



Coach Mom

Would your workout ethic improve if your mom was your coach?

BY DEAN MICHAEL ZADAK

"You look too skinny. Are you sure you're not sick?" Mom asks from her rocking chair while she sips her second glass of wine. The number of glasses she drinks is easy to calculate, simply count the number of drips on her shirt and then divide by three.

"I'm fine. I told you, I've been doing Cross-Fit," I say.

"Your whole family and friends do this?"

"We've been through this. Yes, a lot of them do it."

"Uh huh. It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt," she says, rocking back and forth with the perfect pace of a metronome.

And there it was. I came to Florida to visit my 86-year-old mother, and within minutes of me stepping foot in her house, she worked in one of her favorite sayings. That got me thinking: What if she was one of my coaches? How many of her "Mom-isms" would she work in? I think a day at "CrossFit Mom" might go something like this:

"My goodness, were you raised in a barn?"

Close the door, I'm not paying to air-condition the whole neighborhood," Coach Mom shouts as I walk into the box. "The warm-up is posted, so get started. And don't leave your shoes all over the place. You just bought them and they're not cheap. Money doesn't grow on trees, you know."

"At CrossFit Bob's, they let their members choose their own warm-up," I reply.

"Then why don't you go live with CrossFit Bob and see how you like it? As long as you work out under my roof, you'll WOD by my rules. Now take the vegetables out of your ears and let's go over what we're doing today."

Coach Mom explains that the strength is back squats and we're not to go for a PR. We're to concentrate on perfecting the movement. Next, she reviews the AMRAP of pull-ups, kettle bell swings, and wall balls.

"That is going to be brutal. I hate pull-ups," whispers one of the members.

Like all mothers, Coach Mom can hear everything, even what you're thinking. "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all," she says.

"I wish we could start with wall balls," another member whispers.

"Don't make me turn this WOD around. I mean it. You know, there are people in some countries who don't have CrossFit. What do you think about that? Now let's get started."

We all set up our bars and began lifting. Squats aren't my favorite movement. It usually takes me a few sets to warm up before I can break parallel. As you'd expect, Coach Mom has eyes in the back of her head.

"Don't make me come over there," she says and scolds me for not getting my butt lower to the ground. By the look on my face, she can see I'm upset. "Are you going to cry? Because if you want to cry, I'll give you something to cry about."

Meanwhile, a few of the more accomplished CrossFitters are pushing the weights to the point of bending the bar.

"Stop that this instant!" Coach Mom yells. "Just what do you two think you are doing?"

"We're going for a PR," one of them replies.

"I see. So you think the rules don't apply to you. Is that it? No PRs today."

"In the last class, Phil went for it and got a PR," the other says.

"And if Phil jumped off a cliff, would you follow him?"

"Why can't we try?" they ask insistently.

"Because I said so, that's why. And if you hurt yourself, I don't want you to come crying to me.

"And what are you looking for?" she asks, spotting me searching through the weights.

"I need another five-pound weight," I say.

"It's right there, next to the clips. I swear if it was a snake, it would have bit ya."

I found the weights and loaded up the bar. It was my last set. Coach Mom never took her eyes off me.

"Now be careful. Don't do anything stupid. I don't need you breaking your neck or poking your eyes out."

"How would I poke my eye out doing a squat?"

"Never mind. Now let's see what you've got."

For some reason, I couldn't get under the bar. I didn't know if it was the weight, or the glare of Coach Mom burning a hole in my back. I paced back and forth like I was guarding the bar rather than lifting it.

"I'm going to count to three and before I'm done, you better be under that bar."

I got myself nestled under the bar. Coach Mom walked around to face me. There was no turning back now. I stood up with the bar resting on my shoulder and took a few steps backward. Slowly, I lowered into my squat. The weight was too much. I could feel it. I was going lower, but had no idea how I was going to get back up. It was painful. From my head to my toes, my whole body clenched. Coach Mom could tell I was struggling and I thought I'd finally hear the words of encouragement that would power me through and have me standing proud. The words came:

"If you're not careful, your face is going to freeze like that."

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