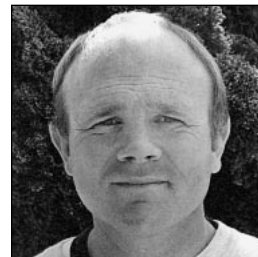


A High School Weight-Training Curriculum Model

Ollie Whaley
Monument Valley High School
Kayenta, Arizona



Mike Burgener
Column Editor

EARLY IN MY HIGH SCHOOL teaching and coaching career, I visualized setting up a weight-training curriculum with a scope and sequence that would begin with a section of beginners, then add a section of intermediates, then finally add an advanced-level class. I pictured the beginning-level class as an introduction to basic training theory, exercise technique in the basic exercises, and some anatomy and physiology. Then, when these students advanced into the intermediate-level class, they would build on the foundation laid with a more advanced routine and some background on designing an exercise program. Finally, the advanced students would follow an individualized routine designed to meet their specific goals. They could participate in individual research in a specialized area of their choosing. They would have advanced through the beginning- and intermediate-level classes as a prerequisite to registering.

While the above is a nice dream, I have found the reality of the high school setting (at least at the schools at which I have worked) to be much different. My experience at Monument Valley High School has been that the counseling office has seen weight

training as an elective course that doesn't require a lot of attention in terms of adhering to prerequisites or creating advanced or accelerated courses. A typical weight-training class at our high school has 35–40 students, ranging from first-year freshmen to seniors who already have completed 6–7 semesters of weight training. The classes are coed and are about 66% male and 34% female. We have no special athletic period, so athletes are encouraged to take weight training during the day, interspersed with students who are interested in general fitness.

Rather than give in to frustration, we have adapted and turned this diversity into a positive aspect of our program. Our curriculum integrates 3 separate strands or levels into each section. Each class has the students organized into 3 groups. The level 1 students are those who are in the class for the first time. They are placed on a 4-week cycle of basic lifts and are given individualized instruction on exercise form and technique. They also have the benefit of having the more experienced lifters in the class as models for the various exercises. The level 1 workout is characterized by a higher number of repetitions per set and by basic

strength foundation-building exercises. Exercises are alternated daily using a push/pull sequence.

Students who have completed at least 1 semester of weight training follow the level 2 program. This is an 8-week cycle with greater emphasis on the Olympic-style lifts and with slightly fewer repetitions per set. The push/pull sequence is maintained. The level 3 program is voluntary (students don't have to advance to level 3 if they don't want to). At this level, students pull, squat, and press each day. This program is designed for those who would like a competitive experience. The level 3 students actually perform an intense and extensive regimen that would prepare them for weightlifting competition if they so desired. In fact, we sponsor a competitive weightlifting club that has done very well at the local, state, and national levels.

Some unforeseen benefits of our attempts to adapt to what seemed to be a negative situation include the following benefits. Beginning-level students have ready role models already proficient in the lifts to demonstrate both proper form and intensity. Intermediate and advanced lifters have the opportunity to coach and lead the newer students. The equipment in

Table 1
Sample Daily Workouts

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
<p>Monday Hang clean 5 × 5 Snatch grip deadlift 3 × 8 Romanian dead lift (RDL), back raises (BR), or reverse hyper extensions, (RH) 3 × 8 Lat machine, pull-ups, or rows 3 × 8</p>	<p>Back squat 4 × 8 Push press 5 × 5 Bench press 4 × 8 Overhead squats 3 × 8 Abdominal work 3 × 10-20</p>	<p>Snatch 3 × 3 Snatch pulls 3 × 5 Back squats 4 × 8 Bench press 3 × 8 Waist work and lat machine, pull-ups, or rows 3 × 8</p>
<p>Tuesday Back squat 4 × 8 Military press 4 × 8 Bench press 4 × 8 Overhead squats 2 × 8 Abdominal work 3 × 10-20</p>	<p>Cleans 5 × 5 Snatch pulls 3 × 5 RDL, BR, or RH 3 × 8-10 Lat machine, pull-ups, or rows 3 × 8</p>	<p>Cleans 5 × 5 Push press 5 × 5 Front squats 3 × 8 Waist work 3 × 8-10 (lower back and abdominal work)</p>
<p>Wednesday Hang snatch 5 × 5 Clean deadlift 3 × 8 RDL, BR, or RH 3 × 8-10 Lat machine, pull-ups, or rows 3 × 8-10</p>	<p>Front squat 4 × 8 Push press 5 × 5 Incline press, decline press, or dips 4 × 8 Step-ups or lunges 3 × 8</p>	<p>Snatch pulls 5 × 5 Back squats 4 × 8 Incline press, decline press, or dips 3 × 8-10 Lat machine, pull-ups or rows 3 × 8</p>
<p>Thursday Front squat 4 × 8 Military press 4 × 8 Incline press, decline press, or dips 4 × 8 Step-ups or lunges 3 × 8-10</p>	<p>Snatch 5 × 5 Clean pulls 3 × 5 RDL, BR, or RH 3 × 8-10 Lat machine, pull-ups, rows 3 × 8-10</p>	<p>Clean 3 × 5 Clean pulls 2 × 5 Push jerks 3 × 5 Front squats 3 × 8 Waist work</p>
<p>Friday Hang cleans or hang snatch 5 ¥ 5 Clean deadlift or snatch deadlift 3 ¥ 5 RDL, BR, or RH 3 ¥ 8 Lat machine, pull-ups, or</p>	<p>Front or back squat 3 ¥ 8 Dumbbell press 4 ¥ 8 Incline press, decline press, dips, or bench press 3 ¥ 8 Overhead squats, step-ups, or</p>	<p>Clean or snatch 3 ¥ 3 Snatch or clean pulls 2 ¥ 5 Dumbbell press 3 ¥ 8 Incline press, dips, or bench press 3 ¥ 8 Overhead squats, step-ups, or</p>

the facility is not congested, as everyone in the class is not trying to complete the same exercises at the same time. The instructor is free to monitor each level as needed, giving individual feedback and

instruction appropriate to each level.

Table 1 shows examples of possible workouts. These are just examples of possible workouts. Exercises are adjusted on a daily

and weekly basis. Sets and repetitions are periodized over a 4-week cycle for level 1 and over an 8-week cycle for levels 2 and 3. Level 3 students are programmed on more of an individual basis, but

the preceding provides a typical example.

We are fortunate to have a 4,000-square foot facility equipped with 7 lifting platforms, all with bumper plates and portable squat racks. Also, we have 3 power racks and 3 tiered squat stations, along with incline, decline, and flat bench press stations, a dipping station, 2 sets of dumbbells weighing from 5–70 lbs, and a set of 90-lb dumbbells, along with other assorted equipment, such as 21 Olympic bars; 3 special, lightweight bars for beginners; a reverse hyper unit; a gluteus–hamstring raise apparatus, a hip sled, and so on. This allows us to handle class loads of 35–40 without having students wait for equipment. Weight training has become our most popular elective class.

In fact, now that our system at Monument Valley High School has been in place and functioning, I prefer it to my original vision of classes segregated by experience and ability. If I ever have the opportunity to begin a program again, I would work instead for the integrated model. ▲

Ollie Whaley, CSCS, is the Head Football and Track Coach and Weightlifting Club sponsor for Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona. He is certified as a Regional Level Coach by USA Weightlifting. Ollie received his BS from Brigham Young University and his MS from Northern Arizona University.