Rationale
Existing literature describes models used to teach the clean (Hedrick, 2004); the power clean (Burgener et al., 1988 and Graham, 2000) and hang or stop variations of the clean and power clean (Duba et al., 2007; Duba et al., 2007; Ebel & Rizer, 2002; Graham, 2002 and Chi & Schilling, 2004). Existing clean models use 12 progressive steps to teach the clean, whereas clean variation models use between 3-6 stages in teaching the power clean or transition from hang clean to power clean. The proposed 6-stage model to teach the clean has been successful in teaching the exercise to athletes new to strength and conditioning as well as refining technique in athletes with 2+ years experience in strength and conditioning programmes.

Cleans may not be fully utilised within strength and conditioning programmes due to the athlete’s lack of mobility in the squat clean position. However, the squat clean is ideal for developing mobility and stability in the ankle, knee, hip and wrist joints and thus is a suitable exercise to improve overall athletic ability in athletes, particularly youths who may undergo a reduction in muscular flexibility and joint mobility post peak height velocity.

The 6-stage model presented can be used separately, as independent exercises, or combined and used as technical progressions to teach the squat clean. This model is considered unique in comparison to others as it teaches the squat clean in only 6 stages.

The Model
The 6-stage model that is presented (see Table 1) adopts a top down approach as previously utilised in other technical models (Walter et al., 2009).

Key Technical Points
Providing an athlete can maintain the correct posture and has no biomechanical issues at each phase of the model, there is no reason why each stage needs to be mastered before progressing to the next. However, key technical points should be mastered (see table 2). This allows an integrated approach to learning. Any postural or biomechanical issues that are highlighted during individual stages can be corrected while the focus continues to be on learning the technique of the remaining stages. Once technical proficiency has been mastered in the snatch, the model can be used as a warm up for any clean derivative.

Table 2: Key technical points to master before progressing to the next stage of the clean model

Additional Technical Exercises
Once the technical model has been taught over a number of sessions and the snatch has been mastered to a reasonable degree of technical proficiency, other exercises can be used to help correct further technical flaws that will likely be evident (see Table 3).

Table 3: Supplementary exercises to correct and further develop technique

Conclusion
The purpose of this article is to share a 6-stage model for teaching the (squat) clean. The model presented provides coaches with a simplified sequence for teaching the (squat) clean. This model has been used successfully with 11-18 year old athletes with diverse training backgrounds and lifting history.

The model should be progressed relatively quickly and time does not need to be spent perfecting each individual stage, providing the key technical points of each stage are mastered. Strength and conditioning professionals can successfully coach the (squat) clean from this model to enhance an athlete’s ability to develop explosive strength as well as using the different derivatives to progressively and functionally challenge an athlete’s motor ability as part of a warm up routine.

References