



Melanie Roach

at a glance...

Statistics

Hometown: Bonney Lake, WA
Birthdate: Dec 14, 1974
Weight: 117
Height: 5'1"



Weightlifting

Athletic Accolades

2007 Pan Am Games Bronze Medalist
7 time US National Champion
2006 Pan Am Championships Bronze Medalist
5 Time US World Team Member
2000 US Olympic Team Alternate

Points of Interest

- First US woman to clean/jerk over double her body weight - currently the only US woman to do this.
- Set new world standard in the clean/jerk in the 53kgs (117lbs) weight class - lifting 113 kgs. (250lbs.).
- Holds the longest standing American records in the clean/jerk and snatch/clean and jerk total.
- Is the mother of three small children, one of whom is autistic, owner/operator of a gymnastics school with over 500 students, wife of WA House of Rep. legislator and a Sunday school teacher.



Melanie Roach

...in depth



As a young gymnast, Melanie's intense work ethic took her all the way to the WA State High School Championships but an injury sidelined her from the competition. Rehab included her introduction to free weights and soon thereafter a future, and powerful, star was in the making.

Shattering the stereotypical body image of weightlifters, the petite former gymnast quickly made it clear that strong things can come in small packages. In her first competition, the 1994 American Open, she won a bronze medal. In 1996, Melanie made the personal commitment to pursue her potential in weightlifting to the fullest and set her sights on the 2000 Olympic Games. She soon thereafter stunned the weightlifting world by exceeding the world standard in the clean and jerk at the 1998 US National Championships. She had become the #1 ranked US weightlifter and the first one in history to clean and jerk more than twice her body weight. She was poised for a 2000 Olympic debut.

Devastatingly, weeks before the Olympic Trials, Melanie suffered a serious back injury. Her Olympic dreams and future in the sport appeared to be over. She picked herself up and moved on. She put her energy into assisting her husband, Dan, in his election to the WA State House of Representatives while opening her own business - Roach Gymnastics, Inc. Her husband is now in the midst of his fourth term, her gymnastics school serves over 500 students and together they have three young children. All the while Melanie still yearned to compete.

In the summer of 2005, Melanie decided that it's never too late to chase your dreams. She returned to competitive weightlifting. By March of 2006 she reclaimed her spot on the US National Team and won her 6th US National Championship. She went on to place 12th at the World Championships. She underwent state of the art back surgery, not available years earlier when she left the sport. The result was her 7th US National Championship (2007) and the first time since 2000 that she clean/jerked twice her own body weight. She was back!

In Aug. of 2007 Melanie won the bronze medal at the Pam Am Games in Brazil, officially marking her return to elite international weightlifting. She will compete in the 2007 World Championships in September and aims to qualify for next summer's 2008 Olympic Games at the US National Championships in February. She is currently ranked number one in her weight class (53 kgs / 117 lbs.).

