

# INTERVIEW

## JEFF LEWIS

interviewed by Bruce Citerman

**BC:** What is your full name?

**JL:** Jeffrey Michael Lewis

**BC:** What are your age, bodyweight, and occupation?

**JL:** I am 35 years old. I am 6'3", and 539 lbs. I went up 12 lbs. for my last meet. Not on purpose, I just didn't keep up on my cardio. I am a Territory Manager for Simplicity Vacuums, at the Tacony Corporation, in Fenton, MO. I am responsible for 11 states and 160 accounts.

**BC:** What are your best lifts?

**JL:** My squat is 1201.5 with a Boss suit and briefs, and 959 with a single-ply Titan. My bench is 788 with a 2-ply Fury, 705 with a single-ply Fury, and my Bench America best is 738 with a single ply Fury. My deadlift is 733. My total with a single-ply is 2342, and with a double-ply it is 2679.

**BC:** How long have you been lifting, and where?

**JL:** I joined a gym in 1991, the St. Louis Weightlifting Club, shortly after my 21st birthday. I was working full time and going to college. I have always been active in organized sports, and love the thrill of competition. I have lifted in ADFPA, USPF, NASA, SLP, WPO, IPF, USAPL, and a few non-sanctioned events.

**BC:** What style of training do you use?

**JL:** I have been using Westside style for about ten years, although I started out using progressive overload.

**BC:** What type of equipment do you use, and how do you get the most out of it?

**JL:** I am currently using Titan gear, Boss suit and briefs, and Boss bench shirt. I use an Inzer Hardcore squat suit to deadlift, when I pull Sumo. I like to keep it simple with the equipment, so I use it every two weeks during the last eight weeks of the cycle. I am still learning to use the bench shirt, so I rely on my training partners, who have had some experience with the double-ply shirts, to help me increase my bench. The squat suit is pretty easy, get it tight and supportive, but not restrictive to the point that you can't hit your groove. I do most of my training without a belt.

**BC:** What is your background?

**JL:** Needless to say, I have always been a big guy. I played baseball, soccer, and basketball as a kid. When I got to high school, I started to play select indoor soccer. I played for three different teams, and I was the starting goalie on all three teams. I have always been light on my feet for a big guy and I loved the challenge of the fast little guys thinking I was too slow to dive for balls, and make kick saves and get right back up for the rebounds. I had a lot of practice because my brother was really fast and weighed about 165 lbs., and he was a fantastic soccer player. I am married to Patti Lewis, for nine years, my wonderful wife, and we have one child and he is seven years old. His name is Justin.

**BC:** Where do you train?

**JL:** I train at Alpha Strength Systems in Festus, MO. We are located about 30 minutes from downtown St. Louis, MO. This place has three power racks, two benches, two reverse hypers, belt squat machine, Mono-lift, two glute-calf-ham machines, and the best power atmosphere anywhere, bar none.

**BC:** Who do you admire in the sport?

**JL:** Joe Scalzitti - the man who got me started in the sport, my friend, mentor, and my father figure. I love you, Dad. Pat and Mike Anderson - these guys have been with me through thick and thin. Two of the best training partners for which a person could ask. Their knowledge of the sport and technical advice is unsurpassed. Kurt Richardson, my coach, he knows numbers like no one else. Ed Coan, with his intensity. Captain Kirk with raw power. Also Gene Bell, Brian Siders, Scott Smith, Shane Hamman, Big Clay Brandenburg, Garry Frank, and Dave Ricks.

**BC:** Do you see any up and coming lifters you'd like to acknowledge?

**JL:** Yes, there is Justin Newsome, Josh Kirsch, Ben Kuvor, and Rodney Wood.

**BC:** How did you start lifting?

**JL:** Joe Scalzitti and Mike Anderson helped me with my first training cycle and took me to my first meet. I have to mention my friends and training partners from the old club, Doc Joe, Mike, Pat, Beer, Hub, Pete Kammerer, Gene Finnochio, Wide Willy, and Darren Gilley.

**BC:** What lifting technique suits you best in each of the three lifts, and what do you concentrate on most during your lifts?

**JL:** For my squat, I use a slightly wide stance. For my bench I keep my elbows in, and for my deadlift I use a Sumo stance. When I am lifting, I think about my form, technique, and complete explosive power.

**BC:** Please list your training bests in some of the more common movements.

**JL:** Squat: 10 sets of 2 at 455, with 50 seconds rest, and done with all equipment.... 1085 single. Bench with a Boss bench shirt, 800 with a single, 855 on a 3-board, for one rep, 905 for 1 rep rack lockouts. Deadlift with a Hardcore squat suit, 800 for 2 five inch block.

**BC:** What is your training routine?

**JL:** Monday: squat and pull: 2-1/2 hours.

Wednesday: speed bench 1-1/2 hours. Thursday: deadlift and squat assistance 1-1/2 hours. Saturday: heavy bench 2 hours. I also walk for 40 minutes, five days a week.

**BC:** What specific exercises do you believe have been effective in increasing your bench, squat, and deadlift?

**JL:** Squat: Raw box squats. Bench: board presses. Deadlift: Nothing yet.

**BC:** Have you ever reached a plateau on any of your lifts?

**JL:** My deadlift is a work in progress.

**BC:** What has gotten you to your current level?

**JL:** Great coaching and consistent training.

**BC:** Have you ever had any injuries?

**JL:** Nothing too serious. I stretch and I see a chiropractor regularly.

**BC:** How do you feel about what you've accomplished so far and what are your goals?

**JL:** When I retire, that will be the time to look at accomplishments. For now, I don't put any limits on what I can do. I just go out and compete as hard as I can and use the tools with which God has blessed me.

**BC:** How do you intend on continuing to progress?

**JL:** Hard work, dedication, and great coaching.

**BC:** What do you recommend non-elite lifters should concentrate more on in training?

**JL:** Keep it simple. Find what works for you and build your core strength. Don't worry about the equipment until you have built a solid foundation.

**BC:** Describe your nutritional plan.

**JL:** Breakfast: 5 eggs, 2 bagels, and 1 cup oatmeal. Mid-morning snack: Protein shake. Lunch: 2 turkey sandwiches on wheat bread, green beans or peas. Mid-afternoon snack: Protein shake, 2 apples. Dinner: Steak or chicken, 2 red potatoes, salad, and vegetables. Late night: Protein shake and protein bar. I also eat plenty of tuna and mixed nuts. I am going to start working with Anthony Riccuito, the Nutritionist, because I am trying to drop some weight. I would like to get under 500 lbs. and see what happens.

**BC:** When and where is your next meet?

**JL:** March, in Columbus, Ohio. The WPO meet at the Arnold Classic.

**BC:** Anyone you would like to thank?

**JL:** I thank God for giving me the strength to lift these weights. My training partners and friends, Kurt Richardson, Mike and Pat Anderson, Doc Joe, Joe Scalzitti, Wide Willy Lamiere, Tilden Watson, Kevin Hahn, Charlie Rico, Darren Gilley, Rick Fowler, and the whole Missouri USAPL crew, the Harold Gaines family, my mom, Kathy Lewis, has always been in my corner, Patti, my beautiful wife, as she puts up with me while I'm getting ready for a meet, and thanks for all the cooking you do, I love you. My son, Justin, for understanding what dad has to do, I love you, son. My brother, Buddy, Theresa, Skyler Rob, Nita, Don, Kim and Ronni, Cris Mark, Jenny, Missy, and Titan, and anyone else I missed, thank you for all of your support. I could not do this without you.

**BC:** What keeps you going?

**JL:** The desire to be number one and to dominate the sport like no one ever has.

**BC:** Other than powerlifting, what are your other hobbies?

**JL:** Spending time with my family, and helping coach my son's teams, and swimming.



Big Jeff Lewis at the '03 USAPL Men's Nationals held in SD.