



Spotlight

Duck weight trainer says job is perfect

By Julie Shippen

Of the Emerald

The pair of dimly-lit rooms that constitute the Harold C. Hagg Memorial Weight Room look more like a medieval torture chamber than a spa for the muscularly flawless.

Located between two tunnels on the east side of Autzen Stadium, the rooms are jam-packed with racks, benches, bars, presses and weights. The giant masses of rippling flesh who frequent the facility appear quite able of inflicting any sort of punishment they please.

But for Eric Hohn, who is now in his second year as the University's assistant weight trainer, the sweat-filled rooms are home, sweet home.

When he isn't giving his 245-pound frame a grueling workout on the weights, Hohn devotes his attention and skills to literally scores of football and basketball players, and other players of college sports.

"This job allows me the perfect situation," he says. "I have a weight room I can train in any hour of the day, seven days a week. It's also fun to write up (training) programs and see people progress."

Many individuals who come to the room have no team connections, and use Hohn's advice and watchful eye to help master the art on their own, he says. The coaching is a must, he adds, in order to keep new lifters from overdoing it.

"There's a danger with that, but we monitor it pretty well," Hohn says. "If they don't know what they're doing, we won't let them lift."

Most, however, are University athletes required by their coach to spend a certain number of hours per week in the weight room.

"Some of them come in because they have to," Hohn says. Although the players are not always enthusiastic about this duty, he says they usually make the sessions to avoid possible "disciplinary action," such as extra running after practice.

The strength training also has another benefit for team athletes, especially those in football. "If you lift properly on the right program, it will help you avoid injuries out on the field or court," Hohn says. He explains that toned muscles are better able to absorb physical blows. "Obviously it makes them stronger. In some cases it helps them improve their speed."

Hohn says he spends around 30 hours a week at the weight room, filling his free time with training toward future power lifting competitions. Hohn's strongest areas include the squat, bench and dead lifts. He adds that he can dead lift up to 700 pounds.

"I'm high enough now that if I stay healthy, I could be competing on the national level," Hohn says. He is slow to admit his abilities, though, adding that "it sounds like I'm tooting my own horn."

But national competition is nothing new to Hohn. He made his way to an NCAA champion-

ship one year as a hammer thrower on the University track team.

Although Hohn began serious weight lifting more than eight years ago in high school, it wasn't until 1982 when he graduated from the University and ended his five-year collegiate track career, that he says he took it up again.

"I did all right...but I have more of a knack for weight lifting," he says. "I saw more progress in the short period I weight-trained than I did in the five years on track."

In addition to making the adjustment to a new sport, Hohn says the switch from "trainee" to "trainer" was interesting and sometimes difficult.

"Last year I really felt in-

secure with that," he says. "I had to gain their respect as a coach. When they saw how intense I was in my own training and saw the good results I was getting, they finally felt comfortable coming to me and asking for my help."

"I'm still not a coach-athlete per se, but I'm probably the best lifter," he says. And feeling secure in his ability was necessary, Hohn adds, as the majority of the athletes were often his peers.

"It took awhile before I could tell the guys that they were doing something wrong with confidence," Hohn says. "But by the end of the season, the guys didn't think of me as just someone to take roll and keep tabs on 'em."

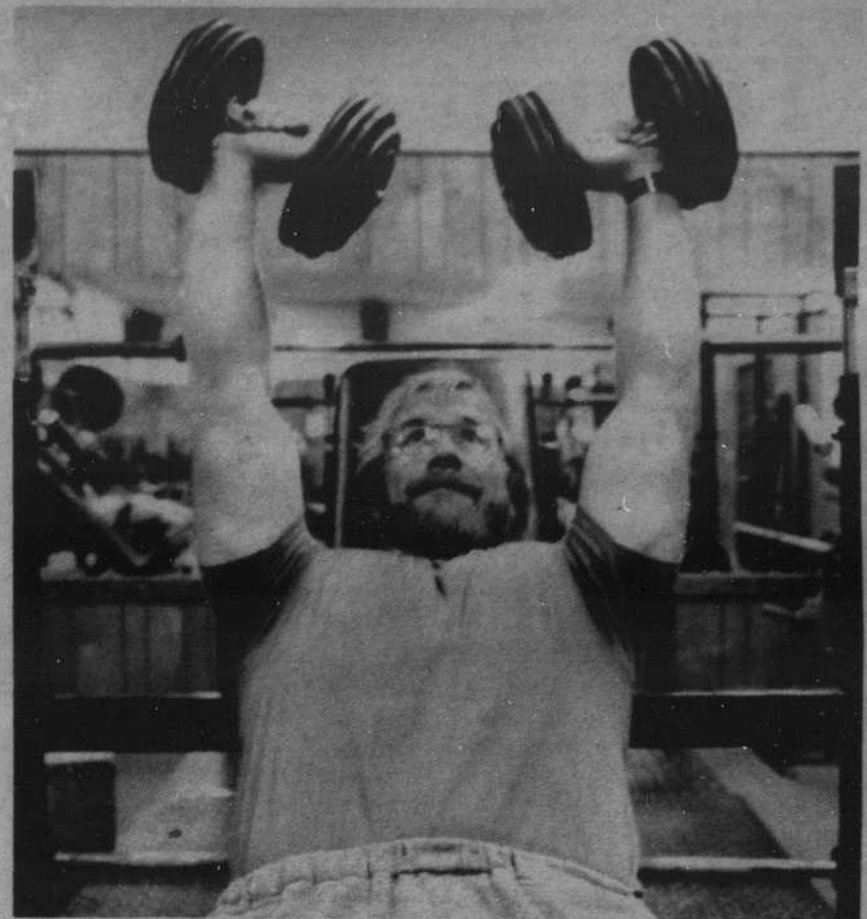


Photo by Karen Stallwood
Assistant weight trainer Eric Hohn shares his intense dedication with University athletes and other devotees to the art of "pumping iron."

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