

# Sports academy not just fun and games

□ Facility designed to give youth safe place to learn about themselves

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**K**ids are not just playing games at the Fundamental Sports Academy.

The academy, created and founded in 1996 by Paul A. Fresques, is aimed at giving youth a safe place to learn more about themselves, helping them to develop fundamental sports skills and achieve educational and life goals.

Participating in a "Good Deeds" program, the youth are asked to perform a certain number of services to others. Any good deed they do, without being asked to, scores them from 1 to 5 points. With the points they are able to buy things such as sporting equipment and clothing. Also in the six-month program they are required to do nine hours of community service, concentrating on an area that they are interested in. Fresques gets in touch with a company or group that deals with the youth's career choice or interests and sets the student up there.

Another focus of the academy, located at the corner of Wall Avenue and 24th Street in Ogden, is to support the kids in their schooling, while helping them to raise their GPAs. In 1976 Fresques went to play football at Snow College without a scholarship. At 5'8 and no pants to practice with, he made the starting team and knew that he had obtained something he could really do. But because of some bad choices and lack of good grades, he had no support and ended up transferring to the University of Utah and then to Weber State University where he focused on academics and graduated. Because of that experience he knows that a high academic performance is as important as succeeding in sports, so the kids chart their grades every quarter so they can see their progress.

Parents' support is an important aspect of the program. For instance, if the child is on track at the academy, but hasn't fulfilled his/her requirements at school or at home then the parents will help decide the academy grade.

This also helps promote clearer communication between parent and child, Fresques said.

One part of the Fundamental Sports Academy mission statement says, "to set realistic goals and keep them." The kids learn to set goals in all areas of their lives, not just in sports.

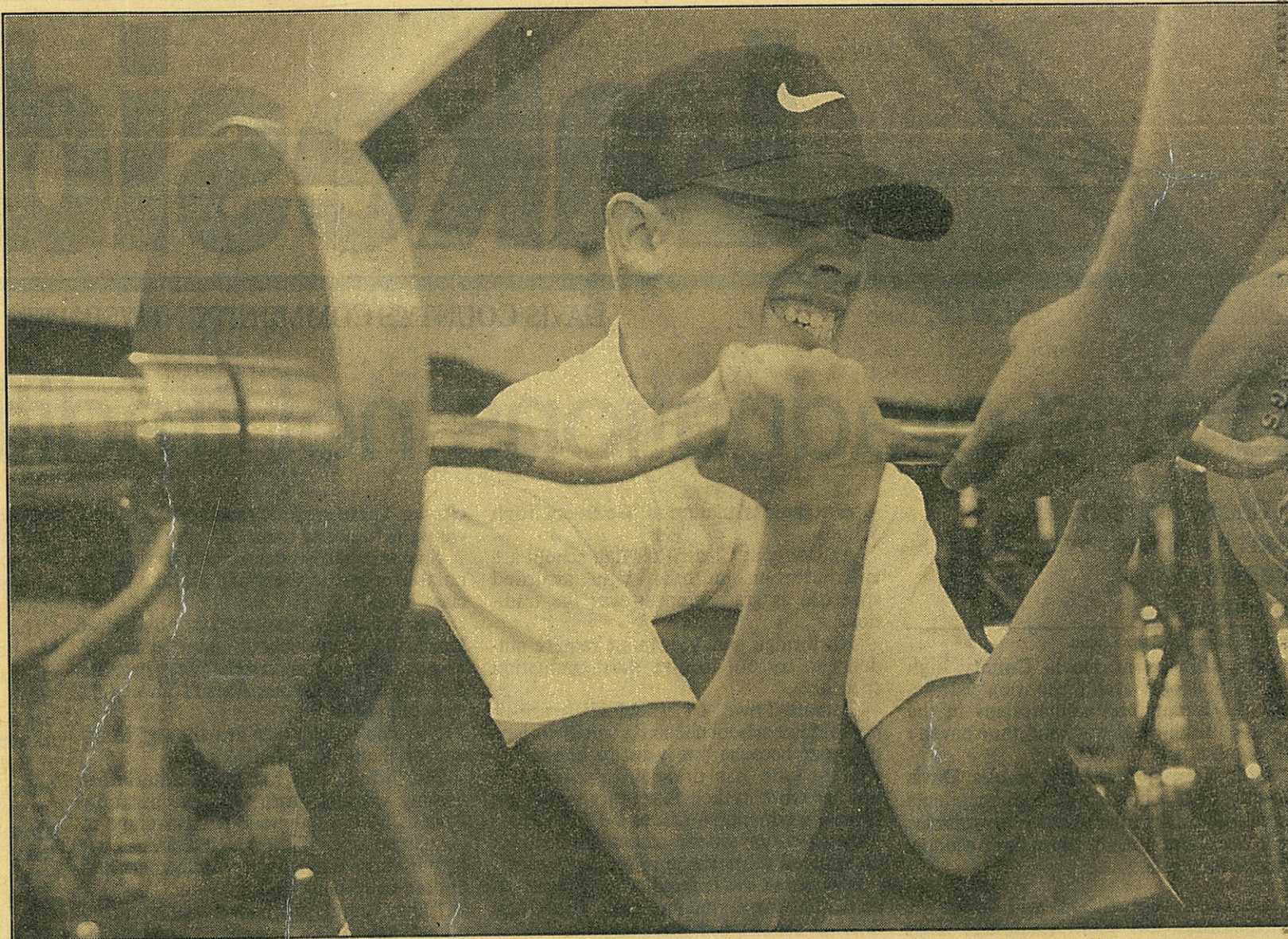
Joey Arthur, 14, has been in the program since January. He raised his GPA by one whole point the third quarter of school. Going from 80 pounds to 135 pounds, he said that he likes the way his body looks since he has been working out. He has a goal to make the football team at Northridge High School and feels like he has a better chance now. He has a goal to graduate from high school.

"Being in the program makes me feel good about myself," Joey said. He is going to stay in it as long as he can with nothing stopping him right now.

Nick Rodarte is a junior at Northridge High. He used to be lazy and slack off on his homework and other things, but since being at the academy he has learned to use his time better, he has developed a better attitude and he feels a lot better about himself. Setting some goals for his future, Nick wants a career in sports, but if he can't have that he wants to be a mechanical engineer.

A big part of the academy has to do with sports. Everything is tracked on computers, with different sporting skills being measured based on the individual. There are two mandatory requirements with the physical body. One is weight conditioning, where they are assisted and coached by Claude Nelson in technique and testing of their strength. Because students range in age from 6 to 18, there are different programs and requirements for each age group.

The other required sports area is in the strength shoe. It is a pair of shoes that helps the students learn correct technique in running, hitting, throwing and other



skills. The shoes are weighted beyond the toe area, helping keep the feet in the proper position at all times.

For two hours in the evening, two days a week, the students have a chance to unwind and talk about things that are important to them, and important in general. They watch motivational tapes, do stretching and weight training and work on sports skills. All of the programs and requirements lead to a Fundamental Sports Academy graduate and possibly a Hall of Fame member. Graduation for the current session is June 30, with coaches and academy sponsors as the speakers.

Fresques said that the academy would like to help with the rehabilitation of the American youth. He would like to have judges and the legal system look at the programs offered as an alternative to locking kids up. Thinking that the sports academy can be helpful with borderline

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**DRILLING:** Paul Fresques, of Layton, founder of Fundamental Sports Academy in Ogden, closely watches his students as they practice footwork techniques.

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youth, giving them a chance to focus on a more positive attitude and future, he is hoping that some will be able to enter the program through the court system which will give them a choice to make a positive change in their lives. While the expectations at the academy are very clear, the level of graduation can be determined by the court system, as well as earning community service hours. Fresques said that the academy has a wide variety of programs designed to work with city, state and federal government agencies.

The cost to enroll is \$20 for each student. Fresques said that while there is a dollar value, it has nothing to do with what the academy is doing. He said, "as a society we need to raise the bar a little higher and take a pro-active approach." Hoping to be able to talk and make presentations to youth in elementary and junior high schools, he wants to give kids self-esteem and the confidence and skills to go into city sports.

As far as he knows there are no other programs in the country like this, right now. Fundamental Sports Academy is licensed and copyrighted and offered as a franchise, although he says he doesn't want to sell it, he just wants to present it. He said that the structure and programs the academy offers will not only compliment city sports but every community as a whole.

For more information contact Paul A. Fresques at 801-444-3618 or check out the web site at [www.dailiesutah.com/fsa/](http://www.dailiesutah.com/fsa/).