

SCOTT MECHAM



INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

BENCHING BRONCOS FAN

I saw Scott at the Olympia Pro Powerlifting meet in Las Vegas where he bench pressed 800 in a single ply shirt like it was 135! We had to delay our interview a few days recently as he was on vacation – he flew to Denver from Utah just to watch a Broncos game!

Scott, how old are you and what's your height and weight?

I'm 35 and 5'9". I usually weigh right about 240.

Where do you live and train, and what's your occupation?

I live in south Jordan, UT and I train at Elite Performance in South Jordan which is owned by Jeremy Horn, an MMA fighter. Our powerlifting crew comprises about 15 or 20 guys and we call our team Brutal Powerlifting. I'm an IT guy for a large Chevrolet dealership, basic 40 hour job. I like it.

Was that 800 bench in Vegas a record?

It was a USPA National Record and the second all time best 242 single ply record. Jimmy Kolb has the best 242 bench at 903. That will hold for a long time, but I've got the all time best 220 single ply record at 750. Both of those lifts were done at the Olympia with strict judging on the big stage.

How long have you been powerlifting and are you a bench only guy?

No, I've been competing since 2000 since I was 20. My first seven years I did full power meets and since about 2007 my life got hectic so I started just doing bench meets. It's sure helped my bench though!

Do you still squat and deadlift to stay connected to full

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powerlifting?

Oh sure, I still squat and deadlift every week and I'm going to enter a full power raw meet in about six months.

What is your best recent squat and deadlift?

I just got a 600 raw squat with just a belt and pulled 625 raw in the gym where I train. My body is built to squat. I'm 5'9" and I've sat next to people who are 6'3" and taller and I'm actually taller than they are sitting down – I've got a long torso and short legs which is optimal for squatting, but it also enables me to get a huge arch on the bench. It's a great advantage, and I still get by in the deadlift!

How did you work up to an 800 single ply? What was your progression?

Most of my training is in multi ply bench shirts. I actually train multi ply until a month out from a single ply meet. I let the multi ply shirts take all the abuse and that keeps my single ply shirts fresh for the meet. The MP shirts also let me overload much more than SP and when I jump in an SP shirt it's like it's new because it hasn't stretched out. I've been doing that for 4-5 years and it's really helped.

Isn't the groove and technique in MP way different than SP?

It is slightly different, but it's so much pressure on the body in MP that when I get in SP it almost feels like I'm benching raw. It really carries over well for me. My shirt is tight, but I can get it off myself in about 10 seconds.

I always wonder how big benchers get rid of the fear of having 700, 800, or even 900 over their face. How do you do it?

It just takes experience. A lot of lifters tense up, they get scared and out of the groove. You have to be able to relax, lower that bar fast, have faith in your shirt and yourself that it will come back up. You basically have to take advantage of the

stretch reflex. The longer it takes to touch, the longer it's going to take on the way up so the quicker the better.

800 is a huge bench at 242! What were you benching three years ago?

I got 700 three years ago. I did 600 in 2007, so it's just a slow steady progression. You're looking at about 100 pounds every three years and obviously it gets slower as the weight gets way heavier! I still feel like I've got lots more in me – I just haven't had that perfect meet yet. At the Olympia the 800 was fast but the third attempt of 815 was even faster. It went back to the rack too fast and if I would've had more weight, it would have slowed me down enough where I could have stayed in the groove better.



800 at 2014 Olympia Pro Powerlifting Meet

Your crew at Elite Performance can lift off and spot well enough?

People come and people go but there's always a nucleus of 15-20 good powerlifters there. I'm always recruiting more people to train with us.

Lay out your basic training template going into the Olympia.

Tuesday is speed bench day, usually with bands or chains or both, 8 sets of triples. I then go to floor press or something resembling a bench press for 6-10 reps, then a tricep movement, some shoulders and lats and I'm done. Saturday is heavy bench using movements that resemble the bench but not an actual bench. We work up to a 1 rep max and do three singles at 90% or above and some assistance work.

If I didn't know better I'd say that's Prilepins table of percents from the Westside template.

Exactly! We follow Prilepins table to a "T" and have since day one.

How about squat and deadlift?

Monday is heavy squat working up to 3 singles then leg assistance work. The following Monday is heavy deadlift day. We do reverse hypers, glute ham raises and do lats and abs against bands. Thursday is speed squat and deadlift day, 8x2 on squat and 8x1 for deadlift. It's the Westside template. I'm not doing any box squats right now because of the upcoming raw meet.

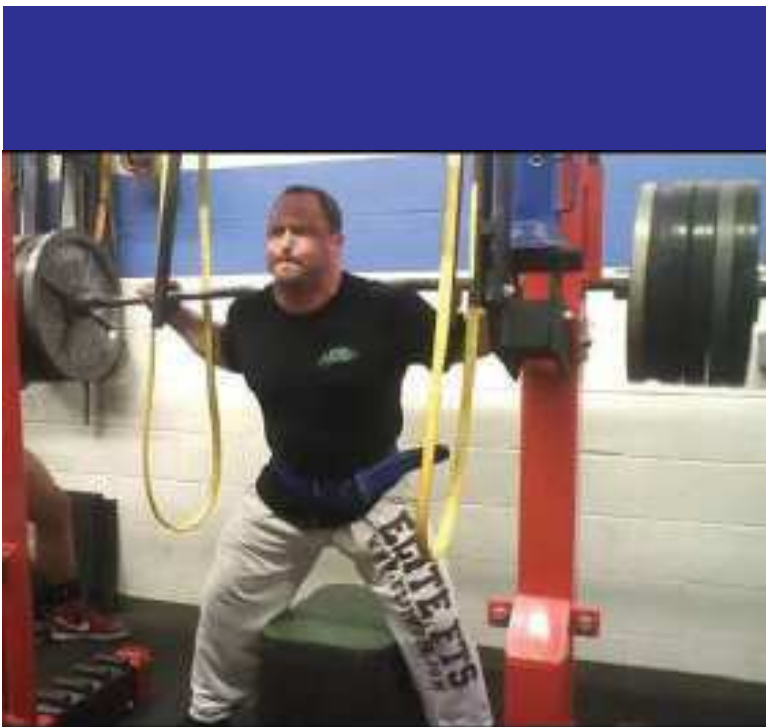
When do you shirt up for a meet?

I train in a shirt every other week all year long. I used to get in the shirt about every 4 weeks when I was at 600, then I switched to every other week and my bench took off. Some guys don't even gear up until 3-4 weeks from a meet. They're not used to the shirt, they haven't had enough overload; I don't see how they do it.

Do you try and touch to the chest every workout?

No matter if it's multi ply or single ply I touch every 5 or 6 workouts. I mostly focus on overload. I like fighting through the pressure of the shirt but you've got to touch so I touch because that's what you do in a meet. Guys get used to hitting a board too much and when they have to touch at the meet, they just dump it on their belly. You need to touch the chest often enough to know what it feels like.

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ABOVE - Raw Squat - Scott is not just a big bencher

OPPOSITE PAGE - Raw 695



So four weeks out you're in the shirt every week?

Yes, I don't put on the single ply Super Katana until I'm two weeks out. It's been a recipe for success, so why fight it? Ken Anderson is always shocked when I get alterations close to the meet, but I know how the shirt should feel after all these years.

Ever thought about going up to 275?

No! I'm real comfortable around 240 and if I want to cut to 220, I can do it in three weeks. For the Olympia I ate whatever I wanted, drank lots of water and I made 242 by a tenth of a pound. I don't like cutting weight like almost every lifter does – it's too hard on the body to try and rehydrate and get back weight quickly.

How long do you think you'll keep doing this?

I think I can do it easily into my fifties or sixties. I've never had an injury and whether that's just luck, diet, knowing when to back off or what, I'm not sure.

Do you think gear has something to do with that?

Oh sure! If I was just a raw lifter my bench career would have been done five or six years ago. I give credit to gear for

preventing injuries.

How do you describe powerlifting gear to the general public?

I describe its protective value and the differences between raw, multi ply and single ply. They sort of understand it but they're still amazed at the weights that are lifted. I still keep my raw strength up. I hit a touch and go gym lift 1 ½ years ago with 550. Warming up I'll go to 455, maybe 485 raw and board work I'll hit in the 600's. My best raw three board is a 670 and then I'll hit a set or two with the Titan Ram at that weight. I usually don't put a shirt on until 700 or 715 and go from there. My last warmup at the Olympia was a raw 635 to a two board. I bring my grip in to pinky on the rings and competition grip is index finger on the rings so that helps save the shoulders but I've got really good tricep strength.

Who would you like to thank or mention?

Ken Anderson at www.andersonpowerlifting.com for his sponsorship and amazing customer service. I'd like to thank all my training partners of Brutal Powerlifting because you can't do this alone. They keep things fun and motivating, and Drage Nutrition for great products. I think one of the biggest keys to success and happiness in competitive powerlifting or any other lifestyle is to have supportive family and friends. **PLT**