
MID-ATLANTIC RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

WOMEN'S ALL-STAR WEIGHT WORKOUT

Suggested Weight Workout from Joe Kelly:

Although designed primarily for pre/early season conditioning, I recommend it be followed during the mid and late season one day per week in addition to practices and a Sunday recovery run. The other off day can be variable according to the individual players assessment of their particular needs e.g., more speed work or aerobic work or possibly "light recovery" Work such as low intensity stationary bike work, etc., etc.

Naturally the day before a match should generally be a complete "off" day or at least VERY light perhaps with an emphasis on stretching should one feel the need. As the players respective club season draws to a close then players should do the recommended workout either 2 or 3 days per week. Some may want to alternate this workout with one of their own that they feel has been effective - that way one can add variety and reduce boredom. As for the weights, I recommend the following from now up until ITT's.

Power cleans

4 sets 4 reps light to moderate weight 1st set with 50% of one rep max; 2nd set with 55% or 1RM; 3rd set 60% of 1RM and last set at either 65% or 70% of 1RM.

Push Presses (Jerks) –

exact same set rep scheme.

Squats (lower until upper thighs are parallel with ground) –

Same set rep scheme as above using "Compensatory Acceleration" i.e., lower very slowly to the "bottom" position (approx. to a SLOW 4 count) and then "EXPLODE" as if you were trying to jump as high as possible but as you approach "lockout" (a full standing position) in approx. the last 1/4 of the movement, abruptly "put on the brakes" so that your feet don't really leave the floor in an attempt to actually jump!

Weighted "Step-ups" onto a stable bench / box / stair step or whatever-

Height should be anywhere from approx. 15 to 18 inches - generally, the higher height for exceptionally taller athletes as you would expect. They can be done with either a barbell on the back or with dumbbells in each hand. The weight used can be any where from about 50% of bodyweight to full bodyweight - some stronger/ more experienced lifters may want to use much more -some go as high as double bodyweight!!! For our purposes, as with the previous exercises, emphasis should be on a weight that you can really move explosively! The set/rep scheme should be 6 to 8 reps per leg preferably alternating them. You can alternate these with lunges for variety. I recommend "walking" lunges if space allows (usually done with dumbbells in hand). Weights can be in the 20 to 30% of bodyweight range e.g., for a 150lb athlete that would be anywhere from 30lb. to 45lb. dumbbell in each hand. If done in "walking" style ten to fifteen steps per leg is recommended for a total of three sets.

In addition to the barbell/dumbbell work above - I suggest

abdominal work each weight training day. Work all the "Core Muscles" preferably using resistance. Be sure and work the transverse ABS and obloquies doing some type of twisting motion. These particular core muscles are vital to athletic performance in that they act to transfer power from the legs and hips thru the torso and arms e.g., a boxer throwing a "Hook", a wrestler executing a "throw" and of course a rugby player who uses a "torquing" motion when ripping a ball, doing a "takedown" tackle, etc.

"Chins" and parallel bar dips.

As many female athletes aren't as proportionately strong in the upper body as most male athletes, it may be necessary for you to get and assisted "spot" from a training partner or use a chin/dip apparatus such as the "Graviton" or similar device found in many commercial gyms and college weight rooms. One way to get strong at chins quickly is to do "negatives" e.g., boost yourself to the top or completed chinning position and slowly lower your self to account of 6 to 8 sec. for just one set of 4 to 6 repetitions. "Negative" work is very intense and taxing and should be brief but with maximum effort and only one time per week. As you get stronger add weight using a chin/dip belt for your negative work.

NOTE: You may be tempted to use lat pull downs in place of chins and some other pressing movement in place of dips but chins and dips have more "real world" application and are excellent barometers in determining if you can appropriately handle your own bodyweight. Of course, smaller lighter athletes are generally more able to master and excel at these exercises but heavier athletes should be able master them if not excel at doing a high number of reps. I speculate that a relatively large female athlete in the 150 to 175 lb. range who is proportionally strong should be able to achieve at minimum 5 full chins and 10 full dips. For training purposes the set rep range can be anywhere from 3 to 5 sets of anywhere from 6 to 12 repetitions assisted or unassisted according to your current capabilities.

Finally, the only other resistance training I would suggest is:

Neck work

Hamstring work along with

Stretching and perhaps

Calf training

--all according to your needs - ambition - time constraints, etc.

All else being said, I strongly recommend drop the curls and "bodybuilding" stuff and move into the mind set of weight training for performance enhancement and injury prevention. The workout above is designed to improve qualities such as 1st step quickness & strength in contact. It develops those called "fast twitch" muscle fibers responsible for the combination of strength speed and agility that we all covet!