

SCOT MENDELSON

On May 22, 2005, Scot Mendelson stepped up to show the world, again, that he is without a doubt the strongest bench presser in the world. The New England Bench Press Classic aggressively marketed their competition, inviting all the top benchers to come and show what they can "really" lift, without a bench press shirt. Very few benchers showed up to the challenge. Mendelson made history that day with a 755 lb. Raw bench press. Then, on August 8, 2005 at the APF California Open, Mendelson captured the 308 lb. All-time bench press record, breaking Ryan Kennelly's record with a 915 lb. bench press. Scot Mendelson is a multiple time world and national champion and an APF/WPO world record holder. He currently holds the all-time 308 equipped record and the all-time largest raw bench press in all weight classes. Monster Muscle recently had the opportunity to catch up with Scot and ask a few questions.

MM: You have a slogan that "Discipline Equals Power." Explain this.

Scot: Hard work pays off. Stay true to your program, training and diet. It is a lifestyle choice. I never cheat on my diet, I don't go out and party. I haven't drank a beer in five years. I am 100% percent dedicated to my lifting and never waiver. You have to identify your priorities and maintain them.

MM: You have been touted as the World's #1 Bench. What do you think about that? Does pressure come with the label?

Scot: I call myself that. I truly know that I AM the strongest man. I have never been beaten or out lifted by anyone in a meet, unless I bombed out. To me there is no second place. The pressure is

constantly on, but more from me – from my mind. It is certainly a large amount of stress, but I have always wanted to be the world's strongest bench and have learned to expect the pressure. Every time I compete I throw up beforehand. It is a tradition. I typically lose fifteen pounds of bodyweight before getting on the platform.

MM: Do you feel that you have to perform for the crowd or for others' expectations?

Scot: I never used to think about the crowd, just on the bench press. But as my popularity grew, it was really easy to get sucked into the drama of the world. It happened for awhile. I felt I needed to live up to the expectations and my performance suffered as a result. When I was trying to get that 1000 lbs. in the bench press, I was trying to obtain that number for both me and the people. Now I am back to the "Old Mendy." I am lifting for me now and the numbers will come.

MM: What have you learned over the years in powerlifting?

Scot: Over the years I have learned that the sport of powerlifting is not as pure as I thought it was. Some people give away lifts to people that don't deserve them. I work really hard to be a perfectionist. I personally don't use multi-ply equipment. I used to think that everyone is fair but it is not a fair world. I don't take it too personally anymore. This is the reason why I also lift Raw. When you see me on the platform you know it's all me. I can perform in both areas unlike most lifters. I wish that all the best lifters in the world would turn out and put in on the line so we could see what the real deal is. For most lifters, if they don't have a multiply shirt on, they can't lift anything. Then there are the lifters that have the "tricks" such as pulling their shirts over the elbows and don't lock out the bench, still getting white lights nonetheless. We need consistent rules. Lifters need to wear their equipment correctly and compete in a national or world meet, not some questionable federation or backyard meet.

MM: Who do you consider to be the top benchers today?

Scot: Aside from myself, I believe Garry Frank, Andy Fielder and Ryan Kennelly are the strongest lifters in the world. I'll count Rychlak when he comes up to me with a shirt that counts.

MM: What kind of cross training do you do?

Scot: I do a lot of boxing, muay thai, kick boxing... It helps keep me loose and keeps my stamina up. Most lifters conk out after three lifts. I am good for eight lifts. I'll go 755, 805, 835, 885, 905, 965 and 1005 lbs. in one workout. I am good for multiple heavy lifts. All of that has to do with stamina. Everyone is powerful out of the gate, like a race horse, but all of the sudden the majority of them die off. I learned a lot from watching tennis legend, Martina Navratilova. She really wanted to be a great tennis player but reached a point where nothing could make her get better. Then she cross trained in swimming and volleyball and accomplished feats of wonder in her own sport. She is an incredible woman.

MM: You hold titles in both Raw and Equipped bench press. Which means more to you?

Scot: I feel the fact that I have both titles is really cool. I am the only man to hold both titles simultaneously. Benching over a grand with equipment is a rush, but hitting a 755 lb. raw bench press is not too shabby. It is a hard question to answer because I really like equipment.

MM: You recently competed in The New England Bench Press Classic which invited all the top benchers to bench press Raw for cash prizes. Very few lifters stepped up to the plate. Why do you think so?

Scot: Because they knew I would take the money. Competing Raw is not their deal. They don't have the strength. Most lifters are technicians with equipment. Very rarely do you see both.

MM: We hear that you are a real family man. Tell us about your family and their involvement with your powerlifting career.

Scot: My wife Maricelle is very involved in my career. She trains with me, keeps my head straight and keeps people away from me when I am preparing before I lift. She runs my life and I truly appreciate everything she does. I have three children: Jasmine 2, Troy 4 and Jade 8, who I love dearly along with my wife. We have come from nothing and have created our family, our business

MONSTER MUSCLE MAGAZINE

and have worked very hard for everything we have. Without them I wouldn't be able to do what I do. Years ago I was already lifting 635 lbs. Raw. While eating out with my wife, we bought a powerlifting magazine. There was a state meet approaching close to our home and she encouraged me to do it. My wife is also a champion powerlifter and pulled a silver medal at the WPC Worlds last year, benching 405 lbs. My sister, Shawna, is also a great lifter. I love her very dearly. She is a 2-3 time National Champion and just opened up a gym.

MM: We understand that you have unique training methods? What specifically makes your training unique?

Scot: My training covers all aspects. If you leave a weak area you will have a weakness. You need to be a perfect machine. Most powerlifters aren't athletes; they just lift. When you take an athlete and incorporate powerlifting, you get a much different beast.

MM: Many of the original competitors of Bench America have voiced some dislikes about the event. What is your opinion? Will you compete there again?

Scot: Joe Mukite constantly changes the rules. If he wants to get the best lifters, he needs to keep the rules consistent. They allowed double-ply shirts when I first competed, now only single-ply. If I decide to lift there again, I will lift Raw. I would rather do a 735 lb. Raw bench press on national TV and get the credit of a 900 lb. bench once they figure in all their "deductions."

MM: You just broke Kennelly's bench press record. At the APF Nationals in Detroit earlier this year, you also attempted to break his record. Did you ever get credit for that lift?

Scot: They decided not to give me the lift. It was a mistake and Kieran Kidder didn't want to deal with the controversy. I hit the weight easily, even Ryan Kennelly said it was a good lift and it was his record that I broke. They gave me the world record papers and said to fill them out. I got a red light from the head judge, and the two side judges said they red lighted me because the head judge red lighted me. Technically it was still a world record, because Kennelly's record was hit on a 4th lift after he didn't make the first three. So technically I have the world record with 881 lbs. Everything was screwed up in that meet. I even found out when I got my medal that they put me in the SHW class when I weighed in at 308 lbs. The wonderfully organized APF... The record should

have counted for the 308 lb. class, not SHW. It doesn't really matter to me now because I have the record as of August 8th. But it was a national meet and should have been run to a certain standard.

MM: There was recently a rumor that Glen Chabbot is planning a comeback to break your Raw record.

Scot: I think he is a very strong lifter. I think he has had a lot of bad breaks. I would like to see him back on the platform. Let me know when and where so I know when to beat him.

MM: What would you like to see happen in the sport of powerlifting?

Scot: I think there should be video judging because there are so many mistakes being made. They do it on the tennis court so they could do it at the big meets. If they make a mistake, it should be reviewed. If there was video judging for questionable calls, it would be a perfect sport.

MM: Every time you compete, your wife slaps the hell out of you. Does this help fire you up, or does she really hate your guts?

Scot: It definitely fires me up. It makes me want to kill. It is a form of controlled domestic violence, lol. She does it all the time and even draws blood sometimes.

MM: You are 6'1" and weigh 330 lbs. What is your food intake like? Where do you think your natural bodyweight falls?

Scot: I have no idea. I was 250 lbs. before I started powerlifting seriously. I consume 12,000 calories a day (7500 calories come from weight gainer, my own personal blend). My weight gainer blend was recently picked up by Dorian Yates Approved and will be on the store shelves soon. I eat up to five lbs. of red meat a day, lots of vegetables, chicken and pasta. Weighing over 300 lbs. puts stress on the body. There will be a point when I will slim down to 280 lbs. Right now I am in good health and take care of myself.

MM: It seems like lifters are putting more effort into getting more poundage out of their gear, instead of getting physically stronger. What are your thoughts on this?

Scot: I think it is true, but you can't blame the gear. You have to blame the lifter. It's not the gear's fault that the lifter is lazy. If you build yourself up physically and technically, you can be the best in the world. That is the reason for all the

muscle tears and injuries because lifters are attempting more weight than their body can handle.

MM: How has your training changed since your younger years?

Scot: I have learned much, especially not to over train. I had a habit of over training when I was with the LA Lifting Club. I no longer do any band, chain or speed work because I feel it is bad for my joints. I pay more attention to my body as well.

MM: You were recently involved in a life-threatening car accident. Tell us what happened.

Scot: I was driving along the freeway in California one night. I was in the fast lane when suddenly the car in front of me jerked out of the way uncovering a stopped car that I hit full speed. The talus bone and heel snapped off my foot and my tibia cracked down middle. I also suffered broken ribs and cracked open my head. I think the steering wheel saved me, which by the way I snapped off with my hands. But then seven other cars hit me from behind. I couldn't get out of my car and it was smoking very badly. Many people tried to help but had no luck. Finally the rescue team pulled me out. When they put me on the back board, the two guys couldn't lift me up. It took six guys to carry me to the ambulance. I told them I would have dieted down a bit had I known. I spent the next eight days in intensive care. I thank God and my wife for taking care of the business and the kids. It has been a very rough recovery but I have trained very, very hard. I still can't walk well. Unfortunately my foot healed wrong and I will need surgery to re-break and set my foot. The only thing I can do correctly is bench. Fortunately I bench on my toes. I just want to be able to walk normal again. My doctor told me he had bad news. He said that I may never be able to run again. I told him that I have never run before so I'd get over it, lol.

MM: Who would like you like to thank?

Scot: I'd like to thank my wife, both of my powerlifting teams, my lift off man – IFBB Pro Bodybuilding Champ, Moe Anouti (For all of you who want to know who that guy is...), Genard Wells, my workout partner for 20 years and anyone else who has supported me. I'd also like to thank my sponsors: John Inzer, Dorian Yates Approved, BodyQuick, FIT, Forza Strength Systems, Crepinsek's Strength Systems and Karin's Xtreme Powerwear.

