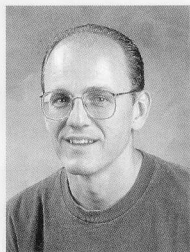


Facility Design Concepts



Adapted from *Designing Strength Training Programs and Facilities*

by Michael Boyle

How well you will be able to design a program will to a great extent depend on the design of your facility. Great ideas are simply great ideas if the logistics of the facility prevent them from being turned into great programs. More importantly,

mistakes in choosing equipment are expensive to undo.

In order to properly equip a facility, a coach or athletic trainer needs to consider usage and subsequent traffic flow. It is clear that the self-contained power area approach yields the greatest weight room usage per square foot. I don't know any coach who thinks that he or she has enough space. With the emphasis on functional training, space has become more important than equipment. This means that equipment must in our current computer-dominated language "multitask". In simplest terms the self-contained power area (SCPA) is a power rack (Figure 1.2), an adjustable flat to incline bench (Figure 1.1),

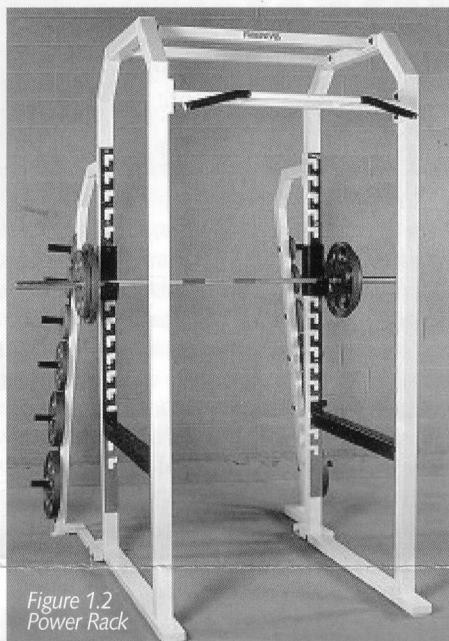


Figure 1.2 Power Rack

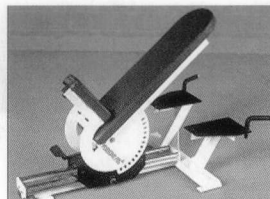


Figure 1.1 Adjustable Flat to Incline Bench

and potentially a set of Olympic lifting blocks. This combination, when used properly, can allow athletes to perform almost any exercise desired in a small area and, with proper planning makes for great use per square foot. Each SCPA takes up approximately 50 sq. ft., but projections should be for 100 sq. ft. per

station (more on this later).

One important suggestion, don't buy the currently popular half-racks (Figure 1.3). Half-racks have become increasingly popular over the past five years, but the truth is a half-rack is actually a half of a power rack that doesn't cost half as much but is in fact half as useful.

Half-racks are designed with pull-up bars, but the reality is that you can't simultaneously use the rack for squats and pull-ups because the squat bar is in the way. With a full power rack athletes can pair (more on this concept when we get to the actual workouts) a

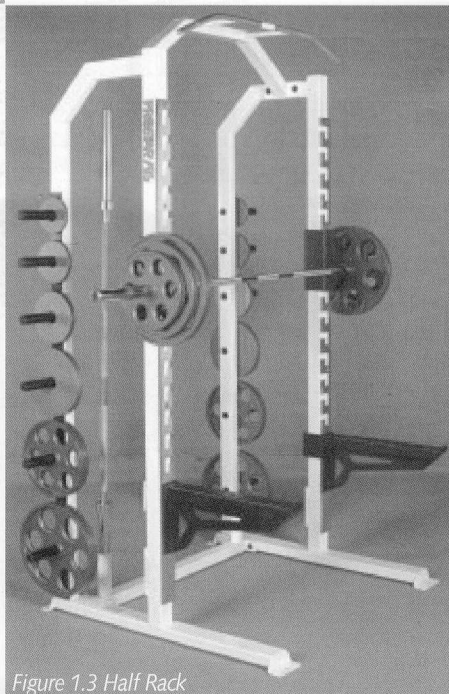


Figure 1.3 Half Rack

squatting movement with a chinning movement and actually use the front and back of the rack. Half racks look good but function poorly.

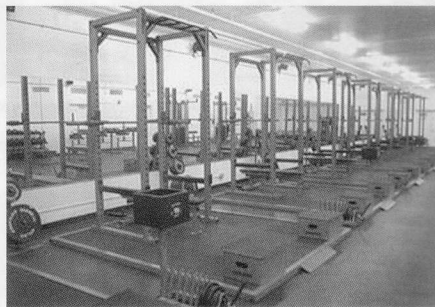


Figure 1.4 The picture of efficiency

Pay a few extra bucks and get full power racks. Figure 1.4 clearly shows how utilitarian a weight room can be when properly designed. A room designed around the self-contained power area concept is literally made for team or group usage. This is in contrast to the weight rooms of the '80s

and '90s that were often designed in what I would call "Noah's Ark" style. In the Noah's Ark weight room, the coach simply ordered two of everything. The rooms often resembled Gold's Gym, more than a strength and conditioning facility. These types of facilities were not at all conducive to team or group training. In fact, a facility designed with too much machinery actually causes bottlenecks as athletes wait for a particular piece of equipment that is in short supply. With a self-contained power area and a large supply of dumbbells athletes will never wait for equipment.

The next illustration (figure 1.5) is potentially the most space efficient. The rack depicted can be combined with 2 adjustable benches and 2 sets of clean blocks to provide maximum usage per square foot.

The down side to this type of setup is that athletes will need to share a mirror. On the plus side, 6-8 athletes can perform their entire workout in this small space. The athletes working on the side closest to the mirror would Olympic lift with their back to the rack while the athletes farthest from the mirror would Olympic lift from the front of the rack.

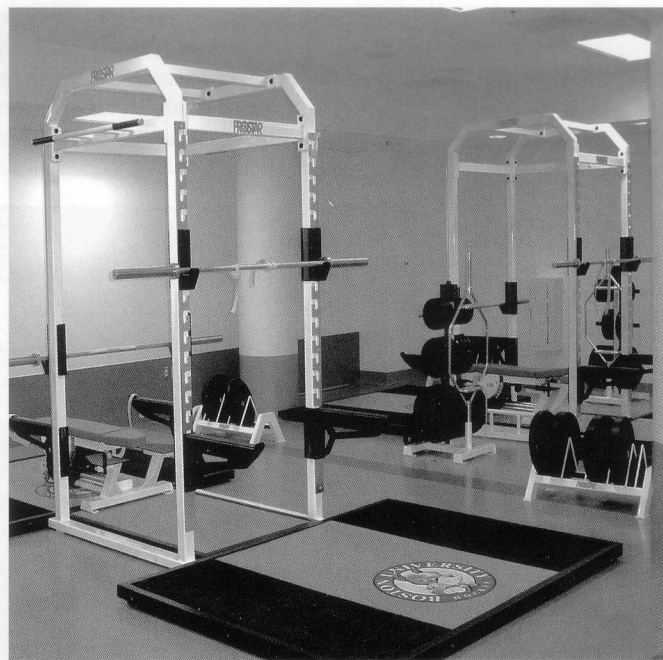


Figure 1.5 Double Racks

Think about equipping each side of the rack as a separate area. Two bars, a bench, a full set of dumbbells, and all of the little tools like balance pads and mini-slideboards should be purchased for each rack. Facility design can be a fun and challenging project. Try to "think outside the box" to use an overused term and get the maximum out of each square foot. ☺