

# Rocky Lanz

## THE ULTIMATE CROSS TRAINER



*A lifelong commitment to BFS principles has contributed to elite performances by this multi-sport athlete*

**R**ocky Lanz is a born athlete—the physical talents he displayed as a child gave promise that he could go far in whatever sport he chose. Lanz, however, excelled in not just one sport; he became great in several. Wrestling, track, football, baseball, powerlifting, Olympic lifting and bobsledding—Rocky Lanz is the ultimate cross trainer.

In grade school Lanz played as many sports as he could, but by the time he entered high school at

Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia, he decided to focus on track, wrestling, and football. He lettered in all three, showing the most promise in football. In 1990 Lanz made the BFS All American Team and his photo appeared in our April 1990 issue.

Lanz's dream was to play Division I football, but an unfortunate decision on signing day left him without a scholarship. Despite this setback, he continued to train and went on to break junior records in powerlift-



(Bobsled photos courtesy USA Bobsled)

**Weighing 185 pounds, Lanz could snatch 308 pounds and clean and jerk 385. His power helped him become a bobsled pusher for Team USA, and last year his team placed 11<sup>th</sup> in the World Cup.**

ing and become nationally ranked in Olympic lifting. Lanz has currently established himself as a talented bobsled pusher and is on the short list for the next winter Olympics.

Lanz's story is of great interest to us at BFS because he started on the BFS program as a sophomore in high school and continued using the program throughout college. Although he eventually had to radically change his workouts to focus on Olympic lifting and bobsledding, the work ethic and basic training principles he learned from BFS continue to inspire Lanz to take his career to the next level. According to Lanz, "Coach Greg Shepard and BFS made me a competitor!"

BFS caught up with Lanz recently at a bobsled training camp in Canada. He took time out from his busy schedule to talk to us about his ongoing determination to excel.

**BFS:** Rocky, when did you start lifting weights?

**Lanz:** I started lifting weights in 1987 during my freshman year in high school, but at the time Riverside didn't have a formal weight training program. The following year Coach Greg Shepard gave an inspiring clinic in our area, with hundreds of athletes and coaches in attendance, and we immediately adopted the program. I became serious about lifting after that clinic, and by my senior year I was pretty much our team's strongest player. I was a wide receiver; I weighed only

about 155, but I could power clean 250, squat 450, and was hand-timed at 4.4 in the 40.

**BFS:** What was it about the BFS clinic that made such an impression on you?

**Lanz:** I remember Coach Shepard telling us how important it was at this time in our lives to "seize the moment," because when you're young you often don't recognize the opportunities you have. He also talked about the consequences of the dumb things we often do in high school, such as drinking while driving. So not only was he talking about what we could accomplish on the field, he got across the message that life is short and you have to take advantage of it.

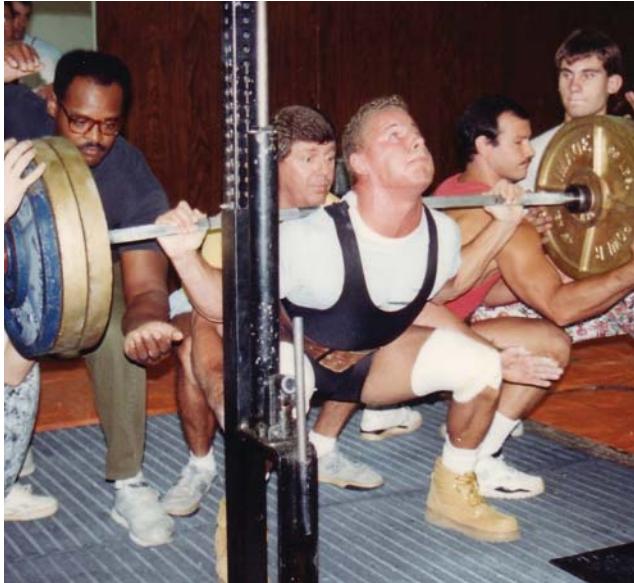
**BFS:** What was there anything else that stuck in your mind about Coach Shepard's clinic?

**Lanz:** There were so many things, but I vividly remember a video he showed us of a high school athlete in the long jump and the 100 and 200. He was also All-State in basketball and football, and he was missing an arm! Seeing what this athlete accomplished really motivated me to set higher goals and achieve them.

**BFS:** His name is Tom Southall, and his story is certainly inspiring. How did the other players respond to the clinic?

**Lanz:** Coach Shepard came across as very genuine,

and many of our players took his message to heart. In fact, during my senior year we had five players earn football scholarships to major colleges!



**BFS:** What were your college plans?

**Lanz:** I had some great offers from Georgia, Wake Forest, the University of Wyoming and some others. But I wanted to play for Florida State so much that I put all these other schools on the back burner. When it came to signing day and Florida State didn't come through, all I heard from these other schools was, "Sorry kid, we got our guy." I was left in the wind, with no school—I had just thrown all my scholarship opportunities away, hoping to go to Florida State.

**BFS:** What did you do next?

**Lanz:** I decided I would do what it takes to play at the University of Georgia. What I ended up doing was going to Gainesville Junior College, because it wasn't far from the University of Georgia.

**BFS:** Were you staying in shape?

**Lanz:** Yes, and because I liked to compete I started powerlifting. I got into it pretty seriously and broke eight national junior records in three bodyweight divisions. In 1993 I was selected by the United States Powerlifting Federation to represent the US in two international meets, one in Stockholm and another in Helsinki.

**BFS:** What were your best lifts?

**Lanz:** I did a 630 squat and a 675 deadlift, just missing 700, in the 198-pound class. I was 20 years old at the time.

**BFS:** How were your studies progressing?

**Lanz:** Good. My grades were up, and I even started

taking independent study classes from the University of Georgia. After a little over two years I transferred to Georgia and I was allowed to lift with the team. Unfortunately, I found out that when you start taking independent study classes your eligibility clock starts, and when you transfer schools you have to sit out a year. That was my last year, and the news that I could not play just about crushed me.

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**In college Lanz represented the US in two international powerlifting competitions. Weighing 198 pounds, he made a 630 squat and a 675 deadlift when he was 20 years old.**

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**BFS:** So, was that it for football?

**Lanz:** I wasn't ready to think so. I met with the head academic advisor for the Georgia football team, and he told me I would still be allowed to play at a Division II college. I ended going to Valdosta State. So in the summer of 1994 I transferred, and for a challenge I played baseball for a summer league. That's when I caught the eye of a baseball coach from Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Florida, who ended up offering me a scholarship to play baseball. My passion was for football, but I needed the financial aid to help me finish my degree, so I transferred. The crazy thing is prior to that summer league I'd never played baseball!

**BFS:** Did you stay with baseball?

**Lanz:** My heart just wasn't in it, and some of my football buddies from Georgia helped me get a tryout for the British Columbia Lions, which is in the Canadian Football League. At the tryouts I ran a 4.47, a short shuttle of 4.02, vertical jumped 37 inches, broad jumped 10' 2". I weighed about 190 to 195. It came down to me and one other guy, but he got the position because of playing experience.

**BFS:** What type of weight training workout were you doing at this time?

**Lanz:** Believe it or not, I was still doing a basic variation of the BFS program!

**BFS:** Really? OK, so after graduating from St. Leo's what did you do?

**Lanz:** One of my former roommates from the University of Georgia was a strength coach at the University of Colorado. He told me he knew there were going to be openings for an assistant strength coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and he thought that with my background I might like to get into this

type of work. With his help I was able to get an interview with Mark Asanovich, the head strength coach at Tampa Bay.

**BFS:** How did the interview go?

**Lanz:** Coach Asanovich was impressed with my background and said he wanted to hire me. But he also told me that he did not use the conventional training methods that I was accustomed to. He described the type of workout that we would be doing and explained that he wanted to make certain that we were on the same page before he would hire me. I took the job with the attitude that I would learn what this program was all about. I had an open mind.

**BFS:** How would you describe the workout?

**Lanz:** We would take the guys from one station to the next, adding resistance when possible. The sets and reps were varied, but generally they were much higher than any conventional workouts I had used.

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**Lanz was selected for the April 1990 BFS All American Team. At the time he was a senior at Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, Georgia.**

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**BFS:** Did the athletes improve?

**Lanz:** It's hard for me to judge since I was not there for the entire season and because they did not perform basic core lifts such as squats, cleans and deadlifts. I will say, however, that during the time I was there that I don't believe any of the players improved their results in the bench press. Also, many of the athletes told me they had lost bodyweight and appeared to have lost muscle mass.

**BFS:** Did you stay on with the job?

**Lanz:** Being able to work for the Buccaneers was a tremendous opportunity and I appreciated Coach Asanovich's confidence in me, but I had other opportunities presented to me with more financial stability.

**BFS:** Considering all the different training philosophies you've been exposed to, do you have a recommendation for young athletes?

**Lanz:** Young people need something that works, and BFS is a proven program that will make them better athletes. Even today I still perform the BFS core lifts.

**BFS:** Did you get into serious training for the Olympic lifting after you left the Buccaneers?

**Lanz:** Yes, Thomas Ingalsbe, Jr., who was a lineman at the University of Georgia and who later competed in the Olympics in weightlifting, encouraged me to try it. So after the Tampa Bay job I moved back to Atlanta to train under John Coffee at his gym. Coach Coffee was extremely knowledgeable about lifting technique, and we had a great group. There was Ben Green, was about 40 years old but still snatching about 300. Brian Jacob and Thanh Nguyen, who both made the Olympic team in 1996, trained there.

**BFS:** What were your best lifts?

**Lanz:** In training I snatched 308 and clean and jerked 385 while weighing about 185. I cleaned 396 and could probably clean 418. My jerk was the problem. I thought I had a shot at making the Olympic Team in Sydney.

**BFS:** What happened?

**Lanz:** About five months before the Olympic Tryouts I got a tryout for the XFL. I tore my hamstring at the tryouts pretty bad, just a couple degrees from coming off the bone. I couldn't lift heavy for almost eight months, so there was no way I would compete at the Olympic Tryouts.

**BFS:** But you completely recovered from the injury?

**Lanz:** Yes, and when I started training hard again I heard that USA Bobsled was looking for bobsled pushers. It seemed interesting, so I got a tryout and made the team.

**BFS:** Is it a misconception that just any athlete who is fast will make a good bobsled pusher?

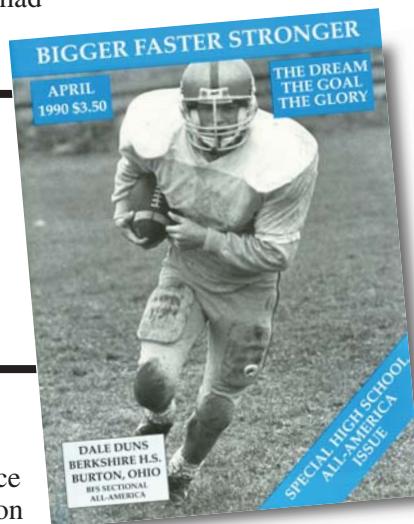
**Lanz:** You need a balance of speed and power. The coaches who recruit bobsled pushers look initially at speed, and they're hoping if you're fast you've also got the power. I'm the strongest pusher on Team USA. In training I cleaned 325 for 10 reps, 352 for 5 and 374 for 3. I also power snatched 292.

**BFS:** How are you doing?

**Lanz:** I'm on the USA II Team, and last year at the World Cup my team placed 11th. I hope to make USA Team I and compete in the next Olympics.

**BFS:** Thank you, Rocky, and good luck with your training, wherever it may take you!

**Lanz:** Thank you for this opportunity. 

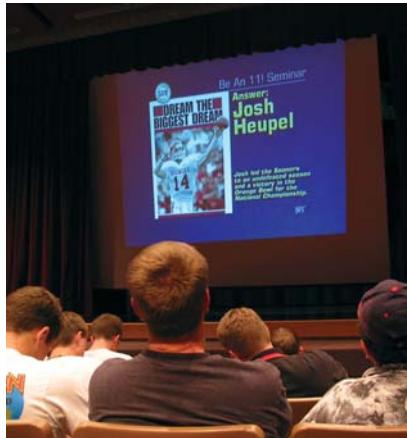
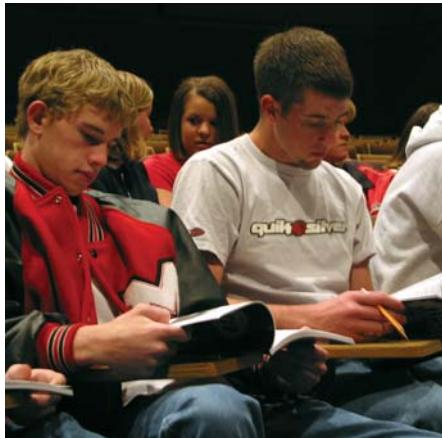


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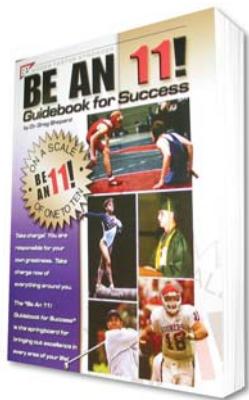
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