

Amy Weisberger

By: Louie Simmons

Westside women have proven to be stronger as a group than those from any other gym. Six women have squatted or deadlifted more than 500 pounds. Mariah Liggett, the first woman at Westside, set many world records and won more world championships than any other woman. Other notable women from Westside are Doris Simmons, Laura Dodd, Sue Meany, Deb Sorenson, and Terry Byland. But only one has managed to become the strongest pound-for-pound woman to date - Amy Weisberger.

Both Carrie Boudreau and Vanessa Gibson have totaled 1151 at 123 pounds. These totals are the only ones by females that surpass a male USPF Elite total. But on February 20, 2000, also lifting in the 123s, Amy made a 450 squat, a 280 bench, and a 450 deadlift to total 1180, a world record. Amazingly, six days later she benched 286 and 292 for two more world records. This reflects the fact that Amy is not only very strong but also very fit.

How did Amy total 34 pounds over a male Elite? She uses a scientific approach to lifting. For squatting she employs box squats with Flex bands, which provide overspeed eccentrics and progressive concentrics. This increases not only the squat but also the deadlift.

The box squats are done with short rest periods between sets (45 seconds works best), Six sets are done when bands are being used. Eight sets are done when just bar weight is used. During Amy's mini-cycle, the weights ranged from 205 to 245, plus 40 extra pounds of tension at the bottom and 75 pounds of tension at the top with the bands. This loading was for 4 weeks. The last 2 weeks was a de-loading phase: the bands remained the same, but the bar weight was reduced to ensure quickness.

Special work played a great role in Amy's squat. She does sets on the Reverse Hyper@5356,359 and 6,491,607b2 machine 4 times a week, 2 heavy and 2 light. She also does sled work, lots of abs, pull-throughs, and glute/ham raises. No more than three exercises are performed in one workout.

At Amy's level of preparedness, she must switch core exercises each week on max effort day. She does a variety of good mornings - bent back, arched back, combo squat/good morning, straight leg, and thigh-supported (Paul Anderson style) - to really isolate the erectors. Only one of these is done per workout. Amy will alternate a good morning one week with a squat the next week. The squat exercises that she prefers are Safety Squat bar, front squat, Manta Ray, and belt squat. Sometimes she will add chains or bands. This prevents the body from adapting to an exercise by changing the rate of resistance. By squatting with

bands, she has increased her deadlift considerably, through leg drive. (Amy deadlifts only once between meets, and she competes twice a year.)

After the core exercise on max effort day, she will repeat the same special work that she did on speed day, 72 hours previously. She will then pick two or three special exercises for glutes, hamstrings, erectors, and lats, but never in the same sequence as on speed day.

For the bench press, Amy does speed work on Sunday using 8 triples with 50% of her contest best. Flex bands that contribute about 25 pounds of tension at chest level and 70 pounds at the top are used in 4-week waves. Then she switches to chains for 3 or 4 weeks. Chains are always used before a meet to eliminate the added eccentric work from the bands. After benching, Amy hits triceps very hard, training them longer than the speed benching (about 20 minutes). Lats are next, and delt raises are last. About 20 lifts out of 200 (about 10%) on the bench are done with a slightly heavier weight to check bar speed.

On the max effort day for the bench, Amy chooses from a wide variety of special exercises. Her favorites are board press, floor press, incline and decline press with the bar or dumbbells, overhead band press, and carpet press (like board press but with a roll of carpet instead of the boards). After the max effort core exercise she does triceps, lats, and delts.

For GPP work, Amy will do a few extra workouts a week with sled dragging to raise her level of physical preparedness.

As you can see, men and women train the same at Westside. There is a test we all must pass: it's the test of time, and Amy certainly has passed that test as no woman has before.