

STEPHANIE VAN DE WEGHE

as told to *Powerlifting USA* by Bruce Citerman

There is someone special in Sheboygan, Wisconsin: Stephanie Van de Weghe.

Stephanie, tell us a bit about yourself.

I currently live in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and I have lived here since the early 1970s. I was formerly married to Jan Van de Weghe, a past masters world powerlifting champion. We remain friends to this day. I currently live with my partner, Kelly Martin. We have been together since 2002. She is the 2008 WPC 165 lb. champion. I am employed at Wigwam Mills, Inc. My position is Journeyman Knitter Mechanic, and I have been continuously employed there for 28 years. In June of 2007, I graduated from Fox Valley School of Massage and became nationally certified and licensed later that summer. Currently I practice massage on a part-time basis. Being a massage therapist, you must stay within your scope of schooling in order to help your clients. I am now working to complete certification as a personal trainer. This way I can help my clients correct and strengthen some of the issues that are the cause of their pain.

What is your athletic background?

My athletic background is not all that involved. I was always active when I was younger—riding bikes, softball and hiking. After I graduated high school I took up Tae Kwon Do. I wanted to understand the mystery of martial arts and it was a great experience and helped me tremendously in my self-confidence.

I studied for four years and reached first degree black belt. Once I left the sport I realized my inner strength and perseverance. By that time, I was introduced to the Body Shoppe Fitness Center. Since lifting and building muscle have always been my first love, I dove in head first, did a little bodybuilding, but became bored and wanted to know how much I could lift. Besides, the discipline in dieting was too much. I enjoy eating, so powerlifting became my sport. Oh, and I did have and on again, off again stint with professional wrestling during the '90s. It was a lot of fun, but it's such a shyster business. I spent more money traveling, training, and costumes than I ever made. Besides, it takes its toll on the body.

How did you get into competitive lifting?

To tell you the truth, I had never heard of powerlifting until I met Jan. I asked him if he would be willing to train me and he agreed. At first, I wasn't looking at competing; it was just for fun. Then with some prodding, I got into my first contest. It was the 1984 USPF Wisconsin State Meet held in Rice Lake. I was a light 148-pounder and took second place with a 350 pound squat, 170 pound bench, and 350 pound deadlift, totaling 870 pounds.



Stephanie Van de Weghe squatting 700 lb. at a SPF meet in Tuscola, IL (Van de Weghe photo)

What contests have you lifted in?

There have been numerous contests. Some stand out more than others. I remember my first world championships. It was 1986 with the IPF in Hestra, Sweden. I was very nervous and excited. The main thing I remember is all the bureaucracy and political bull. It wasn't long

after that, that I began lifting in the APF and have ever since.

What are your most memorable moments?

Some memorable moments would be winning my first world championships in 1994 in Columbus, Ohio. I had a 12-something total.

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Competing in South Africa, breaking the 165 pound bench record with 375 pounds, winning Champion of Champions in Graz, Austria, and also winning the Yodeling contest they had at the post meet banquet. And my last world's win in 1999 in Calgary. The totals I do not remember. I'm sure there were some world records in there. I just concentrated on lifting the weight. You will have to ask my coach, Jan Van de Weghe, about the numbers as that was his job. Finally, I competed at a meet run by Darryl Latch on October 23, 2010, in Tuscola, Illinois. I had my best day ever going 9 for 9 with a 700 pound squat, 400 pound bench, and 500 pound deadlift, weighing 1751 pounds.

What is your training program?

Leading up to a contest, 16–12 weeks out, Saturdays turn into the heavy day. I work all three lifts on that day. We alternate from max day to 80% day with most assistance work during the week. Equipment is mainly used on the weekends but may use knee wraps during the week as we near the contest.

A heavy Saturday starts at 4:00 a.m. then we hit the road by 5:00 a.m. We travel three hours from Sheboygan to Aurora, Illinois, to train with Ernie Frantz and his team. We start at 9:00 a.m. and finish up around 2:00 p.m. It definitely works on your stamina.

During the week though, it is really nothing special. Mostly a bunch of power bodybuilding with the primary exercise being bench press plus assistance work, or squat and/or deadlift with the assistance work. Most of my workouts are dictated by how I feel. Reps may range from doing heavy 2–5 reps, to a good working set with 10–15 reps. Nothing is written in stone.

What supplements do you take?

My supplements include a ground flax by Natural Ovens; a micronized Creatine, BCAA's, L-glutamine, and Shock Therapy for pre-workout from Nutrition Express. I also incorporate Torch Afterburn for post workouts.

Why do you lift in the APF?

I compete in the APF because it's an organization built by lifters, for the lifters. There has always been great camaraderie, even in highly contested classes. I have competed in the ADFPA, USPF, and IPF in the past. However, being a lifter, I feel organizations need to be represented by lifters, for the lifters, and minimize any type of bureaucracy and or political wrangling that does nothing to support lifters as a whole.

What are your future lifting plans?

At this point, I'm looking at the APF Worlds for

2011. After that, I don't know. We'll see how I feel. I'll be 50 years old by then. I can cheerlead though.

What have you noticed since your return to powerlifting?

It is sad to see that whenever a group feels things aren't going their way, they form another organization so they can get their squats passed. I have tell you, I miss Herb Glossbrenner. He may have been a bit sharp in his commentary, but he kept the organizations honest. Also, I do not see myself competing overseas again. The anti-American sentiment is too great of an underlying issue. We, as an American team, just seem to be individuals competing at the same venue and not as a group; not as the American team we once were and need to be again. I'm just glad I had the opportunity to compete in the 1990s, a great time for American lifters. We came together as a team. I am in hopes that we Americans will once again come together as a team, and represent this sport and this country fearlessly and proudly.

My hat goes off to Ernie Frantz for establishing the APF and all the groundwork he laid. He is the one that really brought powerlifting up in popularity and got the sport to grow. I love him dearly and appreciate everything he has done for me and for the sport. I would also like to thank Bill Goldman for coaching me. «

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