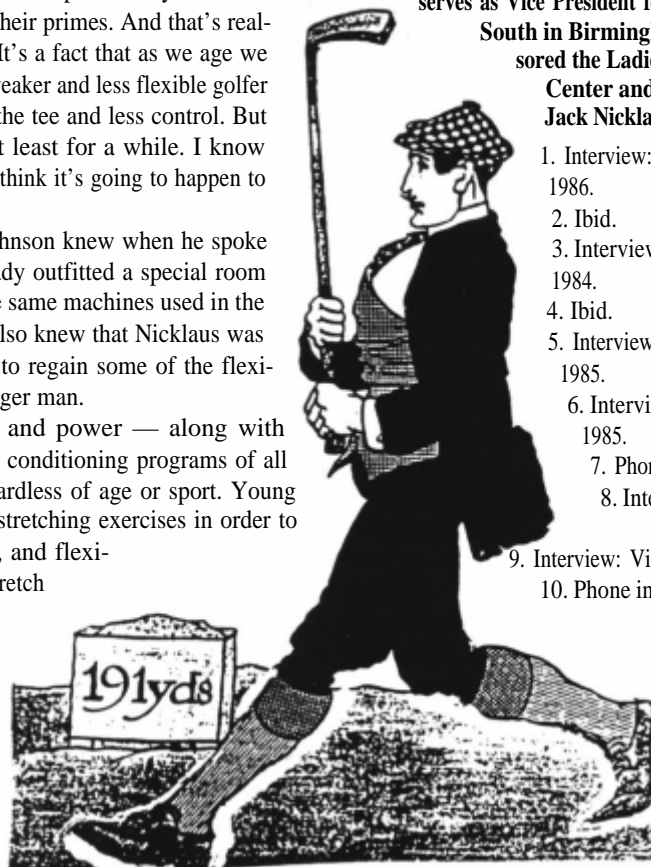
sports scientists all agree is that proper conditioning can not only improve the health of an athlete, it can also enable that athlete to be better at his or her chosen sport. A lot better. Sometimes, it seems as if conditioning can even work miracles.

And didn't those who shouted or wept along with Lanier Johnson as Nicklaus marched triumphantly through the last nine holes at Augusta in 1986 feel as if they were watching some sort of miracle — some sort of time warp in which the years had been rolled back and the greatest golfer in history was once again the terrible bear of old? Maybe Nicklaus' sixth Masters was a miracle, plain and simple, a kind of lucky blessing in which his many fans could share. But maybe Nicklaus' sixth green jacket came like most miracles. Maybe it involved a lot of plain hard work of the sort he did in the traveling Fitness Center every day during the Masters. Nicklaus thinks so. He said as much at the press conference after his victory. Who would contradict him?

#### Notes:

**Diversified Products continued to sponsor the Fitness Center on the PGA Tour until 1987, when the entire sponsorship was assumed by Centinela. Lanier Johnson left Diversified Products in 1986 and now serves as Vice President for Marketing and Promotions for HealthSouth in Birmingham, Alabama. HealthSouth has sponsored the Ladies Professional Golf Association's Fitness Center and the Seniors Fitness Center since 1989. Jack Nicklaus still trains in his home gym in Florida.**

1. Interview: Lanier Johnson, Opelika, AL, 15 March 1986.
2. Ibid.
3. Interview: Dean Beman, Augusta, GA, 14 April 1984.
4. Ibid.
5. Interview: Ray Floyd, Augusta, GA, 16 April 1985.
6. Interview: Fuzzy Zoeller, Augusta, GA 13 April 1985.
7. Phone interview: Hank Johnson, 7 April 1985.
8. Interview: Lee Trevino, Austin, TX, 25 March 1985.
9. Interview: Vin Scully, Austin, TX, 25 March 1985.
10. Phone interview: Frank Shanahan, 9 April 1985.
11. Hank Johnson, 7 April 1985.
12. Interview: John Mahaffey, Augusta, GA, 10 April 1985.
13. Interview: Dr. Frank Jobe, Los Angeles, CA, 22 April 1985.
14. Interview: Tom Kite, Austin, TX, February 1985.
15. Lanier Johnson, 15 March 1986.





Although we don't normally bring you news of recent physical culture contests, we thought the following might be of interest. Mia Finnegan, the recent winner of the 1993 Fitness America competition, is the great-granddaughter of Professor Attila. Mia's mother, Margaret Seppe, is Siegmund and Grace Klein's grandniece and Attila's granddaughter.



Dear *IGH*:

Joe Roark you once wrote to me that writing is a chore for you—not natural to you, I think you said. Well, your piece on Chuck Sipes was (is) a fine job, well handled and quite as sensitive to his situation as any eulogy I've ever seen written in "iron" publications. "Way-to-go," and "Atta-boy."

Paul Kelso,  
Tochigi, Japan

Due to an error on our part, Joe Roark's regular column does not appear this issue, "The Roark Report" will return with Volume Three, Number Four.



Dear *IGH*:

I teach in the Department of Physical Education at the University of Ottawa. I'm in the process of doing a study on health and longevity in people over ninety years of age. I'm wondering if you have any information on life expectancy and health in the "strong persons" population.

Sean Egan, Faculty of Health Sciences  
University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario.

Although no one has, to our knowledge, done a scientific study of strength and longevity among weight trainers, there are several individuals who have evaded far longer than most the ravages of time. Ninety-five year old Milo Steinborn trained regularly with barbells and walked on his treadmill right up to the time of his death. He even bought himself a new wrestling mat when he was in his late eighties in order to get in some of what he called "rolling around."

Another of our personal heroes is Dr. Collister Wheeler of Portland, Oregon. Dr. Wheeler began training with barbells in 1913. Now *one hundred years old*, (he will turn 101 in June of 1994), Dr. Wheeler has set sixteen age group world records in master's track and field and, sixteen age group world records in swimming. Many of these records were set after age ninety. Dr. Wheeler also bears the distinction of being our oldest subscriber to *Iron Game History*. Two years ago we both smiled when we received Dr. Wheeler's twelve-issue subscription renewal check. However, that two year subscription is now up, and so, in honor of Dr. Wheeler's one hundred years of vigor, we are gifting him him with a free subscription to *IGH* for the remainder of his life. And that, by the way, is an offer we will gladly extend to any other Iron Gamer who hits the century mark.

Perhaps other *IGH* readers could let Professor Egan know of other nonagenarians. His address is: Professor Sean Egan, School of Human Kinetics, 125 University, P.O. Box 450 Station A, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6N5.



Dear *IGH*:

The most I let myself hope for was that the article I sent in about Bob Samuels would serve as the basis for an article on Bob, written by someone else who could use my information. To have the article printed under my name was a great honor. In this world it seems like the real heroes are never recognized, their names washed out in time except for the influence they had on the lives of others. Bob Samuels is one of these quiet heroes and he has, at last, received the recognition he deserves.

Like John Grimek in physical culture and Lou Thesz in pro wrestling, Bob Samuels is one of the last of his ilk to be still alive and training. It would be a shame if these men and women were forgotten, especially in terms of their philosophies of life. Your publication keeps the Fellowship of Ironmen if not alive, then at least remembered by caring people. This is why we must somehow get the stories of the surviving strongmen and women in print. I once lived in the Brooklyn area where Joe Greenstein—the Mighty Atom—lived, yet I never looked him up. Katie Sandwina lived until 1952 yet I

never met anyone who bothered to look her up where she and her husband ran a bar in New York. I would have given about anything to meet the amazing Stan Zybyzsko or George Hackenschmidt, but have never met anyone who knew them. I should have made the effort.

In a recent issue of your journal, I enjoyed seeing the picture of Primo Carnera. I enclose a picture you might enjoy seeing, taken when Primo was at the end of his athletic career. It was about 1961, and he came back to wrestle in a tag team match with Bruno Sammartino as his partner. He was about fifty-four years old and still a remarkable physical specimen, especially his tree-like legs. His tremendous hands are quite in evidence. Bruno had big, thick hands with huge wrists, yet Primo's hand completely covers Bruno's. I have shaken hands with both Primo and Gil Hodges, the old Dodger fast baseman who was said to have the largest hands in sports, but Primo's dwarfed his. He was not that bad a boxer, and a tremendous strength athlete who, according to Milo Steinborn who managed him during his fifteen years as a professional wrestler, could military press 265. Despite those monumental hams, Primo was an excellent pen and ink artist.

By the way, I was doubly honored to have my article printed next to Kim Beckwith's excellent piece on Thomas Jefferson "Stout" Jackson, which I found fascinating. I particularly appreciated that she mentioned the character and humanity of the man in helping the "Tejanos" during his lifetime. According to old border patrolmen I have spoken to, they were treated often as practically sub-humans. So, it appears that, like Bob Samuels, Stout had a genuine compassion for the underdogs of this world. Both came up the hard way, and neither forgot their humble beginnings.

I could see that Ms. Beckwith—like most students of strength history—was grappling with the legitimacy of early claims and how they stack up against feats performed by modern strength athletes of today. There has to be critical openmindedness, but they should not be thrown out just because they were not performed in situations pre-ordained to countenance their legitimacy. If this were done, remarkable feats performed by extraordinary people would be washed out in history. Should the legends of plowboys and pioneer women be cast aside in the face of modern powerlifting contests and Olympic-style meets? I think and hope not. There is, of course, that "other kind of strength" that is not measured by doing bench presses or clean-and-jerks. The great wrestling champion and physical-intellectual marvel Stanislaus Zybyzsko could only military press 253 pounds, yet he could lift any struggling opponent over his head to slam him, something a modern competitive lifter probably could not do. Could a modern women's powerlifting champion lift and carry a cannon or bend iron bars into the shape of an "S" as Katie Sandwina could? Could a modern gym-trained athlete perform the sheer physical efforts an old-time plowboy or blacksmith could do? You see what I mean.

I think that the criterion for accepting a claimed feat of strength as verifiable (and all knowledge of the past is second-hand and therefore hypothetical to some extent) is pure common sense.

We must consider the veracity of the source, the number and known character of the witnesses, correspondence with other strength feats performed by the individual under consideration, and consistency of reports.

Sure, natural leverage, bodily proportions as regards bone length as well as what Bob Hoffman called "nervous lifters" (those whose nervous energy could be channeled into lifting feats) can enable smaller people without huge muscle bulk to perform remarkable feats of strength. But it is hard to believe that a man the size of Stout Jackson could out backlift Louis Cyr.

Allen Smith  
New Orleans, Louisiana



Dear IGH:

I am fascinated with *Iron Game History* and in particular with the recent input about the great and only Bob Hoffman.

I became acquainted with *Strength & Health* magazine back in the 1930s when as a high school graduate I weighed 135 at a height of 5'8". I picked up a used *S&H* magazine at a news stand and when I saw the pictures of the "greats" in the magazine, I was hooked. I made my own weights, started working out, bought used weights, and then bought some new ones, finally accumulating four thousand pounds.

I was one of the ten finalists in the *S&H* self improvement contest in 1942; won a nice cup, which I still have and cherish. I was born and raised in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, a little town about thirty miles from York, Pennsylvania, which back then, and for several decades later, was the center of the weightlifting world.

After seeing all those pictures in the early issues of *Strength & Health*, when I got a decent car in the mid-thirties. I used to drive to York and go to the York Barbell Company which was then at 51 N. Broad Street. This was usually Saturdays when the greats put in their real lifting day. The greats were John Grimek, Steve Stanko, Tony Terlazzo and, of course, Mr. Weightlifting himself, Bob Hoffman. I got to be on speaking terms with Bob and many of the other greats. Elmer Farnham was, at that time, about my bodyweight so I patterned my activity after him.

Well, Bob, as you may remember, was a "bug" on the bent press. You remember how tall he was and around 260 pounds. Well, he would take the fixed barbell of 250 pounds, stand it on one end, bend down and then proceed to press the bar overhead and stand up with it. He then did something I shall never forget. He simply walked away from the barbell that he held overhead and down the barbell would come crashing. The entire building shook, for their workout

room was on the second floor of that old, old building. Then to top it all, Bob would say, "There is no one around here that can make the barbell bounce that high."

By the way, you might be interested to know that I am working on a doctoral dissertation at age seventy-six!

**Clarence Rudegeair**  
Zephyrhills, Florida

**Congratulations. Several years ago, one of us sat on the dissertation committee of a man who received his Ph.D. at the age of seventy-nine. Gordon Wallace was a champion racewalker and wrote about the history of his sport in his dissertation. Good Luck.**



**Dear IGH:**

Sorry to hear about Ed Jubinville, I enjoyed reading about his life. I had his muscle control book but lost it when I moved. Is there any way I can purchase it—or any other muscle control books?

**Bob Haley**  
North Bergen, New Jersey

**Anyone wishing to sell a copy of Jubinville's book may write to: Bob Haley, 1314 6th Street, North Bergen, New Jersey, 07047.**



**Dear IGH:**

I am a biblical scholar working on a commentary on the Old Testament book of Zechariah. Odd as it may seem, this has led me to take an interest in the history of weightlifting.

Zechariah 12:3 reads as follows in the New Revised Standard Version: "On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it shall grievously hurt themselves." Many commentators, beginning with Jerome in the fifth century A.D., have compared this verse with the sport of weightlifting in ancient times. Jerome wrote that he had seen such a large stone in the Athens of his day which was lifted by the Athenian young men as a trial of strength, and suggested that the stone of Zech 12:3 would have been

the Jewish equivalent of that stone in Athens.

Some modern commentators have followed Jerome's explanation, but others reject it. For example, the most recent commentary on Zechariah, by Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, has the following comment on this verse: "Thus the suggestion. . .that this metaphor derives from the Greek sport of weight lifting posits a somewhat farfetched association. Such a connection derives from an assumption that this text is Maccabean, a date we reject. Thus, the idea of this image referring to a weightlifting contest cannot be defended with respect either to date or to the nuances of the words employed" (Zechariah 9-14 [Anchor Bible 25C; New York: Doubleday, 1993] 317).

In trying to make my mind up about this I would like to have an expert opinion on the following questions.

1. Is it true, as the Meyers seems to assume, that weightlifting was an exclusively Greek sport in antiquity, so that its presence in Zechariah would imply Greek influence? Or, was weightlifting more widespread in the ancient world?
2. What kind of injury would typically be associated with trying to lift too heavy a weight? An abdominal hernia? The Hebrew word translated "grievously hurt themselves" in the NRSV seems to mean literally "cut themselves" which could conceivably refer to people "rupturing themselves" if that is good English. Would that make sense in a weightlifting context?

Can you shed any light on these matters? I would be grateful if you could give me some relevant bibliography, or assist me in any other way.

**Al Wolters**  
Redeemer College  
Ancaster, Ontario, Canada

The earliest depiction of weight lifting of which we have a record occurs on the walls of a funerary chapel at Beni-Hassan in Egypt. This drawing, done approximately forty-five hundred years ago, depicts three figures in various postures of raising overhead what appear to be heavy bags. The bags are lifted in what would now be termed a one-banded swing. Both the exercise and the shape of the bags are reminiscent of Indian club exercises. Records can be found as early as 1896 BC of strength feats being practiced in what are now known as the British Isles. The early Irish or Tailtin Games included a form of weight throwing known as rotheleas or the "wheel feat." It is certainly true, of course, that stone lifting was a popular activity among the Greeks. Norman E. Gardiner, in *Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals*, observed: "These stories of weight-lifting [among the Ancient Greeks] have been strangely confirmed by discoveries in Greece. At Olympia a block of red sandstone was found, bearing a sixth-

century inscription to the effect that one Bybon with one hand threw it over his head. . . At Santorin, another such block has been found, a mass of black volcanic rock, weighing 480 kilos. The inscription on it, which belongs to the close of the sixth century, runs as follows: "Eumastas the son of Critobulus lifted me from the ground." (p. 82-83).

Regarding your second question, it is certainly possible for a man to rupture himself while trying to lift a large, unwieldy rock. The word "cut," as you may know, is in common use among farmers in many countries. The reference is to the castration or "cutting" of bull calves. Our guess is that this use of the verb "to cut" is the most likely. However, could the Hebrew possibly translate to mean "Year themselves?" If so, perhaps the reference is simply to torn muscles which are far more common than hernias.



Dear IGH:

I have been a weightlifter for thirty years, and I grew up reading *Strength & Health* and *Ironman* magazines, admiring the now-considered old timers: John Grimek, Steve Reeves, George Eiferman Reg Park, etc.

Six years ago, while visiting New York, I was lucky enough to attend the annual meeting of the Oldtime Barbell and Strongman Association where I met in the flesh some of the heroes of my youth. It was a very rewarding experience.

All this was refreshed in my mind after reading a story by Dr. Kenneth Rosa, in the recent issue of your magazine. Dr. Rosa's account was so vivid that I felt as if I had been there in person.

Kudos to Dr. Rosa and to Joe Roark for their fine articles. And, kudos to you two for editing a very special magazine.

Eduardo Franco  
Madrid, Spain.

In the last issue, we placed Dr. Rosa in Brooklyn, not the Bronx. We regret the error.



Dear IGH:

I am currently working on a research project on Louis Cyr (1863-1912), the well-known Canadian strongman and on other strongmen of the Province of Quebec for the cultural ministry of Quebec and the Chamber of Commerce of St. Jean de Matha. We are attempting to create a center near Joliette in the Lanaudiere region on this subject. Could you please refer me to any person or institution that might have information they would be willing to share about Cyr and/or about any other Quebec strongmen?

Jean-Francois Leclerc  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Perhaps the most authoritative place to start would be with David Norwood's masters thesis on the life of Louis Cyr entitled: "The Sport Hero Concept and Louis Cyr," which he did for the Department of Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor in Ontario. We reprinted a section of Norwood's fascinating thesis in Volume 1 Number 2 of *Iron Game History*. Then, we would suggest a look at Ben Weider's, *The Strongest Man In History: Louis Cyr . . . Amazing Canadian* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1976). A belt of Cyr's is at the York Barbell Hall of Fame in York, Pennsylvania. If any other readers have suggestions, please contact Jean Francois Leclerc at: 6774 Des Ereables, Montreal, Quebec, H2G 2N3.

