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## Scarsdale grad Rolnick thrives as physical therapist

By DANIEL BENCH

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Scarsdale alum Nick Rolnick founded a practice called The Human Performance Mechanic and is a co-founder of the BFR Pros.

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Since graduating from Scarsdale High School in 2006, Dr. Nicholas Rolnick has come to appreciate the importance of physical therapy as a way to help people return to activities they love. Rolnick is the founder of a practice called The Human Performance Mechanic.

Rolnick was an all-star baseball player at Scarsdale, where he was the team's offensive MVP his senior year. He continued his academic and athletic career at Franklin & Marshall where he set a school record for doubles (15) and served as captain for his senior year. In both high school and college, he was a plus .300 hitter. Despite all these accomplishments, baseball was not always easy for Rolnick.

“Playing baseball in Scarsdale, I didn't have the easiest time breaking the varsity team in terms of being on the starting roster and that kind of translated to my experience on Franklin & Marshall,” Rolnick said. “I really only played one true season with Scarsdale because I rode the bench my junior year. That experience gave me a hunger to compete. I knew that I had the talent and that was put to the test when I arrived in college.”



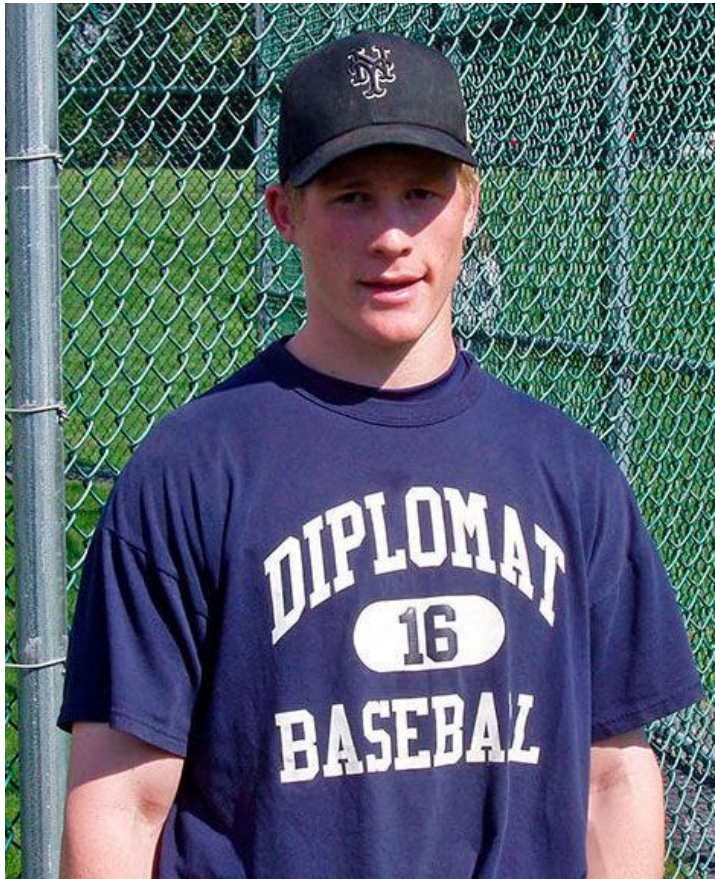
Rolnick was Scarsdale's offensive MVP his senior season.

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Rolnick tried to find any way to squeeze in playing time at both Scarsdale and Franklin & Marshall. In college, he started as a catcher. Then his coach gave him the chance to play in the outfield and he seized the opportunity without hesitation.



While Rolnick got the full college experience at Franklin & Marshall, he never really discovered what he wanted to pursue as a career until later in life. A biology major, he always had an interest in health and fitness. His mom pushed him to be an aide for a physical therapy clinic, based on an ad from Craigslist. Prior to this, Rolnick had no idea what physical therapy was as he was used to athletic trainers. After volunteering, he fell in love with it.



Rolnick played college baseball for Franklin & Marshall College.

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“When I went there, within the first four months I was like, ‘Oh, man, this is something that I really want to do,’” Rolnick said. “It was that same persistent attitude and not accepting that I’m not good enough that drove me to take classes at night to get my grades up. But even that wasn’t enough. I worked for about two years as an aide. I found that in addition to helping patients recover, the physical therapist is in a great position to usher in healthier behavior habits.”

Rolnick then went on to earn a master’s degree from American University in health promotion management. He managed a gym where he learned about health behavior and how psychology can affect health decisions. He started working with Division 1 strength coaches, in field hockey, volleyball and men’s

wrestling. This all shaped the foundational approach to his practice as a physical therapist.

Rolnick then applied to Columbia for his doctorate degree.

“At that point, I knew what I had wanted to do,” he said. “I finally had reached the start of my destination. Columbia gave me that opportunity and I graduated with honors. It is that persistence from my athletic perspective as well as the rigorous curriculum from Scarsdale

High School and the environment that set the stage for when I actually found my passion. That I was able to tolerate the actual workload of a doctorate program.”

When Rolnick was in physical therapy school, he spent a lot of time shadowing prominent practices and physical therapists. He enjoyed seeing patients spending time one on one with other physical therapists and this inspired him to start his own practice. In New York City, there was a lot of demand for one-on-one time and Rolnick is now there to supply it.

Rolnick has co-founded The BFR Pros, which specialize in blood flow restriction therapy.



Nick Rolnick  
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“The object is to get ‘the pump’ like Arnold [Schwarzenegger] did in the ’70s. He was onto something,” Rolnick said. “The pump is a byproduct of a very strenuous exercise. Typically it was thought you could only get that benefit from lifting moderate to heavy weights. Unfortunately, some people are not able to lift moderate to heavy weights so what are they left with? They are left with a suboptimal exercise stimulus. What blood flow restriction training does is it allows individuals who can’t or don’t want to lift heavy to get the same benefits of heavy strength training. As a physical therapist it’s awesome because I am always dealing with patients who are post surgery or are injured.”

Rolnick managed to create a successful practice out of a Craigslist ad and lots of hard work. He believes that a persistent attitude and a rigorous environment can bring success to anyone.