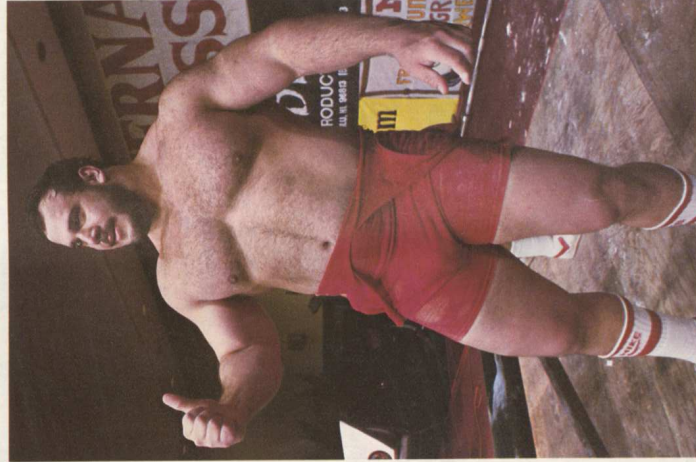


INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

TED ARCIDI

World's Biggest Bench/Wrestling Superstar



PL USA: What bench strength are you able to maintain these days?

Arcidi: When I was out of Gold's Gym in August, I managed a 675 single lift. I did 620x3 and a 630x2. I feel that I could get a good cycle going again, over 2 1/2 or 3 months could probably pop 740. My behind the neck press is staying the same, 360 or 365 for 3 reps. My trieps are up to par. On French curls to the nose, when I'm peaking, I still get about 355-360 for a set of 6 and I'm curling about 210 for 6 now. My curl seems to have gone up. On my squats, I just maintain by doing 450-500 for 10 reps, because you need your mobility for wrestling. McMahon (World Wrestling Federation Promoter) and everyone had been telling me that it would be tough to maintain my World Record capability, but all in all, at no time, even in the winter doldrums or when I've been sick, have I been much less than 10% of my best, and that's still pretty good. Anytime I want, I can roll out of bed and do a 600 bench.

PL USA: How about your body weight? Are you still up?

Arcidi: I'm about 285. I try to be around 280-285, because when you get over that you just get too tired in the ring. I could easily go up to 295, even 300 if I have to.

PL USA: How big are your arms and chest now?

Arcidi: The arms are generally about 24", and the chest is probably around 60". The thing that's really gone up on me is my traps. A lot of people have noticed that my traps are bigger. That's not due to deadlifting, because I really don't do a lot of deadlifting. I might do some good mornings and light deadlifts Saturdays, but it's from the behind-the-neck press that I've got to pop up.

PL USA: When you go to a gym, while you're on tour worldwide, do people know who you are?

Arcidi: Yeah, with all the media exposure since I got in. It's a marketing angle, because I'm involved with an exercise that's the most familiar to the public, and I capitalize on that as far as any weightlifting buff or anyone in a gym. I get pretty well received in gyms. I'll tell ya, I got a nice collection of t-shirts now. It all stems from the little contests I went to in Massachusetts and through New England, and then when I got invited to see that at least one lift is recognized by the world. They're not into the squat, total or deadlift too much. If I can contribute in one lift, and be the best at it and have people realize that it is an important powerlift, I'm happy.

PL USA: Now that you've done this, other lifters are interested in getting into pro wrestling now.

Arcidi: Yes, it's almost a "monkey

tured a couple ribs. I twisted my ankle, and from going off the ropes I managed to create a bunch of callouses across my lats.

PL USA: Who will be the next person to bench 700?

Arcidi: It depends: 700 in their backyard or 700 in a meet? I won't recognize a 700 lb. lift unless it's at a big meet, like the Hawaiians or the Seniors, not a hometown meet. I thought Sam Samaninco, the way he was gunning, was going to be the next guy. I thought Lee Moran was too, but he seems to be in a stalemate now. I have no knowledge of his Ken Fantano. I've never seen him lift. I find it hard to believe that someone who did 600 a few months ago is supposedly going up to 700 for his next meet. I wish him all the best, and I'll be the first to congratulate him if he goes to Hawaii to do it, under more scrutiny, not at a local meet somewhere.

PL USA: Do you intend to compete again in powerlifting?

Arcidi: I do. I had a talk with a promoter, and I'll either bring the whole circus to Madison Square Garden where I can go for 740, or I'll do it for the cameras in Hawaii. I'd like to do it at a meet, but if McMahon wants it done at Madison Square Garden, I'm sure there wouldn't be a problem getting a sanctioned meet there. I'm up to get 740. I feel that I can do it. I swear I had 720 the last time. I haven't been injured. I've had some inflammation, common inflammation, in my elbows and shoulders, but I still think that explosion is there, especially if when I can work up to a few reps in the low 600s at any given time in a cycle, especially when you're on the road. Right now I'm off until I go to Calgary for a month and a half, and then I go to Japan for two months. I'm off now, and my schedule is a lot better, but when I'm on tour, it's two weeks on and one off. When I'm on for two weeks, I finish midnight, get back to the motel at 11:00, and I go to bed. I finish calls, and lift a quick shower, and then I normally would if I was training back home, probably around 1:00 PM. I'm on a plane or into a rent-a-car going to the next house. A lot of gymrats in wrestling are different, but my gym-mate happens to be a real one. Oh, and a body I'm out of a job. Paul O'Malley is the same way, he's got a hell of a physique and even Hogan, because I did the weight, and if I don't they all train diligently. They don't screw around at night. A lot of these guys like to party and do everything, but I'm basically a loner, to be honest with you. On the road, they're my friends who see me and they're my train when I train, I eat when I want, I sleep when I want, just like when

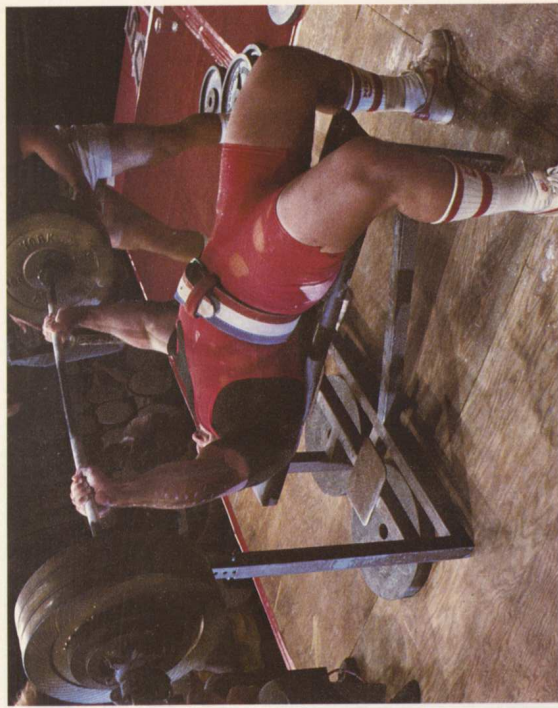
I was training for powerlifting. That's my most successful combination.

PL USA: Who are some wrestlers you think could've been great powerlifters, and are really strong?

Arcidi: Tony Atlas would've been a hell of a bench. I've seen him do 600 at Gold's, and he's on the road a lot. I think Patsky would've. He trained with Young a lot, he told me. O'Malley would've been a hell of a powerlifter. You can tell by the way these guys train. It's funny, I have to mention the style, I used to get so psyched up when I just had powerlifting. I would teach school during the day, and I was even getting psyched during school to lift, but now I don't even have time to psyche up. I just go in and I do it, and it's great. It's like second nature now. Today I'm going to go down to the gym, and I'm not even thinking about my reps and I'll crank out 570 for 5. I take it for granted that I have to do it; it's part of my regime.

PL USA: How about these guys that make inflated bench pressing claims? How do you deal with that?

Arcidi: I guess I deal with it the same way you do, take it with a grain of salt, and hope that they surface in a good meet. There are inflated claims in wrestling. God knows, and I've found out the truth about that, but that's wrestling and you need that synergism with the different types of people you have an angle to go at. So, I'd like to understand, but as far as I go, I'm coming up with claims, but I almost take it in stride because it's going to happen. Usually, it's people who don't want to put the work in. I'll tell you, I never made a claim. I never told anyone I was going to go 700 in Hawaii. I was getting a warrant for my first record, and I went for 700 in Hawaii. I just told them I went for a record, period. When I did it, and I didn't even lock out 614, I had been telling everyone I was going for 622, so I ate my share of crow.



THAT MAGIC MOMENT when Ted Arcidi became the first man to lock out 700 in competition. Lambert photo

Now, even if I go for a record, I'll just do my best. I find that takes a lot of pressure off me. But, yeah, it pisses me off when you hear people out of nowhere are doing this, or their brother has a friend whose wife's cousin who can do that. "Oh, yeah, he's like you, but he's twice your size." I'd just as soon slap these people in the face. It's par for the course. You get the same thing in wrestling too, Mike Bridges, Lee Moran, Doug Furnas, Mike Donald set. PL USA: Name what you think should do in his training routine.

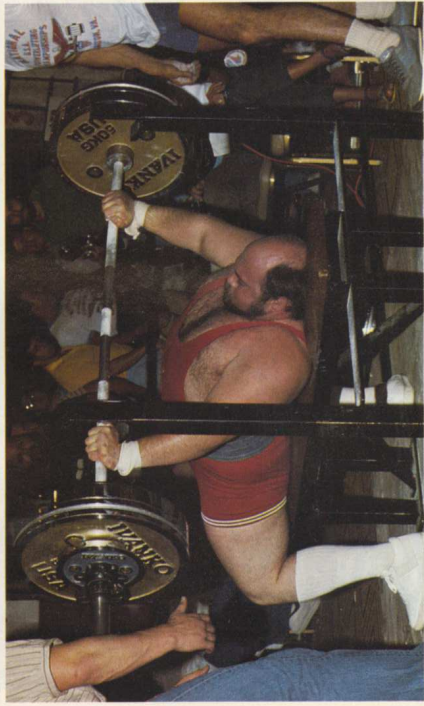
Arcidi: If he's going to bench, he should realize that God gave him two arms, a chest, and shoulders. He should try to utilize all those appendages, all those joints, not just the pieces, because you'll end up blowing out your pecs. I'd say build up those tris, build up those chest muscles, build up the traps, and build up the lats for a great base. Number One, you will have a lesser chance for injury, and I figure you'll look a lot better too.

PL USA: Some wrestlers have a gimmick, and right now yours is strength. You're not going to come out with something new, like wearing a dress, are you?

Arcidi: No way. I'd hang it up. I'd go to another federation. Strength is my gimmick. If someone does break my record, I was always the first to do it, and that's going to hold forever.

PL USA: What kind of money would it take to get you into hard training for a professional bench press championship competition?

Arcidi: I'd say about \$10,000 to \$15,000. I know I could make a lot more money on the road, but just for the sake of doing it in a big meet, I'd have to say that much anyway.



Who Will Be Next to Bench 700? Ken Fantano got an easy 617 at Glenn Stevens' Adirondack Nationals, but missed 661 twice. Still, he's programmed for '707 in 87'. Wyoming Superheavy left Maddy just cracked a 640 and looks to be on the way up. Even 242 pounder Dan Mlodzeniec has a shot, after hitting a 630 weighing 232, and looking good for 650 right now. Any other suggestions? Photo of Ken Fantano above by Deb Mizel.