



IRON GAME HISTORY



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THE RETURN OF *IRON GAME HISTORY*

As many of you know, Jan and I had a rough time last year what with the loss of our country cabin to fire on the Fourth of July followed by a historic Halloween flood which kept us—and Jan’s mother—out of our main house and guest house for approximately six months. What’s more, although we tried to inoculate ourselves from another holiday disaster by using mordant humor, a phone call Thanksgiving morning brought the shattering news that Mike Jenkins, the bright, quick-witted young man who won the 2012 Arnold Strongman Classic, had suffered a heart attack during the night and died at 31. Mike’s death triggered a decision on our part to feature in our next issue of *Iron Game History* an article profiling Mike and examining the circumstances surrounding the heart attack which took him. Accordingly, we reached out to Simon Bronner, who chairs the department of American Studies at Penn State University in Harrisburg. Professor Bronner had developed a friendship with Mike and his wife, Keri, and even did some Strongman training at their gym in Harrisburg. Academically, Bronner is also interested in the cultural aspects of physical strength, and he attended the 2014 Arnold Strongman Classic, taking photos and gathering information. Bronner, of course, shared our profound sense of loss and agreed to not only write the article, which appears on page 54, but to serve on our Editorial Board moving forward.

As anyone looking at the new *IGH* can tell, it’s a good deal thicker than an average version, but we decided to make it longer as a way to express our gratitude to you (our subscribers) and to apologize for taking

so long to produce it. If the issue has a binding agent it would be the subject of Performance Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) Three other articles—besides the one on Mike Jenkins—focus to one degree or another on this topic: John Hoberman’s essay on why competitive athletes face much more criticism in our society for their use of PEDs than do other groups—some of whose members are users, such as law enforcement officers, college students, actors, military personnel, people of middle-age and beyond; John Fair’s article about the decline of U.S. weightlifters relative to those from other countries; and my essay on the meaning of Tatiana Kashirina’s world record snatch. In a way, such a focus isn’t all that unusual given the widespread use of PEDs in sport these days. In any case, we hope you find things of interest in these 84 pages.



Another reason it was difficult for us to finish an issue of *IGH* any sooner is that we’ve been increasingly busy here at the Stark Center doing the sorts of things it was designed to facilitate: hosting meetings, teaching students, writing, organizing symposia, attending academic conferences, lecturing, raising funds for the Center, and entertaining the increasing numbers of visitors we’ve been having. One thing which

makes us proudest is that over the past year or so, three of our graduate students have completed their dissertations and earned Ph.D.’s in Physical Culture and Sport Studies, a degree that we—mainly Jan—designed and managed to have accepted by our Department of Kinesiology and Health Education. The first of these men to finish was Jason Shurley, whose dissertation was called, “Strength for Sport: The Evolution of the Science of

Strength and the Birth of Professional Strength Coaching, 1900-1978.” (Jason also assisted us with the Thomas DeLorme article which appears in this issue.) Jason, who was formerly the captain of the UT Powerlifting Team—and whose wife, Valerie, was also a member of the team—is now an Assistant Professor at Concordia, an excellent liberal arts college here in Austin. The next to finish was Tolga Ozyurtcu, who finished this summer after completing his dissertation: “Flex Marks the Spot: Histories of Muscle Beach.” Tolga’s dissertation isn’t a comprehensive history of Muscle Beach, but a very interesting attempt to understand the Santa Monica site as a mythic place in our cultural imagination. Tolga just joined our department as a faculty member

and we’re happy to have him. Last, and finally, is Baker Harrell, who back in November of 2007 published “A Perfect Storm: An Analysis of the American Youth Obesity Epidemic,” in *IGH*. Baker created and still runs a very active non-profit in Austin called “It’s Time Texas,” which focuses on healthy living and youth fitness. His dissertation is titled: “Beyond Obesity: Historical, Social Change Approaches to Improve the Fitness of Americans.” Baker took a long time to finish because of his work with his non-profit, but he never gave up his dream of a Ph.D. and we expect great things from him.

In late Spring, we took what might be called a “full team” to the annual meeting of the North American

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Society for Sport History—a trip Jan and I have taken almost every year since 1986, when Jan’s paper, “Bernarr Macfadden: Reformer of Feminine Form,” was selected as the best paper by a graduate student. At this year’s meeting our department had—of all the universities represented—the largest number of graduate students. Those students—most of whom came to the University of Texas to study with us and to use the archives in the Stark Center—were there to present the following papers, which represented their areas of research interest: Tolga Ozyurtcu (Muscle Beach); Florian Hemme (weightlifter/world champion wrestler George Hackenschmidt); Sam Twito (Indian Clubs); Jason Shurley (ACL injuries in women athletes); Ben Pollock (world weightlifting champion Joe Dube); Dominic Morais (who won the NASSH graduate prize in 2012, with a paper on Eugen Sandow) using archives in teaching history; George Kioussis (soccer); and Lauren Osmer (international Olympic policy). In addition, the following faculty members presented papers: Thomas Hunt (1968 Olympics); Kim Beckwith (pioneering weightlifter and official Judy Glenney), Jan Todd (early physical culturist Belle Gordon), and John Fair (British physical culture). The newest student in this program has just arrived—Dan Rosenke—an elite sprinter from Canada who could have been accepted almost anywhere, but decided to come to U.T. to do sociocultural research on sports doping and take his Ph.D. It should be added here that two of our people—Drs. John Fair and Thomas Hunt—are also publishing books this year. Fair’s book on the history of the Mr. America contest will be released this fall as part of our U.T. Press series, and Dr. Hunt’s book, with Routledge Press, is entitled, *A Global History of Doping in Sport: Drugs, Policy, and Politics*. We also take pride in the U.T. Men’s Powerlifting Team’s victory at the USAPL Collegiate National Championships. The team was coached by our own Kim Beckwith, who was named “Collegiate Coach of the Year” by the USAPL.

Other manifestations of our activities this past year include two conferences hosted by the Stark Center. The first was the brainchild of Dan Keating, Professor and Dean at the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis, and was designed to honor Clarence Bass, the lifelong lifter who, at 76, by exercising, studying, and eating very carefully since his early teens, has developed and essentially maintained a level of overall fitness well beyond most active athletes in their thirties. Held at the Stark Center, the conference celebrated Bass’ most

recent book, entitled *Take Charge: Fitness at the Edge of Science*, and featured presentations by a number of fitness experts and admirers of Bass. Among those who spoke was U.T. Exercise Physiologist Ed Coyle, who also chaired a panel on “The Aerobics/Strength Alliance.” The second panel was led by Dr. Joe Signorile, a professor of exercise science at the University of Miami and was called, “The Rise of Intervals.” There was also a third panel, led by Professor Keating, on the subject, “Forget Heavy, Think Effort.” The conference ended with a fine dinner at the Center and featured keynote speaker, Dr. Waneen Spirduso, retired Professor of Kinesiology and Health Education and an international expert on physical activity and aging.

The Stark Center was also the co-sponsor—with the Athletic Performance Center, a division of the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Texas—of a strength coaching clinic in May 2014. The Athletic Performance Clinic drew approximately 200 people, most of whom were strength and conditioning coaches. It was sponsored by the Sorinex Equipment Company, which built the beyond-the-state-of-the-art training facility for U.T.’s Olympic athletes (track and field, rowing, cross-country, softball, volleyball, and so on) in the Athletic Performance Center. The two day clinic was keynoted by Dr. Bill Kraemer, professor of exercise science and medicine at Ohio State University and the most prolific strength researcher in the country.

As golf is one of our areas of specialization at the Stark Center, we also worked with the Austin History Center last December to host a memorable event that brought together Austin’s two most famous golfers—Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite—both students of the legendary golf guru Harvey Penick, both winners for the University of Texas of the national golf championship, both longtime Austinites, both donors to the Stark Center, and both among the most successful professionals in the world over the past 40 years. The evening consisted of a long, informal conversation between these two old friends and rivals as they recalled their many decades playing “the auld game” in Austin and far, far beyond. It was televised by ESPN’s Longhorn Network.

Last, but hardly least, over the past year we also received from outside sources the final \$200,000 from the second of the Weider Foundation’s \$1,000,000 pledges, the final shipment of art and books from Joe and Betty Weider, and over \$100,000 in additional monies to support staff salaries.

—Terry Todd