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Liftathon at Acalanes High School

By Jon Kingdon



Girls 500-Pound Club, bottom row, from left: Apple Walton, Jasmine Frost; top row: Monica Dikova, Katelyn Olin, Chloe Lockwood, and Addie Ames Photos Acalanes Boosters

Sports has become a year-round event for many high schoolers. If they're not playing in a summer league, many spend their summers preparing for the upcoming school year on the field and in the weight room.

As the summer weight room program was concluding at Acalanes, Jeff Julian, the Acalanes Booster's webmaster and video coordinator, took it upon himself to organize a "Liftathon" competition. With about 600 Acalanes student-athletes working out over the summer, Julian set up a competition to see how many of them would take on a three-lift challenge (Bench, Squat and Dead Lift) to try and reach a composite 1,000 pounds for the boys and 500 for the girls, giving them a goal to shoot for.

Seventy-five athletes (60 boys and 15 girls) put up \$40 to enter the competition. Each participant received an Acalanes Liftathon T-shirt and the funds left over went to help support the Acalanes Strength and Conditioning program throughout the year.

In the end, 15 boys made the 1,000-pound club led by Tyler Worthington's 480-pound deadlift and Marcus Julian's three lift total of 1,115 pounds. There were six girls who made the 500-pound club led by Jasmine Frost deadlifting 265 pounds and Katelyn Olin finishing with a total of 627 pounds.

Julian had three goals in mind when he set up the competition: "I wanted to encourage all of the athletes in all of the sports to use the weight room. I wanted to provide a fun event so that the athletes could see how their lifting has made them stronger and to help generate more funds to be able to purchase more equipment and allow more hours for the weight room to be available."

Tim Sil has been the strength coach at Acalanes for four years, after coming over from Miramonte. "When I got here, the Booster Club came to me and said that they had funds available to upgrade the weight room," Sil said. "So, (trainer) Chris Clark and I figured out what we needed and put together the layout of the room."

Sil, who also coaches the defensive backs for the football teams, has been studying weight training for 10 years, has attended numerous clinics and has developed his own weight training principles. "My philosophy is 'Less is more,'" Sil said. "I try and set up workouts for three days a week and have them rest in between. We will do upper, lower, and full rotational lifts. I will start with mobility on various parts of the body then will lead into their lifts and then accessories and plyometrics. I like movement-based work as I don't want the athletes to get too tight."

Those athletes that have been coming in since their freshman year have shown great strength gains, but there's a lot more to it than that for Sil: "Everything we do is with the idea of preventing injuries. We've seen a decrease in injuries. We've only had two concussions per season in the last four years."

Besides setting up the lifting programs, Sil also has to manage the increased number of lifters along with the new freshmen classes: "Working with the freshmen is a little harder because this is the first time for many of them to be working with weights. It will get crowded in the wintertime and I have to be creative with setting up the workouts to make sure everyone and everything is safe in here."

Along with Chris Carter, there are other coaches that work along with Sil in the weight room like Mike Ivankovich who started the weight room back in the 1990s and Connor Hornsby, the Dons' baseball coach, who runs the program for his team.

With an influx of new weight room equipment this past year, there has been a concomitant increase of athletes and teams that began to utilize the weight room. "We had about 90% participation of the school's athletes that participated in the weight program this summer with just about every Acalanes team participating," Julian said. "The water polo and swim teams numbers were low for the Liftathon as most were competing in the junior Olympic tryouts. This is the first year we've done this and I'm hoping to make this an annual event as part of the Boosters."



Boys 1000-Pound Club, bottom row, from left: Kyle Bielawski; top row: Sulley Bailey, Brady Morrow, John Rusk, Zach Robb, Jake Boselli, Marcus Julian, Jack Giorgianni, Tyler Murphy, Henry Hagel, Vic Nicolakis, Paul Kuhner, Nathan Kim (not pictured: Tyler Worthington) Photos Acalanes Boosters

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