



FOREWORD BY
BRIAN URLACHER

FOOTBALL TRAINING *LIKE THE* **PROS**



**GET BIGGER, STRONGER, AND FASTER
FOLLOWING THE PROGRAMS OF TODAY'S TOP PLAYERS**

CHIP SMITH

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*To Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior,
who not only has given me eternal life
but has blessed me with an abundant life!
May this book honor Your Name.*

FOREWORD

In 1999 I was a senior playing safety at the University of New Mexico. I had a couple of good seasons at UNM and was told that I might have the physical tools and mental discipline to play in the National Football League. I went through the agent selection process and decided on Steve Kauffman from Malibu, California. Looking for the right fit for me, Steve made calls to all of the top sports performance coaches. He called me one night and was really excited about a conversation he had had with Chip Smith of Competitive Edge Sports in Atlanta, Georgia. Steve asked Chip to give me a call and discuss how his program would prepare me for the rigors of my private workouts at UNM, the Senior Bowl, and, ultimately, the NFL combine.

I'll never forget that first conversation with Chip. We talked for over an hour about my personal and professional goals. I've always made my workouts a priority, and I couldn't imagine working out any harder or with any more intensity. Chip quickly assured me that I could go harder. In fact, he thought that I could add another 25 to 30 pounds of muscle to my 6'4" frame. That conversation was all I needed to see what was possible in terms of my development and performance. I made the decision right then and there to train with him in Atlanta.

I showed up at 235 pounds, running the forty-yard dash in the 4.6s. My body fat composition was 11 percent. Two months later, my body fat was down to 7 percent and I weighed in at 262 pounds. In addition, I shaved my forty-yard time into the low 4.5s. Needless to say, I was sold on Chip's program. I was voted MVP of the Senior Bowl. I had a great workout at the NFL combine. And I was taken as the ninth pick by the Chicago Bears in the 2000 NFL Draft. I then went on to become the National Football League's Defensive Rookie of the Year.

Over the last seven years, I have seen a dramatic increase in the size and speed of the young players coming into the league. I have had to stay up on all the newest training techniques and am constantly modifying my workout regimen. To stay on top of my game, I use Chip's speed and strength program. For example, the chapter on our experience training at high altitude in Lake Tahoe will demonstrate how thorough and creative Chip is at designing programs that fit his athletes' particular needs. Some of the stuff he comes up with is incredibly intense, and that's exactly the way I like to play! This book will guide you through the training process at its highest levels. It will give you that competitive edge that you're looking for.

One remarkable thing that you'll learn about Chip from this book is that he not only wrote the training program, but he also invented the actual training equipment he uses. He understands precisely what movements need to be emphasized. He shows you how each piece of equipment works to train that movement. And he shows you how that movement transfers easily to game-play situations. As an ex-player and coach, he knows the game of football inside and out. He understands the responsibilities of each player and position on the field.

This program will increase your athleticism. It will enhance your performance each day you train. Chip's program uses a multitude of training aids, which means it's never monotonous and predictable. You'll train specifically for your position. You'll work your butt off, but Chip knows how to keep the training techniques fresh and fun.

This book is a must-read for those looking to take their game to the next level or for professional trainers looking to give their athletes the edge. It's an inside look at the methods and techniques used by more than six hundred current NFL players and scores of college and high school athletes across the country and around the world. You'll learn the secrets of the pros and read some of Chip's insights into what it takes to make an NFL-caliber player. When you are paid to make a living with your body, you can't afford to trust your abilities to anyone but the *best*! And the simple fact is, "Chip-aroo" is the best! Here's to your success.

Brian Urlacher
Six-Time Pro Bowl Honoree
2005 NFL Defensive Player of the Year
2000 NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year

PREFACE

*Man is so made that whenever anything fires his soul,
impossibilities vanish.*

—Jean de la Fontaine

While the inspiration for my training technique was the revolutionary ideologies and methodologies that I learned in the 1980s from the Soviets, the inspiration for my training philosophy is relationships. Anyone who knows me knows that my priorities are faith, family, and friends, in that order. All the methods, all the equipment, all the experience, and all the athletic ideology are not what motivate me to do what I do. I do what I do because of the sincere love I have for the players that I train.

My coaching philosophy is this. The way to get the maximum out of a player is to encourage him and to genuinely care about him as a person. My coaching style uses positive reinforcement as a primary motivation. It makes no difference to me if I'm working with a first-round draft pick or a hopeful free agent; I coach them all the same. I want to affirm my players in every way that I can. I want to show them appreciation. I want to shower them with positive attention and feedback. And I want to be affectionate with them. I put my arm around their shoulders. I hug them. I shake their hand with my two hands and slap them on the back while I laugh with them.

I'm not just looking to make players better at their position. I'm not just trying to help them with their strength-training technique, their speed, quickness, agility, and flexibility. Testing and evaluation are not my main concerns. I don't just want to make players bigger, faster, and stronger. The most important thing, what I live for, long for, strive for, and crave, is establishing relationships with the young men I work with. Young men who may or may not have a male role model in their life. Young men who are moldable clay. Diamonds in the rough that I can help to polish and tilt toward the sun so that they sparkle. I get the privilege, the opportunity, the awesome responsibility of coaching these young men.

Nothing thrills me more than sharing in their successes and their heartaches. I get their wedding invitations and birth announcements in the mail. I love what I do; it is my passion. It's much more than just my job. It's not just my vocation, it's my avocation. I feel that it's what God put me on the

earth to do. I want to make every day count. I want to make every contact with every young man a priority. I don't believe in luck or happenstance. I know that everything happens for a reason. I believe in divine providence. I believe that to whom much is given, much is required. And I believe I've been given much. I know that one day I will answer for how I've spent my time and my opportunities. I want to spend them well.

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Iwould like to thank McGraw-Hill for dropping the opportunity to write this book in my lap, totally unsolicited, fulfilling a concealed lifelong dream. “Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father above.”

Thank you to my beautiful wife, Joy, for continuing to pray Psalm 20:4 for me. You’re my secret weapon. All of our challenges have only strengthened our love. You are my inspiration and my soul mate.

Thank you to my children, Tripp, Cody, and Zach, my *Wild at Heart* sons, and to my baby girl, Summer. Y’all are my most treasured possessions in this world. I love you dearly. Tripp, you have shared in my dream of impacting the lives of athletes. Cody, you have taught me not to judge but to look at the heart. Zach, you have shown me what motivation and work ethic really look like. And Summer, you melt my heart and make me sing “Butterfly Kisses.”

Thanks to my dad and mom, Reverend Dr. Carlton E. Smith Sr. and Jane Smith, who have believed in me and supported me throughout my athletic and professional career. Mom, your passion for sports motivated me to strive for excellence. Dad, you are the original “CES” and you are my hero. I can hear you saying, “Only one life will soon be past; only what’s done for Christ will last!”

Thanks to my friend and associate, Robby Stewart. You have been a trusted confidant, an exemplary family man, and the best strength coach in America. Thanks for your help with the strength chapter. I appreciate you for staying the course and believing in what I started fifteen years ago.

Thank you to my staff at Competitive Edge Sports, who have believed in my program. Thanks to Aaron Roberts, CES senior sports performance coach, who helped me with the reaction and position resistance chapters; Ben Barrick, sports performance coach and the computer genius who helped me with the charts and graphs; Tripp Smith, my favorite trainer, who helped me with the stretching chapter; Bryant Appling, Maria Melts, T. J. Sellers, Dr. Brad Hodgson, and all the part-time staff that has become part of the CES family. You all have blessed me with your loyalty and your dedication to CES.

Thank you to all of my sponsors. Under Armour, the products are undeniable! Shannon, you and all your staff have been so much fun to work with; thanks for making me part of the Under Armour family. To Joseph at EAS supplements, I appreciate you for believing in my program and supporting my players with the best nutritional products in the country. To Bruce at UBS Financial Services, thanks for your friendship and

support for the past ten years. Mercedes-Benz, a big thank-you for supporting me and CES.

Thank you to Coach Roger Theder. You have given me some amazing insights into the game of professional football. I think you have forgotten more than most coaches know. You have been a mentor, and I am honored to call you my friend.

To all the agents who have sent me clients over the past fifteen years, thanks to each of you for placing your trust in my ability to make your players better. I truly appreciate you!

To all the high school coaches who have participated in the CES training program, I thank you. Coach Dexter Wood and Coach Jess Simpson at Buford High School, Buford, Georgia, the ultimate model of a high school football family, you have made me feel like I played a small part in your incredible success and that we're now forever bonded. Coach Lee Shaw and your staff at Flowery Branch High School, and Coach Tim Coleman and your staff at Colonial Forge High School in Stafford, Virginia, I thank you for your trust, encouragement, help, and support. Tim, I love you like a brother. To my special friends in Maryland, Coaches Dave Dolch and Steve Luethe, you have been more than just friends—you have treated me like one of your own. To Coach Quinones and your staff in Lovington, New Mexico, thanks for making me feel like an honorary member of your program. To all my friends in Truckee, California, Coach Bob Shaffer and your staff at Truckee High School, and Gary Lewis and your family, you have shown me genuine hospitality.

To Coach Speedy Faith at Shallowater High School, Shallowater, Texas, and Coach Don Rodie, thanks for your friendship and for all the fun times we've had working the Brian Urlacher Football Camp. To the many, many other coaches who are my friends, who have dedicated your lives to impacting young men, I salute you!

To all the NFL football players I have trained who have touched my life in such a positive way, without you this book would not be possible. Y'all have enriched my life in such a profound way. I could never express all the love and admiration I have for each of you. Brian and Casey Urlacher; Matt and Jon Stinchomb; Whit Marshall; Chris Combs; Billy Granville; Gannon Sheppard; Terrance Newman; Adam Meadows; Bobby Hamilton; Nate Wayne; Karon Riley; Roger Robinson; Keith Brooking; Hannibal Navies; E. J. Johnson; David Green; Drew Olsen; Roy Manning; Champ, Boss, and Ron Bailey; Charlie, Nick, and Chris Clemens; Jon and Jeremy Myers; Donnie Klien; Marcus Vick; Mike Williams; Charlie Whitehurst; Nick Ferguson; Shawn Bryson; Leonard Weaver; Brandon Spoon; Vonnie Holliday; Ryan Cook; Mark Setterstrom; Will Allen; Cody Douglas; Cosey Coleman; Fred Weary; Spence Fischer; Alvin Cowan; Brian Wilmer; Philip Daniels; Bryant Robinson; Marcus Stroud; Jonas Jennings; Eric Zier; and the hundreds of others that I have trained over the past fifteen years—you have brought me such pride and joy watching you develop into outstanding young men. You have all become my adopted sons.

FOOTBALL TRAINING LIKE THE PROS

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The Russian Experience

Train like You Play

One day in 1986 I was riding a stationary bike in a health club. Someone had left a magazine in the rack on the bike I was riding, so I picked it up. As I looked through the magazine, I read an ad in the back looking for coaches and sports medicine practitioners who might be interested in studying abroad in the fields of sports training or sports medicine.

I answered the ad and was delighted to find out that the study abroad program was going to be held in the former Soviet Union at the world-renowned Soviet Sports Institute in Moscow. In order to be considered for the opportunity, I had to write a paper on why I should be selected to study abroad. After submitting my paper, I was notified that I had been selected to travel with a distinguished group of American and Canadian coaches, trainers, and sports medicine personnel.

A few of the notable coaches who went with me were Dana LeDuc, the head strength and conditioning coach with the St. Louis Rams; Brad Roll, former head strength coach with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers; E. J. "Doc" Kreis, the head strength and conditioning coach at UCLA; Lebaron Crauthers, former head strength coach of the New England Patriots; Dr. Jim Wright, former editor of *Muscle and Fitness Magazine*; and John Greeley, one of the top personal trainers in New York City.

From Theory to Practice

In this book, I will explain my training philosophy as it pertains to the preparation of professional athletes. What it won't be is a static technical summary of all the Soviet training methods. What I hope to accomplish, however, is to give you an inside look at training techniques that I use with the pros based on those principles. There are three simple training techniques on which I have built my program. The first is movement resistant training. The second is movement overspeed training. And the third is reaction training. If you use these three principles of my training program, you can train any sport or movement necessary to play that sport with my guarantee these principles will enhance your performance on the field. The principles of this book revolve around these three methods of training. I will show you how to structure these three components into a preseason program that will make you bigger, faster, and stronger!

When I was in school in the U.S.S.R., Dr. Yuri Verhoshansky, “the father of plyometrics,” gave a seminar on how the Russians would train American football players if given the opportunity. Of course it would be hypothetical, since the Russians don't play American football. But from this lecture, I developed my six-week program to enhance sports performance for football and would like to share this information with you.

Periodization and the Team Approach

To prepare their athletes, Russian trainers would develop a year-round program using a periodization training model. Periodization is simply dividing the year up into different phases and microcycles. The Russians would divide the training year up into a number of periods of time, each with specific performance goals. The Soviets broke down their system into four preparation phases:

1. Postseason (transitional)
2. Generalized preparatory
3. Specialized preparatory (precompetitive)
4. Competitive (in-season)

They also believed that it was most efficient to use a team approach in coaching, so they assigned each coach responsibilities for the training cycles.

1. Biomechanist—technique expert and position coach
2. Conditioning expert/exercise specialist—speed and strength
3. Physiologist
4. Psychologist
5. Team physician

The biomechanist would be responsible for developing the skills portion of the training model. He would study each movement and then break down each of the movements into position specificity. He would then structure the training program to isolate each movement, as well as teaching the correct skills of each movement. This sounds like the very first job description for a sports performance coach, does it not?

The conditioning-exercise specialist would play a vital role in the physical development of each player. Based on the player's physical capabilities, the conditioning expert, along with the biomechanist, would work together developing a training program that would mimic the actual movements that the player performed on the field at his position (again, sport-specific with position-specific training). Each player would then focus on his position. For quarterbacks, this means working on their three-, five-, and seven-step drops and redirect. Defensive backs would work on their backpedal, breaking at a 45-degree angle, and so on.

The physiologist would be responsible for the testing and evaluation of each player. He would gather baseline information for flexibility, body composition, the forty-yard dash, the vertical jump, the 225-pound bench rep test, the short shuttle 5-10-5, the three-cone drill, the broad jump, the sixty-yard shuttle drill, and any other drill that can be measured and tracked. With this baseline information, each test would give the conditioning coach a quantitative way to address each area of need. In other words, a low vertical jump or short broad jump would indicate a lack of hip explosion. From this information, a planned program would be developed to closely duplicate the actual skill technique needed by the different positions.

The sports psychologist would work on reaction-type training, along with motivation, visualization, and other types of autogenic training. Autogenic training translates to "self-regulation or generation" and refers to the way your mind can influence your body to balance the self-regulative systems that control circulation, breathing, and heart rate. This process allows you to control stress by training your autonomic nervous system to become relaxed.

The Four-Phase Training Cycle

The Soviets believed that there could be little success if the athlete did not possess good overall fitness levels. General fitness levels are paramount for the athlete to achieve the next level of training—in this case, specialized speed and strength training. The Soviets also believed that merely playing a sport would not increase the overall fitness levels of the athlete. So their theory was that you must limit the actual playing time, especially at the professional level. Following are discussions of the four phases of the training cycle.

Postseason (Transitional)

This phase would begin after the postseason bowl game or after the last game of the year. The players would remain active, playing other sports to maintain the gains made during the off-season. This informal activity would keep their flexibility, power, strength, and reaction, as well as any other skills previously acquired, sharp and recallable. During this phase, sports such as racquetball, handball, and basketball are routine activities. These sports would enhance hand-eye coordination as well as maintain quickness, reaction time, foot skills, and general fitness levels. These other sports would also force the body to adapt to different skills not learned in football. A variety of informal sports would enable the nervous system to relax, allowing the athletes some variation in their routine and preventing burnout. The Soviets did not believe in playing only one sport. To the contrary, their philosophy was that specializing in only one sport would hinder the development of all the attributes of physical development. They thought that playing multiple sports when young would help in the development of an all-around athlete. The strength development of this phase would consist of mostly Olympic lifts, power cleans, hi-pull, snatches, push press, and other lifts that are explosive in nature. Again the Olympic lifts were taught at an early age and were the cornerstone of all Soviet athletes' strength training. Assistive lifts were also done in this phase. The postseason would last for one to two months for the teams that did not go to a postseason bowl game and four to six weeks for teams that were involved in postseason playoffs and bowl games. At the conclusion of this period, the generalized preparatory would begin.

Generalized Preparatory

In this phase, the conditioning-exercise coach would be busy developing individualized programs to focus on total conditioning. This program would focus again on the areas that were tested, and weaknesses that had been identified would be addressed. During this phase, strength, flexibility, speed, agility, cardiorespiratory, endurance, reaction, and other qualities that are associated with the athlete would be developed. The volume of work done in this phase would be very high but the intensity would be low.

The strength workouts would be general in nature with emphasis on the joints. Strength training involves compound movements such as bench press, incline press, and decline press along with lateral pull-downs, one-arm rows, bent rows, upright and seated rows, biceps and triceps work, shoulder work, front raises, side laterals, seated dumbbell press, standing barbell press, and neck work. Exercises for the core include crunches, sit-ups, Russian twists, knee-ups, hanging leg raises, hyperextensions, and other low back exercises.

To address lower body development, key exercises include squats, step-ups, leg extensions, leg curls, straight leg dead lifts, toe raises, abduc-

tion, adduction, and other assistance exercises. Flexibility work would also be included at this time with most of the flexibility training being passive or with a partner. The Soviets work more on dynamic flexibility, which, as you will see later on, plays a major role in my training program. Cardiorespiratory endurance work is mostly done thru LSD (long slow distance) training. However, for bigger athletes the decision to assign distance work is based on the position they play, so that offensive linemen, among others, do not participate.

The position-specific work would mainly focus on general football skills. This would include receivers running routs, offensive linemen working pass sets, linebackers working pass drops, quarterbacks working three-, five-, and seven-step drops, defensive backs working on the back-pedal, and defensive linemen working on their swim and rip techniques. These sessions would be broken down into position groups kept as small as possible.

The generalized preparatory phase would last three to four months and would finish after spring practice. The Soviets believed that the higher the level of player, the less time should be spent on this phase of training with more time spent on the specialized preparation phase.

Specialized Preparatory

In this period, the exercises closely duplicate the actual movements done on the field. This phase is often called the period of specificity and is the critical phase that I have been doing with my professional athletes for the past sixteen years. There is no better way to make our athletes better at the skills they use on the field than through movement-specific training. During this phase, the intensity of the exercises increases and the volume of work decreases. The change from high volume–low intensity to low volume–high intensity occurs over a period of time at the end of the generalized preparatory phase. This adjustment in training is called transition.

Specialized strength work in this period would be geared toward the specific movements performed on the field. For example, we would use the Vertimax (explained in detail in Chapter 10) for lower body explosion, along with step-ups for hip drive, explosive squats, plyometrics, and other drills that mimic position specificity. Each position would have exercises that are designed to enhance a player's movement. Some of the kettle bell movements popular today were used for position movements such as throwing action for the quarterbacks or the hang pull to the top of the head with a toe raise. Again, all the strength movements would resemble the player's actions on the field.

Another technique used by the Soviets is drop, or strip, sets. On the bench press, for example, an athlete would load the bar with 110 percent of the determined max and then decrease the weight incrementally on the down phase 10 to 15 percent and include the concentric or muscle shortening type contraction. Upon the athlete reaching the bottom position,