

# Strong Women: It's About Time

It's taken a while, but women are achieving equality in sport and in the weightroom



Chloe Van Tussenbroek is a multi-sport athlete who uses weight training to make her strong and lean. She competes in Olympic weightlifting and is a Level 10 gymnast with a 27.6-inch vertical jump. The 15-year-old attends West Jordan High School in West Jordan, Utah.



Photos: Preston Norris Zone VII Photography

**D**iscrimination against women lifting weights came to the fore in ancient Greece. In those early Olympic Games, women were prohibited not only from competing in athletic competitions but also from watching them. But a proud parent is an unstoppable force, and in 404 BC a mother was so desperate to watch her son compete in the Olympics that she sneaked into the Olympic arena disguised as a male trainer.

When her son won his event, she became so overwhelmed with pride that she yelled to him, thereby revealing she was a woman. She was immediately thrown out of the stadium. To prevent such a transgression from occurring again, the offended Olympic officials ruled that henceforth trainers would perform their duties – and all athletes would compete – *nude*.

As the centuries passed, the powers that be continued to uphold sport as primarily a man's domain, and history recorded only the accomplishments of male athletes. In 1891 there was a spark of reason when a circus in Ireland allowed women to participate in a 100-yard dash, but in 1898 the circus was forced to discontinue the competition due to religious and political pressure.

Over the next three decades the social environment began to change, so that by 1928 women were allowed to compete in several Olympic sprinting events.

Unfortunately, after several women collapsed from exhaustion at the end of the 800-meter event, Olympic officials decided to discontinue all

women's sprinting events, except for the 100 meters. That exclusion lasted 16 years.

Now, of course, women's Olympic events are as plentiful as men's. As the slogan goes, You've come a long way, baby!

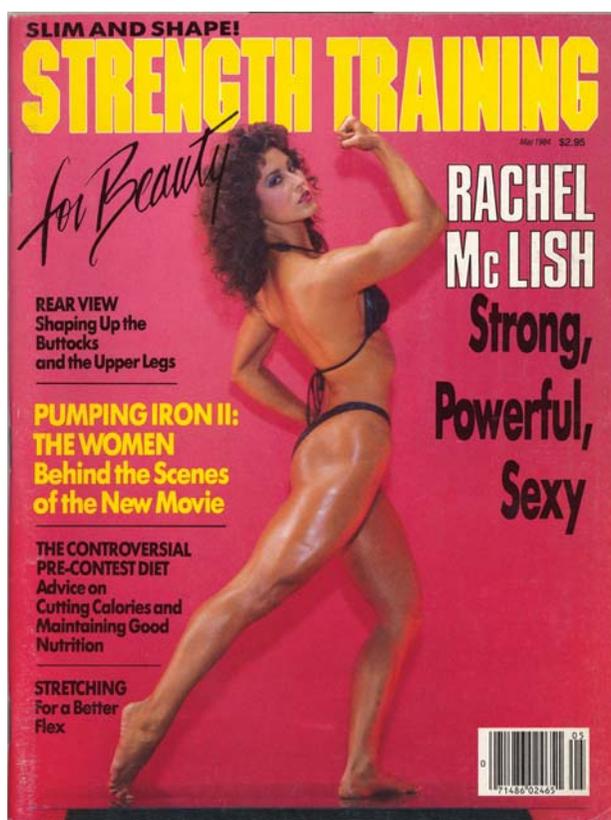
## Pioneers of Women's Weight Training

Due to the disapproval of society, early women athletes could be classified as rebels, although a more appropriate term would be *pioneers*. Mildred "Babe" Didrikson of Texas was one of these women. A phenomenal athlete, Didrikson won the gold medal in javelin and hurdles in the

Kathy Switzer was another pioneer: She challenged the all-male tradition of the Boston Marathon in 1967, registering as K. Switzer. Despite an attempt by marathon officials to remove her from the competition, Switzer completed the race. Switzer dedicated many years of her life to promoting equal opportunities in athletics for women, creating the Avon International Running Circuit, which promoted women's running events in 25 countries and paved the way to the inclusion of the women's marathon in the 1972 Olympic Games.

Of course, any discussion about women sporting pioneers must include mention of Billie Jean King. King was the tennis great who, in 1971, became the first woman to earn \$100,000 in a single year. She also took on the challenge of former men's Wimbledon champion Bobby Riggs in a match dubbed as "The Battle of the Sexes." Her victory inspired young women to follow her lead and fight for sporting equality. Such efforts culminated in the passing of the 1972 Title IX educational amendment, which restricted schools from excluding women from sports programs that received federal financial assistance.

Although the women's sports movement was progressing in the '60s and '70s, women's strength training programs were often limited to light dumbbell exercises, calisthenics and perhaps swimming. Heavy weight training exercises to build muscle, apparently, were not considered appropriate activities for the female body. But that was about to change.



In the early 80s, *Strength Training for Beauty* was the first newsstand magazine devoted to competitive women's bodybuilding and heavy weight training for women. Shown on the cover of this issue is Rachel McLish, the winner of the first Miss Olympia.

1932 Olympics, and she also excelled in swimming, basketball, softball, baseball, tennis and golf.

## FEATURE STORY

In one of the most controversial sporting events of the time, bodybuilding promoter George Snyder held the first international women's professional bodybuilding competition, the 1980 Miss Olympia. This new event was nothing like the cheesy "Miss Bikini" contests in which women paraded around the stage in high heels and skimpy bikinis. In the Miss Olympia, women were encouraged to, literally, flex their muscles. The first major celebrity who arose from this competition was Rachel McLish, whose fashion model looks and lean, athletic physique made her a media favorite.

The expanding interest in more serious weight training for women

led to a major job in journalism for *BFS* editor in chief Kim Goss. In 1984, fresh out of college, Goss was hired as the senior editor of a women's weight training magazine called *Strength Training for Beauty*. He reported to Laura Dayton, who was the sister of Mr. America Mike Dayton, a former roommate and training partner of Arnold Schwarzenegger. The message at the magazine was that muscles on a woman had "flex appeal" and that it was OK for women to throw away the two-pound plastic dumbbells and hit the heavy iron with squats, power cleans, bench presses and – dare we say it – weighted chin-ups and dips.

And just as women bodybuilders

were taking their training to the next level of athletic fitness, other women were taking on the sports of competitive weightlifting and powerlifting.

These sports have seen a lot of change and growth since 1981, when the very first US women's national weightlifting competition was held. At this year's Olympic trials only two US men met the qualifying standards to compete in the 2008 Olympic Games, whereas four women reached that level. And whereas heads were shaking in 1985 when heavyweight Karen Tarter became the first woman to clean and jerk 300 pounds, these days a teenager who weighs only 127 pounds has lifted that much weight and then some. As for the larger women, sev-



**Glenda Ford**, shown at right and below, snatching an American record and world best in 1985, is a former national weightlifting champion who twice placed fourth in the Senior World Championships and threw the discus 181'7".

At left is Ford with her coach, Kim Goss, who would later become the editor in chief of *BFS* magazine.



eral women have snatched over 300 pounds and clean and jerked over 400 in drug-tested competitions.

In support of the efforts of women to achieve the highest levels of strength, BFS has been encouraging young women athletes to participate and train hard right alongside young men. And since the publication of the first issue of *BFS* magazine in December of 1980, we've continued promoting athletic weight training for young women. Two of our most satisfying accomplishments are the award for BFS High School Female Athlete of the Year and our annual issue devoted almost exclusively to female athletes.

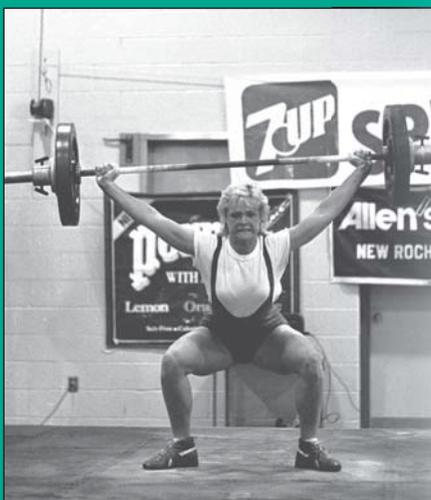
As we enter into another school



Weight training for women is here to stay, and BFS has been proud to help inspire young women to lift heavy to help them achieve their goals. Shown cheering on Lusia Angilau are her sister Katinia (left) and Taylor Tausinga.

year, BFS looks forward to seeing more young women using weight training to fulfill their physical potential. It's been a long, challenging

road for women to achieve equality in the weightroom, but the struggle has been worth it. BFS is proud to do its part. **BFS**



Photos: Bruce Klemens

THE BEST WAY TO GET STARTED ON THE BFS PROGRAM!

# THE TOTAL PROGRAM PACKAGE



THE BFS TOTAL PROGRAM PACKAGE

# JUST \$99

325087 VHS • 325187 DVD

100% MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!!



1. **BFS Clinic Exercise Instruction DVD.**
2. **BFS Total Program 2-Video Set VHS or DVD**
3. **BFS Total Program Book.**  
Contains the complete BFS Program - Completely redone from cover to cover!
4. **Set Rep Log & Record Card.**  
The record keeping book for all athletes. It has instructions and a complete chart to record sets, reps, records, times and more. Each book is designed to last one year.
5. **A One-Year Subscription to BFS Magazine.**  
A quality magazine unlike any other. Inspirational stories, technique articles, products, motivation and more! Published six times a year. Includes the BFS catalog!
6. **Be An 11! Guidebook For Success.**

BIGGER FASTER STRONGER

# BFS

DEDICATED TO HELPING ATHLETES SUCCEED SINCE 1976

CALL NOW 1-800-628-9737

online at [www.biggerfasterstronger.com](http://www.biggerfasterstronger.com) • email us at [info@bfsmail.com](mailto:info@bfsmail.com)

843 West 2400 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84119 • Fax (801) 975-1159

# ANTIMICROBIAL PROTECTION

LEARN WHY YOU NEED IT NOW • 1-800-628-9737



SportsAide® system provides antimicrobial protection to athletic facilities including training rooms, exercise equipment, mats, locker rooms and whirlpools.  
**Call to find out about this protective treatment.**



TurfAide™ provides antimicrobial protection to existing and new synthetic turf systems.  
**Call to learn more about this long lasting treatment for your facility.**



## sportsaide XL

SportsAide® XL provides antimicrobial protection to protective equipment, training equipment and mats for up to 30 days. Available in a handy spray bottle for quick and easy application  
 SportsAideXL  
 (6 – 32oz Spray Bottles) #324006  
**\$128.99**



## sportsclean

SportsClean™ is a regular maintenance cleaner and disinfectant specially formulated to work synergistically the SportsAide® system and TurfAide™ treated surfaces. Available in a handy spray bottle for quick and easy application.  
 SportsClean (6 – 32oz Spray Bottles) #324008 **\$39.99**



## fabricaide

FabricAide™ provides antimicrobial protection, stain releasers and odor control to all of your sports laundry such as towels and uniforms

FabricAide (8 – 16oz Bottles)	#324002	<b>\$139.99</b>
FabricAide (16 – 8oz Bottles)	#324003	<b>\$149.99</b>
FabricAide (1 Gallon)	#324004	<b>\$109.00</b>
FabricAide (5 Gallon)	#324005	<b>\$519.00</b>

BIGGER FASTER STRONGER



**DEDICATED TO HELPING ATHLETES SUCCEED SINCE 1976**

**LEARN MORE 1-800-628-9737**

online at [www.biggerfasterstronger.com](http://www.biggerfasterstronger.com) • email us at [info@bfsmail.com](mailto:info@bfsmail.com)  
 843 West 2400 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84119 • Fax (801) 975-1159