

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

The World's Fastest Lift

World Class Coaching LLC's Olympic Lifting Videotapes

Danny John

I'll admit this: I have never seen a video that made me drive to the cobbler (or "shoe repairman" for you young ones) the next day. Yet, I found myself trying to explain to Kim, the nice young Korean man who added heels to my Olympic Lifting boots a year ago, to remove the extra heel. "I don't need it...I suddenly got more flexible."

Watching a video makes you more flexible? Well, it should sound a lot more complex; actually, it is really quite simple: Greg Glassman asked me to review World Class Coaching LLC's video *The Snatch*. Coach Glassman had been raving about it at the crossfit.com forum...and I said I would review it. But I just kept putting it off. What could I learn? I mean, really, I have snatched 314 pounds in competition and I have a gold medal from last year's Masters Nationals. I mean, really, what could I learn?

How about this: I don't know nothing. Throughout the entire production, I scribbled notes, pressed pause and leaped up to try the "right" way to snatch. Steve Miller walks you through everything you need to know about the snatch. Miller's model, his wife, Loreen, has solid form, yet we keep flashing to images of the 1998 World Championships and the road ahead for Loreen and the viewer.

One would expect an experienced lifter to know how to grip the bar in the snatch. Well, you take the distance from the elbows and then you try it out, then you hope for the best, then you just make do then...

The video is worth the price for this one point. I went

into my garage, "flexed" a little, grabbed an empty bar and started bouncing the bar off my belly in a standing position. I kept moving my grip in until I touch the top of "where you finish pulling the zipper up." In my amazement, I'm not a collar to collar lifter...I am about three inches in on BOTH sides! "Yeah, right," I thought, "let's see if it really works."

Miller is absolutely right. I nailed one snatch. My wife commented: "You are moving so fast." In addition, I was in flats (my Chuck Taylors!) and had a bottom position that felt secure, tight, and easy to pop up out of the hole. I had instantly become more flexible...all without yoga! Time to take those extra heels off my shoes! My moving my hands in, my "pull under" is easier, and I have a chance to press up while the bar comes down. Will this end the curse of my just-out-front misses in the snatch? Mental note: visit the cobbler tomorrow!

This is just one point out of dozens that simply amazed me while viewing. The answer to that elusive question from all throwers who start O lifting: "When do I go on my toes?" shocked me. When? Never! Basically, if you want to jump high, jump off your toes. If you want the bar to go high, stay on your heels! I didn't believe this, but I gave it a chance and the results will soon speak for themselves on the competition platform.

The visual and mental clues throughout this video are far too numerous to mention, but I must say that I came away with not only a better image of the quickest movement in sports, but I also have the tools to break down faults. Miller teaches in a mixture of "top down" and "bottom up" to learn the elements of the snatch,

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The World's Fastest Lift (continued...)

but what I found refreshing was his ability to teach a “part” completely in the context of the “whole.” One never gets away from the idea that the full-squat snatch is the goal of the video.

He also offers an inexpensive way to biomechanically coach yourself at home (a video, a pen, and a piece of paper) as well as enough “gym tricks” to work by yourself, if you end up alone like a lot of us O lifters.

So, am I recommending this video? Absolutely. Let me make this point: it is a MUST have for the strength and power athlete. Why? Well, I had a funny look on my face after doing my snatches and Tiffini, my wife, asked me

what was wrong. “It is just so simple this way...I could have been so much better.” About one hour of watching a video had completely restructured the way I approach the bar.

Yes, Miller is “contrarian,” he is going in a different direction. He spends a lot of time discussing the martial arts, guys are tossed around the whole video, and he recommends things (like jumping back) that will drive some crazy.

But, it is the single best thing I have ever seen on the most beautiful movement in sports.



Editor's note –

I first came across World Class Coaching and their two videotapes *World's Fastest Lift* on the snatch and *The World's Most Powerful Lift* on the clean and jerk over a year ago. I was absolutely stunned, blown away, at the depth and quality of instruction. We had mentioned these tapes in the October 2002 *CrossFit Journal*, “What is Fitness?” where, on the subject of the Olympic lifts, we stated unequivocally, “These tapes are not only the best instruction available anywhere they are as good as any instructional tape we've seen on any subject.” I think we understated the case!

There had long been numerous aspects of traditional coaching of the Olympic lifts that seemed to me to not only defy physics but defied what I thought I was clearly seeing. I'll cite one example. It is nearly universal in coaching the clean and jerk to instruct the lifter to follow through on the second pull by coming up on the toes, but it looked to me like the photos and footage of the great lifters showed that they were on their way down under the bar when the heels lifted – the knees and hips seemed to have begun to flex again and the hair on the lifter's head was often seen rising! This suggested that the lifter was not rising on his toes but falling so fast that the heels rose. I'd long noticed that if an athlete were to drop suddenly from fully erect and land in a squat the heels would briefly lift as the hips and legs

flexed violently allowing the athlete to plunge much like what I thought I was seeing in the photos.

This is but one of dozens of problems I've had with the Olympic weightlifting coaching orthodoxy. *The World's Most Powerful Lift* solved the dilemma permanently for me. I was seeing what I thought I was seeing and the orthodoxy was wrong.

What I desperately wanted was to find a coach and lifter who could substantiate what I thought I was finding in these tapes. I made several efforts to get someone to review them and had little luck for quite awhile. And then our friend Danny John came up to the plate and agreed to review the tapes. (They are approximately two hours each of non-stop, high density, original information.) Danny is a champion lifter and a coach of champions. His website “[Dan John's Lifting and Throwing Page](#)” is an informative, accurate, and honest reference for ALL athletes. We couldn't have asked for a better informed, more honest or capable reviewer. The rest is history.

One more thing: if you are truly serious about optimizing your performance/fitness, buy these tapes immediately. I can't name a superior value in all of fitness. We may not mention it again.

- Coach Greg Glassman