ANNOTATION

WEIGHT TRAINING INJURIES AMONGST SOME COMPETITORS AT THE SIXTH EMPIRE AND COMMONWEALTH GAMES, CARDIFF, 1958

H. Evans Robson, MB,BS.

Loughborough

During a survey by questionnaire carried out amongst 285 competitors at the Games, 135 (48%) engaged in some form of weight training, many merely including it in a circuit training schedule. Apart from the obvious training done by weight-lifters, weight-training was engaged in by:

Event.	Number questioned.	Using Wt. Training.	%	Heavy schedules.	Number injured.	%
Athletics, male.	136	79	58.2	27	9	11.4
Athletics, female.	27	11	40.7	0	0	0
Cyclists.	31	11	35.3	3	1	9.2
Swimmers, male.	13	4	30.8	0	2	50.0
Swimmers, female.	13	5	38.5	0	0	0
Boxers.	25	1	4.0	0	0	0
Wrestlers.	14	7	50.0	1	0	0
Fencers, male & female.	10	1	10.0	0	0	0
Wt.Lifters.	16	16	100.0	16	8	50.0
TOTALS	285	135	47.6	65	20	14.8

(Unless sex is specified, competitors were male. "Heavy schedules" include those in which weights in excess of body weight were lifted by any technique).

The injury rate amongst weight lifters is surprisingly high, but seems to be accepted as part of the risks of the event. There is no information as to how many have to give up the sport through injury. Two boy swimmers out of the four who used weights is statistically of little significance, owing to the small number questioned, but as they were amongst the youngest of all competitors at the Games, a warning might be taken. Generally, injury seems most likely to occur when heavy poundages are handled, (15 cases out of 20) despite the greater experience and knowledge of those using heavy schedules. One case might well be quoted in illustration of this. A doctor, competing in a throwing event, increased his poundage in the press to 180 lbs. He then had to deal with an epidemic of influenza, lasting six weeks, in which he was himself a victim. When he resumed training, he noted his last poundage, then attempted to press 190 lbs, having a black-out in the process, and falling across his weight-lifter's bench. Not surprisingly, he sustained a prolapsed intervertebral disc, necessitating the services of a local osteopath. He did not win a medal.

Exact clinical histories were often impossible to obtain, as many of the competitors could not speak English, and the technical knowledge of the interpreters was frequently inadequate. Out of the twenty injuries, there were two prolapsed discs, six lumbar strains, 3 sacro-iliac strains, (eleven back injuries); 1 hamstring strain, 1 quadriceps strain, 2 ligament injuries and 1 synovitis of knee (five injuries to the knee or its supporting musculature); 1 pectoral strain, 1 wrist sprain, 1 wrist fracture, and 1 ankle sprain. Only one contestant, with a severe sacro-iliac strain, gave up weight training, the remainder making good recoveries. The risks of injury are not high, only 12 out of 269 if the weight-lifters are excluded, or about 4%. Risks are only present when poundage approaches body weight or exceeds it, and when the activity is unsupervised or not controlled carefully. This information was collected twelve years ago, and since then training schedules have become harder, but up to date data concerning weight training injuries does not seem to be available. The results of several investigations included in this project have been published in 'physical Recreation' 1958/9 (at that time the journal of the C.C.P.R., now replaced by "Sport and Recreation").