

Training Advice

Third 4-week block (weeks 9 – 12)

Next Competition

There are now 5 weeks until the next competition on 15 May. Most people are programmed to lift in this competition, but not necessarily will everyone follow the standard “taper” in the week prior to the competition. (A “taper” is a week involving a smaller volume of training).

Character of Training

In this third 4-week block of training, your objective is to raise the volume of practise on the Snatch, Power Snatch, Clean and Jerk, and Power Clean and Jerk and decrease training on skill drills and assistance exercises. In other words, the variety of exercises in a week’s training will narrow.

The intensity of your training on these exercises should also increase and this is achieved by working mostly on doubles in the final 3-4 sets of each exercise. There will also be opportunities to push higher for singles, but preferably under the guidance of a coach. In general, the mistake commonly made at this stage of preparation is to push too hard on singles and suffer too much failure. Quality of training can really drop off if that happens and produce a bad result. Instead, please come to the gym with the mindset that you will achieve quality training on doubles, and not necessarily does this mean you always have to test yourself to maximum on doubles. In many sessions, quality can be achieved by repeating sets at the same weight. It is for this reason that you will find that there are TWO sets at each target intensity, and since there are THREE targets each session, the last six sets should all be about quality technique and nailing receiving positions.

You will find that there is also a good volume of pulls and squats distributed across the week, and the intensity of this training is higher than the previous 4-week training block. Many athletes exhibit strength in squats and pulls that is far greater than the strength they demonstrate in the Snatch and Clean and Jerk. This results in anomalies of training where athletes volunteer to exceed percentages on pulls and squats, often by a considerable margin. Get your calculators out and if you are pulling with more than 120%, you

are indulging in unnecessary and probably unhelpful training just because it makes you feel good. Instead, stay at lower levels of intensity on pulls (110-115%) and work hard to accelerate the bar so that you feel you could Clean it. In fact, every time you are doing pulls with 110%, it should be in your mind to pull like you really mean business. Say to yourself, this is the weight you must Clean – soon!.

A similar situation occurs also for squats. Yes, it’s great psychology to walk out the training hall with PB single back squat but if it means you cannot train for a week effectively, it is probably not a good idea. Singles on Back Squats should not be death-defyingly slow and hard. I would rather you focus on raising your AVERAGE top set of 3 or 2 by a kilo or two and squatting really well. If you can produce multiple good quality squats on a weekly basis around your present PB’s, and occasionally find just an extra kilo more, then you are doing well. For an experienced athlete (more than 3 year) to increase their squat by 10% in one year is a GREAT achievement. This means in one training build up, an increase of 2.5% on your best single, or double or triple, is a just reward. Instead of training for fanciful increases in leg strength, train for REAL increases!!

Use of Targets

To invoke the quality of training required, your task is to achieve all three targets stated for each exercise in each session. In most cases, every target must be repeated before moving to next target. Exceeding targets is permitted with coaching guidance as it depends on how well you are performing. **If you are short of time in the session, drop pulls.** Work on lifts and squats!

Bodyweight

In the last 4-5 weeks, all athletes should be regularly checking bodyweights and those who are over their intended category limit, should take control. At the end of this 4 -week block, try to be no more than 1% over category limit. If you weigh 50Kg, that’s 500 grams, and if you weigh 100Kg that is 1 Kg.