

No Reps

In the past few weeks there's been an uptick in conversation about high repetition weightlifting.

I actually thought this topic, along with the kipping pull up vs. deadhang pull up topic, was done and over with.

Even in the past, opponents of high rep work with the barbell did not even get my attention.

I decided a long time ago to focus on teaching excellent Olympic lifting, and not even worry over the idea that high rep Olympic lifts will hurt someone.

I don't worry because my coaching methods give me that luxury.

It is a crazy idea, but I actually watch my clients for form and don't allow them to use dangerously heavy weights.

I know, I know.

What a concept.

But it is the safeguard that keeps my clients' risk of injury relatively low.

Now, Mark Rippetoe, author of *Starting Strength*, and formerly the CrossFit Powerlifting cert coach, recently wrote a little article named "The Fallacy of High Rep Weightlifting."

It is, I will say, a steaming pile of horseshit.

In it, he basically reiterates the same old, tired-ass arguments against high rep Olympic lifting. Blah blah blah, it's bad for you, blah blah blah.

I mean, I'm sure Rip believes what he is saying to be true.

But that doesn't stop him from being stupid.

And it doesn't stop what he's saying from being as stupid as I believe him to be, personally.

Don't laugh.

I'll give you an example: I think anyone with half a brain would stop caring about his opinions on Olympic lifting when he purveys a start position for the clean lift that puts the lifter in basically a deadlift position for the first pull.

That is a stupid fucking thing to do.

If I ever saw Rippetoe pulling that shit in my gym or any other gym, I'd sock him in his goddamn face.

I'd punch his fucking lights out in front of whoever he had lifting, and then I'd bend my ass down and fart in his ugly drooling mouth while staring at the lifter and saying, "This is how you treat a piece of shit. This is how you treat a fucking scumbag conman."

And then we'd high-five, because he'd *know* that I was telling the truth, because you'd have to be a fucking amoeba to experience Rippetoe's bankrupt tutelage and not know, in your heart of hearts - in your goddamn soul of goddamn souls - that he is quite possibly the single most delinquent, evil-ass fuckface loser in the whole wretched world.

He should keep his focus on powerlifting, like Jordan should have stuck with basketball.
Because he doesn't have shit else, god dammit.

He doesn't have shit.

He doesn't even have anyone to blame but himself.

Think about it: his technique for initiating the first pull, with his ass in the air and his knees behind the bar, is actually *the* thing we all consider to be bad Olympic lifting technique.
I mean, we teach you *not to do that*.

It's not even close to correct.

It's so self-evidently wrong it's as if he's trying to fuck with us.
Like it's some kind of social experiment to see how deep into character he can get.
That character being a stammering, mudsucking 'tard.

A stammering, mudsucking 'tard who should still know that technique is wrong, because it's the habit an athlete displays when fatigue has set in.

Even stammering, mudsucking 'tard gets tired.
And when a stammering, mudsucking 'tard gets tired, and decides via his fecund idiocy to push his puny baby pig body past whatever ass hair's worth of exertion he can still squeeze out of himself, that's how he lifts: with his ass in the air and his knees behind the bar.

And, lo, it doth fuck him up.

And if he doesn't learn from that, well, then his name is most likely Mark Rippetoe, "Giant Asshole."

I feel like I could end this article right there.

But I won't.
Because this goes beyond that.

Because he's not just tossing this misinformation out there, willy-nilly.
He's not just throwing a tantrum, or having some kind of meltdown.

No.
On his forum he's simultaneously posting a *link* to T-Nation.
He's posting a link to T-Nation and he's writing (and I quote), "This should get interesting."

So this goes beyond just some confusion, or bad judgement.
This is part of a *plan*.

He's hoping to stir the pot.

He thinks he's some big shot.
He thinks he's Donald motherfucking Trump.

Well that's *cool*, I guess.
I mean, I'll take the bait.
I can take it.

It'll be a good time.
I can't wait to make this motherfucker squeal.

I can't wait to bring down every righteous inch of my rage-strengthened tongue to lash his pathetic opinions into dust.

High reps equal bad technique?

Oh, Rip, you sad, stupid fuck.

No!

Bad coaching equals bad technique.
Bad coaching equals bad technique.

I'm going to say it again.
Because It's probably hard for Rip to hear me over the sound of my fists whipping his body into goo in my dreams.

High reps equal bad technique?

No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Bad coaching equals bad technique.

I'll be explicit: Rip's bad coaching results in bad lifter technique.

Because Rip is a bad coach.

And probably a bad lifter too.

And they just go back and forth like that: bad lifting technique, then bad coaching, then bad technique, reinforcing one another.

And that's the simple truth, indisputable.

But look.

I'm a generous guy.

I'm not just some turtle-mouthed meathead maniac.

I know how clocks work: even a broken one is right twice a day.

And I'm man enough to concede a fair point well-argued.

Now, Rip's no broken clock.

He's more like a broken donkey dick.

And even a broken donkey dick can get one thing right: yes, high reps can cause injury.

But that's because high rep, low reps, one rep, a million reps, they can all cause injury.

The risk is the same whether you are lifting at high reps with low weight, or low reps with "relatively" high weight.

It depends on *how you do it*.

So, yea, sure, I'm against high rep Olympic weightlifting... *with bad technique*.

Which isn't totally facetious: bad technique happens.

I mean, just look at Rip.

That that man is allowed to walk into a gym unmolested tells you everything you need to know.
That he's not being held down *right now* by a gaggle of toughs while I repeatedly drive a barbell into his groin tells you all you need to know.

Which is that CrossFit has a reputation for allowing—and sometimes even promoting—bad technique.
We allow it in our sport—CrossFit promotes bad lifting by allowing bad lifting.
We let the Rips of the world leave their messes all over our floor.

I say that this acceptance is as good as promotion.
It is like legalizing marijuana.

At CFW—in fact, at all of the top CrossFit affiliates—if an athlete presses out a snatch or a jerk, they get corrected.
If an athlete presses out, and another athlete praises that athlete with a hearty “hell yes you big hunk of strong,” or “nice one Dr. Crunch,” they get corrected.

They get corrected, and then they might get smacked in the mouth.

Because world class gyms crush mediocrity with ridicule and pain.
Any gym not fully invested in crushing mediocrity risks failure.

Absolute failure.

I was recently at a local CrossFit competition where one of the events was max ground to overhead.
I watched as all kinds of horrible lifts happened.

Judges gave “good lift” calls to athletes who didn't lock out or show stability, and in some cases didn't even stand up from the split.
People celebrated and yelled positive encouragement when someone set a new “PR” in what barely resembled a “clean and jerk.”

I'm not picking on the gym really—the lifters were not only from there, nor were the judges—but the rules, or lack thereof, promoted the junk lifting.
It has been the same at every CrossFit competition where the event was Max G2O.

Allowing athletes to get it overhead by any means, no matter how ugly or dangerous, needs to go away.

If we, as CrossFit, adhered to the sport of weightlifting's rules for the lifts, it would improve our sport by forcing us all to learn, teach, and judge the lifts properly.

The best lifts come from lifters with the best technique.
It behooves us to teach good form from the beginning.
If as a CrossFit coach you are going to advertise that your gym incorporates the Olympic lifts into your programming, you should teach the lifts per the rules of weightlifting.

Here's what Rip, and most all the other armchair , are missing: beginners are idiots.
It's not their fault—after all, they're just beginners.
But they're idiots nonetheless.

They're idiots with crap form.
Shit form.

Shit ass form.

I don't care if it is in the deadlift, the snatch, or the biceps curl—when something is new to a person, they have to learn it to master it.

So the exact same argument against high rep olympic lifting can be made against repping out the press, or deads, or running, or kettle bell swings.

It is funny, many of the same coaches that are anti-high rep are ok with junk form on an olympic platform while the athlete is learning to olympic lift if the coach is an olympic coach and the program is an olympic program.

Those same coaches are ok with high volume, heavy singles.

Most weightlifting coaches I know love to program days that look like Snatch x 80% x 15 / C&J x 80% x 15 / Front Squat x 85% x 3 x 10.

I know I do.

That workout is perfectly acceptable to all the anti-high rep coaches.

But put that lift into CrossFit and it changes everything.

Now, because it is in a CrossFit program, learning the olympic lifts means a certain death.

It is absurd.

It's the kind of shit you yell at your kids for: nonsensical bullshitting.

Anti-high rep coaches also like to remind us that the Olympic style lifts are for getting the most weight overhead in one rep max effort.

Why?

What if the great originators of weightlifting had said it was five repetitions?

Olympic lifts are manmade.

We made them up; we made up the sport.

It is a beautiful, but arbitrary construction, pulled from the void by our battered need to confirm for ourselves a reason to continue living in this otherwise impartial and incoherent universe.

Unlike the javelin or the throws, which came from combat.

If CrossFit wants to do multiple rep weightlifting, it is probably not going to be the end the world.

If everyone thought high rep weightlifting was bad, then CrossFit would not be growing at its current rate. Markets correct and markets clear... just like the CrossFit market cleared itself of Rippetoe.

Just like how we spit him out like so much poison, freshly sucked from a wound.

Spit him into the fucking dirt.

OK, I'm almost done.

I have one last counter... to an argument so popular Rip thought he too should touch on it.

In his article he writes:

“If an experienced Olympic lifter wants to use snatches and C&Js for conditioning, or on a dare, sure, go ahead.

An experienced lifter actually knows how to do them correctly.

And he has had back position and lockout technique hammered into his head enough that these important factors will not erode that much with fatigue—the reps will just be rested longer in between. So, for an experienced lifter, high-rep snatches won't be a problem”.

So, a competitive weightlifter can rep out Olympic lifts with no deterioration of form, so long as he rests more.

Good god.

Duh.

Fucking *duh*, genius.

But you're missing a key wrinkle in this little yarn of yours, Rip: *that would not be high-rep Olympic lifting*.

It would be a bunch of lightweight singles, and there would be no point, no condition, and no stimuli to adapt to.

It's as if you don't know the first thing about what you're talking about.

Imagine that!

Well.

Here's the white hot, blazing truth for your shitbag face, you asshole: to say a weightlifter won't fall apart under high reps is bullshit.

Complete bullshit.

And I can prove it, easily.

Think on this, fuckface: I would like to take James Tatum and Cody Lambert and have them do 30 Snatches at 185 lbs for time.

James is a former coach at Wilmington Strength, and is now a competitive weightlifter on Team MDUSA. Cody is CFW's lead coach and a Games athlete.

They are within 10 lbs of each other's bodyweight.

James is stronger on every lift than Cody, including the slow lifts.

He has Cody by 20 kg on the Snatch.

But since Cody has experience with high-rep Olympic weight lifting, and is conditioned to it, I bet Cody maintains his form better and completes all 30 Snatches in half the time James can.

This is not a challenge, fellas.

And in no way am I shitting on James.

I'm just giving an example of why these high-rep arguments are ridiculous.

185 lbs is light to both of them, and 30 reps is high reps.

Of course, this is where Rip and others would say Cody is an experienced lifter—they would be correct. Then they'd loop back to proving my argument that “light” weights are relative to the athlete's skill level, and that the two are directly related, and that the risk of injury is inverse to both of them combined.

(Well, look at that—I think I just created a mathematical equation.

Hell yeah, writing this article has been fun.)

So, QED: the argument should not be about the lifts vs. the reps.

The argument should be about quality coaching.

If a coach has a lifter, beginner or “Games level,” it is up to the coach to know when to stop the athlete from hurting himself.

Form and technique fail as fatigue increases on all lifts.

It is also the coach's responsibility to know how to teach the lifts, to beginners and to more experienced athletes.

You see?

Experienced lifters can get injured too.

The only way to eliminate the dangers of Olympic weightlifting entirely would be to do no reps.