

the
CrossFit
JOURNAL ARTICLES

UC Riverside Baseball

Fall Strength and Conditioning

Josh Everett



In the past six months or so I've noticed more conversations about how having a solid strength and power base really drives top performances on the CrossFit storms (the named benchmark workouts, also known as "the girls") and some discussion on what is the best balance between strength workouts and circuit-type work, etc. I first came across CrossFit about three years ago and immediately began implementing ideas I learned from Coach Glassman and others in the CrossFit community into my job as the head strength and conditioning coach at the University of California, Riverside. With the strength and power discussions heating up and the recent emergence of the [CrossFit Total](#), I thought I'd share an example of how I have incorporated CrossFit in the training of the athletic teams here at UCR.

This article describes the training that we on the strength and conditioning staff did with the position players on our baseball team during the fall off-season. (Next month, I will discuss the specifics of how we used CrossFit in training the women's basketball team.) The pitching coach is very conservative, so the pitchers do a separate program consisting mostly of squats, some plyometrics, and medicine ball work. I will say, though, that out of seventeen pitchers, thirteen back squatted 300 pounds or more, with seven guys squatting over 350 pounds.

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UC Riverside Baseball (continued...)

Our fall training began mid-September. In the first two weeks our returning upperclassman did cleans, plyos, and sprints on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and squats followed by a CrossFit storm on Mondays and Fridays. All frosh and transfers spent four days a week learning how to properly squat, clean, and jerk, with small exposures to CrossFit workouts following their learning sessions.

Once school began in October and the frosh were up to snuff on their form, we began lifting M/W/F for one hour and conditioning at the track T/Th for one hour. Conditioning at the track included various drills but consisted mostly of agility training, short sprints, and either 400-meter intervals or 300-yard shuttle runs. This

pattern continued for four weeks until the team began "Fall Ball," which is basically full-blown practice just as if the team was in season. During the four weeks of Fall Ball we dropped the track workouts and just lifted MWF; all other conditioning was done at the baseball field with their sport coaches. Our lifting during these 7 to 8 weeks was an adaptation of a program by J.V. Askem. You see, I may not be very smart, but I am at least smart enough to recognize successful approaches and adapt them to fit my situation and abilities. The following table lays out the program the players the followed.

Following Fall Ball we moved into a three-days-a-week strength and conditioning program consisting of heavy

Fall Training Chart

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1. Ladder	1. Ladder	1. Ladder
2. Dot drill	2. Quick feet	2. Dot drill
3. 2x: OHS 10, RDL 10, L-chin 5, pushup 10, int/ext 10, Cuban 10, reverse fly 10	3. 2x: OHS 10, RDL 10, L-chin 5, push-up 10, int/ext 10, Cuban 10, reverse fly 10	3. 2x: OHS 10, RDL 10, L-chin 5, push-up 10, int/ext 10, Cuban 10, reverse fly 10
4. Clean combo (3 shrugs, 3 shrug jumps, 3 cleans, 3 jerks)	4. Clean combo (3 shrugs, 3 shrug jumps, 3 cleans, 3 jerks)	4. Clean combo (3 shrugs, 3 shrug jumps, 3 cleans, 3 jerks)
5. Power clean	5. 1 power clean + 3 military presses + 2 push presses	5. Squat clean
6. Floor press	3 warm-up sets, then 3 sets at your "working wt." If you make all 3 sets at the working wt, then move your working wt up for next week.	4. Back squat
7. Back squat: light/speed day. Down slow & controlled, then explode up as fast as possible. 100% effort on each rep.	6. RDL	5. F. Press (light/speed day. Down slow & controlled then explode up as fast as you can on each rep.)
8. Chins	7. Push-ups or dips or ring dips or handstand push-ups - choose based on your ability	6. Circuit a. Chins 10 b. Bottoms-up press 10 + 10 c. Glute-ham raise 10 d. Homerun twist 10
9. Glute-ham raise	8. Step-ups & bent rows	7. Stretch
10. 3-way med ball medley	7. L-hang or L-sit: accumulate 30 seconds	
11. Stretch	8. Core circuit	
	9. Stretch	

Fall Training Chart (continued...)

EXERCISE	wk1	wk2	wk3	wk4	wk5	wk6	wk7	wk8	wk9	wk10
Power clean	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 9x3 65%	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 8x3 70%	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 1x2 70% 8x2 80%	1x2 50% 1x2 65% 1x2 75% 6x2 85%	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 1x2 70% 7x3 75%	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 1x2 70% 8x2 80%	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 1x2 70% 8x1 90%+	1x2 50% 1x2 60% 1x2 70% 1x2 80% 4x1 95%+		
Floor press Mon & Back squat Friday	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x5	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x5	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x5	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x3	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x3	1x5 1x5 1x5 3x3	1x3 1x3 1x3 3x1	1x3 1x3 1x3 3x1	max	
3 warm-up sets, then 3 sets at your "working wt." If you make all 3 sets at the work wt, increase that wt the next week.										
Squat Monday & Floor press Friday	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	5x5 50%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%	1x5 50% 1x5 60% 3x5 65%		
Chins & push-ups	max	10min density	buildups		max	10min density	buildups			
Glute-ham raise	30	40	50		45	55	40			
RDL	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x6	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x6	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x6	1x10 1x8 1x6 off	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x5	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x5	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x5	1x10 1x8 1x6 3x5		
3 warm up sets, then 3 sets at your "working wt." If you make all 3 sets at the work wt, increase that wt the next week.										
Step-ups	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8	3x8+8		
Bent rows	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8	3x8		
Squat clean	4x5	4x5	4x5	4x3	4x3	4x3	4x3	4x3		
Circuit	2x	3x	3x	2x	3x	3x	3x	3x		

UC Riverside Baseball (continued...)

December Training Chart

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1. Tumble 2. Stretch 3. Balance 4. Ladder 5. 1x10 OHS, push-ups, glute-ham, chins 6. 2x10 int/ext, Cuban, empty can, reverse fly 7. Clean combo 8. Power clean 9. CrossFit WOD 10. Forearm bridge & side plank 11. Rope stretches	1. Tumble 2. Stretch 3. Star drill 4. Dot drill 5. 1x10 OHS, push-ups, glute-ham, chins 6. 2x10 int/ext, Cuban, empty can, reverse fly 7. Back squat 8. CrossFit WOD 9. Core circuit 10. Rope stretches	1. Tumble 2. Stretch 3. Balance 4. Quick feet 5. 1x10 OHS, push-ups, glute-ham, chins 6. 2x10 int/ext, Cuban, empty can, reverse fly 7. Clean combo 8. Squat clean 9. CrossFit WOD 10. Forearm bridge & side plank 11. Rope stretches
CrossFit WOD	CrossFit WOD	CrossFit WOD
Wk 9: Helen Wk 10: Tabata: chins, pushups, box jumps, sit-ups Wk finals: Helen Break 1: Cindy Break 2: Helen Break 3: 4 rounds: run 400m, 25 box jumps, 25 push-ups, 15 chins	Wk 9: TUC Wk 10: Diane Finals: Angie Break 1: Fran Break 2: Elizabeth Break 3: TUC	Wk 9: Cindy Wk 10: Fran Finals: Diane Break 1: Tabata: chins, push-ups, box jumps, sit-ups Break 2: Angie Break 3: Elizabeth

EXERCISE	27-Nov	4-Dec	11-Dec	18-Dec	25-Dec	1-Jan
	wk 9	wk 10	finals	break 1	break 2	break 3
Power clean	1x2	1x2	max day	1x3 50%	1x2 50%	1x2 50%
	1x2	1x2		1x3 60%	1x2 65%	1x2 60%
	1x2	1x2		1x3 70%	1x2 75%	1x2 70%
	2 rounds	2 rounds		3x3 80%	4x2 85%	1x2 80%
	Joe Mills	Joe Mills				5x1 90%
Back squat	1x10	max	1x5 50%	1x5 50%	1x5 50%	1x3 50%
	1x8		1x5 60%	1x5 60%	1x5 60%	1x3 60%
	1x6		3x5 70%	1x5 70%	1x5 70%	1x3 70%
	1x4			2x5 80%	1x5 80%	1x3 80%
	1x3				1x5 85%	1x3 90%
Squat clean	6x2	6x2	6x2	6x2	6x2	6x2

UC Riverside Baseball (continued...)

cleans, squats, and CrossFit storms. My bread and butter as a strength coach is Olympic lifts, squats, and hill/bleacher sprints. When I began using CrossFit three years ago, I was worried that I might be sacrificing some of my athletes' clean and squat numbers for the broader fitness they would gain from CrossFit. I was willing to make that sacrifice because I believed so much in the general physical preparedness foundation that CrossFit delivers. I was happily surprised that our strength and power numbers have actually gone up using hybrid programs like the ones I describe in this article.

The chart on the previous page shows the team's training in December.

Here are some of the performance results of this program. Keep in mind that seven of the sixteen guys were new to the program and only one had ever done cleans before. Out of the sixteen players who made the roster, thirteen power cleaned 220 pounds or more. Three guys cleaned 300+. On back squat, thirteen lifted 300+, with the same three guys hitting 400+. We also have thirteen guys who performed "Helen" in less than 9:00. (That's 3 rounds of 400-meter run, 21 kettlebell/dumbbell swings, 12 pull-ups, done on the track with 24-kilogram Russian swings.)

This was the team's best off-season with me since I arrived at UCR six years ago. We have better power numbers than ever before. The coaches have remarked that since implementing "CrossFits" a year ago, the athletes are able to sustain a much higher energy level longer at practice. Our team will at times simulate extra-inning games in practice, going as long as twelve or thirteen innings. The coaches have noticed that the team's energy and ability don't drop off in those late innings like it did in the past. The true test will be how we do on the field during the season. Our season begins Feb 1 and ends in June. In Baseball America's pre-season poll we are ranked 26th in the nation in NCAA Division I.



Cover photo:
Outfielder Carl Uhl boasts a 308-lb. power clean, 430-lb. back squat, 7:44 Helen, and 29 rounds on Cindy.



Josh Everett has been the head strength and conditioning coach at [UC Riverside](http://ucriverside.edu) since 2001.