

INTERVIEW

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

30 years from now when you are telling your grandchildren about the great female powerlifters of your time, one name is sure to fall from your lips, Mary Jeffrey. She has beauty, grace, class, style and she is very, very strong. In the last four years, Mary has set, broken and reset more records than any other female powerlifter. In the last USPF Sr. Nationals, she set six world records, more than most lifters set alone in their entire career.

Dan: How did you get started in weight training?

Mary: I started lifting because some guys, mainly Ken Wheeler, at the YMCA in Bakersfield, CA needed a 114 lb. lifter to fill the slot on their team. The gymnastic team I was on worked out at the Y and to end our training we always had to do pullups, pushups, situps, and other strength movements until we couldn't do any more. The lifters upstairs used to watch us and thought I would be good at the bench. I was and I haven't stopped since. Thanks Ken.

Dan: With all your success, what keeps you motivated?

Mary: I have a need to succeed. We all need success, but more than anything I think when a person finds something they are good at and soon becomes better, and then is given the opportunity because of their involvement in that activity to travel, meet interesting people, and become politically involved, that makes it all worthwhile. Secondly, I am motivated by the group of people I work out with. We have a large group that meets on Sundays to do heavy squats and deadlifts. To watch the efforts they put forth really pushes me to work that much harder. Lastly, the likes of Sisi Dolman and Carrie Graffam does a lot to move me and the weights these days.

Dan: What titles have you won?

Mary: 11 National Championships, 9 World Titles (USPF/IPF & APF/WPC). Now only competing in and supporting USPF/IPF competitions. #1 Ranked female powerlifter in the World. Ms. USA Bodybuilding Champion.

Dan: What is your philosophy when training for a contest?

Mary: I train 4 days a week. Sunday, heavy squats/heavy deadlifts, assistance work. Tuesday, light bench, assistance work.

MARY JEFFREY

interviewed by World Champion Dan Austin



Mary Jeffrey benching at the 1991 U.S.P.F. Senior Nationals in Texas

Wednesday, light squats/light back work. Friday, heavy bench, assistance work.

Dan: How do you prepare yourself mentally before a contest?

Mary: I try not to let anything negative become a distraction. I repeat positive statements to myself, assuring myself that "I AM STRONG". I silently repeat this phrase especially while coming up with a difficult squat or heavy deadlift. Also, I write down the weight I plan on lifting - every attempt I will take and possible totals. It worked for me in Dallas, so I'll try it again.

Dan: To what do you contribute your success?

Mary: I contribute my success in part to the great relationship I have with my husband/coach Dave, and step daughters Lori and Sara Beth who have both competed in and won Teenage Nationals. This is something we all do together. Our friend and practically family member, Stuart Thomson, has always been a giant help and I rely on him greatly. He always helps me no matter what he is doing. Also a good gene pool, and support of my genetic donors, my parents, Richard and Rosemary Ryan.

Dan: How do you avoid overtraining and injuries?

Mary: I can't overtrain because I don't lift heavy all the time. When I do train heavy the cycles only last 8-12 weeks. As far as staying injury free, warming up on a Lifecycle or treadmill and a good stretching routine will do wonders. Also, a trip or two to the chiropractor to keep things in line is usually a good idea.

Dan: How has your husband, Dave Jeffrey, been an instrumental part of your success?

Mary: Dave does everything for me but lift the weights and fix my meals. He plans my training, cycles the weights, picks the dates, and he is there for my heavy workouts. His presence is so stimulating that everyone he trains lifts much better when he is there.

Dan: How does your diet differ when you are training for a contest?

Mary: That depends on whether I lift 114 or 123. If I lift 114 then I'm pretty strict on my diet, balanced meals, very little junk, nothing after 6:00 P.M. If I lift 123 then it's 'pig out city'.

Dan: The comment has been made that you have the best set of abs on a female powerlifter, what do you do for them?

Mary: When I'm in shape my abs are one bodypart I will compare with any powerlifter or body-

builder, male or female, except that I'm a little shy about lifting up my shirt. I do inverted ab crunches 3 x 20, sit ups 2 x 25, and knee raises 2 x 30. I think my abs are always going to be there. My whole family has them.

Dan: Mary, what have been the highlights of your lifting career?

Mary: All of it. The people, the travel, the strength gains I've made, 9 for 9 meets with personal bests and records, but there is one thing that hasn't happened yet. In all the years I have lifted and with all that I have accomplished, I wonder what it takes to be featured on the cover of the very magazine that is the voice of our sport. It keeps me in my place I guess. A good reminder that I do this for me.

Dan: What is your position on the USPF board and what goals would you like to accomplish during your tenure?

Mary: I am the U.S.P.F. Women's Committee Chairperson. My goal is to get every registered powerlifter to encourage any woman they know to get in a meet even if it is only a bench meet, just to show them how fun, intense, challenging and exhilarating it can be, and it can be all of these things.

Dan: What direction would you like to see women's powerlifting go?

Mary: To the Olympics!!!

Dan: Mary, give us the first thought that comes to mind on the following lifters: Glynis Bierria: Beautiful. Her strength threshold is yet untapped. Barbara Crocker: Forthright. Incredibly intense on the lifting platform. Tammy Di Anda: Strong! Coming into her own and climbing. Jackie Pierce: Accomplished. Focused on the platform. Awesome: Ruth Walker: An achiever. My good friend and training partner. Smart, Goal oriented in all phases of life.

Dan: What's your advice to female lifters?

Mary: Be reasonable. Don't stop being coachable. Remember, no matter how strong you get, someday there will always be someone stronger, so don't do anything foolish trying to get there faster.

Dan: Any additional questions or comments you would like to make?

Mary: Yes, do you have the Beatles White album?