



Arel -Sells Sports Revolution

Biomechanics in Sports

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The article discusses the work of Gideon Ariel, an engineer who applies principles of engineering to human motion in sports. Ariel has worked with several professional sports teams, including the NBA SuperSonics, the Dallas Cowboys, and the Kansas City Royals, to improve player performance and prevent injuries. He uses computer studies to analyze player movements and design corrective measures, such as a machine to improve jumping ability and a piece of material to correct a basketball player's off-balance running. Ariel's innovative approach has been praised by sports professionals, such as Frank Furtado, the trainer of the SuperSonics, who believes Ariel's methods could revolutionize sports preparation, rehabilitation, and skill teaching.

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Below find a reprint of the 1 relevant pages of the article "Arel -Sells Sports Revolution" in "Detroit News":

Ariel Sells Sports Revolution

Continued from First Sports

the NBA SuperSonics, whose owner Sam Schulman had heard of Ariel through the work he did in designing a machine to improve jumping ability for Schulman's Universal Gym Equipment company.

"Gideon told us he didn't know anything about basketball," said Frank Furtado, the team's 46-year-old trainer, who has a teaching background. "He said he's an engineer, and the principles of engineering are basically those of human motion, and that these can be applied to humans by the computer."

ACCORDING TO FURTADO, who attended the meeting with the team's general manager, coach and player personnel chief, Ariel broke down some films of basketball players and showed the engineering factors in shooting jump shots and free throws. He tried to explain that the wrist flick (follow through) was really not that important to the mechanics of the shot and how to study the angle of release of the shot.

More important to Furtado was Ariel's work in the area of power training and injuries.

Ariel had told them of the suggestions he made to Elmore Smith, the 7-foot center, who was with the Los Angeles Lakers at the time. Smith's Achilles' tendon on his size-17 feet were short and tight, so he had difficulty getting his heel all the way to the floor when he ran. Consequently, Smith ran often on the balls of his feet and, was constantly off-balance.

A piece of material was slipped into Smith's shoes to compensate.

For this and other corrective work he has done through computer study, it is evident why one of the major shoe companies (Pony) retained Ariel to design one of its new products.

After hearing the 1½-hour presentation, Furtado was clearly impressed.

"Gideon Ariel has opened up new horizons in sports preparation and rehabilitation, and in the teaching of skills."

Furtado said he thought that athletes would buy Ariel's line, too, because they would change their way of doing things when they see it through engineering methods.

Furtado said he was going to recommend that the Sonics retain Ariel. Owner Schulman already felt that way.

"Sam Schulman told me, 'If our (his team's) free throw shooting could be increased 10 percent, we would win the championship,'" Ariel said.

THE SONICS aren't the only team with enough foresight to appreciate Ariel's talents (though when he was in Flint, a friend contacted the major professional Detroit teams, and couldn't generate any interest). Ariel has done work with the football Dallas Cowboys, the baseball Kansas City Royals as well as the Lakers, and infatuated the Chicago Bears' owner George Halas, who was an engineering student in college.

"Halas is crazy over this — he went berserk," Ariel recalled. He further impressed Halas by designing a machine for his hip that lessened the shock as the 82-year-old moves about.

With the Cowboys, Ariel helped improve offensive lineman Rayfield Wright's knee injury and analyzed the team kickers.

With the Royals, he worked with two big-league pitchers on their motions, explaining to them that the simple wrist exercises they had been doing for years would improve them "about two or three percent" while a program he introduced would help 1,000 percent.

Ariel has studied golfers ("The best ones aren't the ones who follow through but the ones who slow down just before making contact with the ball") and tennis (though he doesn't know how to play, he said he is setting up the most sophisticated tennis center ever with pro Vic Braden). He believes he has dispelled a hockey theory that players should shoot their slap shots almost a foot behind the puck.

He studied some of Seattle Slew's races and noticed that the horse's legs were running at different angles when he finally lost. He theorized that the horse was on some kind of drug.

As an idea man, Ariel's mind is like a fountain, spewing of innovations on the spur of the moment during conversation with associates.

Where will it all end? Furtado, for one, says sports bet appreciate Ariel now because "business will be him up so he won't have time for sports."