

FILL IN THE BLANK

Ab-acus, Ab-andon, Ab-ash, _____, Ab-le, Ab-rasive, Ab-solute, Ab-"solution"

WHAT'S MISSING IN THE middle (section)? Abdominals, right? Could they be missing anywhere else? As you know, you *cannot* spot-reduce fat around your gut, but thankfully you *can* isolate your abs by working them in multiple planes of motion, using added resistance as well as both direct and indirect focus, all of which help you fulfill your aesthetic and functional potential.

In sports, your abdominals go into overtime by the end of the first quarter, right? They don't exactly get to rest during the TV time-out. I guess you could name your midsection the go-to utility player for offense, defense *and* special teams. When you move, whether it's reaching out with your arm to catch a ball or hit an opponent, your abs are working hard, firing first and remaining steadfast till the end. Imagine your core as the Marines of your Muscular Armed Forces:

STAR POWER
Gunnar's star-studded clientele includes J.Lo and Sly Stallone

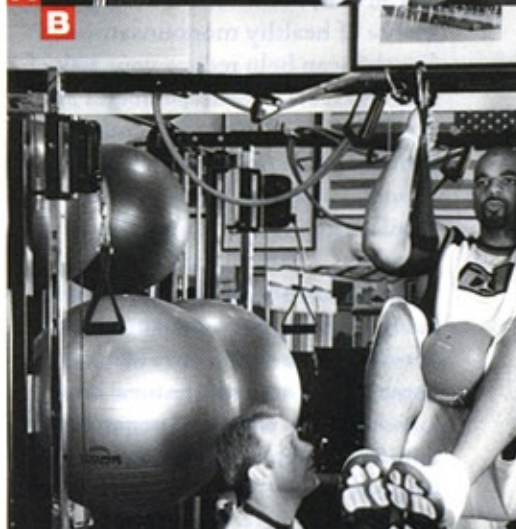
they're the first in and last out. Thus, your job as commander in chief is to make sure that your troops are prepared to go all-out from the break of the huddle till the sound of the whistle. Semper fit? Semper fit.

Think about the movements that are required in your sport (it doesn't have to include a scoreboard and cheerleaders) or leisure activity. Replicate those motions in your abdominal training. As you become more proficient, add resistance, but forget about toning, trimming and slimming because, truthfully, it's time to get to work.

I'm giving you three exercises designed to recruit your core; integrate them into your traditional ab routines and challenge yourself with different angles and various set and rep schemes. You never know when your abs will be called upon to go into overtime, so splice these exercises into your training, and consider yourself on high alert.

>> WIDE-LEG HANGING AB ROLL-UPS WITH MEDICINE BALL

Hanging from a bar or in ab straps, pull your abs in and roll your hips, knees, then feet up toward your chest. This action targets the lower part of your abdominal wall. By hanging instead of lying on a stable surface, you activate your stabilizing muscles. Doing this movement with your legs apart and squeezing a ball (weighted or not) activates the muscles of your groin, hip flexors and inner thighs, all of which are easily injured when they're not strong enough to perform on command.



CARLOS BOOZER

(AKA C-BOOZ)

Pre-Gunnar

(preseason 2005):

261 pounds, 10.4% bodyfat

Post-Gunnar (current):

272 pounds, 6.1% bodyfat

Height: 6'9"

Vertical: 32 inches

Arm span: 7'3"

Team: Utah Jazz

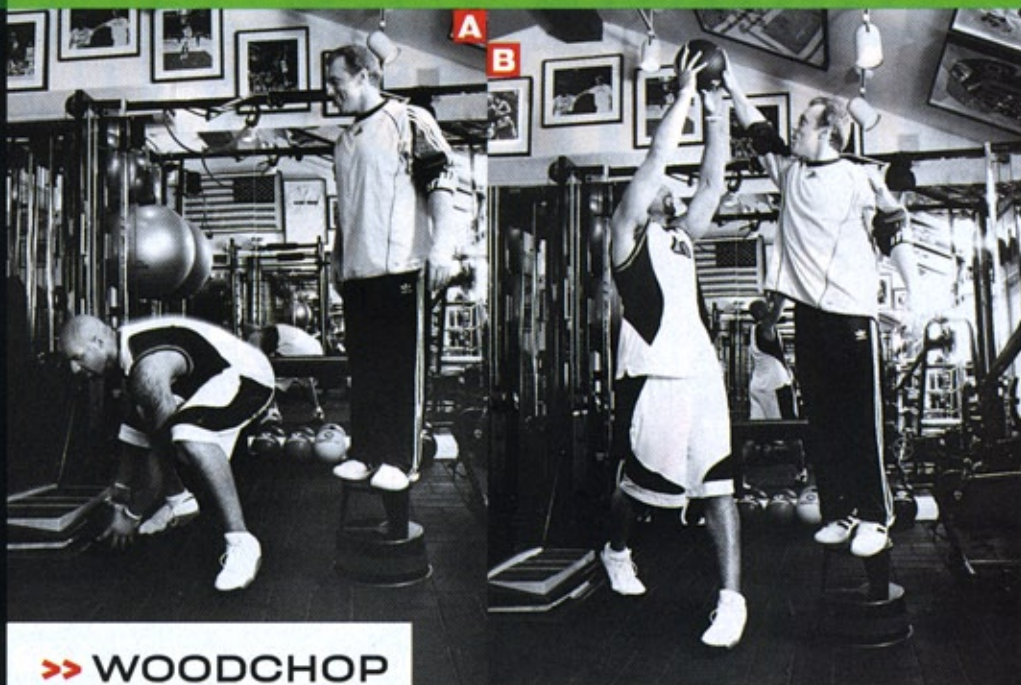
Points per game

(average): 18

Rebounds per game

(average): 9

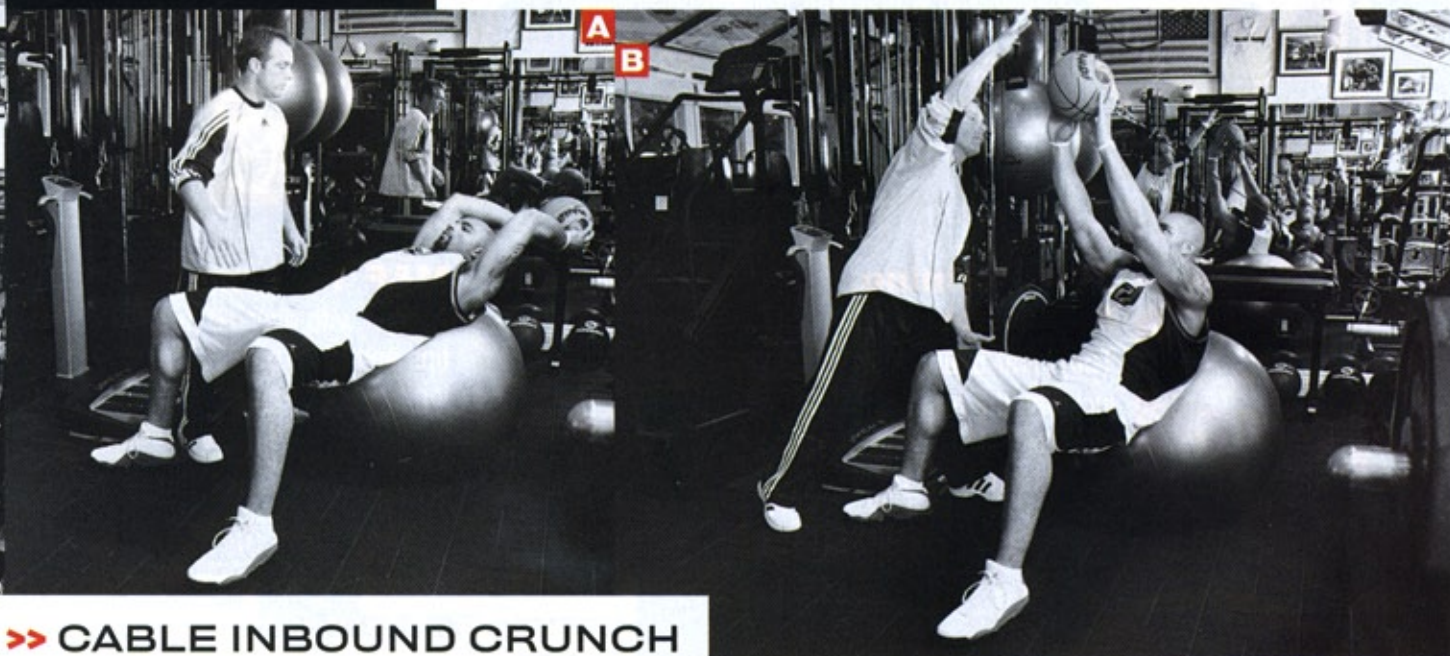
Highlights: Won the NCAA men's basketball tournament with Duke University in 2001 and a bronze medal with the U.S. men's basketball team in the 2004 Olympic Games.



>> WOODCHOP

Grasp a medicine ball, dumbbell or kettlebell, then squat down holding the weight with your arms extended to one side. As you stand, rotate your torso and raise the weight in front of your body, finishing with your outside arm near your cheek, as if you traced

Saturn's rings. Lower the weight in the same path of motion and repeat for reps, then switch sides. Keep your abs tight and pulled in while rotating without sacrificing breathing so you activate the transverse abdominis deep inside your core. (That's me, stuffing Boozer.)



>> CABLE INBOUND CRUNCH

Lie faceup on an exercise ball with your hips slightly lower than your shoulders and your feet shoulder-width apart. Extend your arms overhead and grasp a double-rope or weighted-ball attachment fixed to the lowest setting on a cable stack. Crunch up — that's up, not

forward — keeping your arms extended with a slight bend in your elbows. Lower the weight without excessive bouncing and repeat. As you improve, you can come up at different angles. The sport-specific applications of this movement are evident: You'll improve upon any

overhead athletic movement and also tax your abdominals in an unfamiliar way because you lift the load from an untraditional angle. The cable inbound crunch also isometrically works the shoulder girdle, which is considered part of the core by exercise purists.