

500 AT 51



KAREN CAMPBELL

This woman benches more than most dudes and does it single ply and tested! Karen has powerlifting-watch.com's "Best of the Best" 181 and 198 female single ply bench records and is hoping to widen the margin in April.

Karen, what is your age, height and weight and what's your occupation?

I'm 51, 5'4" and weigh 190. I'm a rural letter carrier substitute for the US Post Office in Winterport, Maine.

You just got a 500 bench in a new Katana single ply. (YouTube video – April 22 500 is the title). What is your next meet where you're going to try it out?

It will be a WABDL meet in Wisconsin Dells, WI on April 11th. I'm going to open with 501. I'm also deadlifting and will open with 450 and hopefully go over 500.

How long have you been

INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

powerlifting and how did you get involved in it?

I've been powerlifting since 2003 and competed in my first meet in 2004. My trainer, Al Stork, closed a gym he had and moved up the road. He kept sending me gift certificates so I wouldn't quit. He asked if my two kids, then 13 and 15, and I would like to try powerlifting. We started powerlifting and both my kids have dropped out, but I loved it and kept going. I was 40 when I started. I was a gymnast in high school and have always enjoyed being active. When I started lifting I weighed over 220 and it helped me manage my weight.

Did gymnastics give you those delts?

I think there's a lot of genetics, but I've always worked hard. My first meet I entered I got a 225 in a loose Titan shirt.

You have a tremendous arch and a very short stroke in the bench.

You've got to have perfect form to make it all work, even with that. My back is rarely sore, but I do a lot of foam roll work.

You also have a great deadlift. What's your best pull to date?

My best meet pull is 502 and best gym pull is 530. That was in 198's. I pull conventional because sumo feels awkward. I've got strong legs so the quad drive helps me.

How many are in your crew?

We have about 18 members. Most aren't ready to put in the work but if they stay, we welcome them. Stork Powerlifting is a small club. It was open to the public for a short while, but people complained about no windows or mirrors, so rather than putting up with all the whining, Al turned it private and it's just our crew. We have our powerlifters who know why they're there, and we just really enjoy them.

Does Al lift any more or is he

primarily a coach?

He tore his tricep and had it reattached. He can't make it do what he thinks it should, so he's mostly the coach.

What's the template or routine that you and the team follow?

We train 4-5 days a week. Monday is usually speed bench, heavy shoulders and biceps. Tuesday is leg day and deadlift work. We'll do hack squats, stiff leg deadlift, leg press and maybe dumbbell walking lunges. Those will kill you! Thursday is back and biceps, and Friday is heavy bench and light triceps. It's basic linear periodization with no heavy attempts 2-3 weeks out but we do a lot of assistance work up to the meet. We're mostly old school but we work really hard. Even on every assistance movement, we'll start with an easy weight and keep adding weight until we fail attempting one rep. That's on everything – lat pulls, skullcrushers,

pushdowns; every assistance exercise. We don't just do 3 x 8's or something like that. Every movement we go to a one rep max failure. It's very difficult. We're all drug free lifters, so whey protein and creatine is our "recovery".

You've been at this eleven years. Any sign of slowing down?

There's no reason at all to stop! I love this sport and the crew is like family. I live in Maine and when we get big snow storms and I can't get to the gym, I really don't like it. I look forward to each day of training!

You mentioned that your kids started off liking powerlifting but don't do it anymore. That leads to the question, "Why isn't powerlifting growing?"

My kids just had other interests. As far as the sport goes, I'm not sure what it is.

Ever thought about moving from snowy Maine?

Well, I live in the house that I grew up in, so that would be tough, but if the right circumstance came along I'd consider it. It's hard to get to most any meet from Maine!

You mostly lift in WABDL. Would you ever consider a full powerlifting meet in another fed?

We were going to do a full power meet in a non-tested fed. but I'm drug free and I WANT to be tested every meet that I enter. They wouldn't test me, so I just stick with WABDL.

Who would you like to thank or mention?

Titan Support systems, Vibram for my deadlift shoes, Al Stork for being the best coach ever. Seth Reed, Caleb Nute, David Palmer, Frank Lowe, Lauren Lugden and Billy Grant. My mom and my sisters Leslie and Vicky. **PLT**

