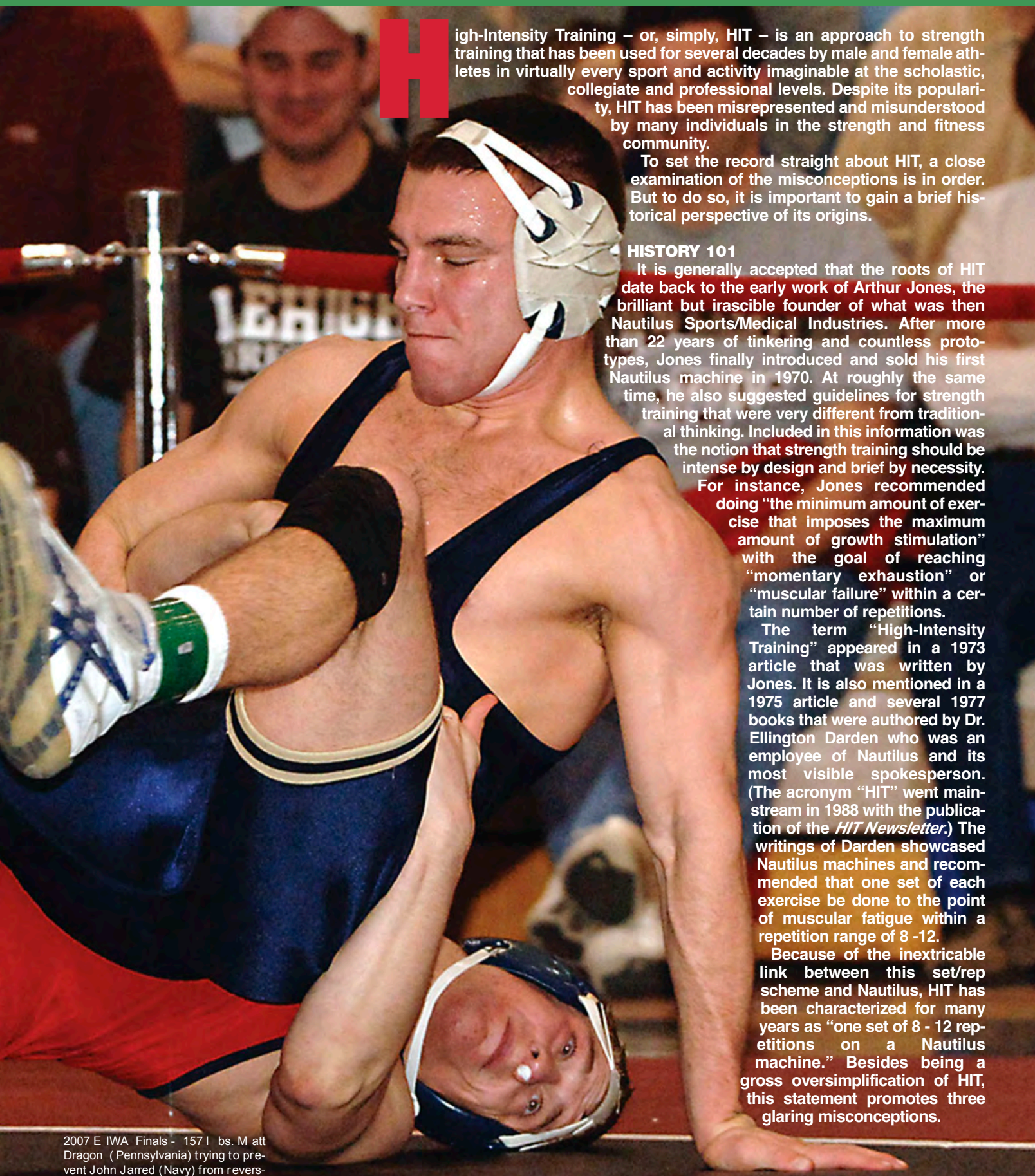

High-Intensity Training – or, simply, HIT – is an approach to strength training that has been used for several decades by male and female athletes in virtually every sport and activity imaginable at the scholastic, collegiate and professional levels. Despite its popularity, HIT has been misrepresented and misunderstood by many individuals in the strength and fitness community.

To set the record straight about HIT, a close examination of the misconceptions is in order. But to do so, it is important to gain a brief historical perspective of its origins.

HISTORY 101

It is generally accepted that the roots of HIT date back to the early work of Arthur Jones, the brilliant but irascible founder of what was then Nautilus Sports/Medical Industries. After more than 22 years of tinkering and countless prototypes, Jones finally introduced and sold his first Nautilus machine in 1970. At roughly the same time, he also suggested guidelines for strength training that were very different from traditional thinking. Included in this information was the notion that strength training should be intense by design and brief by necessity. For instance, Jones recommended doing "the minimum amount of exercise that imposes the maximum amount of growth stimulation" with the goal of reaching "momentary exhaustion" or "muscular failure" within a certain number of repetitions.

The term "High-Intensity Training" appeared in a 1973 article that was written by Jones. It is also mentioned in a 1975 article and several 1977 books that were authored by Dr. Ellington Darden who was an employee of Nautilus and its most visible spokesperson. (The acronym "HIT" went mainstream in 1988 with the publication of the *HIT Newsletter*.) The writings of Darden showcased Nautilus machines and recommended that one set of each exercise be done to the point of muscular fatigue within a repetition range of 8 -12.

Because of the inextricable link between this set/rep scheme and Nautilus, HIT has been characterized for many years as "one set of 8 - 12 repetitions on a Nautilus machine." Besides being a gross oversimplification of HIT, this statement promotes three glaring misconceptions.

2007 E IWA Finals - 157 l bs. M att Dragon (Pennsylvania) trying to prevent John J arred (Navy) from reversing hi m. D ragon dec isioned J arred; 10-3. Photo by Robert Preston.