Training the Masses

John Rodriguez and Steve Pinning
Strength and Football Coaches
Ramona High School, Ramona, California

AT RAMONA HIGH SCHOOL WE can train more than 225 students and student-athletes every day of the school year primarily in the Olympic-style lifts. Another 125 nonathlete students are trained in the more traditional bodybuilding style of lifts. It helps that our school has 3 USA Weightlifting senior-level coaches.

Through Olympic-style weight-lifting we train baseball, basketball, football, soccer, wrestling, track, volleyball, and softball athletes. One big advantage to this approach is that multisport athletes can continue to train using the same lifts regardless of sport.

Our administration is very supportive of the athletic program and allows for athletic PE sections during Periods 1 and 6, along with general weight training classes during Periods 2-5. The weight room is open 1/2 hour before school and at least 45 minutes after school.

A final part of this winning combination is the presence of sport coaches who believe in our training philosophy and trust our work with their athletes.

The first PE period is set aside for basketball, baseball, and football (JV and varsity). Due to some overcrowding, the basketball players have chosen to lift before school. Freshman football, volleyball, and softball train during the 6th period. The general training classes are also taught snatch and clean & jerk techniques, along with traditional bodybuilding movements. After learning both types of lifts, students are encouraged to work out in a manner best suited to their own goals.

We have 3 stations set for each exercise and students are divided into groups of 9, each with subgroups of 3. Each group is assigned a starting station, the number of reps to be performed, and the intensity for the day. Lifters spend about 8 minutes at each station before rotating to the next exercise.

The first period is 15 minutes longer than others, so lifters get 5

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to 6 stations in their workout. The PE classes get in 4 stations and the 6th period performs 5 stations. By using 6 platforms, other equipment, and outdoor areas, we can put up to 125 lifters through their workouts at the same time.

Mondays and Thursdays are devoted to the clean & jerk, supplemental lifts, and upper body strengthening. On Tuesdays and Fridays we focus on the snatch, supplemental lifts, and lower body strengthening. Wednesdays are for active rest.

The learning of proper technique is crucial to the success of the program. Freshmen and new students are instructed in snatch and clean & jerk techniques during the first 2 to 4 weeks of the school year. We use PVC piping for this instructional phase. As technical skills improve, full movements are incorporated into the daily workout.

With this much emphasis on weight training, it is only natural to expect our results in this sport to improve along with sport-specific skills. Both boys and girls have qualified for USAW national competitions.

Equally important, the football team has improved its 40-yd dash times by an average of 0.4 sec, and 4 players lowered their times by 0.9 sec. This past spring we had 23 football players run the 40 under 5.0 sec, a fourfold increase over the previous year. We feel much of this improvement is due to the training methods employed at Ramona High.

A supportive administration, creative scheduling and use of space, and the support of sport coaches have allowed us to build a solid program that has had a positive effect on many students and athletes. Our goal is to help as many boys and girls as possible realize their full potential and increase their self-esteem.

**John Rodriguez** and **Steve Pinning** are senior level weightlifting coaches with USA Weightlifting. John has been a strength coach and football coach at Ramona High School for 4 years. Steve is in his 8th year as a strength and football coach there.