

## TOWARDS A HISTORY OF BODYBUILDING

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Although the more significant historical developments in the sport<sup>1</sup> of bodybuilding have received periodic mention in various publications aimed at devotees,<sup>2</sup> little or no attention has been paid to the origins of this relatively modern form of human engagement and no attempt has yet been made to produce an overall historical account.<sup>3</sup> This paper argues that these twin deficiencies arise largely from a lack of clarity as to the precise definition of bodybuilding itself,<sup>4</sup> viewed as a discrete activity, and that this definitional problem needs first to be addressed if historians are to treat the subject with the degree of methodological rigour now accorded to the history of other sports. As in other fields, phenomenology must here precede history: unless, that is, a general consensus can be reached as to precisely what activity is to be understood by the general term 'bodybuilding', it will not be possible to discuss meaningfully such historical questions as the moment at which that activity recognisably emerged, the reasons for its emergence or the nature and causes of its subsequent evolution.

It needs to be acknowledged at the outset that the term 'bodybuilding' covers a wide spectrum of activities, ranging from the individual gymnasium workout using weights to the professional competitions sponsored by national and international bodybuilding associations.' If bodybuilding is broadly defined as the use of weight training in order to improve the muscularity (either muscle size or muscle

tone) of the body<sup>6</sup> - as distinct from sports such as Olympic weightlifting or powerlifting, where the aim is to achieve maximum effective strength, and from the use of weights either to improve performance in other sports or for muscular rehabilitation after injury - then the number of its practitioners will include a good many who would probably reject the use of the term as applying to them. They will describe themselves rather as 'doing weight training', 'having a regular workout', or even simply 'keeping fit'. Moreover, even those who would recognise themselves as engaging in the activity of bodybuilding are often loath to call themselves 'bodybuilders' in the way in which those who play social tennis are called tennis players or those who play an occasional round of golf refer to themselves as golfers.

The term 'training' (or 'weight training') is frequently used by practitioners to describe their gymnasium workout; but, while this term raises no semantic issue in reference to the competitive bodybuilder - who is clearly in training for a contest - its use is problematical in reference to those weight 'trainers' who have no intention of engaging in competition. What, it may be asked, are they in training for? In fact, the use of such an inexact and unsatisfactory term can be seen to arise from a deliberate desire to avoid the use of the term 'bodybuilding', perhaps because of a perception that the latter description is properly restricted to competition bodybuilding with its technical requirements and judging criteria.

It is, then, the factor of competition that separates bodybuilding in the narrower sense from the more general (and more widely -practised) activity for which a number of unsatisfactory alternative terms have had to be devised? Are we to say, for instance, that the current Mr. Olympia

is a bodybuilder because he engages in competition whereas Mr. Smith who works out with weights purely in order to develop or retain good muscle tone is not? Certainly current usage appears to favour this distinction,<sup>7</sup> but it raises the question of whether a person who has never entered a bodybuilding competition, or has ceased to do so, can properly be called a bodybuilder. Clearly the answer must be yes, quite apart from the fact that bodybuilding had been generally recognised as a distinct activity for some years before competitions were introduced.<sup>8</sup>

The above discussion highlights the problem of definition which has impeded serious historical discussion of the subject. This paper argues that, while there is a spectrum of activities aimed at the improvement of muscularity by exercise (usually involving weights), it is possible to formulate a definition which accounts for the Common recognition of bodybuilding - whether competitive or not - as separable in principle from other, similar activities lying at other points of the spectrum.

As to the spectrum itself, it can be characterised in terms of an active interest in the aesthetics of muscularity and its achievement by means of methodical training. Within this spectrum, it is suggested that the difference of principle separating bodybuilding from cognate activities can be defined by the presence of an additional element, which is that of public display.

This hypothesis is in fact confirmed by the historical data. It is generally acknowledged that the first recognisable bodybuilder, in the sense in which the term is commonly understood, was Eugen Sandow (1867- 1925),<sup>9</sup> though such recognition has been largely intuitive and there has been little or no discussion of the precise sense in which

Sandow can be seen to have inaugurated a new activity. Following the lines of the argument advanced above, it can be argued that the new departure lay in the element of public display of aesthetic muscularity for its own sake, which Sandow introduced in 1892. Having first gained attention in 1889 by winning the 'World's Strongest Man' competition in England, he toured widely in England, Australia, South Africa and Continental Europe, engaging in the usual strongman acts of poker-bending, lion-wrestling and weightlifting. He was, however, to introduce into his theatre and vaudeville-hall performances a new element: he would enter a glass booth, and perform a series of muscular poses to a musical accompaniment. This latter performance so impressed the then unknown promoter Florenz Ziegfeld that he signed Sandow for ten weeks at the Chicago World's Fair, followed by a four-year contract which returned Ziegfeld a quarter of a million dollars from Sandow's performances throughout the world. The significant new departure was that Sandow had now begun to be promoted not as the world's strongest, but as the world's best-built man. As others began to emulate him in public displays of muscularity for its own sake,<sup>10</sup> it became clear that this new activity would have a Continued and increasing following amongst audiences, and that a new term would have to be invented in order to describe it.

If Sandow ushered in a new area - and few would deny him that crucial role - it was not because of some totally unprepared and revolutionary form of human activity which he invented out of nowhere. Historical events are never unprepared, and human history is an evolutionary process in which one series of events succeeds and builds upon another.

The historical 'breakthrough' more often than not occurs when a number of different developments - often in quite disparate spheres - happen to converge at a particular moment in time; their convergence discloses a common movement or direction underlying them all, and they seem uniquely to suit and give expression to the aspirations of their era. It is then, and only then, that some catalyst appears which brings them together. Sandow's role in the development of modern bodybuilding can be seen in this light. His particular innovation lay in the inauguration of public physique display, and it was in this unprecedented form of activity that his emergence represented the catalyst for the development of bodybuilding as it is known today. The critical concept to be examined, therefore, is that of bodily display, resting as it does on the spectator's interest in the *appearance* of the body.

We may understand, in this context the disclaimers of those weight-trainers who profess to disdain the vanity and narcissism of those who have an interest in physical appearance and the display of their bodies. This is a common self-defence mechanism, arising from deep-seated taboos about viewing one's body or those of others. The term *scopophilia*<sup>11</sup> has been coined by psychologists to refer to an excessive or obsessive interest in viewing the human body, and it is natural that taboos should have arisen as a means of social inhibition of extreme or prurient interest. Such behavioural extremes, however, may tend to mask a fundamental human trait about which serious bodybuilders are a great deal more open and uninhibited: namely, that it is natural for human beings to be interested in the *look* of the body.

The history of art - and, perhaps just as importantly, the history of fashion - reveals a long-standing human interest in the appearance of

the human body, clothed or unclothed. And this interest implies two elements: the observed body, and the observer or spectator (either as the spectator of one's own body, or of the bodies of others). From the middle-aged executive who sees himself in the mirror and observes that he has too much flab, through to the housewife wondering whether she should buy a low-tut dress or would look good in jeans, and the audience at a bodybuilding contest, the basic interest is the same.

Given that the essential element of bodybuilding is an interest in the aesthetics of the physique, with a stress on muscularity as an enhancement of the body's aesthetic appeal, we may return to our initial question of the changes Eugen Sandow brought about in the display of the body that had not existed before him.

Having in mind the earlier comment that historical breakthroughs are usually a culmination and convergence of existing trends, we can see Sandow as standing at the point of intersection of three movements or developments which were all gaining impetus in the late nineteenth Century. These were the invention of the camera and its effect on the art studio tradition; the strongman tradition derived from the circus and fairground; and the 'physical culture' movement. If we look at these in turn, we can see how Sandow took them up and combined them in an unprecedented way.

## **The Studio**

The artistic portrayal of aesthetic muscularity dates back to the ancient Greeks, who saw the human body as capable of reflecting the ideal beauty of the gods. Conceived in human form, the bodies of the gods were both more powerful and more perfect than ordinary men.

Although earlier Greek statuary tended to depict the gods in a state of repose or near-repose - their divinity being represented mainly through their ideal bodily proportion - later Greek sculpture was more inclined to build upon the Greeks' interest in gymnastics and athletic games and to portray the transcendent potential of man by a well developed muscularity, which symbolised supreme energy.<sup>12</sup>

It was above all the latter tradition which was taken up by the painters and sculptors of the Renaissance. It is not surprising that certain late Greek sculptures, rediscovered at that time, were often enthusiastically imitated. A good example is the Greco-Roman 'Torso Belvedere', where the sweeping curve of the muscular back was taken up by Michelangelo in his painting 'The Athlete'.<sup>13</sup> The influence of this artistic tradition upon later bodybuilding posing is at its most obvious in these portrayals, of which the three-quarters back-shot perfected by Arnold Schwarzenegger is a clear derivative.

The depiction of highly developed muscularity in painting and sculpture remained a pervasive tradition from Michelangelo's time onwards, and even into the twentieth Century with sculptors such as Rodin and Bourdelle. Although artists in general worked from models, their aim was not so much representation as transfiguration - the attempt to portray an ideal exemplar of energy and power. The models they used tended to be only a point of departure, and artists' journals often make it plain that the resulting work was an exaggeration and aggradisement of the musculature of one or more actual models.<sup>14</sup>

Within the general historical development of European painting and sculpture, the neoclassical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - a reaction against the baroque tradition with its

emphasis on heavily draped costume - marked a return to the classical nudity of Greek and Roman statuary. In an age when the social norms of Victorian prudery even went so far as to require that piano legs be kept covered, the world of art provided a form of release by establishing a socially acceptable context for the sight of the human body without garb, affirming that in an artistic portrayal the nude body could be viewed as an object of aesthetic rather than erotic interest.<sup>15</sup> Particularly in the case of sculpture where the tactile sense is more dominant than in painting, the depiction of unclad bodies prepared the way for the presentation of actual human bodies where the tactile sense is stronger still. Indeed, the notion that the presentation of a muscular body so strongly appeals to the tactile sense that the mind reproduces the sensation of touching, even though the object of appreciation is not directly touched, may help to explain both the appeal of bodybuilding and the taboos which frequently surround it.<sup>16</sup>

The invention of the camera added a new dimension to the evolution of bodybuilding as an art form. What the faithful eye of the camera depicted was real people, as they actually were. Yet in seeking subjects for the new medium, photographers often remained heavily influenced by traditional painting and sculpture.<sup>17</sup> Photographers' models took over from artists' models, and just as 'Academy' paintings had depicted scenes from antiquity, so too photographers would often pose their models in gestures reminiscent of traditional art - and decked out with accoutrements such as spears, shields and gladiators' boots. The difference was that, if the advanced muscularity of the subject was to be depicted, it could no longer be 'invented' by exaggerating the musculature of actual models, but had to be presented to the camera lens

by the use of well developed models using poses which would show their muscles to advantage.

True, the purpose of early physique photography was not always entirely artistic, and a clandestine trade in erotic photographs did not take long to emerge. The dominant motive, however, was imitation of the traditional poses of Classical paintings and statues.

When Sandow inaugurated the public display of muscularity, therefore, he was not so much inventing a new art-form as performing publicly and in person the kinds of poses previously seen in painting and sculpture, which were becoming familiar through the medium of photography. The often minimal attire - at times only a fig-leaf - may well have been intended for titillation, but was entirely within the tradition of the art and photographic studios of the time. Similarly, the white dust with which he covered his body was meant to stress the resemblance to classical marble statuary.

The unbroken tradition that links early physique photography to the conventions of the artist's studio can be observed in the fact that when invited to model for a painting by the artist E. Aubrey Hunt, Sandow was typically portrayed standing in a gladiatorial arena clad in leopard skin and Roman sandals. The same 'props' can be seen in a number of the photographic studies of him which, fortunately, have been bequeathed to later generations. Although Sandow did not actually pose for sculptors, a plaster mould of his (nude) body was made in 1901 for the British Museum and the resulting 'body cast' clearly reveals the influence of the heroic sculptural tradition.<sup>18</sup> As photography developed as an art-form in its own right, the traditional studio features - shields, leopard skins and the like - gradually disappeared and photographers

became more interested in capturing the potentialities of the body in its own terms; but the traditions of the near-nude posing of the studios held on for some time and can still be observed in photographs of Sandow's early successors. Only in later years, when bodybuilding became more widely practised as a competitive sport, did the use of bathing (and, later, posing) costumes become widespread and even mandatory. Whilst this development aimed at minimising any erotic overtones inherent in the earlier near-nude posing, "it also had the effect of obliterating further its original associations with the sculptor's or painter's studio.

### **The Platform**

The second influence behind Sandow was that of the public platform. Here, it was not so much the stage of so-called 'legitimate' theatre, as that of the circus, the fairground and other varieties of popular theatre that provided the context.<sup>20</sup>

Again, the tradition was ancient. From the Greek and Roman festivals through to the medieval pageants and seventeenth and eighteenth century fairs to the vaudeville theatre of the nineteenth Century, the custom of popular theatre had always included tumblers and acrobats and at times - when one could be found - a strongman and occasionally even a strongwoman. Feats of strength performed in public go back to the pastime of stone-lifting in ancient Greece,<sup>21</sup> and had always held a fascination for less well-endowed members of the public.

The context of Sandow's public physique display, then, was well established. When Zeigfeld discovered him and took him on tour throughout the world, it was not necessary to devise a new performance

medium, for it already existed in the variety theatres which had become accustomed to seeing acts billed as the 'world's strongest' (or tallest, or most flexible) man or woman. From there to presenting the 'world's most perfectly developed' man was a small step.

The innovation, in this case, lay in the shifting of the audience's attention from the strength of the physique to the look of the physique. By the use of poses, audience interest could be maintained for the duration of a stage act, and the scene was set for the development of physique display as a mode of public entertainment in its own right.

In short, the Platform tradition differed from the Studio tradition in that the display of the body was in this case directly to the public - to a live audience - and not via the indirect medium of the painter's brush, the sculptor's chisel or the photographer's lens. The extent of Sandow's revolution in bringing together the two traditions can hardly be overestimated.

### **The Gym**

The third and final influence on Sandow was the most recent of all, dating from about the middle of the nineteenth Century. This was the new interest in physical exercise which arose as a reaction against the more sedentary lifestyle that had followed the development of large cities and the other effects of the Industrial Revolution, as an even smaller proportion of the population found itself involved in hard physical labour in order to earn a living.<sup>22</sup>

With the advances that were being made in the understanding of human physiology, the beneficial effects of exercise were beginning to be better understood. The nineteenth Century being an age of invention,

with new patented wonders being promoted in an astonishing array it was not surprising that fertile minds turned to the development of new aids to physical well-being, and simple devices like Indian clubs and dumbbells were soon joined by more elaborate exercise devices.

Although the primary purpose of the new science of physical culture, as it was called, was to increase general health and physical strength, it was also obvious to dedicated practitioners that more visible effects - improved muscle-tone and even muscular development - were to be seen in the enhanced attractiveness of the body's appearance.

Whilst it was true that many of the renowned strongmen of the age added to their robust physical stature a degree of body fat which made them look stocky and rotund,<sup>23</sup> the greater aerobic involvement required in physical culture led to an identification of muscular development and general health with a more lithe appearance and an avoidance of obesity. People were beginning to realise that there were techniques available which would enable them to gain (or re-gain) the athletic appearance of the heroes of ancient statuary and Classical sculpture. In short, they could become the sculptors of their own bodies.

This realisation gave many members of the general public a new interest in the observation of well developed physiques: the latter were no longer the exclusive property of the Young farm-labourers or athletes who had posed for painters and sculptors, but were an ideal to which even the desk-bound worker could aspire. To be able to visit the theatre and see a superbly muscled human being demonstrate his physical achievement was no longer akin to being a spectator at a sideshow, but instead was comparable to a budding violinist watching a recital by a great virtuoso. The spectators need no longer be merely 'outside

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observers. They had the added interest and incentive of being potential or actual participants (if at a less advanced level) in the activity they observed. There were now role models who could be emulated, and systematic weight-training was seen to show the way. It was not long, in fact, before Sandow himself would turn to the promotion of fitness and muscle-building equipment.

If modern bodybuilding arose from the fusion of the three traditions identified above - rather than emerging, as is sometimes supposed, as a totally novel and unprecedented phenomenon - its subsequent development Continued to owe much to its antecedents.

Firstly, let us consider the Studio tradition, for it is this that lies behind the codification of poses in subsequent years. As the sport of bodybuilding emerged, and comparison between its practitioners became inevitable, a number of set poses were systematised to become the norm by which different bodybuilders could be compared. These stationary poses (later to be classified by organisations such as the IFBB as 'compulsory poses') can trace their lineage directly to the attitudes struck by Sandow and his immediate successors. Not only do the stationary poses derive ultimately from the art studio of Sandow's predecessors, but their codification - and the consequent use of them as a basis of comparison of athletes - was the essential ingredient for the later emergence of bodybuilding as a recognised sport, in which competitors would be assessed according to strict criteria of proportion, symmetry and muscularity by a panel of judges.

The second tradition, that of the Theatre platform, continues in both the free posing rounds of competition and in the art of demonstration posing. That this tradition is in principle separate from

the first is reflected in the distinction usually made between 'prejudging' rounds of competition - at which the audience is often sparse - and the final free posing and posedown rounds, traditionally regarded as much more of a spectator sport, being performed before an audience and to an audience. The element of interaction between performer and audience in the free posing round is in direct descendance from the Theatre platform tradition.

Finally, the legacy of the Gym tradition can be measured by the fact that the growth of bodybuilding as a spectator sport has been closely paralleled by the increase in public participation in its various aspects. Emulation of the champions is partly reflected in the increased number of gyms, the proliferation of magazines devoted as much to the training of amateurs as to the exploits of professionals, and the number of 'side-industries' that have arisen and are aimed at the bodybuilding public. These range from the manufacture of training equipment and dietary supplements<sup>24</sup> to workout gear. Probably more than in most sports, the audience at bodybuilding fixtures is made up of people who are not just spectators but are themselves players - even if at a less advanced level. It could even be argued that the relative absence of outsiders (or non-practitioners) at bodybuilding competitions - as compared with, say, football or baseball matches - has worked to the disadvantage of the sport and inhibited its general acceptance in the community.<sup>25</sup>

The place of bodybuilding as a coherent and recognisable sporting activity is certainly assured. If its origins lie, as we have argued, in the convergence at a particular moment in time of three disparate traditions which still continue today as recognisably separate aspects of the sport, the achievement of Eugen Sandow in first bringing them together can be

seen as both the crucial factor in defining the phenomenon and in marking its historical point of origin.

## NOTES

1. The question whether bodybuilding can in fact be classified as a sport is considered by some to be debatable. The authors have argued elsewhere that it meets all the observable and definable criteria attaching to the use of the term 'sport'. See R S. Laura and K. R. Dutton, 'Is Bodybuilding a Sport?' Muscle and Fitness, 48, 10 (1987) 140-42.
2. Such publications are generally of a popular nature. They include the numerous bodybuilding magazines, of which the most widely-read is Muscle and Fitness published by the Weider organisation (monthly readership: over 5.2 million worldwide). The most complete historical treatments of the sport are to be found in Chapter 1 of the Encyclopaedia of Modern Bodybuilding by [Arnold Schwarzenegger and] Bill Dobbins (London: Pelham Books, 1985) and in the entries on significant bodybuilders in The IFBB Album of Bodybuilding All-Stars by Joe Weider (New York: Elsevier-Dutton, 1979).
3. The authors are engaged in preliminary work towards a complete history, to appear in the centenary year of the sport (1992).
4. The term is not mentioned in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary (though it includes 'body-line bowling') or in Webster (even the Encyclopedic Edition). The 1972 Supplement to the multi-volume Oxford English Dictionary gives the definition 'the feeding and strengthening of the human frame by diet and exercise'.
5. The leading international association is the International Federation of Bodybuilders (IFBB), founded in 1947 and now the seventh largest amateur sports federation in the world. Other associations include the World Amateur Bodybuilding Association (WABBA), the National Amateur Bodybuilding Association (NABBA), and the World Physique Federation (WPF). The main Australian organisations are the National Physique Committee (NPC), affiliated with the IFBB, the United Bodybuilding Association (UBBA), affiliated with NABBA and the Combined Regional Bodybuilding Association (CRBA), affiliated with the WPF.
6. The Macquarie Dictionary defines bodybuilding in this broader sense.
7. Cf. Oscar State: 'Other weight trainers use weights in a moderate program to obtain general physical fitness. There are also large numbers who train with weights to develop their physique in order to enter body-building contests.' Encyclopaedia Britannica, art. 'Gymnastic and Weightlifting Sports'.
8. As early as 1903 the publisher-businessman Bernard McFadden began to present a series of contests at Madison Square Garden to select the 'Most Perfectly Developed Man in America': the first prize was \$1,000. Not until the 1920s, however, were organised contests introduced outside the U.S.A., and it was not until the 1940s that the rules applying to contests were codified and standardised.
9. Born Friedrich Mueller in Konigsburg, East Prussia, he changed his name to Eugen

- Sandow when he went to England in the 1880s. His posing act, first seen by Ziegfeld at the Casino Theatre on Broadway, was sometimes directed at 'ladies only' audiences for whom he would pose decked only in a silk G-string. On his return to England after a world tour, he set up four gymnasia and opened a lucrative mail-order business selling physical training apparatus, books and magazines. Such was his fame that he was appointed by King George V as 'Professor of Scientific Physical Culture to His Majesty'. A good deal of mystique surrounds his career, and a definitive biography is yet to be written. See J. Weider, op.cit., p.6; B. Dobbins, op.cit., pp. 31-32; and the account by Sigmund Klein in Charles Gaines, Pumoiné Iraq (London: Sphere Books, 1977) p.119.
10. Amongst Sandow's leading successors were George Hackenschmidt (1877-1968) who became the leading wrestler of his age and broke a number of weightlifting records (though not a competitive bodybuilder, his physique was widely photographed, painted and sculpted); and Sigmund Kjein (b. 1902) who won the French Beauti Plastique contest for the world's best-built athlete in 1925 and was one of the first early bodybuilders to stress body shape more than strength (J. Weider, & pp.8, 10).
  11. Scopophilia (or voyeurism) usually has sexual overtones, and is considered an abnormal form of an otherwise common human characteristic. Longman Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry, (New York/London: Longman, 1984) art. "Scopophilia".
  12. The most authoritative treatment of this subject is Kenneth Clark, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1956).
  13. Although Clark recognises Michelangelo's debt to the 'Torso Belvedere' in his Medici Chapel sculpture of 'Night', where the muscular development is a great deal more extreme, he curiously does not recognise the same antecedent in 'The Athlete', despite the fact that the latter's proportions are closer to those of the 'Torso'. Clark makes the astute observation that 'Michelangelo's athletes exist purely as vehicles of expression. In life they would be squat and disproportionate' (p.200) - the criticism that is frequently levelled, for the same reason, at professional bodybuilders when seen away from the context of the posing platform. ibid., pp. 199-200,241.
  14. Cf. the Italian Leon Battista Alberti in his 15th century treatise on sculpture: We have set down the principal measurements of a man. We did not, however, choose this or that single body, but... have tried to note and set down in writing the highest beauty scattered, as if in calculated portions, among many bodies.' Quoted by John R. Hale, Renaissance, (Holland: Time-Life Books, 1996), p.102.
  15. K. Clark, op.cit., Ch. I: "The Naked and the Nude"; Margaret Walters, The Nude Male: A New Perspective (New York/London: Paddington Press, 1978) p.229.
  16. One important form of taboo derives from the desire to repress fears of latent homosexuality attached to the viewing by men of other men's bodies, especially when the latter are presented as objects of aesthetic appreciation. See M. Walters, op.cit., pp.293-2% for a critique of bodybuilding on account of its supposedly homoerotic overtones. The enormous popularity - amongst audiences of both sexes - of women's bodybuilding in the 1980s suggests that such overtones, even if present, should not be overestimated.

17. K. Clark, *op.cit.*, p.4.
18. D. Chapman, 'Sandow's Greatest Challenge', in Muscle and Fitness 45,5, (1984), 136ff.
19. How far bodybuilding has evolved may be gauged from the fact that the IFBB now provides for the suspension from membership of any bodybuilders who allow themselves to be photographed nude or showing any genitalia, IFBB Guidebook for Judges, Competitors and Organisers, p.37).
20. Encyclopaedia Britannica entry 'Popular Theatre' for its role in placing before the public acts of prowess which pushed physical skills to their limit.
21. Encyclopaedia Britannica art. 'Gymnastic and Weightlifting Sports' for a historical treatment.
22. The first modern gymnastic or calisthenic societies were founded in Europe in the mid-19th Century, and the interest in physical culture was taken to the U.S.A. by European immigrants in the 1880s. It is perhaps significant that the first strongman-bodybuilders were of German origin, though they made their reputations in the U.S.A. as the wave of interest in physical development spread widely in that country towards the turn of the century.
23. The two most renowned strongmen (apart from Sandow) in the late 19th Century - the Canadian Louis Cyr and the German Louis Attila (Sandow's teacher) - both had massive, stocky frames and a large girth.
24. Mention should also be made, of course, of the clandestine trade in anabolic steroids which has regrettably been widespread in this sport as in some others (and more than in most). Official disapproval and testing procedures have not been successful in eradicating steroid use, especially at the professional level. The emergence in recent years of drug-free bodybuilding associations - some of them publishing their own magazines - has been a welcome sign, but the undoubted effectiveness of steroids and other substances (e.g. HGH) in increasing muscle size often prevails over the health risks and has at times tended to bring the sport into a certain amount of disrepute.
25. The best-known attempt by an 'insider' to analyse the mystique of the bodybuilding 'culture' and explain it to 'outsiders' is Charles Gaines' best-selling book Pumping Iron (see Note 9, above).