

Queen of the Iron Game

When you think of great women powerlifters a few names pop up. Olesia Lafina of Russia was the first to total ten times her bodyweight. Margaret Kirkland of Florida made ten times her bodyweight in two weight classes which were 105 and 114. Next up is Amy Weisberger of Westside Barbell. She total ten times bodyweight in the 132 and she holds the world record 1440 in the 148 class. Next women is Becca Swanson of Big Iron of Nebraska with Rick Hussey at the helm. She made lifts no one thought was possible for a women to make and even the men have a tough time doing them. Check this out. A 600 bench press, 856 squat and a 683 deadlift. I saw it. It was my pleasure and a distinct honor to have Becca represent the United States as the world's strongest women bar none.

Then, out of no where, comes Laura Phelps. She holds the squat records in the 165 at 740 lbs and at 181 770 lbs squat. At 181 she benched a world record of 465 lbs. Later on she made 455 and 465 at the Powerstation Pro-Am in at 165 bodyweight. Her total records at 165 bodyweight are 1715 and 1725 at 181 bodyweight. How did this all start? First, Laura was a gymnast for 14 years. Her flexibility is extraordinary. This aids in her later perfect form in all three lifts. After gymnastics she tried bodybuilding for a short time with good success but was bitten by the powerlifting bug. Most would like a virus like that. In the beginning her potential was obvious to all that saw her train. Her husband Shane guides all of her nutritional needs and it is beginning to show in her muscularity. She has traded fat for muscle really changing her body composition. Shane sets the diets for many M.M.A competitors and with his vast knowledge makes recovery and adding muscle mass very easy for Laura to only worry about herself and not other lifters. Laura and Shane set most of her training up with some small guidance from me with the Westside system. She rotates her squat workouts from chains to bands on a hard box to a foam box. The hard box builds connective tissues strength for explosiveness. The foam builds muscle and strength by slowing down the process. I can't wait for schools to do studies on this subject with our recommendations. No more ranting, back to Laura.

She has squatted 640 in briefs and knee wraps. I wanted to take her to the Ohio State football facility but I don't want to see kids cry. She uses her full gear about once a month to ensure she knows how to use it. She does a lot of belt squats, Reverse Hypers and pylo swing jumps making sure her abs are strong and to maintain her flexibility. She wears Leviathon squat suit and Rage X bench shirt from Inzer. For her bench she does speed work once a week and max effort work on Sunday. She always uses bands or chains on speed work to accommodate resistance. This is followed by two sets of moderate dumbbell presses on different angles that are switched each

week. They are rotated with one set close and one set very wide bench on a flat, incline, decline just like the dumbbell press and done moderately for 5 to 8 reps per set. Then she does triceps work with barbells, dumbbells, sometimes super setting with light push-downs for around 15 reps. Next, she does lat work of every kind possible with shrugs, rear and side delt work and that's it.

After max effort workouts the same two sets of light reps for muscle hypertrophy. Her main lifts are foam press, floor press, future method with several variations. They are intergraded with many forms of bands over the bar presses, dumbbell presses are very common in her workouts. She wears a shirt about half the max effort workouts and just like speed day Laura will do lots of triceps, lats upper back and rear and side delt work. She is constantly working on her bench form and flexibility. Shane has been working on Amy Weisberger's bench style with great success.

Now the deadlift training. She is very good at deadlifting having pulled 560 at 165. She will own that world record as well. She would windmill her pulls until I had her take an uneven stance with the under hand grip side by offsetting the foot spacing by two inches she no longer windmills. She does a lot of ultra wide sumo deadlifts which are done for her hip extensions and flexibility. She also does 45 degree hypers, Reverse Hypers, low pulley rows and chest supported rows and shrugs with barbells and dumbbells. She does sled pulling for both squat and deadlifting which also aids in recovery and G.P.P. Glute ham raises, band leg curls and walking with ankle weights. Everyone must pass the test of time to be considered a great but I believe Laura will continue to blow everyone's mind with her flawless form and immense strength combined with beauty and being one of the nicest, down to earth person you will ever meet. It is a true honor to have Laura on the Westside team. She represents us with integrity and strong values and a lasting commitment to her husband Shane her family and friends and Westside.

If anyone can challenge Laura at 165 or 181 I don't see her running or retiring prematurely, but rather raising up to the challenge. She knows her place and it's on top for some time to come. Long live the queen laura.

Louie Simmons

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