

# CasePerformance

## June Newsletter Part I



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Hello,

I hope that the month of June has treated everyone well and that you find yourself a step or two closer towards achieving one of your short/long term goals. Things are active here for the CasePerformance team members.

Our [strength](#), [running](#) and [nutrition](#) consultations are going well. If you're interested in finding out about our group discounts please send us an [email](#).

## I. A Look at This Month's Newsletter

In Part I of the June Newsletter, we kick things off with our CP Community Member of the Month interview with athletic physical preparation coach Michael Zweifel. In it, Michael shares with us his background, importance of developing global athletic skills (vs. early specialization) as well as his thoughts on assessments and training for sports – what factors come into play?

Following our interview, we get to our CP Community Member Discussion where Rebecca Gerdon shares with us her article, *Fine Tuning Olympic Lifts – The No Hands No Feet Snatch*. In it, Rebecca discusses how implementation of the No Hook No Feet Snatch can help "tighten" your form when fine tuning your Olympic lifting movement skills!

Needless to say, I think you'll enjoy Part I of our newsletter!

Respectfully,

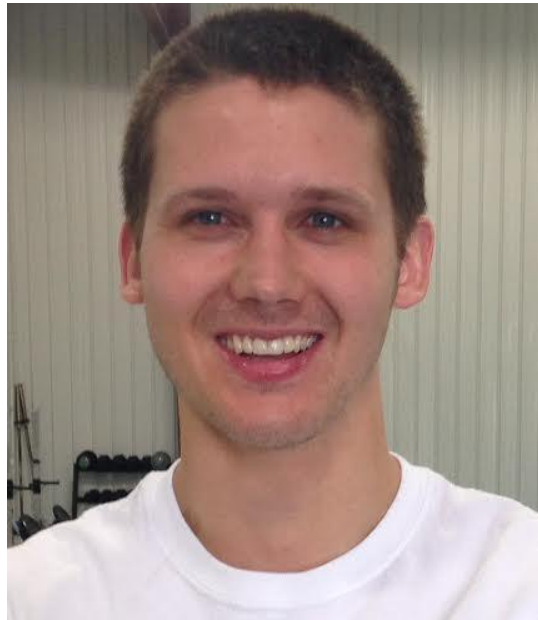
Sean Casey

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## II. Community Member of the Month...



*Athletic Physical Preparation Coach Michael Zweifel*

This month's CasePerformance Community member of the month is Michael Zweifel, a friend of athletic physical preparation who comes to us from Dubuque, Iowa, USA, where he runs the [Building Better Athletes](#) training facility. It is here where Michael draws upon his experience as both a coach and athlete (All-Time NCAA Leading Receiver (463 Receptions); winner of the Gagliardi Award (Division 3 Heisman Award)) to create the finest programs for those looking to take “their game” to the next level. Of greater importance, Michael is a first class individual who I could talk to for hours on end... Making him a perfect guest for us here at CasePerformance! So without further delay, let's get straight to the interview!

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First off, I want to thank you for taking the time out of your training, work and social commitment schedule to join us today. We are honored with your presence.

Thanks for having me Sean!

**Tell us a little about your background... How did you get involved with resistance training and/or exercise in general? Did you participate in many sports while growing up outside of football?**

Well, as you alluded to in the intro, I am the Owner and Head of Sports Performance at Building Better Athletes in Dubuque, IA. We work with athletes on enhancing their sport performance and maximizing their physical potential.

In regards to my personal athletic/training history... I got into performance training at a young age and first started working with a S&C coach the summer going into 7<sup>th</sup> grade. His name was Steve Brown, and he was the S&C at UW-Whitewater. He was awesome! For two years I don't think I picked up a weight heavier than the bar, and we worked on technique, proper mechanics, and mastering body weight movements. I was always a smaller kid, and I really think the base I built with Coach Brown is the reason I succeeded down the road!

*“...I believe I was successful in HS and College... because I never specialized ... kids these days specialize way too early...”*

Another reason I believe I was successful in High School (HS) and College was because I never specialized and I played many different sports. I played baseball, football, soccer, basketball, and ran track growing up. I also played plenty of street hockey, kick the can, ghost in the graveyard, mowed the lawn, etc. I think kids these days specialize way too early, and you can see it when they get to HS and literally have no other skills other than their sport.

I love the ins and outs of advanced training methods, but the reason I got into this field was because I saw firsthand the effect it had on me and my development, and I wanted to share that with as many athletes as possible. I wasn't naturally the fastest, strongest, or biggest athlete, but I outworked everyone and that's where I believe my success came from.

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**Taking into account the knowledge/experiences you have now, if you could hitchhike back in time with Marty McFly & Dr. Emmett Brown what would you tell the 15 year old Michael Zweifel with respect to training/nutrition? In other words, what things could you have done better from a training/nutrition perspective?**



Haha, well I was a little bit of a nerd because I would sit in class and daydream about training. I would literally have notebooks full of training plans, far before I even knew what periodization was! I read a ton on training at a young age, and wrote all my own training programs all through HS.

Looking back, I definitely wore myself out with excessive volume and training frequency. I also didn't do a great job of taking care of mobility and recovery modalities. If I could do it again, I would definitely focus more on taking care of my body, and putting more emphasis on technique and my posterior chain rather than get caught up in max-outs and the mirror muscles.

I really love nutrition; once I started to change my habits, my overall performance and energy went way up. It was going into my senior year of HS that I really focused on my eating habits. I cleaned up my breakfast and added quality proteins, ate more veggies and fruit, started cooking more, and dropped many of the simple/processed foods from my diet. If I could do that portion over again I would add in supplements, specifically creatine and whey protein.

**What's your training look like these days? Any personal goals you're chasing down?**

Honestly, this may sound crazy for a trainer, but I don't really train or workout anymore. WHAT!? Yup it's true.

I worked my ass off for 10+ years; planning and organizing every bit of training I did for a specific goal, and now my energy is spent on my athletes and my business. My bodies taken a beating from years of football and sports, and I don't see the need in continuing to put stress on my body through demanding training. Plus as I like to say,

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come coach for 12-hours a day – on your feet, demonstrating, moving, spotting, and moving 45lb plates – and tell me it's not physically demanding!

I feel if I focused on my own training, it would subtract from the quality of my athletes training. In the fitness world I often see coaches showing videos of themselves lifting or hitting PR's, and I look at it and think, do they care more about their own training or their

athletes? In my mind, I don't care if I can PR in a squat or deadlift; I had a time for all of that, now my focus is on my athletes. If I have free time it's spent on programming, reading, or finding better ways to help my athletes.

Really the only training I do now is if I want to experiment with different training methods or exercises before I program it with my athletes. I do think, that as a coach, you need to have performed the training or movement before you prescribe it to your athletes, and that's essentially the only training I do. From time to time I also workout with my adult classes as its fun and it's good to push each other. Overall I can still probably pop out a 2xBW deadlift and squat, dunk a basketball, pop-out 15+ pull-ups, and move well, so I'm ok with not training.

**You've had a fair amount of experience in the gym. That being said, if you had to pick a single lift that would be your "favorite" for pure enjoyment purposes, (not to be confused with what you think is "best" lift for performance), what lift would it be?**

I have an obsession with hamstrings! So if I had to pick an exercise I really enjoy doing it would be Kettlebell swings, glute/hams, or valslide leg curls. But like I said I don't do much anymore in terms of training. I prefer to play things like pick-up basketball, racket ball, golf, or pickle ball.

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I've always argued that the most important session you can have with an athlete is the assessment. I know you feel pretty strong about this as well. Walk us through a typical assessment...

*“Every day is an assessment and everyday I'm trying to pick-up on the mood, gait, demeanor of the athlete ...”*

Yeah the assessment is key, but off the bat I want to state the assessment doesn't end on day 1. Every day is an assessment, and everyday I'm trying to pick-up on the mood, gait, demeanor of the athlete that may help alter that days training.

So on Day 1, we assess all of our athletes. We put them through some more “static” or low-speed movements like ankle mobility, OH squat, bird-dog, single leg RDL, and push-up for some insight. Then we plo p them on a table and do some passive range of motion tests. Specifically we test for Femoral Acetabular Impingement (FAI), we test for Glenohumeral Internal Rotation Deficit (GIRD), we look at elbow valgus angle, and finally we look at scapular movement during OH movements.

Next we take the athlete through our dynamic warm-up so we can see them moving. Static assessments are fine and dandy, but dynamic movements bring out a lot of potential movement errors and great insight as to how the athlete will move during competition.

Finally we test vertical jump, a 4-jump test, broad jump, 10-yard dash, and the Hop and Stop test. We do this more for the athlete and parents, rather than us. These athletes and parents are paying for this, and they want to see results, and results, in their mind, are a 3-inch improvement in their vertical jump, etc. So even though I'm not the biggest fan of these tests and how they actually carryover, we do them because we are in a business.

**One issue that often gets discussed in the field of athletic physical preparation is “sport specific training”. What are your thoughts on this? Assuming everything checks out fine during the assessment described above that would grossly alter how you train the individual (i.e. – no major range of motion/mobility/pre-existing injury issues), do you feel that there are exercises/methods that are beneficial for a given sport but not for others? If so, can you give us some examples?**



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Yeah I think there is definitely a need for sport specific training in terms of different emphasis on movement patterns, energy system development, need for training on a certain end of the speed-power-strength spectrum, etc. Not only should training be specific for different sports, but for different positions in each sport. For example the demands are very different for a quarterback and offensive lineman in football, but if you often look at training in many team sport settings in HS and College, everybody on the team does the same thing, and this is obviously a weakness.

Now this doesn't mean there will be extreme drastic differences, as I believe there are fundamental movements that all athletes need to master, no matter their sport. These basics will make up most of all training programs, but once they are mastered, we can delve into the fun stuff.

When looking at sport specific training, a coach needs to breakdown the sport and the requirements of the athlete. What are the predominate movements, what energy system is dominant, what skills are required, what kind of situations will the athlete face, etc? Once you breakdown this information, you can have a better understanding on how to attack training.

Three areas that I often see very underutilized are specific energy system training (i.e. rest periods), frontal/transverse plane training, and eccentric training.

In terms of energy system development, I rarely see a coach use specific rest periods or work:rest ratio's. To me this is so simple, and if you're not doing it, you're probably not training the specific qualities you're trying to target. I often see programs trying to train max speed or max strength and they literally give 30-second rest periods. Well guess what, you're not training max speed or strength with those rest periods. Along the same lines, time under tension is rarely taken into account. You can't train pure power, strength, or speed when TUT is too high; you'll start getting into hypertrophy and different energy systems than what you're trying to target.

The lack of frontal/transverse plane training is also confusing. Almost every sport

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requires a ton of lateral and rotational movements, yet in training we typically see squat, bench, clean, deadlift, pull-up, etc – but these are all sagittal plane movements. You’re not maximizing ability in your sport if you don’t include some type of lateral or rotational movement training.

*“...the best and most successful athletes are the ones who can stop and restart the fastest ...”*

Lastly, is eccentric training. I love eccentric training and we work extensively on it. Everybody wants to jump higher or run faster, but nobody wants to work on landing or stopping. In reality, the best and most successful athletes are the ones who can stop and restart the fastest, not necessarily the ones who are purely the fastest. You can only produce as much force as you can safely absorb, so we hammer at deceleration, landing mechanics, and isolating the eccentric portion of lifts. I interned with Cal Dietz at the U of M, who is the mastermind behind triphasic training, and even before I went up there I believed in this stuff, but working with him cemented many of my thoughts.

*“...there are movements or excises that certain athletes should not do...”*

I know this is getting long, but lastly I DO believe there are movements or excises that certain athletes should not do. I know many coaches say there is no such thing as a bad exercise and everything has a place, but I don’t feel that way. I honestly don’t see the benefit of certain exercises for certain athletes.

For example, let’s look at overhead (OH) athletes... I don’t see the benefit of the snatch, empty cans, barbell shrugs, jerk, and bench press to name a few. For football players, this might cause all hell to break loose, but I don’t believe in Olympic lifting. Football players get the crap kicked out of their wrists, elbows, and shoulders and I honestly don’t see any reason for beating them up further with cleans, jerks, and snatches. There are far easier and as effective methods for developing power than Oly’s.

All of these considerations are if the athlete doesn’t possess any physical limitations or weaknesses, and we open a whole new can of worms if they do possess issues. Some other problems I often see athlete pigeonholed into, without consideration for possible structural limitations are squatting to parallel, overhead pressing, and cueing lower back arch. Doing any of these while an athlete isn’t structurally suited to do so, can lead to further problems and pain. This is where an assessment comes into play.

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**A topic I always get questions about is nutrition and supplements. Have you found any particular nutrition strategies to be particularly effective for you? Ditto for supplements?**

We try to work with all of our athletes on nutrition on some level. Personally, I think the best strategy is making small changes rather than radical ones. Trying to radically change an athlete's diet is just not sustainable, so instead we like to take 2-day food journals and make 1-2 small changes.

This could be as simple as instead of eating 2 pop-tarts, eat 1. Instead of eating regular yogurt, eat Greek Yogurt. Adding a protein shake after workouts. Waking up 5-minutes earlier and making eggs. Small, simple changes, over time, lead to big improvements.



CasePerformance & BBA for the Win!

We also give out tons of handouts with recipes, shopping lists, quick snacks, pre/post training nutrition, etc. We also make protein shakes and smoothies for our athletes post training. Then if all else fails, we bring in experts like you to present to our athletes!

Supplements wise, I really only suggest Whey Protein and Creatine.

**Any other final thoughts/advice you're willing to share with us at CasePerformance?**

I really don't have anything new to offer haha, but here are some good reminders that I still try to remember to this day.

I guess for potential coaches, my advice would be to get into the field ASAP and start working. This means observing, volunteering, working for free, anything really to get experience! I really think newer college graduates seem to be entitled and think they deserve things to be handed to them. They don't think they need to volunteer, internship, or GA without getting paid. Look at any successful coach out there and they spent countless hours working for little or no pay.

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Also, if you're not a morning person and want to make a lot of money, this field isn't the best! It's the blunt truth, be prepared to work 12+ hours a day for not a ton of money.

Finally with the ease of access these days, contact coaches/leaders and network. For example, Sean you reached out to me out of the blue, and hell, here we are 20-miles apart, never knew about each other and because of a simple email we've had some great discussion and work with each other. Most people in this field are open to helping youngsters, having discussion, or meeting to talk shop. Use this!

**Great advice there! Once again I want to thank you for joining us here today. Keep up the great work! Besides going to the [Building Better Athletes](#) website, where else can people find you?**

**Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Building-Better-Athletes/152422311587513?ref=hl>**

**Twitter - <https://twitter.com/BBAPerformance>**

**Email – [buildingbetterathletes.bba@gmail.com](mailto:buildingbetterathletes.bba@gmail.com)**

## *Image Reference*

Universal Studios /Drew Strutzan. Logo for Back to the Future series. This image only consists of simple geometric shapes and/or text. It does not meet the threshold of originality needed for copyright protection, and is therefore in the public domain. Accessed June 25, 2014 from: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Back\\_to\\_the\\_Future\\_film\\_series\\_logo.png](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Back_to_the_Future_film_series_logo.png)

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## III. Community Member Performance Discussion

This month's community member performance discussion comes to us from Olympic Weight lifter Rebecca Gerdon. For anyone who competes in the sport or incorporates the Olympic lifts into their training, you know one thing – It's pretty dang challenging to perfect proper form. Luckily for you, in this CP Community Member Performance piece, Rebecca shares with us a new exercise, No Hook No Feet Snatch, to help you master the power snatch!

### Fine Tuning Olympic Lifts – The No Hands No Feet Snatch

By Rebecca Gerdon



Rebecca Gerdon Preparing for a Lift

The snatch is an extremely complicated movement and learning how to move with and around the bar takes a lot of time and practice. One drill that actually helps a great deal involves two cues that are a bit counterintuitive to what most beginners are told when they start learning to snatch: DON'T use a hookgrip and DON'T move the feet.

I remember the first time I ever did a no hook no feet snatch (aka “no hook no foot” or “no hands no feet”, as it is also called), I felt awkward, slow, and wobbly because it

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made my technical deficiencies very obvious. Now, I love this exercise because it has helped make me a better weightlifter.



In terms of set-up, this drill is just like a regular snatch except that the lifter will complete the lift using an overhand grip as opposed to using the hookgrip on the bar. Additionally the feet will stay stationary throughout the lift. **[Editor’s Note** – For those in the CP Community who don’t follow Olympic weightlifting, a thumb locked hook grip is traditionally used in the sport as it allows one to have a stronger grip vs. an overhand grip; thus allowing one to lift more weight. A hookgrip is shown in the picture to the left]. Since the feet aren’t going to move, the

athlete should set up with the feet in the catch position rather than the normal start position.

The no hook no feet drill works by making it more difficult for the lifter to get away with certain technical errors. Let’s break this down from both a grip & foot perspective.

### No Grip

Not using a hook grip forces the lifter to smooth out the pull; Accelerating the bar too suddenly, will cause the athlete to lose his/her grip. For lifters who tend to slow the pull at the hip or jerk the bar this drill will work wonders.

The lack of hook grip also makes the weight *feel* heavier than it actually is which can be good for teaching the lifter to go under heavy weights. Many people end up depending on their arms too much and this drill teaches lifters to trust their hips and legs regardless of how the weight feels.

The no hook grip also helps with a fast transition under the bar. A less secure grip means the lifter cannot pull with the arms too long and must have quick hips to drive the bar up and then immediately pull under. For athletes who tend to “overpull” or delay pulling *under* the bar, this drill will be very helpful.



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## No Feet

Moving the feet can help a lifter compensate for an error in the lift. The lack of foot movement in this drill makes it easy to point out and address faults in the athlete's technique. Thus, having the lifter focus on keeping the feet glued to the ground creates several positive effects.

First, by forcing the lifter to keep his feet firmly on the floor, the no hook no feet snatch also encourages a more up and down movement with the hips. Thus, issues like reaching with the hips and looping the bar around, dropping to the bottom with a forward lean, or not opening the hips fully can be mitigated.

Additionally, for some lifters who jump excessively forward, backward, or even sideways, this drill is a great one.

## Working It into Your Program

Benefits from this drill are apparent almost immediately. My teammates and I have all improved our lifting as a result of this drill and I've also had good results in using it with the CrossFit athletes and weightlifters I coach.

At MuscleDriver our coach, Don McCauley, programs no hook no feet snatches once or twice a week. Usually we'll do triples from 60-65% of our max snatch and then work sets of doubles and singles up to 75%. If you're doing these for the first time, start lighter than 60% and work up in weight as you get the hang of the drill.

## Video Demos

To give you a better idea on what this drill looks like, let me share a couple videos with you. The first one is a video of me using this drill during one of my training sessions at MuscleDriver

[Rebecca Gerdon – No Hands No Feet Snatch](#)

^ Click Hyperlink to see video

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Here's a video of Zygmunt Smalcerz, resident team coach at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, demonstrating a no hook no feet snatch. Zygmunt was the coach who originally showed my coach, Glenn Pendlay, this drill a few years ago.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyNicZjQYX4>

^ Click Hyperlink to see video

## Bottom Line

The snatch is a difficult lift to master. However, as I've discussed in this article, by incorporating the *No Hands, No Feet Snatch* into your training routine, many of the technical errors commonly seen when performing this lift will disappear. Thus allowing you to become a stronger and more technically sound Olympic weightlifter!

## Reference

Baddriver. Olympic Weightlifting Hook Grip. 13 April 2010. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license. Accessed June 26, 2014 from: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hookgrip.jpg>



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## IV. Meets/Events

I have been notified of a couple upcoming events that those in the CP community may enjoy participating in...

### Strength Sport Events

#### **2014 USSF Missouri State Powerlifting Championship**

What: A two day strength sport event.

Where: Peters, Missouri, USA

When: Powerlifting - July 12, 2014; Weightlifting – July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

#### **2014 Alliance Strongmen Competition**

What: A one day event including Log Lift, Yoke, Farmer's Carry & Keg Relay.

Where: Alliance Area YMCA, Alliance, NE

When: July 19th

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

#### **2014 UPA Iron Battle on the Mississippi**

What: A two day powerlifting and Ironman meet

Where: Dubuque, Iowa, USA

When: July 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Strength Guild Games**

What: The basic premise of the games is very simple. It will be a two day team competition, 5 events per day chosen randomly each year by rolling dice. The events are compiled from all of the pure strength sports (Powerlifting, Weight lifting, Highland games, strongman and track and field short events). The events will be contested under the rules of the existing sports. The team with the most points at the end of the competition wins!

Where: Topeka, Kansas, USA

When: Oct 4-5<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Prize money: A cash prize as well as other prizes will be given out

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

## **2014 UPA Power Weekend**

What: A two day powerlifting and Ironman meet

Where: Dubuque, Iowa, USA

When: Nov 15-16<sup>th</sup>, 2014

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

## **Endurance Sport Events**

There has been no specific event that has been brought to my attention. However, for a general listing of running events going on in your area, [CLICK HERE!](#)

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\*\*\* Please know that CasePerformance does **NOT** receive any financial or other incentives if you choose to participate in any of the above events.

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That wraps up Part I of this CasePerformance newsletter. Hope you enjoyed it. Stay tuned for Part II of the Newsletter where we share news of note at the CasePerformance Website before touching on the CP Performance Discussion, *Intermittent Fasting – Hype, Hope or Something In-between?*

Until then... Train smart, train hard and leave the excuses to someone else!

Respectfully,

[The CasePerformance Team](#)