

DEREK WADE

as told to Powerlifting USA by Ben Tatar of Critical Bench

At the young age of 20, Derek Wade has bench pressed 550, pulled 690 and squatted 860. He totaled elite at his very first meet! At his next meet, he aims to squat 1,000 plus, bench 700 and deadlift 750 pounds. This is most impressive for a lifter who is barely 21. With Derek's skyrocketing rise into powerlifting superstardom, *Powerlifting USA* is pleased to interview Derek as a birthday present for Derek's 21st birthday! Derek is moving up the powerlifting ranks fast and with his genetics and drive, there is no telling what kind of amazing headlines Derek will be making in the future.

To quote a friend of Derek's, Dean Bennett: "To know Derek Wade is to know a young man who is like a rocketship on the launching pad, waiting to blast off into the stratosphere of powerlifting. At 6-foot-1-inch and a solid 315 pounds, Derek has the physical attributes, power and sheer athleticism to take him anywhere he chooses to go in this sport. Beyond that, this college student takes an intelligent approach to his lifting, seeking out the best information available. Derek chooses to surround himself with quality coaches, family and friends. Derek Wade is ushering in a new generation of powerlifters to whom brains are as important as brawn."

Without further ado, here is Derek Wade!

Happy Birthday Derek! *Powerlifting USA* wishes you a very happy birthday. Congratulations totaling elite! Derek, first, please tell us what federation you compete in and what are your best lifts?

I compete in the Southern Powerlifting Federation (SPF). My best lifts at my last meet were a 550 bench press, 690 deadlift and a 860 squat. I was 290 pounds when I did this.

Derek, this is very impressive for 20—let alone any age. Way to total 2,100 pounds at such a young age. When you were younger, you excelled at hockey in high school and football in college. Tell us about your athletic background prior to powerlifting.

In high school I played hockey, football, and also participated in track. After high school I went on to play football at The University of Findlay. I really enjoyed playing sports in college, but I learned very quickly that I enjoyed training for sports more than I liked to actually play them. After just one year in college I was the strongest kid on the football team; I knew then that I wanted to powerlift a lot more than I wanted to play football.

What made you focus on powerlifting instead of the other sports?

The main reason that I decided to focus on



Derek Wade (middle) with Shane Sweatt and Laura Phelps-Sweatt in the Sweatt Shop

powerlifting is for the feeling you get when you have that weight on your back and know that if you do anything wrong it will crush you. Followed by that is the feeling you get after you lock it out and the rush you receive from it. Also, I love pushing my body to the limit every day in training and proving to people as well as myself that the human body can do anything as long as you work hard enough to achieve it.

You seem genetically gifted and predisposed to moving big weight. Does strength run in your family?

I would have to say that I am blessed with an excellent background for this sport. My grandfather is in his 70s and he is still farming and my father used to lift weights in high school, where he benched 250 at 145 pounds of body weight.

At just 20 years old, you competed in your first full power meet with some of the best lifters in the sport at the SPF Luke Edwards/

Cellblock meet in Cincinnati. You lifted big and went on to earn an elite total of 2,100 pounds right out of the gate. What was going through your mind that day? What was your strategy?

To be honest, there were a million things going through my mind that day. Not only was this my first ever full power meet, I had the best of the best competing against me. I knew that I had to be on my game, but I wasn't too worried because my coaches had me more prepared for this meet than I had ever been prepared in my life both physically and mentally.

The strategy was actually pretty simple; just control what I can control and the rest would take care of itself. I knew from my training that I could—at bare minimum—hit all my openers which would give me my elite total. I just needed to do what I was there to do. Above all, I wanted to show, not only myself but everyone else, that even though this was my first meet, I was ready to compete with the best and not just be happy to get a lift in. I want to succeed in

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work. I utilize the big multi-joint movements to build strength (rep ranges 1-5) while also using higher rep accessory work for hypertrophy and balance in my training (rep ranges 10-50).

Training Tips:

- Have defined both short and long term goals.
- More is not better - better is better.
- Progress slowly and measure your progress (always WRITE IT DOWN!)

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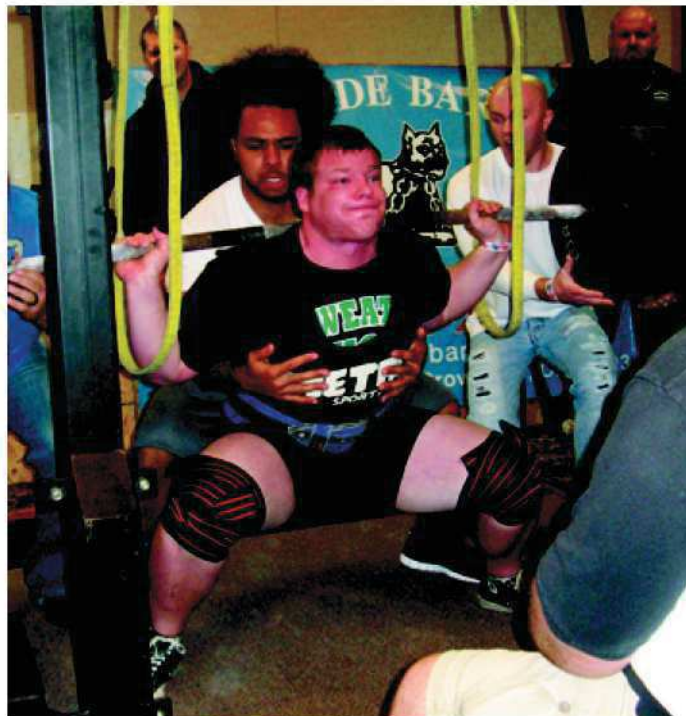


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A good 860 lb. start to his 2,100 lb. Elite total in his first full meet

this sport and getting my elite total at this meet was the first step.

You have the reputation of being a very hard working strength athlete. How do you balance college, work, family life and still manage to train heavy and consistently?

I do have a lot on my plate. I train either early in the morning or on the weekends so that it doesn't get in the way of work and school. The most important thing to me is to not let any one thing take too much of my time and I make sure that I always have time to do my homework and spend time with my family. Yet, at the same time I have an awesome family and boss who understands the commitment it takes to achieve in this sport and they do whatever they can to assist me with my training.

How important is the mind in powerlifting?

In training, people make many errors, whether it's over training, training wrong, or just following some basic program not even designed for them (which is an automatic set up for failure). The first thing people need to realize is that no one way is going to work for everyone and it's very important to know what your individual training needs are as well. Then you need to know what movements you need to do and why. Blindly following a program without understanding the ins and outs will never turn out well. So it is very important to use your brain when it comes to training so that you don't just aimlessly waste your time in the gym.

You're pursuing a career in education. What do you want your students to remember most about you?

The most important thing I would ever want my

students to know is that no goal is too big and if you want something bad enough and are willing to do what it takes to achieve it, then anything is possible.

Being a young man, you have huge hopes, dreams and goals ahead of you. Describe who Derek Wade will be ten years from now.

Wow, ten years from now I would like to be teaching and coaching football somewhere in the Cincinnati area. As for my powerlifting career, I would like to have achieved over a 3,000 pound total, even though I know that is a huge number. I'm 20, we'll see what happens at my next meet, but if I put an average of 80-100 pounds on my total each year I believe it is possible.

You train primarily at the Sweatt Shop in Cincinnati. What's that like?

Training at the Sweatt Shop is like nothing I have ever experienced for multiple reasons. For starts, Shane and Laura, the owners and my coaches, are amazing. They bring years of hands on experience, world records, and a knowledge base second to none. Most gyms that claim to be hardcore powerlifting gyms may have the mono lift, chains, and bands. They might scream at you and hit you right before you go and maybe even cuss you out if you miss a lift. That angry "kill or be killed" mentality may work for some people, but at the Sweatt Shop they actually teach you how to improve form and how to train. I can remember one instance where I missed a bench. Instead of screaming at me and hitting me in the face, Shane tweaked my form and I hit 3 more attempts after my miss. I think it's the knowledge base and training style he has that makes him a

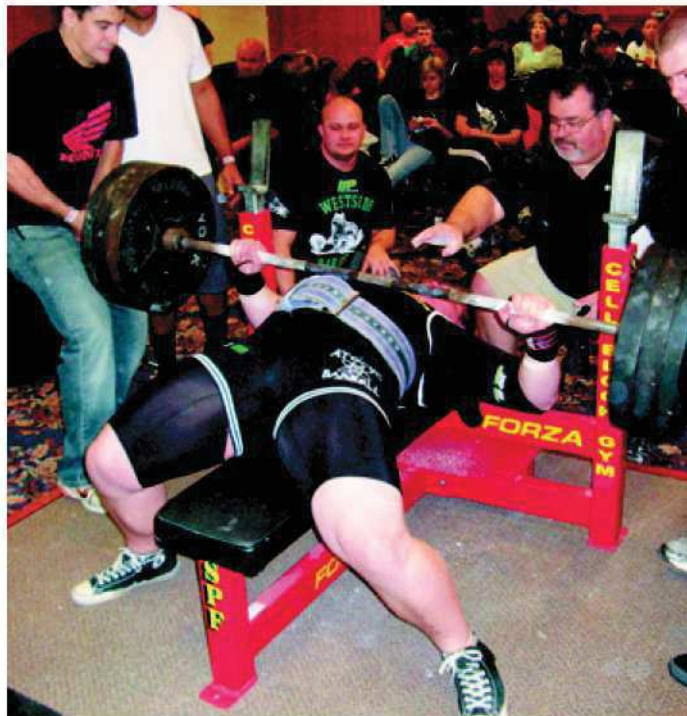
tremendous coach.

Let's get down to training. What does a typical week look like for you? You just seem to hit PR after PR! Tell us about that.

My training is 4 days a week, one dynamic effort and maximum effort—upper and lower body—per day just like the basic conjugate method. As for the big PRs each week, I owe that all to Shane's training. It is truly unreal. Every week is completely different from the last and not only does it make you stronger physically, but mentally as well. I go into each workout jacked up and not saying, "Damn, I really want to hit a PR," but "Damn, I can't wait to see how big of a PR I'm going to get!" Because of this I have put almost 500 pounds on my total since I started training with him and have hit a PR increase of 50 or more pounds on over 30 different movements.

How important is good coaching?

Good coaching is the most important aspect of this sport. We can all read training logs and watch videos of people on the Internet, but then once you're in the gym you're all alone. I'm lucky because when I go to the Sweatt Shop and train with Laura Phelps-Sweatt, I get to train with the freak on the Internet. She has really helped tweak my form on just about every movement and it has paid real dividends. Also, we all have questions about different ideas or things that are posted on the Internet and I'm very lucky because Shane has a tremendous knowledge base and can answer any question and fix any flaw in your training, or get you the right supplement to complete your diet and because of this I have really started to gain some good weight.



Derek benching 560... what will he hit during his next meet?

What do you do for conditioning/GPP? What is the most insane thing you do (or have done) in the gym?

My GPP comes from a few things, ranging from speed work, sleds, pushing the prowler, super sets, and above all a high work load of auxiliary movements that follow my main movements. As for the most intense thing I have ever done, that is tricky because we train pretty hard, but I'd have to say squatting with the safety squat bar with purple, green, and blue bands pulling against me off a box. Not only is that more band tension than most people can squat, we are using a safety squat bar which tries to push you forward. In addition, we've killed momentum because you have to fire up from the box.

What are the five most significant things you've learned from training with Shane and Laura?

It's difficult to pick five because I have learned so many valuable things, but if I had to pick five it would start with how important a good diet actually is; you have to feed the body for it to grow.

Second would be how important it is to train your abs. They're the most important thing in the deadlift. As my abs have gotten stronger so has my deadlift.

The third is how important speed training is. Not only does it help build explosion, but also the connection between it and the central nervous system.

The fourth would have to be the training itself; such as what movements to do to fix certain weaknesses and how pick things you're bad at to train and avoid things you're good at, so that when what you're bad at is what you're good at, your lifts skyrocket.

The fifth would be the importance of technique. Even though you may be strong, you have to be in a good position to lock it out and can't always rely on brute strength.

What impresses Derek Wade?

What impresses me is not lifting big weights, but the people in the weight room who may not be the biggest or strongest, but show lots of heart and dedication and strive with everything they

have to reach their goals.

What sets you apart from other young lifters?

I think that like most young lifters I have big dreams and goals, but what sets me apart is I am lucky and blessed enough to have found some amazing coaches who care about their lifters and have the knowledge and resources to get me to where I want to be.

What advice would you give to teenagers starting out? What are the most common myths/mistakes they should avoid?

I would have to say that the most common mistake that teenagers make is that they either over train or train incorrectly. With that being said, the number one tip I could give them is to seek expert advice and understand all aspects of their training.

What's your favorite part of being a powerlifter?

My favorite part of being a powerlifter is the constant challenge with yourself of reaching new PRs and the feeling of smashing an old PR.

Do you follow a specific diet plan?

I eat between 5 and 7 meals per day. The biggest pain in my diet is trying to get the appropriate amount of protein and other nutrients in order to help my body recover from the constant beating I put it through.

What supplements (if any) do you use?

The main supplements I take are protein, creatine, fish oil, and a multi vitamin. The biggest misconception in today's programs is people worrying too much about what people are using or what they should use. Just eat and fuel your body, then the supplements are a boost on top of that.

How do you envision the future of powerlifting?

I believe that this sport will continue to grow and that the training will continue to improve and I can't wait to see the numbers lifters will hit in the future.

What do you want the powerlifting world to know about Derek Wade?

If there was one thing I want the powerlifting community to know about me it would be that I'm not just another guy hoping to hit a big number and that I'm for real. I have some pretty high goals and am willing to do whatever it takes to achieve them.

Derek, it has been great interviewing you today. In closing, is there anyone that you would like to thank?

There are many people I would like to thank, but above all I would like to thank my coach Shane Sweatt for many reasons. Right before training at the Sweatt Shop I had a few personal things happen to me and my overall self confidence was at an all-time low. Shane showed me in life there are things you just can't change and how to roll with the punches. He helped me regain confidence in myself. On top of that Shane has helped me so much in my training. He calls me at all hours of the day and night to set me up with my workouts. There are many times where he has stayed late on a Friday or opened up on his day off to help me and even has let me crash at his place so I could train with him. He has taken my training and super charged it and helped me get numbers that I have never thought possible. He has shown me a whole other side to this sport and without him I would never have gotten to this point. I am truly thankful for everything he has done for me. «



Derek working up a sweat in the Sweatt Shop



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