



MERCER ISLAND FOOTBALL



BFS - Bigger Faster Stronger Program

MIHS Football has been training 8th graders that transition into high school starting 6 years ago. One of the main reasons was to prevent injury and improve athletic performance. Injuries were drastically reduced to the incoming 9th grade football class because of this. We then instituted the Bigger Faster Stronger Program about 4 years ago. The BFS program has been around for over 40 years working with High Schools and Colleges. This time tested and continually improved system has created an all-encompassing platform to develop athletes. Even at MIHS we have had 8th graders work out not just for football but for basketball, baseball, soccer and lacrosse.

Coach Gary Shavey MIHS Lead for the BFS Program is trained and certified in the BFS program personally by Jeff Scurran to help implement this program at MIHS. Gary has 14 years of football playing experience and 9 years of coaching in addition with the last 4 years running BFS. Coach Shavey is assisted by MI Football Head Coach Ed Slezinger with over 26 years of weight training and coaching experience. Additional instruction and student-athlete safety is provided by Coach Kyle McKenna (MIHS AD) who has 23 years of coaching experience and weight training.

We are now going to explain what goes on at BFS at MIHS. Your student-athlete will be held to the following rules, proper techniques and appropriate training practices.

Rules:

Our weight room has a no headphone policy for safety reasons. Any music played has to be clean and at a level where athletes can be heard and instructed. No horseplay or messing around is allowed as safety is key to an athletes health. Therefore, we institute a high alert at all times to ones safety. We require spotters at all times for the exercises that can pose danger to the athletes.

Types of Training:

There are three basic types of training in which we emphasize the last one. We are not a Body Building program so that athletes can pose better on the beach. We are not an Olympic Lifting program although we do incorporate a few Olympic lifts. We are an Athletic Training program. We want athletes to master the art of all the exercises, so they can run faster, jump higher and execute better in their sport. That is why we emphasize a Velocity Movement Training (VMT) in our workouts. This in a nut shell is getting the athlete to accelerate the resisted weight as fast as the athlete can. This develops not only strength but power to move ones body. This is a quality versus a quantity training.

6 Principals of BFS:

The following principals are the terms we use to help the student-athlete master the exercises we incorporate into BFS. All these terms help protect the athlete and keep



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them healthy. These principals are also all the body postures they would use in their sport.

- Stance - we have a jumper stance and athletic stance we use for all lifts
- Toes - we must make sure our toes align with our knees in the stance we are using
- Knees - knees must align with toes and stance
- Spread the Chest, Lock the Back - shoulders back and slight bow in lower back. If there is ever one thing more important for children today is this principal. Due to video games, typing and texting posture in an athlete is a constant battle.
- Stand Tall, Power Line - These terms are making sure that the athlete is in proper posture from the top of their head through their tailbone.
- Eyes Locked, Chin Level - athletes cannot compete with their head down. This helps the athlete move their body with eyes up, reinforcing Power Line and proper posture.

Core Lifts:

Your student-athlete will be mastering the following exercises we call the core lifts. Along with VMT, Core Lifts or Compound Movement Lifts are invaluable for the developing athlete. A compound movement lift incorporates multiple muscle groups. The reason being is that an athlete that competes uses multiple muscle groups during their competition. These exercises are always done at the beginning of a BFS workout because we believe they are that important to an athletes development. All these lifts require spotters except 2 of them. We will give a simple explanation of each lift in case your athlete complains the coaches are getting on them for their proper form.

- Parallel Squat - one of the best lifts in developing the total body. Almost 80% of our muscle mass is below the hips and this lift works all of them. We use an athletic stance, knees stay on top of toes and back is locked. Barbell is on the back of the shoulders. The thighs must get to parallel to the ground in order to stress every muscle. It is a controlled movement down then accelerate back up with the bar as fast they can (VMT). Many reasons an athlete struggles with this form is flexibility and balance. If you see your athlete holding a squat at home they are working on their balance, encourage this please. We will never go more than 10 repetitions of this exercise to prevent improper form and lead to compromising health.
- Box Squat - a variation of the parallel squat using an athletic stance. We have boxes that the athlete sits on under control. Then slight pause which releases the tension in the legs. The athlete then accelerates up with the bar and finishes on their toes to mimic and explosive jump. We will never go more than 10 repetitions of this exercise to prevent improper form and lead to compromising health.



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- Front Squat - another variation where the athlete holds the bar on the front of the shoulders. Using the technique from the parallel squat. One must keep chest spread and lower back locked to perform this exercise. Good for beginners and trains the body in proper form of all the 6 principals. We will never go more than 10 repetitions of this exercise to prevent improper form and lead to compromising health.
- Power Clean - Although this can seem like an extreme exercise it is one of the best for any athlete in any sport combining speed, strength and power. Also the athlete can just drop the weight if they struggle with it (we have rubber floors and rubber plates for this). We start in a jumper stance and finish in an athletic stance. We use 4 terms, Jump, Pull, Flip and Dip. These are the movements they need to master for this lift. We never do more than 5 repetitions of this exercise to protect the back and to not create back fatigue.
- Hex-Bar Deadlift - the athlete uses a jumper stance, spreads the chest and locks the lower back. They then push with the legs driving shoulders back until they stand with a shoulder shrug. This lift develops strong hips, hamstrings and back. It also builds a foundation for the first half of their power clean. Like the power clean if the athlete struggles they can just drop the weight. We never do more than 5 repetitions of this exercise to protect the back and to not create back fatigue.
- Bench Press - one of the more dangerous lifts in the weight room and the hardest to develop for a high schooler. The athlete uses an athletic stance to stay balanced and spotters are absolutely necessary. There are six points of contact for this lift. Hands on barbell, head on bench with chin level, shoulders spread on bench, lower back locked (should be able to put a flat hand between lower back and bench), glutes are firmly on bench and feet on floor. The movement of barbell is controlled down motion with bar going across lower portion of pectoral muscles then accelerated as fast as they can back up. The position of the bar should be directly above the chin. We will never go more than 10 repetitions of this exercise to prevent improper form and lead to compromising health of athletes shoulders.
- Towel Bench - a variation of the bench press using a yoga block. This takes stress off the shoulders but still develops the chest. These two versions of the bench press are the only upper body uses with a fixed barbell. High School athletes are still developing their shoulders and we use all other upper body lifts with Dumbbells to develop the strength and flexibility of the shoulder. We will never go more than 10 repetitions of this exercise to prevent improper form and compromise from which could lead to injury.

Auxiliary Lifts:

After we have completed our core lifts we have a variety of exercises that complement the entire body. One important aspect is we do a neck exercise every workout to



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develop their necks. Neck muscles help prevent concussions in any sport and therefore is a point of emphasis.

Plyometric & Agility Exercises:

During a workout we also have exercises that take the strength and power and apply it to body movement. We have padded boxes to jump onto or over. We also have quick feet exercises to develop fast twitch muscle fibers. These tap into what is called Central Nervous System training or CNS. This ties the mind and muscles operating at high speeds and explosion.

Diet, Hydration, Flexibility and Rest:

Something that we emphasize that we are unable to do at BFS but should be reinforced at home are the following:

- Diet - it is important that as your student-athlete is training they eat a healthy diet with lots of good calories, carbs and proteins. We ask that the athlete intake at least 20 grams of protein within in 30 minutes post work out. Before a workout, a snack of carbs will help with energy levels during workout. Additionally, as many of our athletes are developing body mass and strength, it is recommended that they focus on protein intake equal to desired weight. Example: Sean (6' 0") weighs 165lbs, but has a target weight of 185lbs, he needs to intake 185 grams of protein daily in addition to maintaining a good workout regimen. This intake should be throughout the day in small amounts with the addition of the 20 grams post workout (this does not count in the 185 grams).
- Hydration – is key for your student-athletes training as it helps with muscle recovery, promotes cardiovascular health, aids to keep your body cool, and helps muscles and joints work better. IMPORTANTLY – hydration should be WATER, not flavored drinks, sports drinks, or “recovery” drinks. With proper regular hydration of water, your athlete will not need recovery drinks.
- Flexibility - it is also important that the athlete stretch (static stretch) before they turn in for the night. This helps release tension in muscles as well as cool them down. If there is a foam roll available that is good as well.
- Rest – This is critical. Be sure your athlete gets sleep as the body uses this time to repair and grow. This means the student part of student-athlete has to be organized with completing homework before other hobbies get attention.

Success:

It is imperative that our student-athletes excel on and off the field. The true effort they put into the BFS workout program will benefit them as both student and athlete. It has been clinically proven that student-athletes that maintain a regular, consistent development workout routine benefit from:

- Reduced stress



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- Better sleep
- Increased daily productivity and energy
- Increased memory retention, focus and concentration
- Improved self-confidence/social interaction
- Weight management

BFS at MIHS is far more than just a workout routine, it is an opportunity for the development of the mind and body, structured social engagement, and the maturation of the pillars of character.