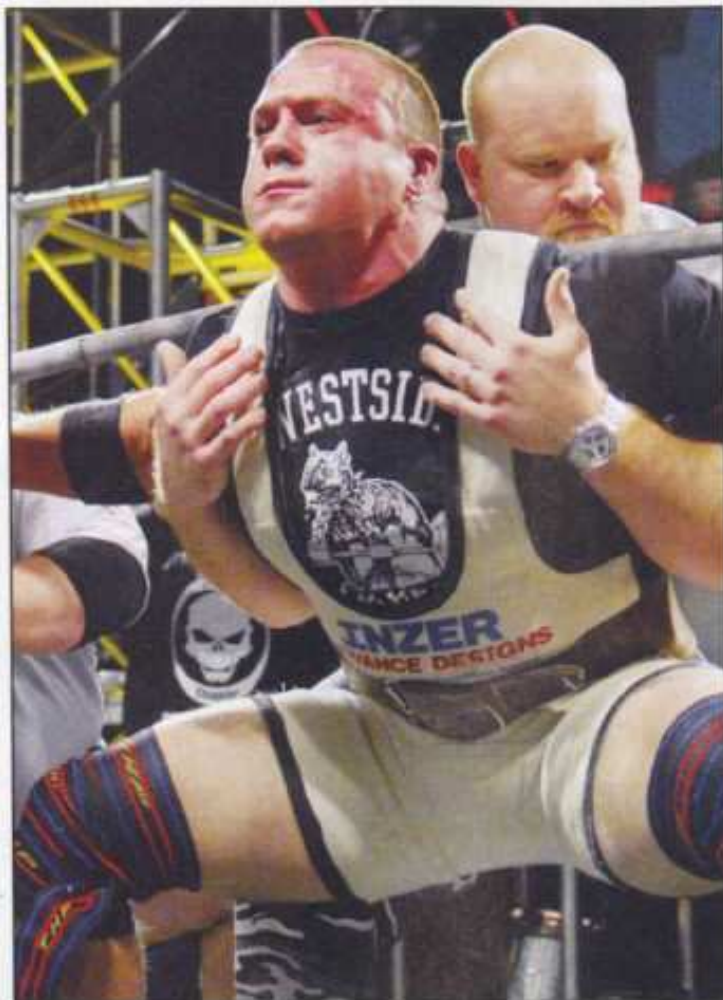


# INTERVIEW

## GREG PANORA

World Record 2600 at 242 lbs.  
interviewed by Matt Wenning M.S.



Greg Panora squatting at the 2007 Arnold Classic in Columbus, OH

Greg Panora is probably one of the strongest lifters around today. His best squat is 1050 lbs., his bench is 775lbs., and his deadlift is 815 lbs. and still growing. He has the all-time highest total by almost a hundred pounds ever done at the 242 lb. weight class, and is only at the ripe age of 25. He also posts a top 5 total in the 275 lb. weight class. He currently trains at Westside Barbell in Columbus, OH.

**Matt Wenning:** Hello, Greg. We have trained together for a while now, but tell me where you're from and some background information.

**Greg Panora:** I'm from a small town in Massachusetts called Stow. After high school, I moved to Union of Maine where I first started competing in 1999. I trained at a small gym called Union Street Athletics, where we had a pretty good lifting group. We had the basics, reverse hypers, good squat bars and a good atmosphere. I competed raw for my first two years of training which I think was a great base. I squatted around 700, benched in the high 400s, and deadlifted 700 raw.

**MW:** Who do you credit for your success in powerlifting and name some people that have big some big influences?

**GP:** In the beginning, my father helped me, trained with me, and taught me the basics, so he was a huge influence and still is today. Although not a distinguished lifter himself, he saw my dream and helped me to accomplish it. In Maine, in 2001, Russ Barlow showed me quite a bit, and my friend, Louie Morrison, was a good guide who supplied a ton of information. In 2006, I came to Westside and learned a ton from Louie, you, and others at the gym that were stronger than me. This was a big influence on my training, gear usage, and everything in general. This had been the first time I had really used any good gear and training methods, so the learning curve was slow, especially since you and I didn't train in gear all that much.

**MW:** Who are your idols in lifting?

**GP:** When I was younger it was Chuck Vogelphol, and still is. Louie, for what he has brought to the lifting community and anyone else that has stepped through the door and paved the way at Westside. Ed Coan was an influence as well, but I always looked up to the world's strongest men, since I could watch them and see them

on TV growing up. It was hard for our generation to have idols since we don't see them on a national stage. The lifters in the past (70s and 80s) got so much more national attention (TV).

**MW:** Your bench has come a long way in the past year, (mid 600s to mid 775) how did you accomplish this?

**GP:** When first coming to Westside I was doing a ton of shirt work with boards, and neglecting raw work and full range tricep exercises. My lifting group taught me to utilize my training in a better fashion creating more gains much quicker by doing hard raw work and triceps work with the proper exercises for my weaknesses. My upper back and rear delts develop-

ment has really made a huge difference. Then after building a better base I learned to utilize shirt work. But the raw training is what really helped.

**MW:** What are your future plans in lifting?

**GP:** I'd like to post a bigger total in the 242s that will not get touched in a while, and would also like to raise the 275 mark over 2700 when I'm ready to eat like a pig and not worry so much about breathing properly. Ha-ha. But for now the 242s is my home.

**MW:** We both have sacrificed a lot to be strong, and train in the strongest places, tell me some of the things that you have given up or put on the back burner for your goals in lifting?

**GP:** I've given up everything to be strong. I moved to Columbus with only a beat up car and clothes to my name. I didn't even own furniture or a TV for the first few months at the gym, and slept on the floor. I've left good jobs, relationships, and for me, to be the best in this sport, powerlifting has to come first. Some of the most hardcore people live at the top of powerlifting; you can't do this for external rewards, just pride.

**MW:** How do you feel about the advanced equipment of today, and how it has changed or affected your training, would you still be the strongest 25 years ago?

**GP:** I think that I would be the strongest 25 years ago as well; my deadlift training would have to be much more severe since I wouldn't get that extra poundage out of a shirt or a suit. I think people put too much emphasis on gear and the strongest now, at least most of them would be the strongest then. Sure, there are a few people that are getting insane carryovers, but I'm definitely not one of them. Today a person must be strong and also learn to manipulate gear. I want to say that I don't train in gear very often, but I do have to put more emphasis on different muscles for optimal transfer. Back work, and tricep work have dominated over chest muscles, but I still get stronger even raw. So for me, they are one in the same.

**MW:** How do you feel about the internet?

**GP:** I think that it is sad with the state of powerlifting over the internet. Accessibility to the top level guys was very cool in the beginning and getting advice from your idols. Now it seems everyone has mouths everyone else and a lot of the top level guys don't even utilize it because of negative posts. Now I just train, eat, and try to learn from people around me.

**MW:** Thanks for taking the time to do this interview. Not only have you been a good lifting partner, but a great friend. Any closing comments?

**GP:** I'd like to say thanks to Louie and you for showing me the way in the sport. I also want to say thanks to my dad that has been there since the beginning, and my girlfriend, Katie, who has stuck with me through all the hard times. And to my two buddies, Scott and Tony, for making my job easy so I can train hard.

**MW:** Good luck to you, Greg. We will be anxiously awaiting your new records.