



# New PERSPECTIVES

A Quarterly Bulletin about Rolwing and Somatic Awareness

Winter 1990

Welcome to the fifth issue of *New Perspectives*. In this issue we focus on how Rolwing impacts athletic performance. The interview with pitcher Craig Swan is reprinted with permission from an article entitled "The Second Time Around," from the February, 1989 issue of *Sports Illustrated*. The interview with Brazilian National Volleyball coach, Jose Augusto Menegatti is reprinted from the Summer 1989 issue of *Rolf Lines*, a news magazine for Rolfers.

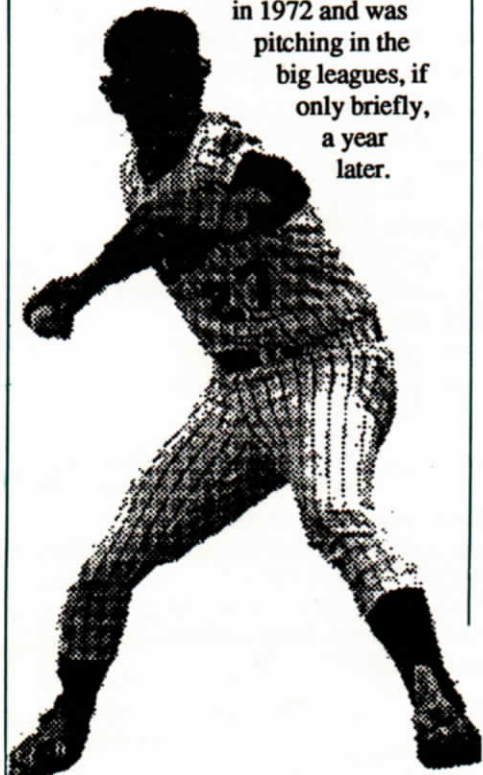
What makes Swan and Menegatti stand out in the world of athletics is their commitment to sport as a means of personal development—overcoming limitations, the development of character and the awakening of a global world view. I know you will enjoy the interviews with these outstanding athletes. D. L.

## The Second Time Around

by Ron Fimrite

Craig Swan's 12-year major league pitching career, all but two games of it with the New York Mets, was more significant for what it might have been than for what it was. After setting school records at Arizona State for wins (47) and strikeouts (459), he was drafted by New York

in 1972 and was pitching in the big leagues, if only briefly, a year later.



But from the beginning, his brilliant prospects were dimmed by a bewildering succession of physical problems. In 1973, he had an appendectomy that was followed by peritonitis. In '74, he suffered a stress fracture of his pitching elbow. In '78, he

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had a stomach disorder the Mets called gastroenteritis, but which Swan now says was a duodenal ulcer. In 1980 and '81, he was plagued by a tear in his rotator cuff, as well as, in '81, by a fractured rib. And in 1982, he was treated for a boil under his right armpit that eventually resulted in torn tissue there. This last injury ended his career in 1985. He had won only 59 games, but his medical history had opened his eyes to unforeseen possibilities. The year he quit playing he enrolled in the Rolf Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

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## An interview with Jose Augusto Menegatti, Coach Brazilian National Volleyball Team

Frank Hanenkrat, Ph.D.

Jose Augusto Menegatti coaches the Brazilian national men's volleyball team, currently ranked among the top four or five teams in the world (along with the national teams from the U.S., Russia, Czechoslovakia, and Germany). Jose was one of six Brazilians auditing the basic training taught by Gael Ohlgren nee Switzer and Michael Wm. Murphy, during June–August 1989 in Boulder. Nilce Broadway of Sao Paulo, an assistant in the class, served as translator for this interview.

**Q:** Jose, you coach an elite team of 16 or 17 world-class athletes. How many members of your team have been Rolfed, and how did they come to be Rolfed?

**A:** Six players were Rolfed at my suggestion.

**Q:** Can you comment on specific ways that Rolwing improved the physical performance of these players?

**A:** The player spends all of his life developing parts of himself—stronger arms, better legs, etc.—and Rolwing brings to him a global perception, or awareness of the integrated body. This awareness permits athletes to use their strength in a more balanced way, with greater freedom of movement and greater efficiency.

Rolwing also enables an athlete to breathe better. Good breathing reduces fatigue and allows for a shorter recovery time. Another factor is that breathing patterns change according to the level of

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**Second Time***from page 1*

Rolfing, as defined in the Rolf Institute literature, "is a technique for reordering the body to bring its major segments—head, shoulders, thorax, pelvis, legs—toward a vertical alignment. Generally speaking, the Rolfing technique lengthens the body, approaching an ideal in which the left and right sides of the body are more nearly balanced."

All this is achieved by manipulation of the connective tissue—or fascia—between the muscles, as well as by educating the Rolfee to the importance of carrying himself properly. It is a system developed by the late Dr. Ida P. Rolf, who had been an organic chemist at the Rockefeller Institute. There are only 641 Rolfers practicing throughout the world. Craig Swan of Greenwich, Conn., is one of them.

His office is on the top floor of a modest, white three-story building in downtown Greenwich. Swan's clients vary in age from 10 to 80. Most come to him because they are suffering, as he once did, from specific pain. In the end, says Swan, the suffering will be alleviated because the subject will be healthier, more energetic and walking taller. "We can't take a person's arthritis



away, but we can stop it from getting worse," he says. Swan was first Rolfed when he tore his rotator cuff. The treatment, he claims, allowed him to pitch for another two years, and he became so fascinated with the procedure that he decided to make it his career.

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At 38, he looks young and fit enough to go nine, even leaner than when he was cranking it up for the Mets. He is dressed this day in khaki pants and an orange polo shirt. He will go through several of these shirts in a working day, because Rolfing can be as strenuous as pitching. Each session of manipulating muscle-connecting tissue lasts from an hour to 90 minutes.

"One of our jobs is to make people take responsibility for their own body structure," he says. "I will tune you up, but you are responsible. People become more aware of their bodies after they've been Rolfed. It's an advantage to have this knowledge, because you know how to relax your muscles. It may involve nothing more complicated than changing the way you hold the steering wheel or the way you sit in a chair, but you can make yourself feel better. There's no doubt in my mind now that my injuries could've been avoided if I'd been more aware of my body. I'm not quite ready yet to take Rolfing into sports, but I can envision a time when every team in all sports will have a Rolfer."

Swan sits down on his own Rolfing table. "To be able to help people this way is something I've always wanted in life," he says, smiling brightly. "It's just fortunate I found Rolfing. I didn't even have time to dwell on the fact, as some do, that, God, I'm no longer a baseball player. I guess I started thinking about the end the first time I hurt my arm. I don't have to wonder anymore what I'm going to do. I've really found my niche in life." □

**Menegatti***from page 1*

tension felt by the athletes. Rolfed players are more aware of their breathing and therefore are better able to relax and control their level of stress.

**Q:** Do the Rolfed players differ from the others in ways that might be termed psychological, emotional, or behavioral?

**A:** As I said, Rolfed players are better able to deal with stress through proper breathing. But there are other dimensions to this. Having observed Rolfed players in a number of difficult games, I am convinced that they handle stress better not simply because of better breathing, but also because they are more balanced in the global, or total aspects of their being.

**Q:** You intend to complete Rolfing certification in the October class taught in Sao Paulo by Stacey Mills. Do you hope to see the majority of your players receive Rolfing, and do you hope to do much of the work yourself?

**A:** I would like to see everyone in the world Rolfed; however, that isn't possible. A person should be prepared, should be ready to receive Rolfing.

People come to Rolfing; Rolfing does not go to people. Some of the players will probably be Rolfed by others, depending on how the player would prefer to receive the work. Some may prefer not to be Rolfed by anyone. The individual players should have a choice in this matter.

**Q:** How do you think your personally Rolfing some of the players will affect the coach/player relationship?

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## New PERSPECTIVES

*New Perspectives* is a quarterly bulletin about Rolfing and Somatic Awareness. It is published by David Laden, Advanced Certified Rolfer, 301 S. Bedford Street, Suite 5, Madison, WI 53703, 608-257-7212.

Editor ..... David Laden

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A: After being Rolfed myself, I can better understand the concept of the global, or truly integrated, person. The integrated person is less individualistic, less self-centered, and therefore more open and receptive to other ways of being, both in himself and in others. This makes it possible to have more harmony in relationships, whether professional or general. It makes us feel responsible for all life in the universe, and we are no longer individuals trying to get the best for ourselves and not caring for other people. We see our place in the totality of things.

The coach-player relationship is not an impersonal one between technician and player, but is person to person; it is directed toward achieving the best results for everyone in a consensual agreement. My relationship with the Rolfed players is more open, me to them and them to me. I can see more mutuality and openness in the relationship I have with Rolfed players, and this makes for a more integrated and better performing team.

Q: What about Rolfed Movement training? Are there any benefits you see it could bring to athletes, and do you have any plans to provide this kind of training to your team?

*Rolfing permits athletes to use their strength in a more balanced way, with greater freedom of movement and greater efficiency.*

A: Athletes should understand that there needs to be a balance between the extrinsics and intrinsics, and this is difficult if it is not understood experientially, by living it. An evolved person learns to be responsible for this process, to be always aware of the changes that Rolfed brings and to be ready to integrate these changes into his total being. It's constant work with the

global self. Rolfed Movement makes this process more aware and therefore easier. Body awareness training has already been used by our team, and now I intend to enrich this training with Rolfed Movement training.

Q: In world-class competition, the differences in physical ability among the top athletes is often negligible, and even the slightest training benefit can often give a player or a team the competitive edge needed to win. How much of a competitive advantage do you think Rolfed can provide to volleyball players in particular?

*Rolfed players are more aware of their breathing and therefore are better able to relax and to control their level of stress.*

A: I would mention again that Rolfed players have more freedom of movement and more economy of movement, but the main thing is that Rolfed opens spaces in the body so players can move in an integrated fashion. And I mean here not just integrated in the physical sense, but in a global sense, the whole person. And this higher level of integration in each member of the group creates a situation where the respect among themselves is greater. They have a perception that the group's cooperative benefit is most important, and so no one tries to stand out as a star, which might cost the team points. I like very much a phrase I heard here in this class, as we were talking about the fifth session opening of the visceral compartment: that Rolfed makes space in the sky for the stars to shine. I cannot say by what percent Rolfed would improve a player's performance, but in each game, which is a new and different situation, the Rolfed players adjust more readily to the stresses and therefore have a real advantage.

Q: As you know, a number of Olympic and world-championship athletes in sports as diverse as diving, skating, gymnastics, and cycling have been Rolfed and often bring their Rolfers with them to major competitions. How valuable do you think Rolfed is to athletes in general, and what are the benefits that could be gained by the average recreational athlete, such as a jogger or tennis player?

A: The human being is never immobile. Immobility is death. Harmony in movement is what imparts beauty and grace to any living thing. Rolfed promotes harmony with gravity, brings pleasure to movement, brings a perfection to the whole being, and this integration is what makes movement pleasurable.

I think everyone is looking for this, and in this respect I see no difference between professional athletes and recreational players: both are seeking pleasure in movement. Rolfed, by bringing this integration to the body, brings this pleasure to anyone. The goals of the professional athlete are different from the goals to the recreational player, but the pleasure of movement is the same for both.

Q: Do you view athletics as an art form as well as a competition?

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A: Yes.

Q: Do you recommend any special approaches to Rolfing for athletes who seek Rolfing to improve this performance?

A: We as Rolfers should be conscious of the power of this process and evaluate with honesty and sensitivity whether a person is ready to be Rolfed. Rolfing brings changes and allows changes to go faster. It stimulates evolution. Not everybody is ready for that.

Q: In some ways, your coaching position is privileged because it gives you ready access to an elite group of athletes from many nations. Because of the publicity such athletes often receive, you are in a position to generate favorable publicity for Rolfing and for Rolfers. After you become a practicing Rolfer, do you plan to extend your work with athletes beyond the Brazilian national volleyball team?

A: I repeat that I would like to see everyone Rolfed, but that is not possible now. My privileged position will enable me to bring Rolfing for the people I am near, and I will be able to present the concepts of Rolfing that lead to better athletic performance. I think it is difficult for a person who has not experienced Rolfing to

understand the process. The persons who are directly responsible for athletics in my country do not know Rolfing through their own experience. I'll have difficulties, as has anyone who introduces something novel in the world. But to me, Rolfing is the way that has heart. Certainly, the difficulties will be overcome, and I'll be able to help more and more people to accelerate their evolutionary processes.

Q: Would you like to add any final remark?

A: I would like to acknowledge my happiness at having encountered Rolfing and the Rolfers who brought me to this higher level of awareness. And especially I am grateful to Ida for having developed this beautiful system.

## Resources

### Books for Knowledge and Inspiration

1989 saw the publication of two new and excellent books about Rolfing:

*The Power of Balance: A Rolfing View of Health* by Brian W. Fahey, Ph.D. published by Metamorphous Press; \$19.95.

*Expressive Movement: Posture and Action in Daily Life, Sports and the Performing Arts* by Alexandra Pierce, Ph.D. and Roger Pierce, Ph.D. published by Insight Books; \$19.95.

These beautiful, hardcover books are eloquent contributions to the blossoming field of body/mind interaction—how our daily lives and activities are enhanced by integrated body structure and movement. Both books are written by Rolfers and are intended for the layperson. They may be ordered through any bookstore.

## Free Public Lecture on Rolfing

**When?** Wednesday, January 31  
**Time?** 7:00–8:30 p.m.  
**Place?** 301 South Bedford Street, Suite 5

Please bring or send your friends who are curious about Rolfing and want to know how Rolfing can help them. It is an interesting and stimulating talk full of beautiful slides that illustrate the process. There is plenty of lively discussion, a demonstration is given and refreshments are served. Do your friends a favor and let them know of this opportunity to hear how Rolfing can enrich their lives.

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David Laden, Advanced Certified Rolfer  
 301 S. Bedford Street, Suite 5  
 Madison, WI 53703