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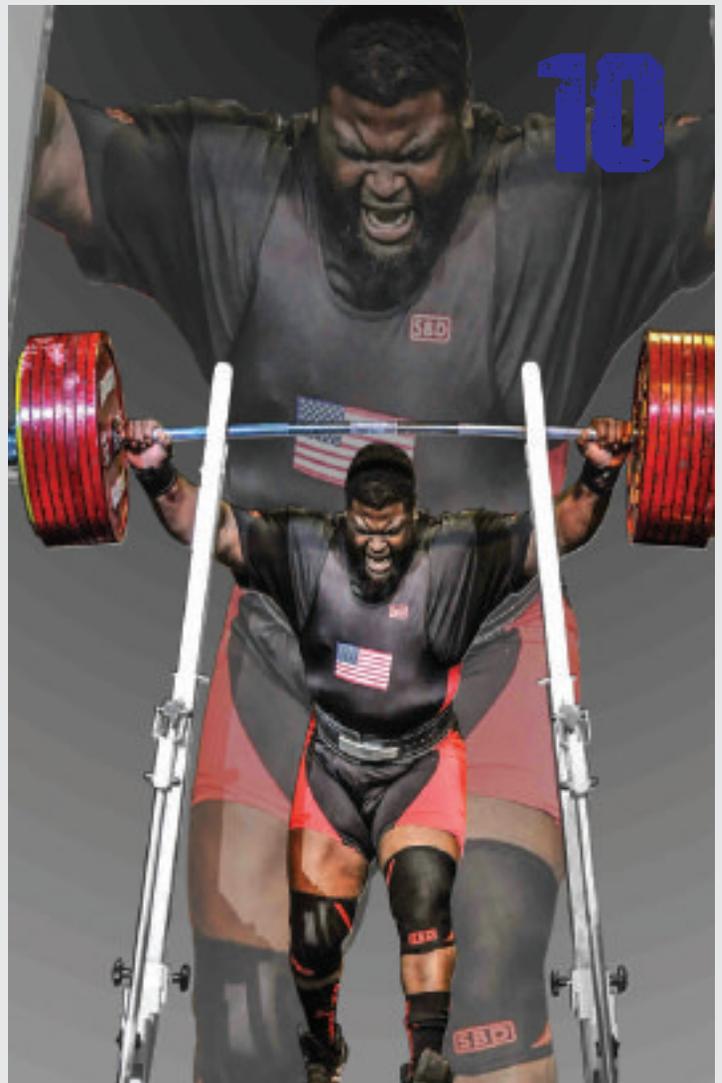


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POWERLIFTER TODAY
November/December 2014

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From The Editor

Third issue! It is the Bench Press issue, but since the magazine title is Powerlifter Today, that includes squat and deadlift too. Ray Williams, age 27, is a huge raw lifter and we'll be seeing even bigger lifts from him as time goes by. Bud Davis, age 71, pulled 684 at 68 years old with technique that is mind boggling to watch. What other sport can you start in your teens and still be going strong SIXTY years later?



This issue is actually November/December but the national distributor advises us to just put December on the cover so it stays longer on the newsstands. It is, and always will be, a bimonthly magazine (six issues per year).

Martin Drake, Vice Chairman of AAU is interviewed and talks about young or novice lifters being intimidated about entering powerlifting competitions when they see huge shirted benches. If you're just starting out, do what you can and get better by training with top lifters. The benchers in this issue might intimidate you but see it as a goal. If they can do it, you might get there someday too.

Mike Womack, 942 and going for more. Austin Sellers, all time teen record bench press at 705. Scott Mecham got 800 at the Olympia and missed 815 because it came up TOO FAST! Roger Ryan, 59, rarely bombs and consistently hits low to mid 700's almost every meet he enters. All these guys wear single ply shirts, which is a science unto itself. You don't just put on a shirt, lay on the bench and the shirt does all the work. It's like comparing apples and oranges, raw bench vs. shirt bench.

Speaking of raw vs. gear – Tony Chirico trains both and competes at a high level in both raw and multi ply meets. He insists everyone needs both methodologies to be their best in competition.

Tina Redding of Big Iron Compound has transitioned from raw to multi ply. It's a great article if you're considering that.

Tim Henriques discusses the title of "world champion", Gary Gertner writes about squat depth and there are two meets covered – USPA Nationals and the Olympia, both high level events.

And much more!

Jim Curley,
Editor In Chief

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

BE A CONTRIBUTOR

Feel qualified to write about the world of powerlifting? Got a great idea or angle that no one has discussed? We welcome your story but reserve the right to edit as we deem necessary and also reserve the right to accept or reject the article.

If you would like to be a guest contributor regarding training, nutrition, or anything related to powerlifting, please email Jim@powerliftertoday.com and I'll get back to you.

Meet Directors - If you want your World or high level invitational meet results in the magazine, please think "summary" with lots of pictures of the biggest lifts at the meet. The database of meet results is not as important as a good story of the meet. For example, if a World meet has 600-800 lifters this might take half the magazine to print and we just can't do it and stay true to the emphasis on content. Think highlights, big lifts, platform battles....many lifters can't be mentioned due to lack of space and just general interest. Federations compete for lifters, so make the story of your World meet interesting and lifters will want to compete in your federation. The actual meet result tables can be included in a link at the end of the article, or go to www.powerliftingwatch.com.

SPECIAL OFFER

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TIM HENRIQUES
Director, NPTI VA/MD/DC

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FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS squat *HIGH*

Gary Gertner has coached and trained hundreds of successful athletes in all sports, some who have been able to compete professionally. He has coached many athletes who have attained college scholarships to all divisions, both male and female. Best benches with a perfect single ply bench shirt that took 2 months to break in, (5 weeks and 3 weeks) was 605 x 5 reps, 635 x 3 reps and 655 x 1 rep. Best raw bench 540 and 519 in competition. No surgeries but multiple things wrong! Lots of rehab and prehab of both shoulders and planning to bench at 2014 WABDL worlds and the present goal is 501 lbs at age 55.



By Gary Gertner

Do you squat deep enough? The only real and official squat that counts is one done on a competition platform with certified judges. It has to be in a sanctioned meet with 2-3 white lights given from the judges for that attempt. Many strength athletes train the squat high. This sometimes has a different meaning in Colorado where I live! While I condone Miracle Medical Marijuana for any use, "FRIENDS DON'T LET FRIENDS SQUAT HIGH!" in this context means squat depth, not altered state of mind if you get my drift. If all your training's been done simply to parallel or (the horror of it ...above), chances are once you hit the hole in a meet with that heavy weight it will bury you and you're not coming back up, at least not without the help of your spotters. So many training partners and friends of lifters aren't honest about depth when training together. They're either not trying to hurt someone's feelings or not paying attention to details. Be consistent and brutally honest with your athletes or training partner's depth because brutally honest feedback will help. Squat depth really is a big deal - below is below and not AT parallel.

I had one athlete squat a weight for 10 reps and with each rep I said, "It's high! Get your butt down!" After racking the weight, he responded, "Coach Gertner I heard you the first time!" "Well then did you understand that each and every time I said it's high, get your butt down means that you were not below parallel and you need to get your butt down!?" "Comprehension and intellectual capacity, doing what you are told, when told. This helps me to help you so much more!" His next set was better and the following squat workouts were better each and every rep as well. Now he can feel when he is at or below parallel without my feedback.

The competition squat starts with the lifter standing erect, the bar loaded and with bar resting on the lifter's shoulders. At the referee's command (SQUAT) the lift begins. The lifter bends his knees and descends into a squatting position with the hips slightly below parallel position. The lifter returns to a fully standing position. At the referees command the bar is returned to the rack and the lift is completed. Jeez, what's so hard about that!? Why is squat depth so controversial? Maybe

that's why we have so many powerlifting federations!?

“At parallel” represents a very ‘fuzzy’ area for judging. The lift often happens so quickly that when a squat is attempted, the strength athlete has a 50/50 chance of passing at smaller meets. National and World meets, no way! Judging is ultimately a personal perception that is governed by objective rules and standards.

A referee's perception is everything and poor judging is so obvious! Referees are there to make sure every lifter is on the same level playing field. I believe that watching thousands of squats helps to develop a keen eye for judging good or bad squat depth. Training and continuing education may also help with getting everyone fairly and consistently judged by the same squat rule which is - the hip crease breaking the imaginary line from the top of the knee across the crease of the hip. (Refer to line drawing.) The side referees have the best seats in the house unless blocked by a spotter or spotters. As a judge you must be quick

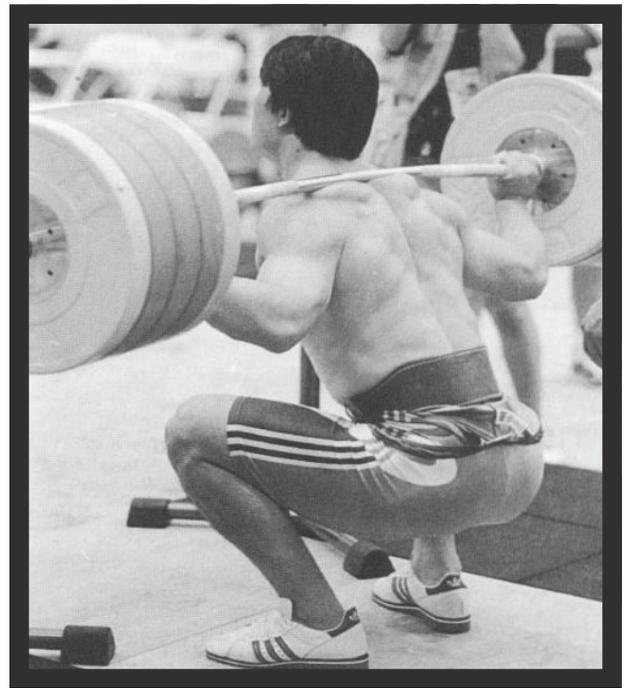


Diagram A.

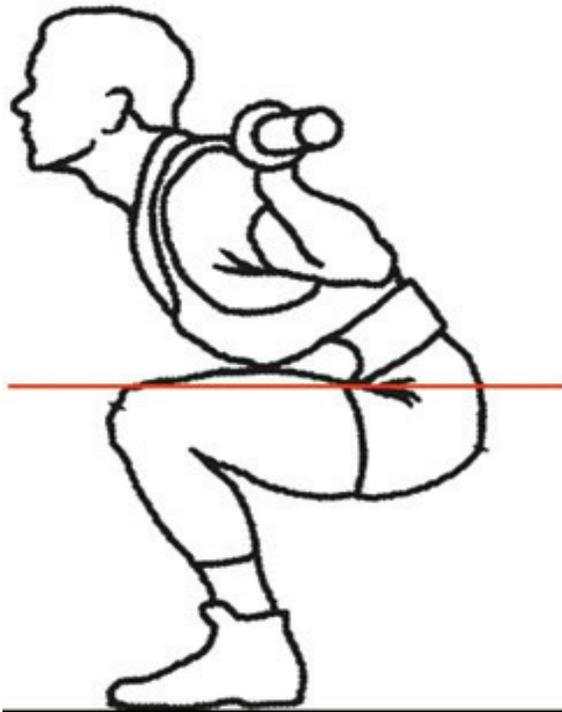


Diagram B.



SQUAT RULE the hip crease must break the imaginary line from the top of the knee across the crease of the hip.

and nimble to get to the best unobstructed view of the lifter's squat as possible, even if it means getting off the chair to view the attempt. I feel that head referees often guess because the hip crease may be hidden by larger thighs or a big belly getting in the way for judging an individual's proper depth. What did the head referee see awarding a white light and the two side judges give red lights? Again, it's perception! You only need two white lights for a good lift, 2/3 majority vote. Many organizations ask that judges err on the side of lifters for close calls but "at parallel" is not a legal squat so that shouldn't be a legal lift.

I've given even my daughters a red light at Colorado State Championship meets for at parallel squats and not being completely erect at the completion of a dead lift! I truly love my daughters, but would never bastardize either rule! Rules are rules and not just a guide line, as some other organizations would like to believe and think. They are clear standards to be followed as to what constitutes proper depth and not a guess or recommendation for being close.

When YouTube squats are posted, everyone who knows the depth rule automatically judges the

squatter as well as judges the referees ruling. When high squats are called "good", regardless of the organization, it gives rise to a greater animosity between the other lax depth federations and those who adhere strictly to the squat depth rule. This is especially true for the multi ply excuse of "well, with the briefs and double ply suits I can only get close!" If you can only get close then maybe you should relearn what a raw squat feels like, and at proper DEPTH!

One meet, out of state, while I was refereeing as a side judge for squats, a lifter was given 3 red lights for her first two squats, both clearly above parallel. Now her third attempt is coming up with the crowd cheering for her to make this final attempt and remain in the meet! "Squat", she descends, and from my vantage point it was the highest of the three! Two white lights! My initial thought was "WOW" did I miss something here? No, it was high and when the video was reviewed by me, shown from a spectator, her squat was high! As a football coach of many years my favorite saying is "The eye in the sky doesn't lie!" I was labeled an ass and poor referee! How dare I purposefully prevent their lifter from continuing in the meet?

One of the other two refs approached me later stating that he had made a mistake with his call

"SQUATTING PAST PARALLEL IS THE ONLY WAY THE GLUTES AND HAMSTRINGS ARE FULLY ACTIVATED, CREATING BALANCE BETWEEN THE ANTERIOR AND POSTERIOR MUSCLES."

and he admired me for standing by my call.

All federations have basically adopted the same squat rule as the IPF - "Squat failure: Failure to bend the knees and lower the body until the top of

the surface of the legs at the hip joint are lower than the top of the knee." So easy even a caveman could do it!

NOT! A pet peeve of mine is and always has been squat depth! When I hear, "I squat 600 lbs", my first thought is yeah right! Show me.

Bending your knees a couple of degrees does not constitute a squat! My first experience with powerlifting was in the 80's and I was told that my squats were 3-5 inches too low! "What?" I responded,

Diagram C.



Two keys to a big squat are believing that you can make it by getting down and up with the hip crease BELOW PARALLEL.

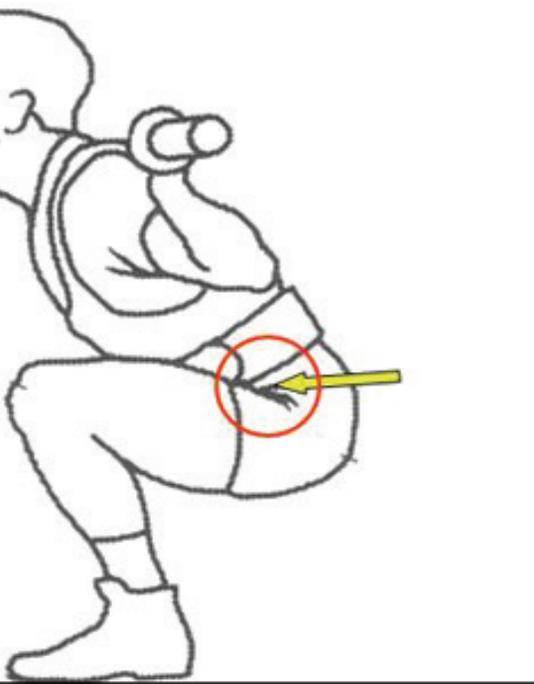


“I always squat like that, front and back squat alike”. In fact, at the time I was front squatting over 500 lbs. and back squatting 600 raw, t-shirt, shorts and no belt. I had video of these feats and had several track and field throwers at JK Mullen watch in awe, but I copied over them because I had so many injuries thinking I wouldn't ever get back to that again.

My journey into powerlifting was training for throwing events in track. Olympic lifting and powerlifting helped me to throw farther. It was a necessary evil. Cleans and snatches were caught in a power position ¼ squat

but heavy weights were caught with ass to the grass (ATG). Picking up quarters with butt cheeks! This kind of lifting helped greatly with my mobility. I had a secret desire to enter one of Andrea Sortwell's meets in Denver and open with a 500+ lb squat and front squat it! I probably would have been banned for life from USAPL and all the other powerlifting federations. Too bad raw lifting wasn't as popular as it is today! Look at what the 2014 USAPL Raw Nationals drew this summer in Aurora, Colorado hosted by Dan and Jennifer Gaudreau... 500+ lifters.

Diagram D.



What is good squat form? What does it take to develop a great squat? First you must develop the hips, hamstrings, spinal erectors, glutes, and abs. Without a strong posterior chain (the muscles on the back of the body), you will not sit back into the proper squat position. Make sure you are warmed up properly allowing synovial fluids in joints to lubricate and muscles ready to attack your workout. Make each warm-up, training set and competition attempt convincingly deep! This means breaking parallel and getting your hips below parallel, every damned time!

Work on mobility especially if needed to improve squat range of motion. Two keys to a big squat are believing that you can make it by getting down and up with the hip crease **BELOW PARALLEL** and secondly having the mental discipline as well as being brave to hold your technique, even if the weight feels uncomfortable. If you have been meticulous about your training depth then meet depth will be a sure bet. Perfect practice makes perfect competition. Many lifters think that by adding more weight they'll get down or wrapping their knees tighter will get them to proper depth. Both, in my opinion, only cause more trouble.

As a coach of athletes of all ages and at all levels including professionals, I work so hard to get my athletes to get their butts down! This is one way to protect the knee from ACL injuries, as well as mobility work and sequential plyometrics. This holds true especially for women with the Q-angle with regards to their hips. Squatting past parallel is the only way the glutes and hamstrings are fully activated, creating balance between the anterior and posterior muscles. I worked for sixteen years at JK Mullen High School in Denver, Colorado and we had only one ACL injury! That individual was a veteran of the NFL with a seven year pro career, Bo Scaife. Bo was born with anatomical defects in the knee joints and had two surgeries.

The squat rule doesn't expect a strength athlete to “pick up quarters” with their butt cheeks but to get their hip crease to break parallel. Plain and simple.

Squat below parallel or the terrorists win! High squats make us a weak nation!

Do every one a favor, learn the squat depth rule and watch thousands of squats. But most importantly, “Don't Let Friends Squat High!” **PLT**

BEAST OF THE SOUTH

RAY WILLIAMS AND BLAINE SUMNER GO HEAD TO HEAD IN EVERY CONTEST THEY'RE COMPETING IN. THE MATCH UP IS ALWAYS IN USAPL AND THE RAW DIVISION, AS RAY ONLY COMPETES RAW. IT'S ANYONE'S GUESS WHO WILL RISE TO THE TOP...

RAY SQUATS OVER 900 POUNDS RAW, WITH JUST A SINGLET AND A BELT. HIS BEST SQUAT?

909#

INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

RAY WILLIAMS

Ray, how old are you and what do you do for a living?

I'm 27 and I'm the defensive line coach and strength and conditioning coordinator at Itawamba Community College in Fulton, MS. I've been here since May 2011. I have a Bachelors degree in Business Administration from University of Tennessee and a Masters in Athletic Administration from Western Kentucky University.

What's your ultimate career goal?

I'm entering the PhD program at Western Kentucky U, and would like to end up as a school district superintendent. I'll always try to stay in coaching just because I love doing it.

Are you married?

I'm divorced with two sons.

So how long have you been powerlifting?

I started competing in October of 2012. My brother did a meet in 2012 and I was "football" strong but hadn't specifically trained for powerlifting. I decided to enter it so I had a few months to train for it. It was an APA meet. I got an 800 squat, 425 bench and a 610 deadlift, weighing 340 at 6'0".

I met you at Raw Nationals and you seemed to be way taller than me!

No, I'm 6 feet even. I tried out for the Bears and the Atlanta Falcons in 2009 and that's what I was. I would have liked to have played pro ball, but the Arena League had folded in 2008, so there were a lot of really good guys competing for the NFL slots, and college guys like me had too much competition. I was an all conference defensive tackle but it didn't matter.

Didn't your college coach have you doing the powerlifts while playing ball?

He didn't believe in max lifts, so I squatted 500 for reps, 315-405 bench for reps, but never a max. A lot of coaches are like that; they want strength but also stamina and endurance. In my senior year I squatted 500x21 with no wraps or sleeves and high bar.

What are your best lifts in a recent meet?

Best squat was 909, bench 529, and deadlift was 750, all raw. Right now my goal is a raw squat of 950, then 1000 in sleeves only. I'm hoping to get that 950 in December. I've had a deep glute injury which has really affected my squat and deadlift. Once football season slows down I'll get to a good doctor. Right now I can hardly get out of my truck - I'm always in pain.

So you've never considered getting in any kind of gear?

raw Ray

"I REALLY LIKE RAW AND THINK I CAN GO A LOT FURTHER IN IT. RAW LIFTING REALLY TAKES A TOLL ON THE BODY, BUT I LOVE IT SO MUCH I'LL STICK WITH RAW."



STRONG D-LINE COACHED BY RAY



No, I really like raw and think I can go a lot further in it. If I do decide to gear up, I'd probably reach out to Blaine. He's very good at both. Raw lifting really takes a toll on the body, but I love it so much I'll stick with raw.

You've always lifted USAPL. Ever thought about throwing on some wraps and trying another federation?

I've seen guys with these big championship belts. The only reason I would try another fed is if I thought I could get one of those! With wraps, my knee is numb by the time I start wrapping the other, so I don't really like wraps.

I'm not sure, but I think NASA is the only fed that offers those, and they're tested which you like.

I like drug testing and I've been tested every meet I've been in except the first and

the last ones. There's a lot of name calling and speculation online, but I'll go against anyone raw and see who wins. I really don't care if they're on or not.

What's your general training cycle look like?

My next meet is December 12th in Washington D.C., so I'm cycling for that. I train hard for 3 weeks, then take a deload week where I recuperate and just train my form real light. I train hard right up until a few days before the meet and I usually do a modified CUBE method, where you're rotating heavy, speed and reps. I didn't do nearly as well as I wanted to at Raw Nationals in July. I was embarrassed and I take that embarrassment to the gym every training day. It motivates me a lot!

What's your diet look like?

I eat what I want but it's clean. Lots of

chicken, pork, beef and tons of rice, but my weakness is Mountain Dew. I know it's bad, but it's delicious!

What's your weekly training cycle like? What are you going to change up to hit your best lifts in December?

I usually train Monday Tuesday, Wednesday, take Thursday off, then squat Friday or Saturday, with some light assistance work on Sunday. To prepare for the meet, I'm going to be much more intense in training in everything. I need to do more back and triceps for bench. For deadlift I'm working on technique, because my form stinks! I take a little advice from everybody, mix it up in a bowl and apply it to myself.

Where do you mostly train?

Mostly at the college gym, but when I lift heavy I go to Peppertown, MS to Power Zone Gym. I've bent some bars there, but they still let me train there! If I can't get this glute injury straightened out, I may have to go to gear, but raw is what I like.

Any thoughts on performance enhancing drugs?

I don't think it should be allowed at the elite level, but guys will always try to get the edge.

Anyone you'd like to thank?

My sponsors – SBD, Anderson Powerlifting, Power Zone Gym, and Boxa Protocol (an Australian company). **PLT**



675 EASY PULL

765 for reps

"THERE'S A LOT OF NAME CALLING AND SPECULATION ONLINE, BUT I'LL GO AGAINST ANYONE RAW AND SEE WHO WINS. I DON'T CARE IF THEY'RE ON (DRUGS) OR NOT."



INTERVIEW WITH DAVE BATES OF POWERLIFTING WATCH

BY JIM CURLEY

MOST POWERLIFTERS ARE AWARE OF WWW.POWERLIFTINGWATCH.COM AS A RESOURCE FOR BIG LIFT VIDEOS, BREAKING NEWS, MEET RESULTS, A CLASSIFIED SECTION TO BUY GEAR AND EQUIPMENT BUT MOST OF ALL – RANKINGS! WHAT IS POWERLIFTINGWATCH AND WHO'S BEHIND IT? I SPOKE WITH DAVE BATES WHO OWNS IT ALONG WITH JOHNNY VASQUEZ.

This isn't your full time job? What is your full time occupation and how did you get involved with Powerliftingwatch.com (PLW)?

I'm a grocery store manager. I work 50-70 hours a week and have for 15 years. Johnny Vasquez, my business partner, and I bought PLW in 2010 and since we both have full time jobs, this is also a full time job. I like technology, so this is fun for me, but I compile the data, and Johnny does the short write ups. I'm single, so I can be a workaholic with no trouble. Hopefully I could find a wife who was as interested in this as me and could help me out.

Are you a powerlifter?

I do powerlift in my garage gym, but I don't have the gift of strength, so I've never competed. I'm a fan of the science of strength and I do some coaching, but no, I don't compete.

This magazine is primarily about content. PLW is es-

entially "Meet Result Central" along with providing rankings nationwide after those meet results have been compiled. Everything hinges upon meet directors getting their meet results to you and you posting and compiling these results. Since no magazine has printed meet results for 2 ½ years, and most lifters have had to go to PLW for results, I hereby deem you the clearinghouse for meet results. You have a paid section of the site, Lifter Rankings, but meet results are free.

The key to results and rankings is us getting the information from the meet director or the federation website. Will the occasional mistake occur? Sure, but we do our best to rectify a mistake as soon as possible and we're constantly upgrading and improving the website. A lifter can also order a certificate from us with their lift and ranking in a particular class. We just started international rankings in kilos so that is growing too but we're only as good as the

meet results we get. Another thing we've started doing is recording meet results on digital copies. Some of these federation owners are getting old and if they died a lot of information would die with them. PLW is very much involved with historical preservation.

So what is the goal of PLW in a nutshell?

We want people to "join the ranks". That means train, enter a meet and get ranked on PLW. By encouraging lifters to do that, the sport grows.

Dave, thanks for the interview and offering the resource for meet results and rankings. It's very motivating – I was looking at Masters deadlift in my weight class and if I get what I think I'm going to get in November, I'll be in the Top 20! I'm stoked to do it and would not have known I had a chance to "join the ranks" if not for www.powerliftingwatch.com.

Join the Ranks!

Powerlifting Watch.com

Powerlifting Watch Lifter Rankings

...destination Dallas

Greg McCoy, owner of featured gym called...destination Dallas. It's primarily a bodybuilding gym but has a powerlifter's corner complete with two monolifts, 55 and 65 pound bars, ten 100 pound plates, reverse hyper and glute ham raise machines, Forza bench and strong-man equipment...any powerlifter would be in hog heaven at this gym!

 interview by
JIM CURLEY

You're 27 and you own this place? Nice!

I actually owned a Metroflex gym for 5 years and this one for about a year. I went to Oklahoma State and graduated in three years because the gym business was calling! I knew the owner of Metroflex and had been in the bodybuilding arena since age 15. I asked him for the franchise, got the funding and I was in business. My dad definitely helped me get started and I'm thankful to him for that.

Is the gym going according to plan?

It's actually doing better than anticipated, because the last one went slower than anticipated!

What's your marketing plan?

It's kind of a Red Bull marketing thing. We had a

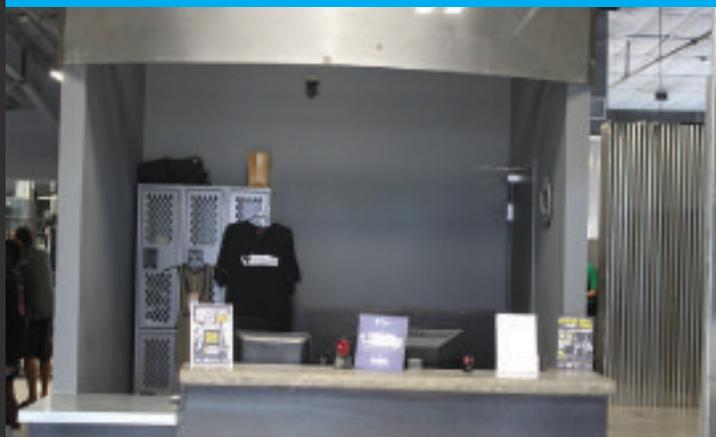




"Bodybuilders get interested in powerlifting, powerlifters see the facilities and equipment we have and it seems to be working."

powerlifting meet here a few months ago and today we're hosting an XPC Arnold qualifier. Bodybuilders get interested in powerlifting, powerlifters see the facilities and equipment we have and it seems to be working. We're big on event marketing and probably hold 25 events a year. That gets people in the door and we sponsor and attend events – anything to get people in the door to try us out. We've got a great partnership with Gasp Nutrition and Better Bodies who have stores in the gym. They sponsor big name athletes who in turn train here, which draws others who want to train. Most of these athletes and events are bodybuilding oriented. I've always been dedicated to powerlifting and have always held at least two meets a year. I support powerlifting and have always had powerlifting equipment in the gym.

So any powerlifter would be welcome here and be able to get a great workout.



THE FRONT DESK

ANNOUNCEMENT BOARD - THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING GOING ON



...destination Dallas is an international must-visit location for the most dedicated athletes within the iron sport. A hardcore facility made to support the fitness industry and its top athletes who call an environment like ...destination their home.

We've got buckets of chalk, two monolifts, deadlift platforms, five squat racks – anything any powerlifter would need. In fact, I'd say that 20% of the gym's equipment is powerlifting specific and that will increase as we expand. We're probably 60% bodybuilding and powerlifting is probably 25% with the rest being general gym rats. We're here for the hardcore iron sport athletes – bodybuilding, powerlifting and strongman. We have the top two percent of each sport training here so there's crossover between the sports. We have a good relationship with APF and their Texas chairs so most of our powerlifting meets are APF.

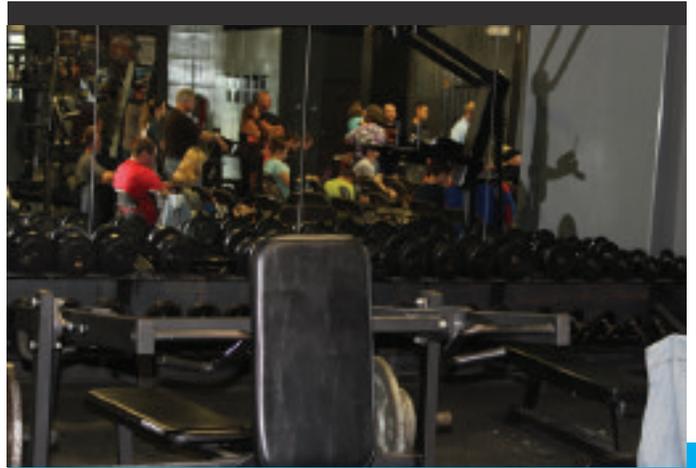
Tell me about your expansion plans.

We're hoping to break ground in 9-12 months, finished in two years. As membership grows powerlifting will grow. Sean Donegan's crew of 15-20 guys train here too.

Are you the typical gym that hopes people sign up and never come back?

No! I worked at (Brand G) gym that had 10,000 members but only 800 showed up once a week! We have 800 members and we see 600 of them four times a week. Our members are hardcore and into it. We encourage any powerlifter who is any level to come in and give us a try. **PLT**

HUGE DUMBELL RACK

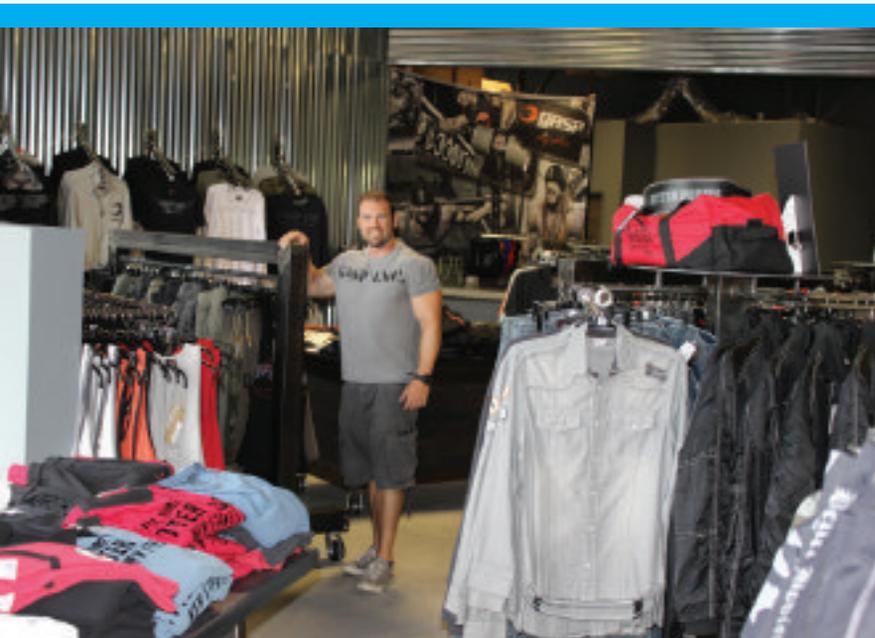


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GREG MCCOY IN GASP CLOTHING
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THE PROCESS OF

“WORK CAPACITY IS A HUGE COMPONENT FOR SEEING CONSISTENT PROGRESS. IF YOU CAN INCREASE YOUR WORK CAPACITY, YOU WILL ALSO INCREASE YOUR POTENTIAL OF STRENGTH.”

“

I BEGAN TO LOOK AT SOME OF THE TOP RAW LIFTERS IN THE WORLD AND HOW THEY WERE TRAINING, LOOKING FOR CONSISTENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ALL THEIR PROGRAMS, SPECIFICALLY EXERCISES OR REP SCHEMES.

LEARN FROM THE BEST

“AS POWERLIFTERS WE NEED TO BE MUSCULAR TO BE A WELL-BALANCED ATHLETE. IMBALANCES CAN BE CREATED AND WREAK HAVOC ON LIFT PROGRESSION.”

CONSTANT EVALUATION

LAST TIME I DISCUSSED HAVING A PURPOSE AND HOW HAVING A PURPOSE IN YOUR TRAINING AND CONSTANTLY ASKING “WHY AM I DOING THIS?” LEADS TO SUCCESS. THIS ARTICLE IS GOING TO GO OVER SOME OF THE REASONS AND PURPOSE FOR MY OWN TRAINING AND HOW I PROGRESSED THROUGH SOME OF MY PLATEAUS AND INJURIES IN GREATER DETAIL.

BY JOHN PETRUZZI

When I first started powerlifting in 2008 I was competing in bench only and was using a very linear progressive bench template that I found from Ryan Kennelly. I had one designated day of bench where I followed percentages and built up from volume to intensity over 8 weeks, but the rest of my schedule was what I was doing previous to 2008 which was a basic body building routine. I was naturally somewhat strong, and at 157 lbs in my first meet ever in North Carolina competing in the USAPL, I benched 275 lbs. I won my weight class, set some state records and felt pretty good. I thought this is fun, I love lifting and I can be good at it. I continued with the way I was doing things, and competed in March 2009 and benched 282 lbs @ 159 lbs. That summer I competed in my last bench only meet and was looking to bench 300 lbs but I missed two attempts at 300 and only made 275@163 lbs. I decided something needed to change so I started researching powerlifting programs and found Louie Simmons and the Westside Barbell template.

Like most lifters, I got it. It made sense! I read Louie's articles and bought his earlier

videos. I set up my basic template and began to train “Westside”. I did not pretend I was as strong, experienced or as conditioned as the lifters at Westside and I had dialed back some of the work. I did not do any sort of circa max (near max) work, and my routine consisted of rotating different maximal effort lifts and incorporating speed work twice a week. I was seeing good progress and trained this way for 3 years. I went from 1175@181 lbs. to 1625@198 lbs. I remember carrying my box into commercial gyms and hooking dumbbells up with bands to squat and bench! Being young and just starting to get into strength training, I made good progress and then decided to modify the Westside template because I was getting beat up and my pecs were really giving me issues. Floor press hurt along with speed bench with bands. I have to say that Louie is a great coach because I emailed him a few times, he took time to answer my emails and help me out with how to adapt some of the training to raw lifting. I noticed that I could box squat 405 with double green bands on each side at 190lbs bodyweight but when I took the bands off and did a free squat I wasn't getting much carry over. I began to think what was the purpose? Why were my pecs killing me?



John Petruzzi

JOHN PETRUZZI IS AN EXERCISE SPECIALIST/ STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING EXPERT CERTIFIED BY USA WEIGHTLIFTING GOVERNED BY THE U.S. OLYMPIC COMMITTEE. AT JUST 24YRS OLD JOHN HAS BECOME ONE OF THE YOUNGEST POWERLIFTERS IN HISTORY TO BE RANKED IN THE TOP 5 AND TOP 10 FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS IN THE WORLD ACCORDING TO PLWATCH.COM.

"I STARTED TO LOOK AT QUALITY OF REPS AND NOT JUST ONLY GETTING THEM DONE."

I videotaped my form and critiqued it as much as possible but what I found was the fast eccentric portion of the lift, especially for bench, really strained the pecs. Over the course of 3 years I had 4-5 pec strains and I'll admit that I was not doing the GPP or "extra" workouts that Westside does. That was a contributing factor to some of my injuries and pec issues. My bench and squat were stalling and I just wasn't getting a lot of carryover.

I began to look at some of the top raw lifters in the world and how they were training, looking for consistent correlations between all their programs, specifically exercises or rep schemes. Some things I noticed were:

1. There was not a lot of variance between types of bars.
2. There wasn't much box squatting.
3. There were much longer strength phases of 3-5s for sets at particular percentages.

Why were they doing this? Why was this so different from Westside? As I mentioned earlier I think most people do not realize the amount of GPP, conditioning and extra workouts Westside incorporates as their volume work. Most people see the template, see how to rotate max lifts and incorporate the speed work and that's it. That will quickly put a ceiling on your potential. One thing I learned was that work capacity was a huge component for seeing consistent progress. Work capacity was your ceiling. If you could increase your work capacity you were also increasing your potential of strength. I began to look into the basic 5/3/1 template and Jim Wendler's program. Working in a particular range of percents/ reps and what is optimal in the 3-5 rep range did wonders for me at this point. My lifts started to shoot through the roof because my work capacity of handling more reps went up and my ceiling of strength started to increase. I did this template for about 2.5 years and went from 1625@198 to 1800@220. I made my own adjustments in terms of the percents and prescribed sets. What I changed was in getting ready for a meet I would not do the usual three prescribed working sets but instead only do one all out rep max for that particular rep scheme. Preparing for a meet I would put on 5-10 lbs each month and each cycle, really working on a maximal effort rep max. After the meet I would back off and do the prescribed three working sets. One thing I

started to notice was adaptation. I found the rotation of 5/3/1 was starting to come too quickly. I was seeing better results staying in a particular rep range for a longer period of time. This is where I started to look at quality of reps and not just only getting them done. I was noticing I was grinding a 5 rep max PR but failing a single rep max PR. Why? Wasn't I becoming stronger? I was hitting five and three rep max PRs and grinders but when competing it was not translating to a meet PR. The speed of the weight was not increasing, it was not feeling lighter. One rep is power and power is not defined by a number but the rate at which work is done. The correlation between speed, strength and force development is not just making the muscle stronger but also getting the muscle to fire quicker to develop force and power.

I started researching CAT (compensatory acceleration training). Fred Hatfield, aka Dr. Squat, had made this popular in the early 1980's by simply producing force through the entire range of motion in a particular rep range and completing an optimal amount of reps, sets and volume while also incorporating maximal force to the bar. It was similar to Westside and the dynamic effort method but without an accommodating resistance (bands and chains). One of the greatest raw squatters, Sam Byrd, also used this by working on his conditioning and work capacity with volume, but also increasing power and force development with the CAT principle of applying maximal force to a sub max weight. It has become VITAL and extremely important for my training. In the past 4 months I have been using Paul Carter's Base Building template and found that I was doing very similar training, i.e. staying in a certain rep range or "phase" for a bit longer to increase work capacity but also feeling the weight getting faster and lighter and then moving up from there. I made some changes to the template of my own in terms of sets and reps but I give credit where credit is due and it is a very solid program that I like. For my percent work or rep ranges where I am hitting 60-75%, my sets and reps are all done with the CAT principle with focus on form and force development. Anything at 80% and greater I'm doing pause reps and using a belt for the lifts. I'm also doing a little more volume work to not only increase work capacity but also muscular development and to correct imbalances. I've found this to be crucial for injury prevention because as

powerlifters we need to be muscular to be a well balanced athlete. Imbalances can be created and wreak havoc on lift progression. I have recently suffered a compression fracture issue in my t-9 vertebrae and while it's a mild compression, there's not a whole lot to do other than give it time to heal. Preventing this issue from happening again will involve incorporating more smaller exercises to help balance out my muscular development and strength. Everyone hears "work on your weaknesses". Look at that from a muscular development issue as well, not just an exercise weakness standpoint.

Think of powerlifting like any other sport. In track and field not everyone is a sprinter and not everyone is a long distance runner; therefore training is much different for each sport. I was a long jumper and sprinter in college and I have always been a quick explosive athlete. I find that CAT helps me a lot and has great transfer and keeps me at a high rate of force development. I have the volume to increase my work capacity and to raise my ceiling of strength. A good balance of both help me consistently make progress. For someone who is not as quick or explosive or responds to that style of training, more volume and work is going to be more beneficial to you. You have to go through a little trial and error and find that sweet spot for you. **PLT**



Keys and purpose of evaluation in my program are:

1. Increasing work capacity. (ceiling for strength)
2. Increasing bar speed. (force development)
3. Creating a balance through muscular development, not just muscular strength.



REAL FACTS

WHOEVER THINKS THAT LIFTING EQUIPPED IS EASY OR THINKS THAT IT'S CHEATING, NEEDS TO TRY IT!



TINA REDDING

MY JOURNEY

FROM RAW POWERLIFTING TO EQUIPPED POWERLIFTING

BY TINA REDDING

The world of powerlifting is a world that I fell in love with this year! My husband, Justin Redding, has competitively powerlifted since 2004. He took a 5 year break to spend time with his son and to help me grow in my business as we travel to bodybuilding shows in the Midwest to provide competition tans, stage makeup and hair. We decided that we would compete in a powerlifting meet and this was the beginning of something special because he had the opportunity to show me what he learned from his Coach, Rick Hussey, (who passed away almost 4 years ago and was the coach of the Big Iron Team) as well as do this sport together as a couple.

We started training for my first meet back in March of this year and were going to compete at a UPA meet in July. Since I had never competed in a powerlifting meet Justin wanted me to do my first meet Raw. I had to learn how to squat, bench and deadlift the “Big Iron Way” as Justin referred to it. Big Iron was known for their equipped lifters and I learned how to lift like I was in gear but was Raw.

Everything was a little bit different than the way I used to train. Although I had been lifting weights since 1997, I did a lot of bodybuilding training but I also trained with heavy weights. My squat and deadlift stance had to be wider. I had to learn what “real” depth was when squatting. I was so excited to learn what I wished I had done years ago when Rick was alive. It was about 5 or 6 years ago when Rick suggested I get into powerlifting and join the team. I was lifting but never thought about powerlifting because I was too scared. I didn’t know much about it except for what Justin did at meets. Rick would tease me saying that I was built for this sport because I had short arms and legs. To this day I regret not listening to him because I know why my husband loves this sport so much and Rick had a lot to do with it, but everything happens for a reason. I didn’t think I would ever lift heavy again because I dislocated my collar bone in 2012. It was the worst injury I had ever had and it took me almost 2 years to recover. With the help of my chiropractor and Justin helping me rehab my collarbone I was finally able to lift



again and that's when I decided to give powerlifting a try!

After training for 4 months at Jim Grandick's Big Iron Compound and finally getting to step on the platform, I got that feeling of adrenaline and was focused on doing what I came there to do....LIFT some heavy weight! I ended up winning the women's open 148 division at my first Raw meet and my numbers were 325 for the squat, 160 for the bench and 319 for the deadlift at the weight of 145 and in the 148 weight class. I had no idea what my numbers were until the very end of my 3rd attempt on my deadlifts because I tune everything out and focus on what I am supposed to do. It was an emotional

time as my husband hugged me and told me how proud he was. I was surrounded by my awesome teammates and happened to look up and see the picture of Rick that we brought to the meet...tears filled my eyes and I knew that this was only the beginning of something special. I fell in love with this sport and couldn't wait to do the next one!

After the meet and on a high from doing a meet, we decided to do another. It was 10 weeks away, which meant that I had 8 weeks to learn how to lift in multi-ply! How I was going to do this I had no idea! I trusted my husband and with the help of my team I was able to make my transition. I'm not going to lie, it was not easy! Whoever thinks that lifting equipped is easy or thinks

that it's cheating, needs to try it! I was really worried about not having enough time to train in gear and finding gear that would fit me as well as be compatible for me. The first thing I tried was a pair of predator briefs made by Inzer. I was so excited to make the jump from raw to multi ply that I didn't stop to think about how hard it was to get in the gear! I borrowed a pair of briefs my first week and from there I knew what size to get. The thing about gear is that you want it to fit your body and everyone molds into their gear a little differently so I needed to find a pair of my own briefs to wear. Luckily my teammate found a pair of briefs on Craigslist and they were exactly the size that I needed. After I got a pair of my own Inzer predator briefs,



Name here writer

THERE IS A LOT OF ARGUMENT ABOUT RAW VS EQUIPPED AND I HAVE DONE BOTH, SO TO ME THERE IS NO WRONG OR RIGHT WAY. I WILL CONTINUE TO LIFT AND COMPETE EQUIPPED BUT I WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO WORK ON MY RAW STRENGTH IN MY TRAINING AS WELL. I KNOW THAT RICK HUSSEY WOULD BE PROUD OF ALL OF US ON THE BIG IRON TEAM AND WE WILL KEEP HIS LEGEND ALIVE BY DOING THIS SPORT TOGETHER AND LIFTING THE "BIG IRON WAY."

- TINA REDDING



TRAINING RULE

TO ME, IT'S LIKE A SAFETY BLANKET - IT'S ACTUALLY SAVING MY BODY AND IS GOING TO KEEP ME IN THIS SPORT A LOT LONGER.

next I had to find a squat suit, deadlift suit and bench shirt. This was a little harder but a teammate gave me an almost brand new Leviathan Inzer suit that didn't fit him and was given to him by another teammate. It fit me pretty well but was a little big in the legs and waist, which wasn't that big of a deal since I would have my briefs underneath. When I finally squatted for the first time in the Leviathan and my briefs, it was a different feeling...I realized that I had to adapt and use my body to push against the suit. It's a feeling that's hard to describe but once I got used to pushing and arching harder at the bottom of my squat, I flew up so quick that it caught me off guard! The weight added was 100 plus pounds more than I was used to but it went up so easily! I was so excited about the extra weight I squatted that I didn't care about the bruises on me from the gear being so tight on my body. To me, it's like a safety blanket and although it may look a little scary or sound awful to someone who doesn't know anything about equipped powerlifting, it's actually saving my body and is going to keep me in this sport a lot longer. When I explain to people what equipped powerlifting is like, I tell them it's like getting your knees wrapped for a squat except it's for your whole body... everything is tight and the suit or shirt winds you up to spring up for your lifts. The gear threw my hips forward when I would squat or deadlift but each week I improved on whatever it was that I was struggling with. For my bench, I went through 2 shirts and learned how to bench in the shirt that I used for the meet in only two weeks, which was an Inzer Rage X. I was nervous at first about using a shirt that I used two times before the meet, but my bench went up more than we thought in the Rage X than in the Phenom which are both made by Inzer. Benching raw versus in a shirt is completely different but it also depends on what shirt you use.

Equipped lifting for me was easier if I listened to my husband talk me through my squat, bench and deadlift so I knew what I needed to do. On my squat, I would go down until I was told to come up unless I got out of groove, then I would come up. I'm amazed at how much weight I could squat in

gear but being brand new to the gear and to this sport, I still have a lot of learning to do. Out of all the lifts, I was worried most about my deadlift until I found the suit that worked the best. It was extremely frustrating to not be able to deadlift in gear what I could deadlift raw, so I had to figure out what I was going to do and that's when we decided to try some different suits like we did with my bench shirt. With the meet only three weeks away at this time, I was more worried about doing this meet than I was about my first raw meet. I'm a perfectionist so that was the hard part... knowing that I only had eight weeks to train in gear and not having it perfected, but as my husband and teammates told me, this is a sport that you continue to grow and learn no matter how long you've been doing this sport. So putting that part of me aside, I did what I was supposed to each week and I made the improvements that I needed to.

One of the major differences that I noticed about being in gear is that my body and joints don't hurt as bad as it did when I was lifting raw, especially after the meet I did in gear. Different parts of my body feel sore because I am lifting significantly more in the gear than I was raw, so I just have to get used to the differences and my body will adapt the more I train. My transition from raw to gear was a little easier for me because my raw strength was pretty good so it was easily going to transfer over and it was inevitable that I would lift more weight in gear. It was a matter of learning how to use the gear which is very technical and is a lot to learn in such a short time. At the Rick Hussey SPF Tribute meet, I ended up getting first place and my numbers were 425 for the squat, 215 for the bench and 365 for the deadlift at 148. In my first equipped meet, I totaled 1,005 pounds! I hit my goal of over 1,000 pounds and I am excited to keep going to see what I can do with more time to train in gear. **PLT**



ROGER RYAN “THE RYANO”

RYAN BENCHING 760 AT
...DESTINATION DALLAS XPC MEET,
SEPTEMBER 6, 2014



ROGER RYAN IS A 59 YEAR OLD BENCH PRESS WORLD RECORD HOLDER WHO IS CHASING 800. AND HE'LL GET IT.

INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

How old are you and what do you do?

I'm 59 and I'm a fully retired police detective from Decatur, IL.

Did you like being a detective?

At first I did but after 10 or 15 years it got old, dealing with the same type of people all the time. I took every school I could, so even though I worked days if there was a call for a detective at night, I got called. You see everything – murders, autopsies. I've been fully retired since 2005. I had a couple part time jobs so now I just train and nap. My wife retired from Archer Daniels Midland and we get along great. Been married 34 years and we were high school sweethearts.

When did you start powerlifting?

When I got out of the military I started lifting weights. I needed upper body strength to control perps in altercations and if you can overpower them it's safer for them and you. I was mostly working on upper body strength, some legs, and I happened to see some powerlifting meet

results and I thought, "I could out lift most of these guys". I went to a Son Light Power meet, got a record bench and a trophy and just had a lot of fun. I was a powerlifter after that! That was in 2003 and I was in 242 and now I weigh 315 so I've gained some muscle since then. You do this sport because it's fun and I won't lift in a meet that isn't fun.

You're primarily a bench. What's your training cycle look like?

I don't follow a template; I just work my butt off. The harder you push yourself, the more gains you'll get. If your form is good you won't get injured either.

Do you squat and deadlift? Bench is your specialty – what's your best recent bench?

I've got such bad knees...I blew out the left one skydiving and fractured the right ACL trying out for semi pro football at 42, so the knees are shot. I tried an 18" deadlift in a strongman contest and got 550 but I favor one knee as it's less painful. This results in my back being twisted as I pull, so I do bench only meets now. (He got 760

single ply the next day for a new PR).

How are the elbows and shoulders? Can you keep going?

I keep getting stronger and I still love this, so I'll keep going. I've hit over 800 in single ply in the gym several times, but haven't made it happen at a meet yet. I've got several multi ply shirts but I can't touch in any of them so I like single ply.

Do you do much raw lifting?

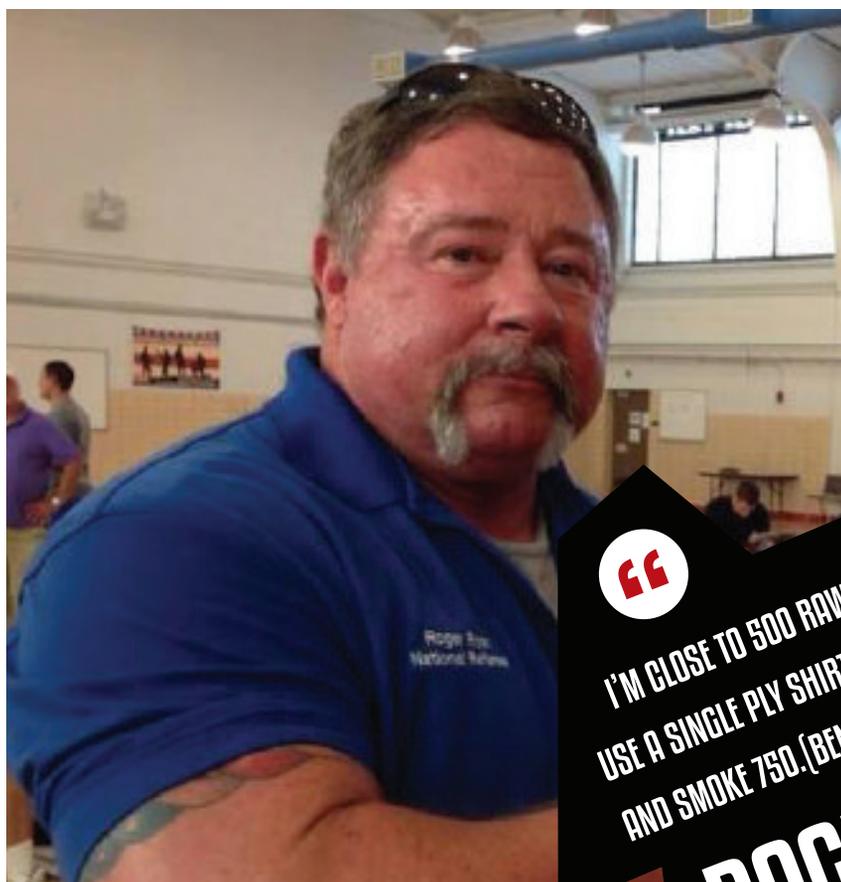
I worked up to 480 before I put the shirt on a few months ago but I'm not going to ever hit a max raw. There's just too much chance of injury and at my age I doubt if I could recover, so no on the raw max. You've got to stay healthy and keep your form. Technique starts to break down when it gets heavy and I think gear is safer than raw.

Is gear "cheating"?

You have to be really strong to get 550 raw no matter what your size. I'm close to 500 but I can use a single ply shirt effectively and smoke 750. I think raw lifters get jealous of the big lifts, but hey, anyone can get a single ply shirt that's legal in almost every fed except the raw ones, and they can lift a lot more if they can master it. I've tried to explain the difference between gear and raw with a baseball analogy. Slow pitch softball is similar to Major League Baseball. They're similar with the same basic form but they're very different sports. The public will never quite "get" gear but I don't care. I get tired of all the drama in powerlifting but that's the way it is. It will never be unified and that's alright.

Anyone you'd like to thank?

My wife for sure! Ken Anderson and Titan for sponsoring and helping me. Rob Luyando and the crew at Mecca Barbell. I drive 180 miles each way on Saturday to train there. I leave at 6 am and don't get home until 4 or 5. If you want to be the best you've got to train with the best. The help and spotting is outstanding. **PLT**



I'M CLOSE TO 500 RAW BUT I CAN USE A SINGLE PLY SHIRT EFFECTIVELY AND SMOKE 750. (BENCH)

ROGER RYAN

DEADLIFTING

FOR LOUSY

DEADLIFTERS



By Mark VanAlstyne
DC, PT, CSCS

I am a lousy deadlifter. It is my favorite lift but I suck at it. I once had a plateau in the deadlift that lasted nine years. I was able to get my deadlift to a semi-respectable 600 pounds in the 181 pound class in 2010. I have been able to maintain this over the next four years despite many injuries including a triceps tear and a herniated lumbar disc.

Brad Gillingham assessed me back in 2010 and said I had powerful quads but underdeveloped gluteal muscles. Gluteal muscle conditioning was missing in my training. I was never locking out my hips in the deadlift or the squat. In other words, I never contracted my glutes forcefully at the top of either movement.

I have always noticed that single ply and raw lifters seem to be better deadlifters than many (not all) of the lifters in multi ply suits. The single ply suits aid the gluteus maximus less and allow for deeper squats. The further below parallel the lifter squats, the more gluteus maximus activation. The same can be said about raw lifters. This means the multi ply lifter needs to supplement equipped squats and deadlifts with raw exercises that utilize the gluteal musculature.

I do a variety of assistance exercises making sure I contract my glutes hard at the top of the movement. I mixed in Romanian

deadlifts with a cable or kettlebells, low box squats, reverse hypers (with my lumbar spine always in extension), and kettlebell swings.

I use a three week rotation very similar to the Cube method to train my deadlift. There is a rep week, a speed week, and I find this helpful in staying healthy and fresh. I may also take a week off from deadlifting every 3 to 6 weeks or whenever I feel stalled or overtrained. I use three different types of bars: a Texas deadlift bar that has a 28 mm diameter grip, a Texas power bar that has a 30 mm diameter grip, and a squat bar (mine is 7 feet long but an 8 foot bar is fine) that has a 32 mm diameter grip. The thicker bars flex less and are harder to hold on to so they offer more of a challenging pull. I also save baby powder on the legs for the meet only.

Assistance work should focus on glute lockout strength. Romanian deadlifts, cable Romanian deadlifts, and kettlebell swings are my favorites. Pick one or two per week and do 3 sets of each for 6-10 reps following your deadlifts.

This routine assumes a best sumo deadlift of 600 pounds. The goal is a 620 pound meet deadlift. Conventional deadlifters can use this routine by subbing in regular deadlifts in place of sumo deadlifts. Speed pulls are done in the power rack with mini bands for extra resistance.

RIGHT: Doc performing speed pulls

EQUIPMENT

Regarding equipment, if allowed, a multi ply canvas or poly suits will act like artificial glutes. Using them in the deadlift, especially the sumo deadlift, should help increase the power of the pull. I switched to an Inzer Leviathon squat suit, but I found that wearing it backwards really made the suit work better. Narrowing my sumo stance helped me get more pop out of the suit, but I have been working on widening my stance to shorten the movement and take some of the pressure off my lower back disc injury.

GRIP STRENGTH

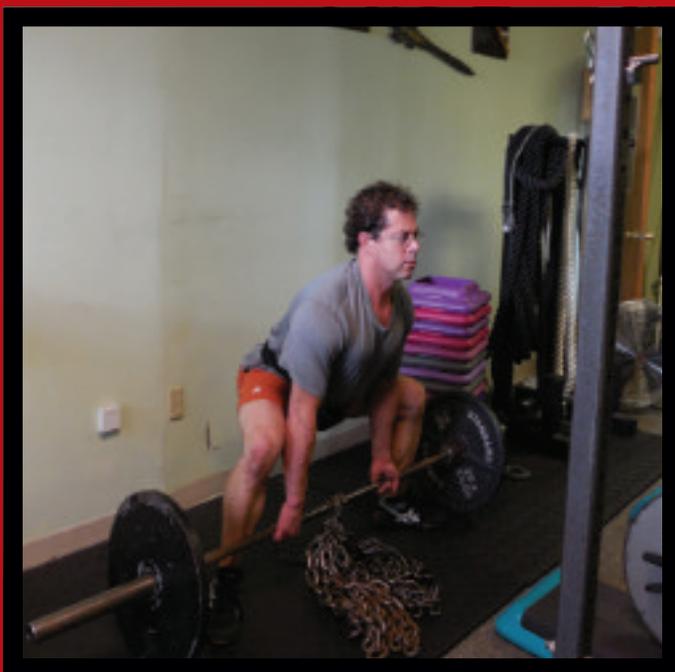
Grip strength is important for any lift but especially the deadlift. Bob Bridges taught me years ago that holding the bar in your fingers and not the palm will actually prevent the bar from rolling in the hand as much and will also shorten up the pulling distance. Static holds can help this type of strength. I like farmer's carries with two kettlebells for this purpose. Grip them with the fingers and not the palms. Squeezing potato chip bag clips is also helpful especially for pinky strength. Also, if your hands are big enough, the hook grip is worth trying.

EXECUTION

Regarding the execution of the lift, don't concentrate on pushing the feet into the floor. Think about getting your hips forward as fast as possible and pushing the floor forward. This will speed your lift through the sticking point.

HIP STRUCTURE

Stuart McGill, PhD is a renowned lumbar spine expert who feels that many lifters do not have the hip structure to deadlift conventional with their spines in a safe position. I agree with this because I hurt my disc deadlifting off the floor. In fact, I can't even lift conventional deadlift off three inch blocks; I need 6 inch blocks to be in proper (safe) spinal position.



THE VANALSTYNE DEADLIFT PLAN

Week 1: Speed deadlifts - sumo off floor using deadlift bar and deadlift suit 415 plus double black mini bands x10 sets x 1 rep 60 seconds between sets; assistance work.

Week 2: Max effort - sumo deadlift raw off 3" block using regular power bar 500 x 2 sets x 2 reps; assistance work.

Week 3: Sumo pulls - raw using reverse purple bands in power rack using squat bar 445 x 3 sets of 6-7 reps; assistance work.

Week 4: Speed deadlifts - sumo off floor using deadlift bar and deadlift suit 425 plus double black mini bands x10 sets x 1 rep; assistance work,

Week 5: Max effort - conventional raw deadlift off 6" block using squat bar 495 x 2 sets x 1 rep.

Week 6: Conventional deadlifts off 3" blocks 445 x 2 sets x 5 reps; assistance work.

Week 7: Rest.

Week 8: Speed deadlifts - sumo off floor using deadlift bar and deadlift suit 495 plus 80lbs chain attached to bar x 10 sets x 1 rep; assistance work.

Week 9: Max effort - sumo raw off floor using squat bar 485 x 3 sets x 2 reps; assistance work.

Week 10: Sumo deadlifts (full gear) from floor 475 x 6 sets x 1 reps, concentrate on speed and form; no assistance work.

Week 11: Rest.

Week 12: Meet: 1st attempt 560 2nd attempt 605 3rd attempt 620.

In closing, I would like to thank my lifting partners at Hercules Gym in Syracuse, NY, particularly Marcus Morris who keeps me motivated to do my best. A special thank you goes to my long time sponsor Inzer Advance Designs for their support. I feel they are the best apparel company in powerlifting and have always been very helpful and generous to me. Anyone who would like advice on routines or injuries can contact me through www.outlaws.com. Put it to the attention of Powerdoc.

Good luck.

Mark VanAlstyne, DC, PT, CSCS



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MY PET PEEVE POWERLIFTING

HOW MANY "WORLD CHAMPIONS"
CAN THERE REALLY BE? MAYBE WE
HAVE BEEN CLASSIFYING "WORLD
CHAMPION" THE WRONG WAY.

BY TIM HENRIQUES

I love powerlifting. In my new book, *All About Powerlifting*, I make the claim that powerlifting is the greatest sport there is. But just because I love it doesn't mean I think it is perfect, and while we may never make it absolutely perfect, I do think we can (and should) strive to make it better. One of the problems with powerlifting is that we are not united and instead there are many different federations and divisions within powerlifting. This has led multiple organizations having "National" and "World" championships which in turn has created far too many "National" and "World" Champions and supposedly "world record" lifts. I understand from a meet director's point of view that holding their "National" or "World Championship" is usually the biggest meet with the biggest draw and they want to (and I believe they are entitled to) make some money for their time and efforts. And I understand the excitement of the lifter as they think about entering a "National" or "World" level meet, but it just isn't accurate.

Powerlifting is all about credibility. If you are a powerlifter and you say you can bench 400

lbs, I am expecting to see a properly performed competition style bench press with a pause of 400 lbs, preferably completed in a meet. If you didn't pause the bar on your chest or you didn't lock it out or you had a finger spot, it is a bullshit lift and it doesn't count. The same is true of the multiple "National" and "World" Championships. Of course it sounds cool to say you went to "Worlds" or maybe even you placed at "Worlds". It sounds even better to say you set a "World Record", but the bottom line is that's not true and by saying that you ruin powerlifting's credibility and your own. If one can do a simple google search and within 5 minutes produce several lifts that are notably higher than these "World Records" done under the same conditions, it is a BS record. Throwing around "National" and "World" records and championships only impresses those uninvolved in the sport - it makes one sound less impressive, less credible, to anyone in the know.

I do believe there is a good solution to this problem. Acknowledging that we have multiple federations, powerlifting organizations can hold their Federation Championship and

WITH NG

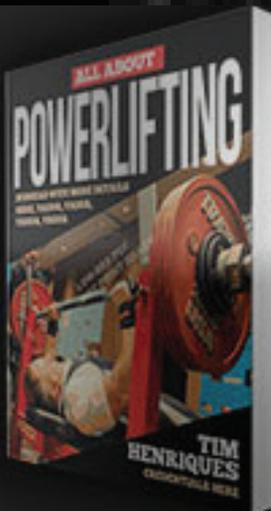
they can keep track of Federation Records. If you place first at that competition in the Open division you can say you are the XYZ Federation Champion in your weight class. While that may not be as prestigious as being the National or World Champion, it is actually accurate and that is still quite an accomplishment in and of itself. To be the Federation Champion or set a Federation record is something to be genuinely proud of and you should be able to celebrate your accomplishments without tearing down or insulting someone else (by claiming you have a World Record when you don't). If you do want to aim for the true World Records then exploring the All-Time Records listed on powerliftingwatch.com is a good place to start.

Powerlifting rewards hard work, dedication, discipline, and a blue collar attitude. It doesn't reward quick fixes or miracle cures. Don't throw away what the iron discipline has taught you just for a brief chance at fame or perceived glory. Be honest with yourself and to the sport and list your accomplishments accurately.
PLT



TIM HENRIQUES

GET THE BOOK



THIS ARTICLE IS BASED ON A CHAPTER IN TIM HENRIQUES BOOK ALL ABOUT POWERLIFTING. YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TIM AND HIS BOOK AT WWW.ALLABOUTPOWERLIFTING.COM.

I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF MIKE AT A WABDL WORLD MEET IN 2009 WHERE I SAW HIM BENCH PRESS 942, WEIGHING ABOUT 340. IT LOOKED LIKE HE HAD "DUDE CLEAVAGE" UP TO HIS CHIN AND AFTER BUYING A TRAINING VIDEO FROM HIM, I FOUND THAT HE HAD MANY UNIQUE IDEAS LIKE PULLING THE PECS UP AND TWEAKING A BENCH SHIRT FOR OPTIMAL RESULTS. I WAS IN DALLAS AT THE TIME OF THIS INTERVIEW SO I FOLLOWED HIM AROUND AND HE PUT ME IN HIS NEWEST TRAINING DEVICE THAT HE CALLS AN "MRS". I'M A LOUSY BENCHER, BUT I MATCHED MY BEST SHIRTED BENCH OF 365 AND JUST MISSED LOCKING OUT 385, A NEW PR FOR ME, ALL AFTER EATING A GIANT HAMBURGER 15 MINUTES EARLIER. I'M FIRST IN LINE TO BUY ONE OF THESE WHEN THEY ARE READY FOR PRODUCTION.

INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

**MIKE
WOMACK**

KING



bench daddy

"THERE'S NO WRONG WAY TO BENCH PRESS,
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A BETTER WAY TO
BENCH PRESS...."

OF THE BENCH

How old are you and what do you do?

I'm 32 and I train people at Lockout Gym in McKinney, TX. My wife and I have six kids and until she had some health issues, we were going for twelve. I became a father at 14 with my first girlfriend (not my wife). My then girlfriend's parents stepped up to the plate and took care of our daughter as their own. My dad had a chain of video stores in Modesto, CA where we lived, and I went to work for him at 14 selling videos and games. He would take money out and I would help however I could with raising our daughter. I met my wife, Stephanie, in our senior year of high school and got married in 2006 at a powerlifting meet in Vegas. My kids are 5, 7, 10, 11 and 12 and 18. My son Xander at 10 has my build and benches so he may be a big bencher someday. I bought and sold video game stores and a commercial gym in the Modesto area and moved to Dallas in 2009. I currently train people how to bench better at Lockout Gym in McKinney, TX. I train all ages and the reward for that is mostly intangible.

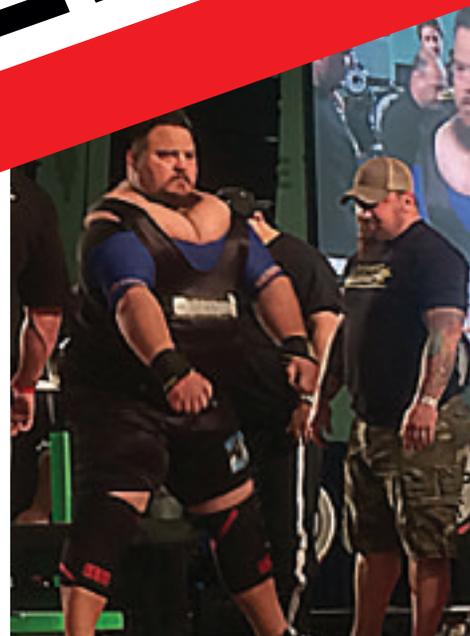
The bench press is your signature lift. Have you always been a natural bencher?

When I was 14 I benched 315 trying out for football in school. By the time I got home the coach had called my dad

wanting to know what kind of steroids I was on! In my senior year weighing between 180 and 205 I got a 495, sloppy and no pause. My very first powerlifting meet was at 19 and I benched 385 in an early bench shirt. My next meet was an AAU meet two weeks later where I benched 475 raw with a pause. I came in when the second generation bench shirts were just coming on the scene. I got up to 550 and would blow out every shirt I bought so I just kind of quit powerlifting for a while. I still coached my mom, dad and sisters and brother. I weigh about 370 at 5'7" and I've always had a barrel chest and big shoulders. Even at 220 the upper body doesn't change much so I guess I'm built to bench.

Have you ever looked in the family tree to see where this strength comes from?

I have and I half expected some of my ancestors to be circus freaks! When I really started digging, I found that my great-great grandmother was a woman named Sarah Womack, who had 38 children! This was confirmed by a Ripley's Believe It or Not article, along with several articles in the Dallas Morning News. My birth father was her grandson. Sarah only had a couple of single births – all the others were multiple births. Twins, triplets, sextuplets – she had 38 kids in 38 years. If you put a goatee like I have on her picture, she and I are almost twins. She



was tough!

Did your family compete?

Oh yeah, we traveled together to meets from 2001-2005. My dad has benched 500 in a meet, raw in 259 or 275. My mom and sister still have some WABDL records, but they don't compete much any more. We went to WABDL Worlds in 2005 and I bought a Titan F6 from Ken Anderson. I opened with 450 and it flew up but it came up so fast I hit the rack. Second attempt it came up so fast it hit a spotter in the chest. I went to 600, having never benched that much and smoked it weighing 259. In 2006 I went to 275 and then 308, and my bench went from 661 to 881 all in one year just by learning how to bench in a shirt and work on what a shirt could do.

None of that was raw?

Oh no, I stopped raw benching in 2005. When I stopped raw benching my lifts started going up and I've had no elbow or shoulder pain since then. I realized that I had been overtraining. The body is like an army of "healers". When you break down muscle while training that "army" goes to rebuild the muscle tissue that you broke down, but if you've got inflammation the army is "split" and can't do what it's supposed to do on either side effectively. What happens is that recovery is extended. If you're "on the juice" your recovery is 48 hours, but a natural lifter takes more like four days. People who overtrain, it's more like 5 or 6 days, and the body NEVER gets healed or builds like it should because of that overtraining. It's a trade off though; if you go for just strength you'll never have the "look" that a lot of people want because you only bench once a week and don't do much assistance work. I want to be as strong as I possibly can, so I'll give up some of the "look".

Does your family go with you to meets?

Mostly local meets and if there's one in Vegas we all go, but with five kids it's tough.

Did you ever squat and deadlift in competition?

No, my ACL and meniscus have all had surgeries at age 15 due to wrestling. If I squat, sometimes my leg will lock up, so I do above parallel squats and heavy

leg presses in the gym. I hate deadlifting so I don't do it. If I train kids for sports I have them all do deadlifts because they're all weak from sitting around playing video games and the lower back is so susceptible to injury.

Let's talk about body weight. Weren't you a contender for the TV show "The Biggest Loser"?

Yes, I just got cut from the casting finals six weeks ago at the last cut. I was ensconced at their facility – no outside communication, a battery of tests, both psychological and medical. In fact I just got my medical report back yesterday and my doc looked at it. He said I'm healthy as a horse – no pre-diabetes, cholesterol and serum levels all good, normal blood pressure – and he said that's probably why I got cut. A lot of contestants have serious medical problems from being overweight, so it's almost a matter of life and death if they don't lose the weight which increases the drama for the show. For my height and weight I'm way overweight so I was a prime contender, but I'm actually pretty healthy. I need to lose weight, no doubt, and I'm working on it but it was a lot more motivating to do it and win 250 grand if I could do it. Often people get cut, come back next year and win it. It's happened several times on the show, so I'll



try it again next year.

What would be your optimal weight for health and a big bench?

I'm shooting for 220-242 and a big bench. I've never even tried steroids because I want to be around as long as possible for my kids and grandkids, but my shoulders and chest would still be there and I think I could do well at that weight.

So how do you get some of these guys benching what they do? Sean Finegan (also interviewed in this issue) at 65 benching near 700 in single ply, Austin Sellers at 20 in single ply benching 700 – how do you do it?

I just change slight things that they're doing. I've already done the hard work. I know what to do, and it's a bunch of small things adding up. There's no wrong way to bench press, but there's always a better way to bench better and show a hundred ways to do it, but I can't teach anyone how to get better until I see a flaw. Many people are "on point" until they get to that 90% area, then the faults start to happen – butt comes up, head comes up, bar gets out of the track. I don't teach anything until I see their max.

Most of the time their technique forced them out of the groove. The bar path has left the correct alignment. The right bar path can be found by holding a max weight at full extension for a long 3-5 count. Wherever the bar drifts, whether towards the feet or the head, that's where the body wants it and is recruiting the muscles in the right place to push it. Once you find that spot, lower it straight down and it will go straight up unless you're arched. Then "straight up" is actually pushing towards the feet.

Do you recommend a lifter to arch?

No, but I promote angle of shoulder. "Crush the can" between the shoulder blades which



"THE BODY IS LIKE AN ARMY OF "HEALERS". WHEN YOU BREAK DOWN MUSCLE WHILE TRAINING THAT "ARMY" GOES TO REBUILD THE MUSCLE TISSUE THAT YOU BROKE DOWN, BUT IF YOU'VE GOT INFLAMMATION THE ARMY IS "SPLIT" AND CAN'T DO WHAT IT'S SUPPOSED TO DO ON EITHER SIDE EFFECTIVELY. WHAT HAPPENS IS THAT RECOVERY IS EXTENDED."



MIKE GOING FOR 1035#

WHERE IT COUNTS

"WHEN YOU'RE IN FIGHT OR FLIGHT MODE WITH A HEAVY WEIGHT YOU NEED TO FIGHT, AND ABSOLUTELY FIGHT. CONTINUE TO PUSH THAT WEIGHT AND THE LONGER YOU GRIND, THE BAR FINDS ITS OPTIMAL PATH AND THE BODY RECRUITS EVERYTHING ENABLING YOU TO FINISH THE PRESS."

pinches the shoulder blades together, then drive yourself back so that the back and even the arch of the neck all make contact with the bench. This creates what I call a "footprint" on the bench. Tuck the chin into the chest which gives the feeling of raising the head but creates tightness. You then have almost a "triangle" on the bench with the shoulders and neck tight forming the triangle points. The more weight on the bar, the more your shoulder blades

"IF YOU DON'T START WITH YOUR SHOULDER BLADES CRUSHED TOGETHER, NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN EXCEPT FAILURE."

are pushed together, and the shorter the stroke becomes. It doesn't surprise me that someone says 600 is tough, but they put 700 on the bar and if they're set up right, it's almost easier because the upward stroke has been shortened by the shoulder blades being "crushed" together. If you take a tape measure to it, the 600 stroke might be 9", but with 700 it's now 7 1/2". So what's happening? They're bending their arms less so there's more power. If you don't start with your shoulder blades crushed together, nothing's going to happen except failure. If you start right, as you hold the weight you can feel the shoulder blades coming together while simultaneously engaging the lats.

How about leg drive?

I like to teach driving back, not up. Ideal ankle placement is under the knee, feet flat to drive back. The great part is while

you're driving back you get all the benefits of lifting your butt without actually lifting it!

So where do you drive from?

I literally try to rub the soles off my shoes. When I bench, I tap my toes into the front of my shoes. I've forgotten to do that and end up driving my feet out so hard that the shoe slips back and I can't lock out the weight. When you're in fight or flight mode with a heavy weight you need to fight, and absolutely fight. Continue to push that weight and the longer you grind, the bar finds its optimal path and the body recruits everything enabling you to finish the press. There's no sticking point – the body will put the bar in the right groove. You have to be all in to finish. When I'm sitting on the end of the bench getting ready to lift, I tell myself "I've done all the right things, now let's cash the check".



The single most important thing I tell myself is “short stroke, short stroke”. That triggers everything to set up right – foot placement, shoulder placement – everything comes together to create the shortest stroke possible. When I bench heavy my legs and lower body are really sore but my upper body rarely is sore. I’ve also learned to maximize the shirt’s potential through trial and error. I sew, so I can alter a shirt right there to test something. With wrist wraps I form a “backstop” on the back of the hand so that your mind thinks you’re wrist is rolling back like you’ve always done it but it’s rigid. Now you don’t have to think about keeping the wrist straight. It’s done, now you can work on other techniques instead of that one thing that used to always send the bar to your face. Move a roadblock that’s in their way and they can move.

What breathing advice do you have?

I like the valsalva maneuver, basically drawing in a big breath through the nose only and pushing it down into the diaphragm. What you’ll notice is that air in the diaphragm increases your fight time. Before I learned this method, I had about 10 seconds to finish a lift or I’d faint from all the pressure. There’s a YouTube video with me benching 911# and from the time I get the weight handed to me and the finish, it’s 18-20 seconds. I couldn’t do that without the valsalva method. You now have 3-4 extra seconds to stay in the groove to touch rather than lift your head to find the right spot. If you stay in that straight groove, you don’t have to push it fast. You also have more time to finish in the groove. In fact speed often gets people in trouble. The speed within the angle of the groove often gets lifters right in their sticking point. Here’s an analogy. If you secure a string to a tennis ball and nail the other end of the string to the floor and throw the ball toward the ceiling fast, what is the chance the ball will come straight down? Almost none. If you throw

the ball up slowly, there’s a much better chance the ball will come straight down. What gets people in trouble with speed is they often go beyond full extension. Two things cause the bar over the face – limp wrist and speed. They’ll start with the wrist angled toward the head and try and move it forward near lockout. That’s too much transition in the lift. Too many things are going on. This is technique. Now when the weight gets heavy, it’s heavy. For example, Greg Powell is 49 years old, 220 and was benching 700. He then hit 800, then 850 and is flirting with 900.

What are your favorite assistance exercises?

Single arm dumbbell bench is by far the most important exercise. Every rep start with an arch, crush the can, tuck the chin. I like to teach one thing that fixes five. When you lower the dumbbell all the muscle groups are activated in the right way. If they aren’t you’ll cartwheel off the bench, and the body knows what to activate to not do that. It triggers leg drive. I’m always sore in my lower body after a meet, but not upper body. I’ve had people start with pressing two 100# dumbbells, ease into pressing one 100 pounder, and a month later they’re doing a one handed DB press with 160. It’s leg drive being recruited and that’s why my legs are so sore after a meet. I also have some “forbidden” exercises that pertain to bench pressers only. No more bicep work. None. The biceps prevent a lockout as they work against the tricep. You’ve got the bicep pulling and



MIKE WOMACK AND SONS

the tricep pushing. Of course you want to look good so do high rep hammer curls to prevent tearing. Next is incline press. You don’t recruit anything from those muscles. It’s a long term injury that’s going to happen; shoulder impingements, surgeries and pain. You can do incline and decline but only a very slight angle either way. The core bench press muscle is the lats. Third, triceps. No skull crushers, because the shirt is the tricep. The lats do most of the work. Dips are another one you need to drop. The absolute worst exercise you can do is skull crushers because they isolate the joint at the elbow. Do tricep pressdowns but use the whole body instead of isolating the triceps. Lean into it and DON’T



LEFT: TEAM MEMBER IN A BENCH OVERLOAD DEVICE THAT WOMACK CALLS "THE KILLER B".

isolate the triceps. Use the core and back to press down. The Hammer Strength Incline machine is a good one because it's basically a partial, and you're pressing out instead of up. Lockouts with a wide grip are good back exercises, like pin presses.

How about side laterals for shoulders?

I don't believe any pulling exercise helps the bench. Not face pulls, lat pulldowns...anything. Grab the bar wide and do lockouts. If you do lockouts, people will say it's a tricep exercise. It's actually a lat exercise to shorten the bench stroke through time under tension. I can do a 6" inch stroke for 6 reps with 500# and get a tricep pump, or go really wide, "crush the can" and do one rep with 700 holding the bar for 10 seconds. You'll push it up an inch and after 10 seconds it's sitting on the pins. Why is that? You just gained an inch of flexibility in the shoulder blades. The weight literally smashed and crushed you. That's what you're after. My stroke with 700 is 8". My stroke with 900 is 6". I approach this from a different way than everybody else. I'm minimizing injuries, maximizing bar alignment – the strength comes in time. If technique and alignment are fixed, now we can get stronger. You should always bench in a bench shirt. If you want to compete at the highest level, you should bench in a shirt.

What about all the raw benchers that will beg to differ?

Really big raw benchers are mostly not drug free. Even a good raw bencher gets to around 400 and starts getting pec tears and shoulder injuries. Raw benchers need to go to gear. I used to lift raw and always had elbow pain. If you lift multi ply you must do a lot of raw work because you're fighting the shirt.. In single ply you can still recruit a lot of the same muscle that you use raw. I use my shirt to protect me and I can manipulate the single ply shirt to help me, but the raw stroke and shirt stroke are different due to the groove, kind of like a golfer will modify the club to fit their swing. The chest plate must be correct, i.e. looser or bigger. It's the arms that must be tightened down. If the chest plate is too tight it pulls the shoulders forward which you don't want. When you go wide and crush the can, then the chest plate will tighten. Stock shirts can be recreated. Most guys get a PR in their old single ply and then want to move to double ply. The single ply becomes their "opener" shirt. Why not leave it on and get the "home run" in it? Get one shirt and use it for a year, two years. I've taken guys from 600 to 700 in single ply in a short period of time and they want 800 so they go multi ply and they go back to 600. I know it doesn't make sense but it happens a lot.

What's with the dark glasses?

I used to wear the transition type

that darkens in the sun, but I prefer the dark glasses. I'm so used to it I even go to movies and drive at night in these.

So you do all your own alterations and for your crew? Do you do alterations for others and what do you charge?

Yes, I know what to do and I care about a lifter benching more weight. There's special thread that won't break, the arms have to taper...most seamstresses can't really get it right. I taught myself to sew out of necessity and one special stitch can put 20 pounds on a PR. I'm such a mean guy I'm tightening some of my competitors shirts tonight so they can try to beat me! (Go to the ad elsewhere in this magazine).

You've come up with a new product called the MRS (muscle recruitment shirt). Tell us about it and how people can order it.

Go to www.benchdaddy.com or see the ad in this magazine. These will be customized to each lifter. They're made of knee wrap material and there's a patent pending. The price is \$149.95 but keep in mind this is not a bench shirt but a bench press overload training tool.

Who would you like to mention or thank?

My mom, dad, wife and kids. Ken Anderson, Anderson Powerlifting and all my team members. **PLT**



real facts

"I SEW, SO I CAN ALTER A SHIRT RIGHT THERE TO TEST SOMETHING. I TAUGHT MYSELF TO SEW OUT OF NECESSITY AND ONE SPECIAL STITCH CAN PUT 20 POUNDS ON A PR."

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BUD DAVIS

MASTERS

STRONG

INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

“I STARTED LIFTING ON MY 36TH BIRTHDAY TO QUIT SMOKING AND STARTED POWERLIFTING WHEN I WAS 54.”

I first was introduced to Bud Davis at WABDL Worlds in 2009 in Reno NV where I watched him approach the deadlift bar and start pulling stiff legged and round backed. The bar didn't move for a couple seconds, then slowly, ever so slowly it started its ascent, never stopping until he reached lock out. The weight was 684 pounds and Bud was 67 years old, weighing 250. It was an amazing lift and I've never seen anyone lift so much weight in the style that he does. I congratulated him and saw him the following year at the Utah state meet. We hit it off and he invited me to train at Bud's Gym, a private gym behind his house in Spanish Fork, UT. I've trained there at least 30 times and always learn something new.

How old are you and how long have you been lifting?

I'm 71 years old. I started lifting on my 36th birthday to quit smoking and started powerlifting when I was 54. When I started I lifted 4 hours a day and lifted 367 days straight to keep my mind off smoking.

You're retired now. What did you do for a living?

I was a millwright for Geneva Steel. A millwright is basically a crane mechanic so it involved a lot of hard labor and work with 16 and 20 pound hammers.

Do you think all that hard labor gave you a base for deadlifting?

It had to help a little, but the deadlift progression has been slow and steady. When I started gym lifting at 36 weighing about 220, I could deadlift around 400 pounds.

What got you into powerlifting at 54?

A guy named Misi Inyuki (sp?) could bench 617 in a shirt and raw bench 500 where I was training. He said that I should try a powerlifting meet in Roy, UT. I trained for a while, entered the meet and got a trophy and I was hooked! I squatted 520 (a gift), benched 320 and pulled 512. It was single ply, but I knew I was a deadlifter first and foremost. I've always lifted in drug free meets and have never even tried steroids.

When did you get the idea to build your own gym?

I was making good money at Geneva Steel and needed a tax break so I thought I'd start a business. The city wouldn't give me a license, so I ended up with a really nice gym after all that and no business. I've just let friends train there since.

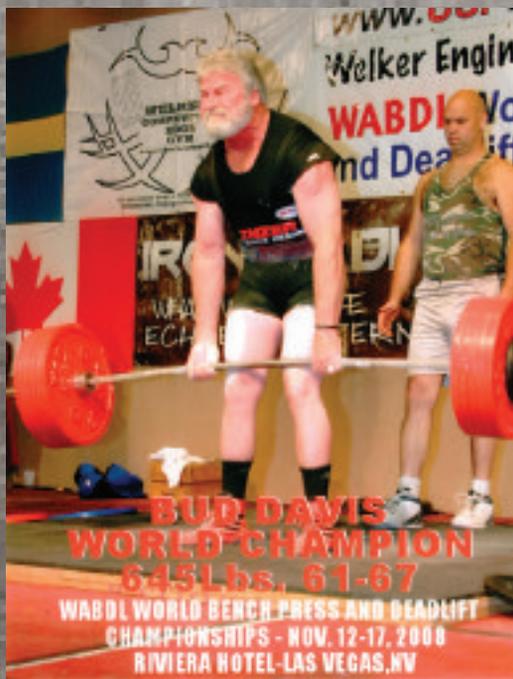
Would you have built it anyway?

Yeah but not nearly so nice. Before I built it I would occasionally train in the family room on a cheap little \$19 Sears bench with a squat rack attachment. I was squatting 400 for reps and racked it slightly off center. The whole thing tipped, breaking a bunch of tile and some furniture. My wife banished me to the outside and many's the day I was squatting and deadlifting in the driveway in the middle of a snow storm. I'd have snow on me when I came in. I figured if Arnold Schwarzenegger could train outside when he was young in Austria, well I could too! It did get me to thinking about building a separate enclosed gym.

So what are your best lifts?

520 was my best squat at 55 years old. I benched 360 at 59 and could do that raw until a few years ago, but never could get 365. My best deadlift was 684 at 67 years old. I mostly competed at 242. At 70 years old and 220, I pulled 580 and couldn't lock out 601. I still beat the WABDL World record for age and weight by 80 pounds. About two months later I had a quadruple bypass and more complications. It just really irritates me that I'm not coming back faster.

You think you'll ever compete again?





“MY BACK IS MY STRENGTH AND IT JUST WORKS FOR ME. I HAVE GOOD LEG STRENGTH BUT I JUST DON’T USE THEM.”

Only if I can pull at least 500 off the floor!

You have a unique deadlifting style. Most would call it stiff leg round back. Have you ever tried to change the style?

My back is my strength and it just works for me. I have good leg strength, but I just don’t use them. Gus Rethwisch commented to me once, “You know, it’s legal to use your legs in the deadlift in this federation”, but as I tell people who train with me, “Do as I say, not as I do!”. I’ve rarely had any back problems. I was at an AAU meet pulling 620 and someone in the crowd yelled “Use your legs!” I resolved to do it and the next attempt at 650 I focused on using legs and really hurt my back. I’ve been lucky to lift like this and not get hurt.

Where do you get that back strength?

I have no idea. I’ve always done labor but so have a lot of guys. It doesn’t run in the family so I don’t really know where it comes from.

You’ve been married to Carol for 52 years and she just quit running the St. George Marathon (26 miles in the summer averaging 15 minutes per mile) at 68 years old. I wish my parents would have had you and Carol’s genetics – I’d be Superman! What’s your training looking like these days?

I’m trying to get back to rack pulling but I’m still really weak and I haven’t done much core training, so I’ve got to do more of that.

All the times I’ve trained there I always came away with the impression that if you could pull a weight off the #2 pin in the rack (bottom of weight plates 5” off the floor), with meet psych you could pull that same weight at the meet.

Basically or real close. Meet psych does a lot!

Describe your meet warm up routine for the last several years.

My opener is my warmup. I figure you’ve only got a number of lifts in you, so why waste them in the warmup room? I used to warm up a lot and it didn’t seem to help much. I can tell my first lift is my first lift, but that second is GOOD! I pulled 678 at 68 at 241 body weight and it worked great.

What had you pulled off the #2 pin previous to that lift?

I had pulled 700 off the #1 pin so I knew I could pull big. I was alone in the gym when I did it.

What are you doing specifically to train for the next meet?

I deadlift 3 days a week, alternating #2 pin one day and #5 pin the next. My shoulders are shot, so no lat pulls but I do a lot of chest supported rowing. I’m not too eager to go back under the knife to fix my shoulders! **PLT**

“THE WEIGHT WAS 684 POUNDS AND BUD WAS 67 YEARS OLD, WEIGHING 250. I WATCHED HIM APPROACH THE DEADLIFT BAR AND START PULLING **STIFF LEGGED AND ROUND BACKED.** THE BAR DIDN’T MOVE FOR A COUPLE SECONDS, THEN SLOWLY IT STARTED ITS ASCENT, NEVER STOPPING UNTIL HE REACHED LOCK OUT.”

- JIM CURLEY

AUSTIN SELLERS

AUSTIN HAS THE ALL TIME
BEST TEEN SINGLE PLY BENCH
RECORD OF 705 AND RUNS AN
OIL SERVICE COMPANY. ALL AT
THE TENDER AGE OF

20
YEARS OLD

YOUNG GUN

I (Jim) was in Dallas a while ago and met Austin Sellers who was in town for an Arnold bench qualifier. It was hard to believe that he had the all time teen bench record (705 in single ply) so of course I interviewed him! He's a great contrast to Bud Davis who pulled 684 at 68 years old, proving once again that you can do this sport your whole life and keep getting better at it.

INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

How old are you and how long have you been lifting?

I'm 20 and I've been lifting for 4 years. I started lifting the second semester of my sophomore year. I weighed 260, all fat, and a friend of mine asked if I'd like to try powerlifting. (Ed. - powerlifting is HUGE in high school in TX). They welcomed me and made me feel like family, so I was hooked from the first workout.

What is your current height and weight?

I'm 5'8" and 230. I usually lift 242.

So you played football in high school?

I played tennis for three years, football for one year and powerlifting for two years. I was actually really good at tennis because no one could return my serve so I didn't have to run around very much!

High school powerlifting is all single ply. What were your best high school lifts in a meet?

I got 600-460-570. I went to Hawley High which had a graduating class of 50 but we had a good team and I still live in Hawley, about 20 miles north of Abilene.

Where do you train in such a small town?

I live with my grandparents and they "donated" half of a 1200 square foot outbuilding so that I could build my own gym. I spent my life savings of \$40k to build it. I knocked down walls, ran wiring, put in flooring which is 3/4" rubber mats. I've got a Dynabody monolift, a brand new Forza bench, and much of the rest of it is Rogue Fitness. My dumbbell rack goes from 5-125 pounds. If you count chains, I've got 4000 pounds of iron weight, 1000 pounds of rubber weight (olympic plates so I can drop them), Texas Strength squat, bench and deadlift bars, three more Rogue power bars, a reverse hyper, squat rack, boxes, single and double pillar pulldowns, leg curl and extension machines, shoulder press and three Texas Strength squat racks with snap in benches. I've got gear, belts, a deadlift platform, and a leg press machine. I've got some equipment that's in storage so I'm looking for a new building already!

Do you train people or is it a true home gym?

I train people, mostly high school kids from surrounding schools who powerlift or play football. I'm thinking about moving it to Abilene so I have more room and time

to train people.

Is that your full time job?

No, I work for the oilfield service roustabout company that my grandpa owns. It will be mine someday, but what I need to do is find people that I trust so that one would manage the gym, one would run the oilfield service company and I would manage the managers. I've got a few people in mind because with Shell moving in the area is getting ready to explode.

What exactly does a roustabout company (you) do?

Once the well is drilled we do everything else. We set up all the gathering tanks, the pumpjack, the electricity, tank batteries, flow lines - everything. A crew of three can have a drilled well flowing and producing oil in 4-5 days. We're always busy. It's hard physical labor but I'm used to it.

How big is the oilfield service company?

It's only two years old with nine employees but it's doing well. My grandfather started it so that I'd have

something to go into. He's 67 but he and my grandmother have raised me since I was six months old. Long story, but they've done a great job and for all intents and purposes they're my parents. I started the gym after the oil company was up and running just because I needed somewhere to train. I didn't start it as a business but it's kind of turned into one.

Do you have any certifications?

I'm certified through NSCA and CrossFit Level 1.

Experience counts more than a sheet of paper. What are your best lifts in a meet recently?

I hit an 860 single ply squat, a 705 bench single ply and a 630 raw deadlift, all in three separate meets. The squat was in APF, the bench was in WABDL and the deadlift was in a non sanctioned meet. I'm going to APF/WPC Worlds in November in their AAPF drug tested single ply division. I'm hoping for 840-720-650 for 2050-2150 total as a junior.

What's that teenage bench record you have?

In high school at 198 I benched 445 and I have the all time teenage

"I TRAIN PEOPLE, MOSTLY HIGH SCHOOL KIDS FROM SURROUNDING SCHOOLS WHO POWERLIFT OR PLAY FOOTBALL."

single ply bench record at 705. I did that last year at a WABDL meet in Oklahoma before I turned 20.

How did you go from 445 to 705 in two years?

Two words – Mike Womack. I train with Mike and his crew in McKinney, TX at least twice a month on Saturday (now Sunday because of Mike's kid's sports activities). It's a four hour drive EACH WAY but it's worth it. I probably would've quit powerlifting and I sure wouldn't be where I am now without him. They call him the "bench daddy" and he is the "guru" of bench pressing.

THIS "HOME GYM" IS PROBABLY BETTER EQUIPPED THAN WHERE YOU TRAIN! SOME POWER BARS, A REVERSE HYPER, SQUAT RACK, BOXES, SINGLE AND DOUBLE PILLA



FEATURES INCLUDE MONOLIFTS, FORZA BENCH, 4,000 LBS OF IRON, TEXAS STRENGTH SQUAT, BENCH AND DEADLIFT BARS, THREE MORE TOQUE
R PULLDOWNS, LEG CURL AND EXTENSION MACHINES, SHOULDER PRESS AND THREE TEXAS STRENGTH SQUAT RACKS WITH SNAP IN BENCHES.



I met Mike when I was a teenager because a bunch of other teenagers and myself entered a meet in Arlington a few years ago. Mike was there and I saw him bench after he had just made his 942 bench in single ply at WABDL Worlds. My bench at that time IN A SHIRT was 270. I arranged to train with Mike a while later and the first time I trained with him I got 420 to two boards. I was sold! He showed me the basics of how a shirt worked and when he saw my diligence and desire to bench more, he started altering my shirt and my bench took off. I've brought 820 to my chest and 945 to a two board in the gym but my best meet bench is only 705.

Why do you think that is? Why can't you do it at a meet?

I haven't had the weight in my hands enough. I've only had 800 plus on the bar three times and each time was two or three months apart. I need to handle 750 a lot more and then go to 800 and train with that weight consistently. My high school coach around here is a big help but there aren't very many big single ply lifters that can help. I've put out the word that I'll train people for free if they'll just help me with the gear so I hope I can get a crew together locally. I also have to get over the "open big to win big" mentality. Many times an easy opener just to stay in the meet will win because everyone else bombs so I'm trying to dial back my openers.

What's the next month look like in preparation for WPC Worlds?

I'm doing a lot of volume at 80-85% in gear. Maybe two or three weeks out I'll be doubling my projected second attempts, 3 sets of 2 reps twice a week in each lift. I always pull raw in both training and meets so that's easy to accommodate.

Do you pull sumo or conventional?

I pull equally each way. No matter what I've done they're both equal.

What meets are you looking at in 2015?

I'm going to pull back from powerlifting for a while and try strongman. I've bought some stones, yokes and other strongman equipment. I think powerlifting will always come first but strongman can help powerlifting. I can do almost everything Derek Poundstone has done even though I'm not an optimal strongman height. Last Wednesday I got the 430 pound stone to a 50" platform which is almost to my chin three times along with walking 75 yards with a 950 pound yoke. I haven't sprinted with it yet but I've got natural strength that seems to translate well to strongman.

Do you look forward to the day where you can have a cushy manager type position and just train hard without all the physical labor during the day?

I'm not sure if it would help or hinder me. Physical labor is good for a person and I know when I go on vacation I don't train. It's kind of like not training in your bench shirt. Your brain forgets the groove.

Who would you like to thank or mention?

First and foremost my "papa" and "meme" (Grandpa and Grandma). They're my real

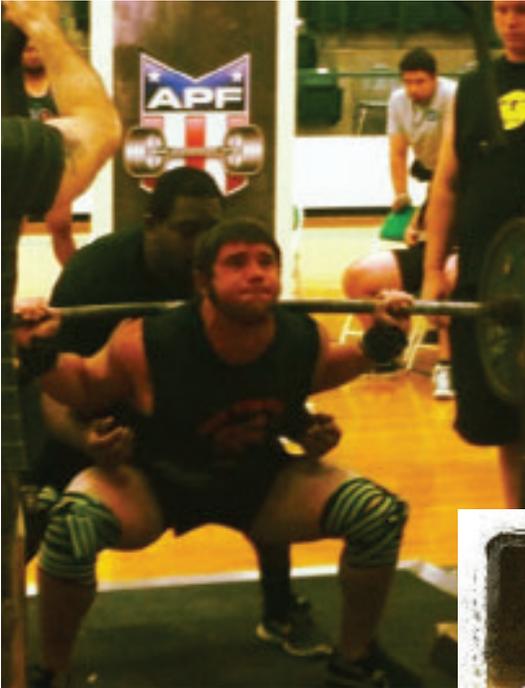
family. I'd like to thank Clancy Manuel and Josh Helder, two of my best friends. Clancy is the one that got me into lifting in the first place and they're always there for me. Kevin Stoker and Cort Arthur were my two high school powerlifting coaches – they warmly welcomed me into the iron brotherhood family, and they're still great buddies and training partners. Henry Thomason for squat and deadlift help, Ken Anderson for great gear help and last but not least Mike Womack. If not for him and his crew I'd probably have quit. I thank him for everything he's done and I could never repay him. He's a family type of guy and he's always there for every one of his

iron family.

To Kayla, my mom and my sisters Trinity and Kailyn Cooley, the Helzer family and the Stoker family for all the support and help as well.

Family isn't blood or who's married into who. It's about who you love and care for most, who you would be there for at anytime anywhere for anything without even batting an eye and you know they would do the same for you. Each one of the people above are all very close to me and a huge key to my success. Without them, anything I do or have done wouldn't be possible. **PLT**

STRENGTH *INSPIRATION*



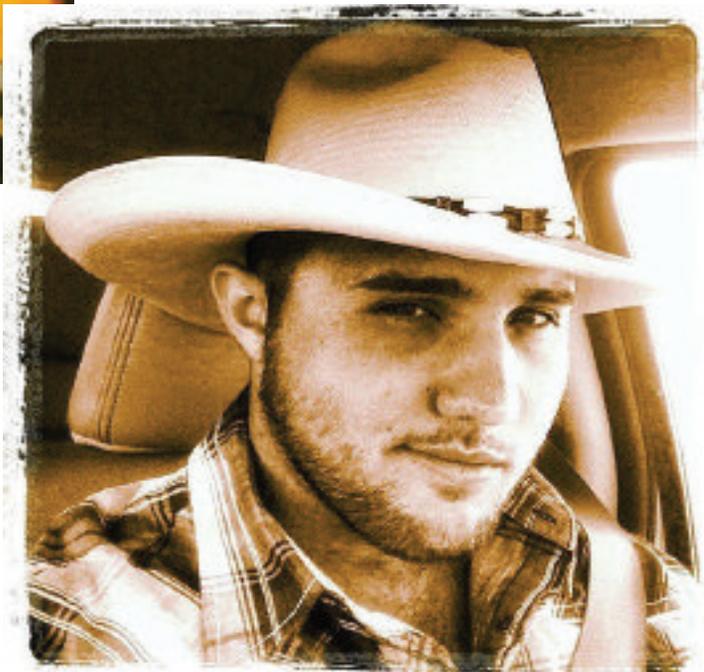
"Just me, God, and gravity" - Mike Womack

"Life is like bench press, you'll get through it, you just gotta keep on pushin'" - Mike Womack

"Work hard, pray hard, live simple" - Austin Sellers

"For the kingdom of God it is not a matter of talk but of power."
1 Corinthians 4:20

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13





USPA OLYMPIA PRO POWERLIFTING INVITATIONAL

By Anthony Pastorello - Host of "Strength Talk"

"WHERE THE WORLD'S STRONGEST COME TO TALK!"

Like always, Steve Denison and the USPA put on a great event with the best single ply lifters competing on one platform. Something that I think is missing from pro invitationals or any big powerlifting event is will it ever get back to when we looked forward to the lifters on the platform and not just the meet itself? When was the last time you went to a powerlifting meet and thought "I can't wait to see these two strength warriors go at each other!" We forget that invitational only meets are a competition and not just an event. Each weight class is not only stacked with 3-6 lifters ranked in the top 5, but they will soon be battling it out on the same platform, and one mistake, one bad call on attempts, and it's over.

We often forget that the lifters competing are some of the strongest people in the world. Over the last few years, we seem to judge great meets by either the federation, the location (venue) or any all-time records that might be set. But when was the last time we looked at a meet just on the criteria of who is competing? Hopefully next time the Olympia rolls around, we will be looking forward to the match ups and not just the meet. The reason I bring this up is that the Olympia brings out the best in single ply powerlifting and there were at least two or three big battles that were happening. Did anyone catch

what was happening in the 220's full power between Ben O'Brien and Dan Tinajero? Or what about deadlift only when Shawn Doyle had to deadlift 904 to win? I know it wasn't a big deal in any social media, at least not as much if someone squatted high, or if the lifter doesn't meet the social media criteria standard for a good lift. So next year when the Olympia rolls around, take a look at the roster and don't miss the competition part of the competition.

So now that I am off my soapbox, let's start talking about this great event!

All competitors were lifting in the open division and were able to set state, national and world records in their respective divisions. All fourth attempts were either a national or world record.

DAY 1 ~

WOMENS BENCH PRESS

Starting the weekend off was the womens bench press, and as done in past years they started things off with a bang. Some of the womens events were judged using Wilks or by classes, depending on how many competitors there were.

In the 105's April Shumaker took first place with a huge 115/253 bench. April is a long time competitor and never disappoints when

she is on the platform, and she is one of the toughest women to beat.

In the 165 open 15 year old bench press sensation Maryana Naumova (RUS) took first place with a monster 145/319.6 bench. Every year she makes the trip across the ocean and never lets the crowd down! Only time will tell where she will end up in the history books. Winning second place was Monique Jackson from GA, who benched 142.50/314.11 but with a fourth attempt she got a 330lb world record. Monique could have had the win, but walking away with second and a world record is still a great day. Third place went to Bernice Fuss out of CAN. Bernice handled a 135.50/298 and then on a fourth attempt for a masters world record took a 303 for a ride and handled it easily. Fourth place was Nevada's Trace Ryan. Trace was recently in a car accident and didn't know if she would be able to compete. But like a pro, Trace stepped on the platform and was successful with 102.50/ 225.97.

181 OPEN

First place went to Kathy Johnson out of ND. Kathy showed her ability to dominate with a 160/352.74.

198+

Rae Ann-Miller led the whole field with an amazing bench, 182.50/402! Rae took not only the gold, but the best lifter award as well.

MENS BENCH

Like always, the mens bench is exciting to watch!! Twenty five of the worlds best in a single ply bench meet on one platform. Incredible to watch these very determined athletes!

165

Only one man could make it to the competition, Kokorev who came from Russia to show why he is one of the best in the 165's with a massive 185/407 lift.

181

Brian Burrirt Sr. (FL) had a bad day and got "no lift" with 245/540. Joe Mazza (NJ) one of the best in the world smashed a 285/628.31 and took the Men's Best Lifter Light home with him. I'm sure it will be displayed proudly in his state patrol car.

198

This weight class was stacked with great lifters and one wrong move could mean the difference between gold and watching someone getting the gold. To determine the champion it came down to body weight. Just like I said before, it is always great watching warriors battle down to the last lift. Dan Dungeon (CA), the lighter of the two, came home with the gold with a 262.5/578.1 Chris Neal (MS) took second place with the same 262.5/578.1. Barry Antonow (CAN) was third place with a 250.5/552.25 and Bruce Mendozian (CA) was fourth place with 247.5/545.64.

220

Unfortunately Greg Powell (TX), and Tony Carlino (GA), didn't have the day they wanted and bombed out. Viktor Mistrato (RUS) came up with the win with a 270/595.24.

242

This class was packed with great benchers. I'm not saying anything negative about any of the other classes, but when Cory Dexter (NV), last years winner, benches a 322.98/710.98 and only takes third place you know the division was packed with beasts! In 99% of meets that are held today, that would have won easily and been best lifter but on the Olympia platform this year it was a bronze! Hey, I would take that bronze with a 710 bench any day on this platform. Second place Jake Prazak (IA) hit a massive 357.4/788.14. Only one number was going to take the gold home today, and it was smoked by Scott Mecham (UT). Yes, 800lbs! Well, actually 362.5/799.17. We will call it 800! Andrey Paley (RUS) just couldn't get in the groove and bombed with 270/595.

275

This was the biggest class in the bench. The one great thing about this class it had the return of Rob Luyando (IL), one of the top single ply benchers in the world. Rob had surgery on his shoulder and this was his first meet back. It didn't go well for Rob, as he just couldn't get 352.5/722 in the groove and bombed out. He said later it had nothing to do with his shoulder and that he will be back full force soon. Another big bencher, Anthony King, also had a hard time with 320/705 and bombed out. That left three tough competitors, Anton Begalko (RUS), Dmitry Bubnov (RUS) and Dustin Minks (IN). Russia went home with the gold and silver; Anton finished first with a 325/716.5. Silver went to Dmitry 290/639.33 and the bronze went to Dustin with a 267.5/589.73.

308

This class could have gone any which way! All three lifters were as equally strong and talented, but someone had to be the ultimate winner. Glen Russo (AZ) took first place with a 365/804.68. Second place was Chuck Hudson (AZ) with a 340/749.56 and third was 58 year old Roger Ryan (IL) 327.5/722.01. Chuck attempted 810 for the win, and missed it right at lockout.. This was Chuck's first meet in single ply so expect big things from the BIG HUD. Roger Ryan missed a 777. I know he is after that 800 and has hit it repeatedly in the gym.

SHW

Nothing like watching guys that look like mountains and move huge amounts of weight!! Very rarely do you get to see a SHW win the best lifter. This is special because best lifter goes on body weight and the Wilks formula. When Matt Houser (IL) is in the SHW there is a chance you will get to see it happen and that's exactly what did happen! Matt hit a huge 385/848.77, the biggest bench of the day, which gave him the win and best lifter. Michael Bowden (AZ) got silver with a big 337.5/744. Brandon Braner (MN) would have given Matt a run for his money, but bombed out with a 397.5/876lb.

DEADLIFT

"The meet don't start until the bar hits the floor" is a saying every deadlift pro will say when competing in a full meet. But that is what's great about the Olympia, we don't have to wait all day for the best to pull, we get it as an event.

Chris Neal - 198, 578 bench

Justin Graalfs - 275, 804 squat



There is nothing better than watching people who are great at deadlifting battle it out to see who is the best at it. Don't get me wrong, both days of competition were great to watch, but in my opinion the deadlift was the best of the whole meet.

WOMEN

WOMENS LIGHTWEIGHT 123-148

These three women gave it their all, and it's difficult to win when going against your opponent via Wilks score. It didn't matter, they went charging head down and pulled the crap out of the bar! Gracie Vanesse (CA), pulled a pr 205/451 with a Wilks of 218 for third place. Suzanne Davis (AZ) came in the lightest at 123, pulling a 190/419 with a Wilks of 230.08 for second place. Suzanne also had a fourth attempt for a master world record of 192.5/424. Stephanie Powell (NV) took the field with a 227.5/501 Wilks 233.10. This makes me wonder if Suzanne had pulled her fourth on the third would she have won? Second place and a new world record was still a pretty good day.

165

This class was filled with top female athletes and it was hard to guess who might win. Most of the time you can look and say "wow, everyone else is fighting for second place" but not this time; five top athletes, some multi world champions and multi record holders. Monique Jackson (GA) tops the class this

year with a 231.5/510 deadlift and pulling for a world record fourth attempt 231.5/518. Second place was an impressive 215/473 by Linda Okoro (TX). Third place was Leslie Hofheins (UT) with a 205/451. Fourth place was Bernice Fuss (CAN) 187.5/413 and she set a new masters world record with 190/418. Fifth place was Tatiana Buys (CA) with a 182.5/402.

HEAVYWEIGHT 181-198, WILKS FORMULA

3 top female deadlifters were in this division. One of them, Brittany Prior (NV) might be one of the first females to pull 600lbs raw soon. She took the gold with a 250/551. Second place was Kathy Johnson (ND), ending with a nice 195/429. Third place was Linda Schaefer-Hanely (CO) and even though she has pulled more in competition she ended with a respectable 180/396.

MENS

165

Unfortunately only one 165er was able to make it this year, Ilya Kokorev (RUS). He was the only one in this division and would have been hard to beat, with a 260/573. It would have been nice to see a few others fight it out.

198

I feel sorry for anyone in the 198s next year. I know anything can happen in a meet; injury, bomb out, or just not having a good day but if I was in the 198s that's what I would hope for with Jesse Norris (ID) on the roster. Holy cow!! 238/821 to take first place and best lifter light weight, and in a loose singlet at that. Scary!! How many times have you seen a 198er pull 207/716 and take second? It happened this year with DaMon Mayers (GA). I am sure that DaMon with a 716 deadlift has rarely taken second.

220

One of the best in the world takes second? Good headline, right? That's what happened. Three athletes all pulled over 700. Andrey Sizov (RUS) took third with a 320/705. Brandon Cass (MO) took second with a 352/777. David Hansen (ND) normally competes 198 but weighed 199 so had to go 220 against Brandon and hit a 355/782 for the gold. I said it was a good headline!

242

When I saw this list of the 242ers, I couldn't believe what I was reading. A legend and a

Ben O'Brien - 220, 782

Scott "Hoss" Cartright - SHW, 804



Hall of Famer Steve Goggins (GA) was going to be on the platform. And here is the kicker, he took second but lifted raw. He tied with Gary Grissinger (MO) with a 337.5/744 and lost on bodyweight. Third place was Edward Kranski (FL) with a 320/705. Fourth place was Patrick Curtis (GA) with a 295/650. Tim Sparks (AZ) didn't have the day he wanted and bombed out with his opener of 320/705. Talking with Tim afterward, he just didn't feel right today and something was off.

275

The problem with this class was that Patrick Holloway was competing in it! Now that's not a problem with me or anyone watching, it's just a problem for any other competitors because Patrick is one of the best around. Marc Griffiths (GB) took third with a 330/727. Marshall "the Freakshow" Johnson (ND) normally competes multi ply but stepped on the Olympia stage and came up with second place via a 337.5/744. Patrick Holloway (AZ) destroyed a 372.5/821 for the gold.

SHW

All day long we watched these great match ups going back and forth with big numbers all day long. But in my opinion, the two that stole the show were Dominick Matrana (LA) and Shawn Doyle (OR). If this day would have ended without seeing Shawn or Dominick, it still would have been great with a lot to talk about. Michael Otero, NM would have been in the mix, but it wasn't meant to be and missed his attempts of 357.5/788. Shawn Doyle opened up with a 390/859 and totally smoked it. Last year Shawn missed 904, which you know he came back to pull. But here comes BIG Dominick. The best way to describe it is (referring to an old 90's joke) "Hey, Colorado called, they want their mountain back." Shawn jumped to 410/903, which was just what we expected and of course wanted to see. He gave it his best pull but came up short. Dominick comes behind Shawn and pulls a huge 400/881 deadlift to take the lead. And now it gets really exciting, Shawn needs the 410/903 to win. Again another great attempt, but comes up short. Dominick took the gold and heavyweight best lifter and Shawn got second. So it comes to this question: is it better to PR or to win? Shawn could have easily pulled a 402.5/887 and secured first, then his third go for the 410/903. Don't know if Shawn knew or if he even cared, but all in all, it was AWESOME to watch.

OLYMPIA PRO POWERLIFTING INVITATIONAL, DAY TWO

Day two had a lot of bomb outs and I know many people might say the judging was way too strict. I strongly disagree because personally I would rather have overly strict vs. too lenient. One thing I noticed and it can't be argued, is that the judging was consistent and as lifters that's all you can ask for. For example, if judges are calling the same depth for everyone, and the lifter or their coach is paying attention, you know what adjustments may be needed to your lifts and you do the best that you can.

Powerlifting is not the only sport that relies on humans to make it or break it for the athletes. For example, baseball has many different types of umpires. Some umpires calls are considered pitcher friendly and some are considered hitter friendly, but both have the same rules, yet both call the games different. Why? Each umpire can justify their call, and it's up to the player to make any future adjustments.

The player who can adjust will succeed eventually and those who can't will mostly likely not. You may be asking why this explanation was given. If lifters are going to call themselves "Pro" then they need to make the adjustments and realize it's part of the game and do their job, living up to their "Pro status" and all that it entails.

Now for the good stuff.. Recap of day two!

WOMENS

105

April Shumaker (FL) was the only one in the 105's. She not only took home the gold, she took home the best lifter as well with a squat of 155/341, bench 120/264, deadlift 157.5/347 and total of 432.5/952. She has been in the sport for a long time and is strong as hell.

132

Ellen Stein (NY) was the only 132lb pound lifter in today's competition, but watching her lift is always exciting. Ellen is 61 years old and kicks the crap out of people half her age! She is so technical she could put on a clinic. Ellen squatted 180/396, benched 95/209, deadlifted 190/418 and totaled 465/1026.

165

Nina Kondrassheva (RUS) had a great squat with a 225/496 but had a tough time with the bench and bombed with a 145/319. We can't wait to see what she brings next year because with a 500lb squat at 165, it will be exciting to watch.

181

Nicki Ianson (CA) had a tough day. Although a multi time world champion she couldn't get her bench in and bombed with a 132.5/292. She said, "I'll be ready for IPL Worlds and ready to kick ass." She will have a tough time with the up and comer out of Canada if she shows up to worlds. Tara Green with legs like tree trunks, had a massive squat of 245/540 and that was her opener. Tara Benched 152.5/336 and deadlifted 207/457 with a gigantic total of 605/1333. Keep an eye out for her, she is going to be a big name in the future.

MEN

132

Jarred Benitez (CA) had a great day until the deadlift, where his problems began. It happens to all powerlifters and I think it's more common today with gear having to be so dead on that you never know what might happen in any lift. Years ago when you got past the squats, the possibility of bombing out decreased, but with current lifters, those odds seem to not change.

148

Jeremy Scruggs (TX) took home the gold with a 215/473 squat, 132.5/292 bench and a 217.5/479 deadlift giving him a total of 565/1245. Mario Marquez (TX) and Matt Hoosier (MO) both bombed out in the bench.

165

No winner in the 165's. Both Ilya Kokorev (RUS) and Micah Marino (MO), bombed out; Ilya in the deadlift and Micah in the squat. Micah did come and deadlift and pulled a 310/727 and then almost passed out.

USPA OLYMPIA PRO

198

Only one competitor in the 198's. Shawn Buckley (CA) squatted 307.5/677, benched 217.5/479 and deadlifted 310/683 for a total of 835/1840.

220

One of the biggest battles of the day was between Daniel Tinajero (FL) and Ben O'Brien (AZ), who were going at it all day. It was great to witness two top caliber lifters go at it and when it came down to the deadlift, you knew you were watching something special. Ben was ranked number one coming into this meet in 220 single ply. Daniel just competed in the Westside Pro coming off a huge performance of a 2500lb total and losing to Jimmie Pacifico on bodyweight and his words were that's not going to happen again!! Daniel had a huge squat of 365/804 took a 10 kilo lead in to the bench. Ben finished with an impressive squat of 355/782 and knew he had to stay close to Dan in the bench, since Dan is a better bencher. Ben finished with a 300/661, a massive pr, but more importantly it put the pressure on Dan. He responded with a 317.5/699 final bench. Subtotals looked like this, Dan 682.5 and Ben 655. Now most people look and see a 27.5 lead going in the deadlifts and might feel comfortable but in Ben's eyes the meet doesn't start until the bar hit the floor. And now he goes for it. Dan knows the game, he has to stay ahead with each pull to secure the win. Plus, learning from his last loss, Dan cut down to 217, making sure he was lighter, just in case of a tie. So when Ben missed his 350/771, Dan went for the kill and pulled 350/771. No way Ben was going to pull 27.5 kilos more. Match set, Dan... Great battle!!!! That's what the sport is about. Sean Olsen would have been in the game, but unfortunately got taken out in the bench.

242

This would have been an equal match up in the class, but it just was not in the cards. Both

Michael Giunta (MO) and Juha Someros (FIN) couldn't get a total. Michael bombed out in the bench, Juha the squat. But Chris Pappillion came through with a big day and it made me really mad. No, not because of Pappillions success, but about the match up we lost out on. Chris hit a 367.5/800, benched 262.5/578, and deadlifted 327.5/722 hitting a 957.5/2110.9 total.

275

The only one in 275 was Justin Graalfs (IA) which may be a good thing since Justin is a beast and won best lifter heavy. Justin hit a 365/804 squat, 292.5/644 bench and a 365/804 deadlift for a 1022/2254 total.

308

Robert Lee (CA) was looking great. After the squat, he pretty much had control of the day. Robert squatted 365/804 and never looked back. He benched 320/705 which put the nail in the coffin for first place. He deadlifted enough to make sure he created a total; he pulled a 272.5/600 easy. David Zyski came in second and had a monster day. David lost his father a couple weeks ago and dedicated this meet to him. David went 9/9 with a 350/771 Squat, 235/518 bench and 337/744 deadlift. David totaled 922.5/2033 and with that took second place. Bill Collins (WY) came in third with a 317.5/699 squat, 257.5/567 bench, 272.5/600 deadlift for a 847.5/1868 total.

SHW

Scott "Hoss" Cartwright came back to the platform after about two years off. Hoss had some bad luck and it seemed like every time he turned the corner an injury would happen. But he is finally back and Hoss is coming home with the gold with a 365/804 squat, 272.5/600 bench, 322.5/652 deadlift for a 960/2116.4 total. Welcome back Scott!! Jeff Frank, MO, was one man I was waiting to watch. Seeing some of Jeff's lifts on Facebook I figured he

would have seen a 1000lb squat but no cigar. Each one of Jeff's squats was fast and easy, but depth got the best of him. Fredi Rankyn (SP) looked to have some kind of knee injury and just couldn't overcome it. Hopefully next year we will see him back.

That's it. That's what you missed if you weren't there or didn't see it live via streamlining on our Ustream channel, ustream.tv/Strengthtalktv. If you want to see those great match ups and some of the best lifting in single ply to date, you can watch all the recordings that are still posted.

I want to take the time to thank Jim Curley for asking me to write this for the magazine. Also, Steve Denison for giving me the opportunity to streamline his meets and believing in what we are trying to do, to better powerlifting and give everyone a chance to watch and most importantly give those who deserve it the ability to be remembered for the next generation. Therese Foy, thank you for taking time and editing this for me. Most of all, thank you to my wife Laureen Pastorello, who loves the best Chicago baseball team, White Sox, (editors can't trust them) and who after 19 years has sacrificed what most would call a normal life. She has supported me with everything powerlifting related and helped me produce the Olympia streamline, which pretty much went problem free. Without her this is not possible. **PLT**

Anthony Pastorello

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POWERLIFTING INVITATIONAL

RAW AND EQUIPPED

TONY COMPETES AT A HIGH LEVEL, BOTH RAW AND MULTI PLY. WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE IS HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO BE GOOD AT BOTH.

INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

How old are you, where are you from and what do you do for a living?

I'm 43, I live in Chicago and I drive a truck. I'm an owner operator, hauling grain to an elevator. I like being self-employed because when it's time to train I go and there's flexibility in the schedule. I work 50-60 hours a week and I'm married with six kids ranging from 3 1/2 to 23. My wife, daughter, and son all powerlift. My son and I competed at the UPA meet in July where we both got records. He got age and weight national records (he's 15) and I got Masters 40-45, 275 raw records with 710-451-606 for 1763. Raw was with belt with wraps.

You also lift multi ply. What are your best lifts there?

At a UPA meet in November I went 903-600-666. (At the XPC meet in Dallas where I met Tony, he got 950-600-705, so two new PR's).

What multi ply gear do you use?

Ken Anderson sponsors me and I do well in Titan Boss suit and briefs, and for bench a double ply Katana. Thanks Ken!

You've only been powerlifting about five years. How'd you get in the sport?

I've worked out my whole life, but one day I walked into a powerlifting gym and saw guys putting on gear, lifting huge weights, so I joined the gym. I liked powerlifting the minute I tried it. My first geared meet I totaled 1400 and five years later I'm real close to 2300 at 275.

Where do you train now?

I train at Barbell Central in Aurora, IL with Team Lilliebridge. Ernie Frantz trains with us and I couldn't ask for better training partners. My family stands behind me 100%.

You're just getting started at 42. You could have some big totals and lots of years left in you.

Yeah, I haven't had any injuries be-

cause my ligaments and tendons are already mature and seasoned.

You're competitive in both raw and multi ply. Very few guys do both at a high level – you think you can keep doing both raw and multi ply?

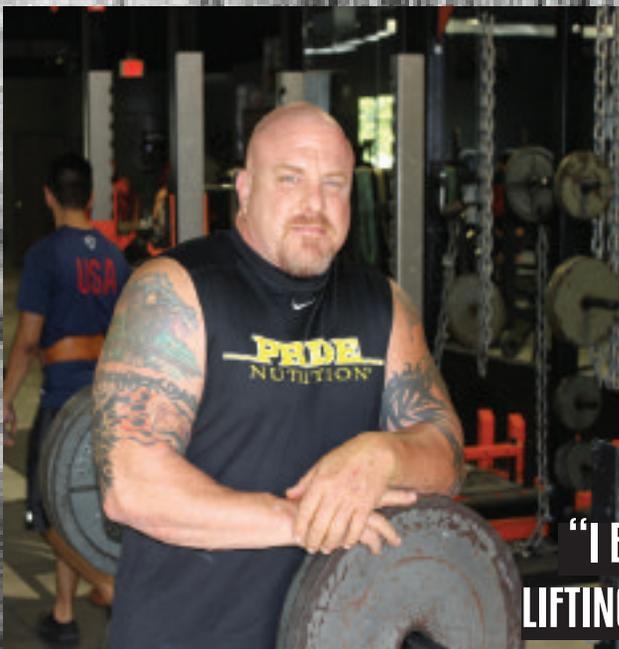
I believe my raw lifting increases my geared lifting and vice versa. There's the old powerlifting adage that raw is real and gear is cheating. Raw is lots of technique, but there's even more technique in gear, along with the body having to adapt to increased pressure on the body. My set up for raw and geared squats are like night and day different. My geared "overload" helps my raw and my building raw strength helps my geared lifting. It's a big circle. There are "gear whores" who lift big weight but if they lift raw they can't do anything. You need to train both equally hard and both will benefit. I'm living proof! I love this sport and I'm just getting started.

Is there anyone you would like to thank or mention?

First and foremost my family. My wife and kids put up with a lot. Byron Hicks and the Lilliebridges, Ernie Sr. in particular. **PLT**

"I BELIEVE MY RAW LIFTING INCREASES MY GEARED LIFTING AND VICE VERSA. YOU NEED TO TRAIN BOTH EQUALLY HARD AND BOTH WILL BENEFIT."

**TONY
CHIRICO**



SCOTT MECHAM



INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

BENCHING BRONCOS FAN

I saw Scott at the Olympia Pro Powerlifting meet in Las Vegas where he bench pressed 800 in a single ply shirt like it was 135! We had to delay our interview a few days recently as he was on vacation – he flew to Denver from Utah just to watch a Broncos game!

" YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO RELAX, LOWER THAT BAR FAST, HAVE FAITH IN YOUR SHIRT AND YOURSELF THAT IT WILL COME BACK UP."

Scott, how old are you and what's your height and weight?

I'm 35 and 5'9". I usually weigh right about 240.

Where do you live and train, and what's your occupation?

I live in south Jordan, UT and I train at Elite Performance in South Jordan which is owned by Jeremy Horn, an MMA fighter. Our powerlifting crew comprises about 15 or 20 guys and we call our team Brutal Powerlifting. I'm an IT guy for a large Chevrolet dealership, basic 40 hour job. I like it.

Was that 800 bench in Vegas a record?

It was a USPA National Record and the second all time best 242 single ply record. Jimmy Kolb has the best 242 bench at 903. That will hold for a long time, but I've got the all time best 220 single ply record at 750. Both of those lifts were done at the Olympia with strict judging on the big stage.

How long have you been powerlifting and are you a bench only guy?

No, I've been competing since 2000 since I was 20. My first seven years I did full power meets and since about 2007 my life got hectic so I started just doing bench meets. It's sure helped my bench though!

Do you still squat and deadlift to stay connected to full

powerlifting?

Oh sure, I still squat and deadlift every week and I'm going to enter a full power raw meet in about six months.

What is your best recent squat and deadlift?

I just got a 600 raw squat with just a belt and pulled 625 raw in the gym where I train. My body is built to squat. I'm 5'9" and I've sat next to people who are 6'3" and taller and I'm actually taller than they are sitting down – I've got a long torso and short legs which is optimal for squatting, but it also enables me to get a huge arch on the bench. It's a great advantage, and I still get by in the deadlift!

How did you work up to an 800 single ply? What was your progression?

Most of my training is in multi ply bench shirts. I actually train multi ply until a month out from a single ply meet. I let the multi ply shirts take all the abuse and that keeps my single ply shirts fresh for the meet. The MP shirts also let me overload much more than SP and when I jump in an SP shirt it's like it's new because it hasn't stretched out. I've been doing that for 4-5 years and it's really helped.

Isn't the groove and technique in MP way different than SP?

It is slightly different, but it's so much pressure on the body in MP that when I get in SP it almost feels like I'm benching raw. It really carries over well for me. My shirt is tight, but I can get it off myself in about 10 seconds.

I always wonder how big benchers get rid of the fear of having 700, 800, or even 900 over their face. How do you do it?

It just takes experience. A lot of lifters tense up, they get scared and out of the groove. You have to be able to relax, lower that bar fast, have faith in your shirt and yourself that it will come back up. You basically have to take advantage of the

stretch reflex. The longer it takes to touch, the longer it's going to take on the way up so the quicker the better.

800 is a huge bench at 242! What were you benching three years ago?

I got 700 three years ago. I did 600 in 2007, so it's just a slow steady progression. You're looking at about 100 pounds every three years and obviously it gets slower as the weight gets way heavier! I still feel like I've got lots more in me – I just haven't had that perfect meet yet. At the Olympia the 800 was fast but the third attempt of 815 was even faster. It went back to the rack too fast and if I would've had more weight, it would have slowed me down enough where I could have stayed in the groove better.



800 at 2014 Olympia Pro Powerlifting Meet

Your crew at Elite Performance can lift off and spot well enough?

People come and people go but there's always a nucleus of 15-20 good powerlifters there. I'm always recruiting more people to train with us.

Lay out your basic training template going into the Olympia.

Tuesday is speed bench day, usually with bands or chains or both, 8 sets of triples. I then go to floor press or something resembling a bench press for 6-10 reps, then a tricep movement, some shoulders and lats and I'm done. Saturday is heavy bench using movements that resemble the bench but not an actual bench. We work up to a 1 rep max and do three singles at 90% or above and some assistance work.

If I didn't know better I'd say that's Prilepins table of percents from the Westside template.

Exactly! We follow Prilepins table to a "T" and have since day one.

How about squat and deadlift?

Monday is heavy squat working up to 3 singles then leg assistance work. The following Monday is heavy deadlift day. We do reverse hypers, glute ham raises and do lats and abs against bands. Thursday is speed squat and deadlift day, 8x2 on squat and 8x1 for deadlift. It's the Westside template. I'm not doing any box squats right now because of the upcoming raw meet.

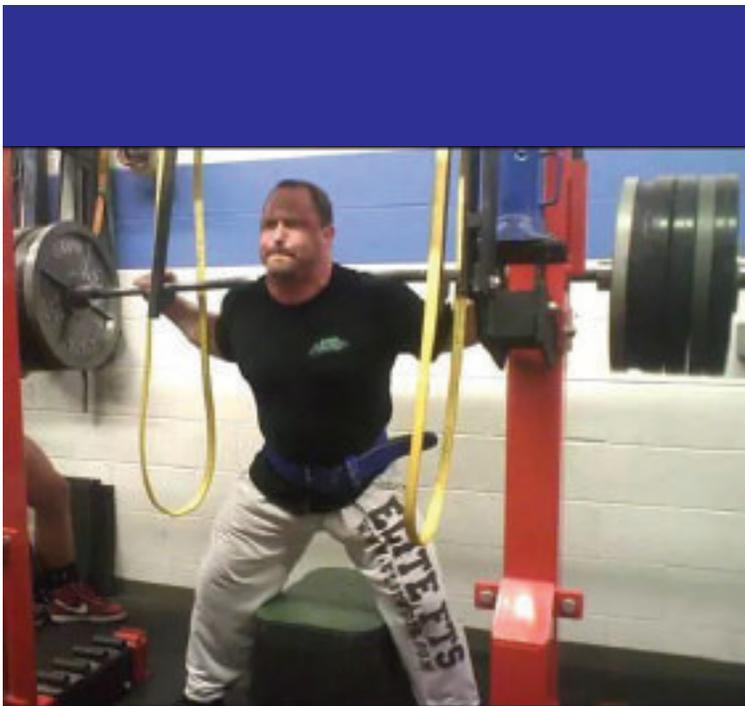
When do you shirt up for a meet?

I train in a shirt every other week all year long. I used to get in the shirt about every 4 weeks when I was at 600, then I switched to every other week and my bench took off. Some guys don't even gear up until 3-4 weeks from a meet. They're not used to the shirt, they haven't had enough overload; I don't see how they do it.

Do you try and touch to the chest every workout?

No matter if it's multi ply or single ply I touch every 5 or 6 workouts. I mostly focus on overload. I like fighting through the pressure of the shirt but you've got to touch so I touch because that's what you do in a meet. Guys get used to hitting a board too much and when they have to touch at the meet, they just dump it on their belly. You need to touch the chest often enough to know what it feels like.

"I TRAIN IN A SHIRT EVERY OTHER WEEK ALL YEAR LONG. I USED TO GET IN THE SHIRT ABOUT EVERY 4 WEEKS WHEN I WAS AT 600, THEN I SWITCHED TO EVERY OTHER WEEK AND MY BENCH TOOK OFF."



ABOVE - Raw Squat - Scott is not just a big bencher

OPPOSITE PAGE - Raw 695



So four weeks out you're in the shirt every week?

Yes, I don't put on the single ply Super Katana until I'm two weeks out. It's been a recipe for success, so why fight it? Ken Anderson is always shocked when I get alterations close to the meet, but I know how the shirt should feel after all these years.

Ever thought about going up to 275?

No! I'm real comfortable around 240 and if I want to cut to 220, I can do it in three weeks. For the Olympia I ate whatever I wanted, drank lots of water and I made 242 by a tenth of a pound. I don't like cutting weight like almost every lifter does – it's too hard on the body to try and rehydrate and get back weight quickly.

How long do you think you'll keep doing this?

I think I can do it easily into my fifties or sixties. I've never had an injury and whether that's just luck, diet, knowing when to back off or what, I'm not sure.

Do you think gear has something to do with that?

Oh sure! If I was just a raw lifter my bench career would have been done five or six years ago. I give credit to gear for

preventing injuries.

How do you describe powerlifting gear to the general public?

I describe its protective value and the differences between raw, multi ply and single ply. They sort of understand it but they're still amazed at the weights that are lifted. I still keep my raw strength up. I hit a touch and go gym lift 1 ½ years ago with 550. Warming up I'll go to 455, maybe 485 raw and board work I'll hit in the 600's. My best raw three board is a 670 and then I'll hit a set or two with the Titan Ram at that weight. I usually don't put a shirt on until 700 or 715 and go from there. My last warmup at the Olympia was a raw 635 to a two board. I bring my grip in to pinky on the rings and competition grip is index finger on the rings so that helps save the shoulders but I've got really good tricep strength.

Who would you like to thank or mention?

Ken Anderson at www.andersonpowerlifting.com for his sponsorship and amazing customer service. I'd like to thank all my training partners of Brutal Powerlifting because you can't do this alone. They keep things fun and motivating, and Drage Nutrition for great products. I think one of the biggest keys to success and happiness in competitive powerlifting or any other lifestyle is to have supportive family and friends. **PLT**

2014 USPA NATIONAL POWERLIFTING, BENCH PRESS, AND DEADLIFT CHAMPIONSHIPS

JULY 18-20, 2014

LAS VEGAS, NV

REPORTED BY GEORGE PESSSELL

This year's event was once again held at the Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino, located in the heart of downtown Las Vegas. The property has a significant number of dining choices, always an important consideration for powerlifters. And, located adjacent to the Fremont Street Experience, there were plenty of other food and activity choices to take advantage of offsite. Steve and Shelley Denison continue to put together superior meets combined with great venues.

The grand ballroom was spacious. Even with four warm-up platforms, each equipped with combo racks, there was no crowding backstage. Speaking of crowds, this year's competition was well attended by both athletes and fans. In order to qualify for the competition, a Class II total was required. That didn't seem to impact the number of entries (over 300), the vast majority being raw athletes, continuing the trend exhibited over the past several years. Powerlifting as a sport, along with the USPA, continues to grow and thrive. Steve changed up the order of meet from prior years, with the bench press and deadlift championships taking place on Friday. Women and light men full-power competed on Saturday, and heavyweight men lifting on Sunday. From my perspective I thought this best, as the majority of athletes compete in full-power and this enables them to lift on a weekend, reducing the need to take off from work/life. Two competition platforms were being run, allowing for the meet to progress quickly. Live internet streaming was provided and hosted by Strength Talk's Tony and Laureen Pastorello. Meet play-by-play was handled by the illustrious Chuck LaMantia (BFC), with energetic Lisa Wheeler, newly inducted into the Powerlifting Hall of Fame, and many-time world champ Kevin Meskew lending a hand as needed.

Lifting on Friday began with the bench specialists. Starting with the raw lifters, Lori Vanyo kicked things off in the Women's 132 45-49 class, putting up a 148. 165 open lifter Kori Oliver, all the way from Virginia, made a solid 165. In the 198+, 40-44 class, Tracy Goodwin moved a huge 236, garnering best lifter for raw women. Orange County Strength Club's Tracie Marquez just missed the 198 class, wanted to keep eating, electing to go 198+, and was successful with a nice 154.

In the men's raw bench, junior 20-23 lifter Ryan Liu, at 148, made a big 275. Nathaniel Andrade, in the 165 20-23 juniors, made a huge 319, giving him the best lifter award in the raw junior bench division and an IPL world record. 198 junior 16-17 competitor Zack Bartell ran into some difficulty and was unable to successfully navigate 308. Stephen Schaap, in the junior 18-19 198 class, made the same 308. In the junior 20-23 242 class, Israel

Irizarry was good for 314.

In the men's open raw bench, Faraz Esnaashari pushed a big 358 for the gold medal in the 181 class, followed by Chris Williams with 275. In the 198's, Eric Kratz was first with a huge 413, with Raymond Horton landing in second with 363. Don Johnson was the lone 220 lifter making 341. Iman Richards took gold in the 242's with a great lift of 479. Sean Seligman won silver with 402, along with his gold in the 50-54 masters. Sean also made good with a fourth attempt 421. Four lifters squared off in the 275's, with new South County Wrecking Krew lifter Matt Posselt winning the class with a nice 413. Matt was hoping for more but afterward, proved to be philosophic about it and will be pushing up much bigger numbers soon. New Mexico National referee John Skelton took second in the open, along with a gold in the 45-49 masters, with 341, followed closely by Texan Omar Avila with 330. Unfortunately, Jarrod Mills was unable to get his 451 passed. The 308 class featured only one lifter, Ryan DeWitt. Ryan was successful with a whopping 606, plenty enough to win the best lifter for raw open bench along with setting a new IPL world record.

In the sub-masters, Eric Kratz doubled-up and took home another gold medal in the 198's. Daniel Melgoza won the silver with 325. Iman Richards also won the submasters 242. In the masters, venerable Jim Merlino, lifting in the 75-79 148 class, made a world record 181. Rick Gutman went 259 in the 60-64 165 class. Chris Williams made a nice 275 in the 55-59 181 division. In the 60-64 198's, John Harp made a good 270. 220 45-49 athlete Stacy Dedrick went double bodyweight with a huge 440, along with winning best lifter for raw master's bench press. Howie Chaves, another 220 lb-er, benched 308 in the 60-64 age group. Competition in the 45-49 242 masters couldn't have been closer. Gary Strassberg and Karl Davenport both put 303 lifts, with Gary taking the win by bodyweight. Wayne Jandoc put up a world record 348 in the 55-59 242 class. 40-44 275 lifter Jonathan Strobele was good with a 303. International referee and national referee chair Alan Aerts wasn't feeling 100% but still pushed up a big 385 in the 55-59 275's. Ron Moormeister, also serving time in the judge's chair, made a fine 319 in the 65-69 275's. 50-54 308 competitor Rudolf Schaap Jr was good with a 418.

In men's single ply bench only, Aramiq Amirchian lifting in the open 181 class, couldn't get his 413. Joe Bernazzani, who would later be inducted into the Powerlifting Hall of Fame, continued his winning ways, making a great 402 in the 60-64 220 class and garnering the best lifter award for masters single-ply bench. Wayne Jandoc doubled-up his medal count, donning his shirt and

getting a big 440. Alan Aerts also went single ply, going 435 in the process. Michael Bowden, lifting in the SHW 50-54 class, tried a massive 815 unsuccessfully.

Savannah Sparkes started things off in the National Deadlift Championships. Lifting in the 13-15 women's raw class, she pulled a big 198 American record, making her dad Tim very proud. Savannah also was awarded the best lifter for junior women in the deadlift. Asia Littlefield, a 148'er also in the 13-15 raw age group, made great 227, topped off with a successful 236 American record on a fourth attempt. Amber Fowler rounded out the junior competitors and pulled a good 297 in the 20-23 198 class.

Bernice Dea took the gold in the 148 open raw women's deadlift with a big 336, followed by an even bigger 347 fourth attempt. Good for the best lifter in the open and masters women's raw classes and a new IPL world record and gold in the 45-49 masters. Kori Oliver took first in the 165 raw open with 264. Rachel Herrera landed silver with 248, complimenting her gold in the 45-49 masters. Edenn Perez pulled a big 325, followed by a successful American record fourth with 336 in the 198 division. In the 35-39 148 class, Amy Seligman made a nice 248. In the 35-39 198+ division, Grace Tacuyan pulled a huge 369 then hauled up a 391 fourth for a new American record. In the masters, Zee Helmick, lifting at 181 in the 45-49 group, went 259, while Lil Stewart, 71 years young and in the 181 class, pulled an incredible 236 IPL world record.

In the men's raw deadlift competition, junior 20-23 165 lifter Daniel Myers from Virginia, pulled a nice 462. In the 198 junior 16-17 group, Zack Bartell took first with 435, with Andrew Knapik in second with a fine 413. 20-23 198 Texan Justin Enriquez yanked a huge 584, taking home the best lifter award for junior raw men. Israel Irizarry landed another gold medal, this time in the deadlift with a nice 473 in the junior 20-23 242 class. Carson Ebke, at 242's in the junior 20-23, made a big 600.

In the open raw men's deadlift, junior division winner Daniel Myers repeated in the 165s, getting by Taylor Marek who pulled 440. Best lifter in the open raw men's deadlift, 181'er Eric Lang, hauled in a big 551. Aramiq Amirchian was successful with 451 for silver. 198 open lifter Raymond Horton, landed a nice 490. Dan Zarrella, going in as a light 220, went 540. Matt Posselt completed the double, getting a matching gold to his bench success, with a solid 617 pull at 275. Texan Omar Avila was second with a good 529.

Sub-master 198 lifter Daniel Melgoza went 468. Masters 242 raw lifters Karl Davenport and Gary Strassberg matched wits and muscle in the 45-49 class with Karl's 462 being the winning effort to Gary's 435. 308'er Lance Ross, in the 50-54 group, hauled in a whopping 749 for gold and best lifter in the master's raw deadlift. 40-44 Dan Stephens went 440 in the SHW class.

Only five competitors vied in the single ply deadlift classes. Superman David Hansen was successful with an easy opener of 661 in the 198 open class. His second attempt at 749 did not meet the scrutiny of the referees along with a subsequent third attempt, leading to much discussion in the social media, to the point where USPA prez Steve Denison weighed in on the subject. We may see juries at future national and world meets to avoid such situations. At 220 open, J.R. Mancini pulled a solid 683. National referee Tim Sparkes took the gold in the 242 open and 45-49 masters with an impressive 718 for a new IPL world record and best lifter in the men's open single-ply deadlift. Orange County Strength Club's Vit Arulmoli moved up a class and pulled a p.r. 633 for silver in the 242's. Mississippi's Kevin Boone, lifting in the 40-44 220 class, made a nice 529.

On Saturday, full-power competition began with all women and light-weight men's lifters. In the junior raw lifter categories, the 20-23 105 class was taken by Team Mana's Jessica Okimura, totaling a solid 579 via 176/127/275, setting new IPL junior marks for bench, deadlift and total. The silver went to Tiffany Vu who went 165/77/253 for a 496 total. The 20-23 123 class, Francesca Paraz won the gold with lifts of 225/137/286 and a 650 total, the deadlift being a new IPL world mark, to Alyssa Kuveke's 600 total. 18-19 148 lifter Tayler Garvey totaled 622 by way of 198/148/275, with her bench and pull being new IPL junior world records. 20-23 148'er Kristen Morgan used well rounded lifting of 192/143/270 for a 606 sum. Brittany Jackson, lifting in the 18-19 junior 165's, went 220/110/325 for a big 655 total. In the 20-23 165's, Katey Choukalos put up some big numbers, going 292/170/352 for a huge 815 total. She narrowly missed winning the best lifter award for junior raw women, to 20-23 181 victor Corina Scott, who totaled a huge 898 by way of 336/176/385, with her squat, deadlift and total being new IPL world records. Corina also earned the best lift award for junior raw women's full-power. Georgianna Flagello, in the 20-23 198's went 58*/126/314 for a nice 699 total. Rounding out the junior raw classes was Sara Berlin in the 20-23 198+ class with solid lifting of 319/159/347 and an 826 total.

In the women's raw open divisions, Meghan Merino went 126/77/225 for a 429 sum in the 97 class. Wendy Rodriguez lifting in the 105's, totaled 512 via 154/99/259. Tina Daneshmand took the gold in the 114's by way of a 254 squat, 143 bench, and a big 380 pull for a 778 total and all being new IPL world records. Tina was hunting for that elusive 400+ pull which should be just around the corner for her. Jessica Caldwell gained the silver medal with a nice 485 total. The 123 class featured three fine lifters. IFBB bodybuilder and powerlifter supreme Susan Salazar was clear winner with a 341 squat, 192 bench, 429 deadlift, and 964 total. All lifts were done in a smooth, controlled fashion, with the squat, deadlift and total being new IPL world marks. Susan also won the best lifter award for raw open women's competitors. Susan can now start prepping for her next bodybuilding competition in earnest. Team Mana's Donna Bareng did some excellent lifting totaling 738 for the silver medal by way of 259/159/319. Junior 20-23 gold medalist Francesca Paraz added to her hardware collection with a bronze medal with a 650 total. Four women competed in the 132 raw open. Tricia Downing was the victor with a 683 total, going 236/143/303. Tricia also took the win in the submaster's category. Tiana King placed second with a 617 total, while master 40-44 gold medalist Blanca Rios placed third, totaling 567. 50-54 class winner Lisa Evanovich placed fourth with a 485 total. The 148 class was the largest among women with 10 lifters. Oregonian Kelly Reece topped the bunch with some solid lifting, going 319/165/391 and an 876 total. The silver medal went to Tatiana Buys with her 799 total. The bronze medal was awarded to Christie Guevarra, who registered a 755 total. Close behind (10 kg) was Genevieve Betro with 733. 5 kg further back in fifth was Nishea Martinez with 722. Sixth place went to Renae Holmdahl, who won the submaster class with a 694 total. Leonetta Richardson of Team Mana, re-located back to Hawaii. She put up some massive numbers while competing and winning the 165 open and submasters; 358 squat, a huge 275 bench, followed by a big 457 pull, totaling 1091, all new IPL world records. Leo also took home the best lifter award for raw open submaster's women. Second place was earned by Naarah Pyscher, whose balance lifting of 308/176/380 totaled 865. Close behind in third was Ogechi Akaleghere with her 833 total. Danielle Rivera landed in fourth with a 799 total. Marie Lemkul, winner of the 40-44 masters class, placed fifth with 699. Only one lifter was registered in the 181 class. Submaster Sophia Hussary took home two gold medals for her 848 total, including a big 413 IPL open world record deadlift. Among other submaster/master lifters, Grace Tacuyan-Witt had a

nice 870 total in the submaster 198+ class. Rome Stein, competing in the masters 45-49 148's had a big 304 pull included in her 691 total.

There were significant number of junior lifters competing in the men's raw full-power competition. While the majority of them were also entered in the open division, there are many that did not which are worthy of mention. 123 junior 13-15 lifter, Chevy Shumaker put together a nice 733 total, going 236/165/330. He added on a successful fourth squat of 242 for a new junior American record to go along with his deadlift record. Jake Schellenschlager, all the way from Maryland, got American records in the bench (214), deadlift (fourth attempt 341), and total (799) in the 13-15 132's. Gerardo Checa, in the 18-19 132's totaled 931 and hit an IPL world record fourth pull of 435. In the 148 junior 16-17 class, Ryan Schumm used a big 418 deadlift to get the win and an 881 total. Runner-up was Robertson Yang, with a 777 total. In the 148 junior 18-19 division, Darius Theos-King went 303/176/407 for an 887 total. The 148 junior 20-23 class was hotly contested, with Taras Chavra lifting some big numbers, going 451 (468 IPL world record on a fourth), 308, and pulling 523 for a 1284 total, also an IPL junior world record. Only 5 kilos back was Kyle Ota. Kyle pushed an IPL world record 314 and pulled a huge 545 for his 1273 total. Martin Baculinao served notice in third, with a massive 562 fourth attempt IPL world record deadlift and a 1201 total. Taras and Marin placed second and third, respectively, in the 148 open. Among the raw 165's, junior 18-19 Hawaii lifter Brennan Leong totaled 1113. In the 20-23 class, Steven Lopez took top honors with an excellent 1399 total, going 518/314/567, with all lifts being IPL junior world records. Ryan Rork was second with an 1129 total, and

Joe Francisco was close behind in third with an 1113. Best lifter in the junior raw classes, Jason Britt, was the gold medal winner in the 181's, with junior IPL world record lifts of 551/347/601 capped by 611 pull on a fourth attempt. Joseph Manno was the silver medalist posting a 1328 total, while William Morris captured the bronze with an 1168. In the 198's, Gianni Vinson, lifting in the 13-15 age group, totaled 970. Nick Massa, in the 16-17 group, went 1322 with some big lifts, 468/319/534,



Jon Vaughn, 198 raw with wraps, 633 squat



Dennis Cornelius, 275 raw, 551 bench

Andreas Gallagher, 242, single ply, 705 squat





Dennis Cornelius, 275, raw, 766 squat

Jared Dale, 242 raw with wraps, 655 squat

with his bench, dead and total being new junior world marks. In the 20-23 group, Fahrudin Kostjerevac took first with a 1289 total. Seth Philipp was second with a 1212. In the 220 20-23 class, Joe Hardy used an IPL world record bench, along with a 600 squat and 644 deadlift to total 1675 for the win. Daniel Zhitomirsky pulled a nice 611 en-route to a 1466 total and the silver medal. Kyle Spoerl landed the bronze with a 1223 effort. In the 242 20-23's, David Elmore was the victor with his 1559 total and balanced lifts of 589/374/595. Anthony Nocera placed second with a 1355 total, and Ian Penrod was third with 1289. In the 275's, 16-17 age group lifter Tristan Anderson squatted big, posting a 600 fourth attempt for a new junior IPL world record, along with attaining a 1329 total. In the 275 20-23 class, Zach Wittusen, tired of cutting weight, bumped all the way up from the 220's and put up some huge lifts, going 617/44/661 for a winning 1719 total, with all being new IPL junior world records. Landing in second was Jerred Fisher with a solid 1642 via 606/374/661. In the 20-23 SHW class, big Steve Maradona had succeeded with an equally big 750 squat, 490 bench, and 600 pull for an 1841 total. Steve's squat, bench and total resulted in new IPL junior world records.

Raw men's open 132 featured two closely-matched lifters, with Samnang Thang using his big 391 squat to hold off the big deadlifting of master 40-44 victor, Cadet Bryant. Samnang added in a 225 bench and 413 pull to total 1030. Cadet registered a nice 341 squat, then proceeded to make up some ground with a 236 bench. A final pull with 424 gave him a solid 1003 total. Bakersfield, CA's multi-time world champion and world record holder, Scott Layman, had his hands full in the 148's with junior sensation Taras Chavra. Scott launched the initial salvo with a 473 squat to Tara's 451. Scott extended his lead with a 314 push, while Taras fell back by 27 lbs with a 308. Scott's master IPL world record deadlift of 496 gave him a 1284 total. Taras made a big 523 resulting in the same 1284 total, giving Scott the win by means of being the lighter man. Martin Baculinao was third, pulling a 551 deadlift towards his 1201 total and made a 562 fourth for an IPL world record. In the 165 open, Rostislav Petkov was the clear winner. With amazing form and leverages, he posted all new IPL world records, with 540/418/628 for a massive 1587 total, as well as a successful fourth attempt 551 squat. Junior 20-23 winner Steven Lopez was runner up with his 1399 total and Thomas Stover was third with a 1333. San Diego's Chris Garcia significantly distanced himself from the rest of the 181's. His 578/402/661 and 1642 total were all new IPL world records. Second place was tightly contested by two lifters out of



Missouri, with Daniel Velasquez getting the nod with his 1223 total, followed closely behind by Bradley McDonald with 1218. Talon Wright posted a 402 IPL world record bench to go with a 507 squat and 622 dead to amass a 1532 total to take the gold in the 198's. Andrew Corlett had the biggest squat of the class with a 534, a 341 bench, 600 pull, and 1477 total for silver. Don Johnson, the bronze medalist, was close behind with 1460. In the 220 open, Andrew Herbert registered a winning 1730 total via 600/424/705. David Labrie used his huge 722 deadlift to pull out second place and a 1658 total. Ben Autrey was very close behind with his 1647 total. Emilio "Elmo" Paez was somewhat disappointed with his numbers, but still managed to post some big lifts while winning the 242's, going 617/407/705 for a 1730 total. His eyes are set on 1,800 in the near future. Chad Wilson put on a strong effort with his second place 1669 total by way of 600/424/644. Joseph Adamo took third with 1570. The 275 open class was dominated by best lifter Dennis Cornelius. Dennis set a new world mark in the squat with 766, followed by a fourth attempt bench WR of 562, capped by a 755 pull for a WR 2072 total. In second was junior gold medalist Zach Wittusen with his 1719. Third place went to

Rick Simmons with 1625. Oregonian Shawn Doyle set new IPL world records with his 760 squat and a massive 826 deadlift on his way to winning the 308s with a WR 2088 total. Kevin Smith placed second with his 1383. David Puckett was the lone entry in the SHW. His 771 squat was the biggest among raw athletes. Combined with a 440 bench and 705 pull, David amassed a great 1918 total.

Highlights among the men's submaster and master raw categories include Anthony Lopez and his 1234 total in the 35-39 165's, going 440/292/501. Close competition was waged in the 35-39 198's, with Benjamin Swope landing the top spot with a 1405 total via 523/352/529. Second place went to Phillip Watford with a 1361. Dimitrov Veselin placed third with his 1333. Neal Bozeman put together a 1361 total in the 35-39 220's. Youngster Dale Garlitz, lifting in the 60-64 masters 148, went 281/214/325 for an 821 total, with his bench and deadlift being new IPL master world records. Matthew Chapman had a 970 total in the 45-49 165's. Terry Hudson went 865 in the 50-54 165's. Master 50-54 181'er David Colvin totaled 876. In the 65-69 181's, Alan Levine hit IPL world records including his pull of 413 and 931 total. The 50-54 198's saw the return of the on-going friendly rivalry between Mike Koufos and my training partner David Conteras. Dave took the early lead with a nice 402 squat and a p.r. 242 bench for a 22 lb sub-total lead. He finished the day with a strong 413 pull and p.r. 1058 total. Mike hauled up a big 457 deadlift to compliment his 396 squat and 225 bench to capture the gold medal this day with a nice 1080 total. Best lifter in the masters raw classes was 55-59 198'er Isaac Akuna, also from Team Mana. Isaac set new master IPL world records in the squat, deadlift and total, going 440/270/551, 1262. John Harp set a new master IPL world record on a fourth bench going 319 in the 60-64 198's. 40-44 220 competitor Matthew Peltz went 545/352/562, for 1460. Chad Wilson, in the 40-44 242's, had big lifts of 600/424/644 and a 1669 total, with his deadlift and total being new master IPL marks. The 45-49 242's had Brian Aliotta taking the win with a 1504 total via 540/336/628 to Tom Fahy's 1421 total. 50-54 242's featured Gregory Cotterell going 429/330/540, 1300. Thomas Matlock went 1184 in the 60-64 242's. Kevin Wells went 1477 in the 40-44 275's. Frederick Martinez took the 45-49 275's using big master IPL world records of 440 bench and 650 deadlift for a 1592 total. Second went to Troy Anderson with his 1306. John James had a nice 1388 total in the 50-54 SHW class. Big Dave Dallmeyer went 1140 in the 65-69 SHW's.

Moving on to the women's classic raw competition, junior 13-15 105 lifter Nisa Salazar used the oh-so-slight advantage of her 137 squat to squeak by Savannah Sparkes, with her 134. Each put up identical bench and deadlift numbers of 77 and 198, respectively. Final verdict, 413 total for Nisa to 410 for Savannah. Ironically, Savannah called for and made an American record squat of 138 on a fourth. Miranda Cooper used lifts of 170/104/225 to total 501 in the 16-17 132's. Molly Mullikin took gold in the 20-23 148's with 319/143/402 and a big 865 total, getting junior IPL world records in the squat, deadlift and total. Silver went to Washington's Erin Murray who had a big junior IPL world record 165 bench and 799 total. In the 20-23 181's, Tara Maier continued her winning ways with lifts of 352/209/396 and a solid 959 total. All lifts were new junior American records. Tara also took home the best lifter award for women's classic raw division.

In the women's open classic raw, Mary Huang went 299/143/303 for a 746 total in winning the 114's, with her squat being a new IPL world record. Unfortunately, her competitor, Araceli Munguia, couldn't get her 110 bench approved. Teela Brewer took the 123 class with a nice 755 total by way of matching 303 BP/DL bookends and a 148 bench. Courtney Leih handily took the 132's. With a big 347 squat, 176 bench, and solid 369 pull, she totaled a

huge 892, along with winning the best lifter award for women's open classic raw. Elda Negrete totaled 584 for the silver in 132's. 148 Texan Jessica Belt did some big lifting, with a 336 squat, 187 bench, and 385 deadlift for a gold medal 909 effort. Close behind was Molly Mullikin who pulled a huge 402 to help total 865. Eva Salazar was the victor in the 165's with lifts of 275/121/352 and 749 total. Fellow competitor Kristy Scott, down from Washington State, made a whopping 413 squat, but failed to get her 265 bench validated. In addition to her gold medal from the junior class, Tara Maier also took home the gold in the open division. Stephanie Alvarez won the 198+ with nice lifts of 413/154/407 and a 975 sum. Georgian Melissa Benson got the win in the 35-39 submaster 123 class with a 523 total. Kerri Nichols, also in this class, couldn't make good on a 198 squat. 45-49 123 lifter Tamara McElwee made a IPL master world record 314 deadlift en-route to a 611 total. Nicki Ianson came down a class and put up all new master IPL world records in the 45-49 181's, going 363/234/424 for a huge 1022 total.

Not too many lighter lifters in the men's classic raw. Beginning with the juniors, Philip Vang went 253/176/297, 727 in the junior 16-17 114's. Junior Senesomboun, lifting in the 18-19 132's, had a nice 330 squat, 242 junior WR bench, and a 443 pull for a 1016 WR total. Junior also had a successful fourth pull with 451 to further up his WR. Very close behind was Devan Richter, who had the lead at subtotal time with a 358 squat and 231 bench. His 407 pull gave him a 997 total and the silver medal. Israel Narvaez doubled up on hardware, going gold in the 148 20-23 junior and open classes with a 468 squat, 231 bench, 451 deadlift, and 1151 total. His squat and pull being IPL junior world records. 16-17 junior 165 lifting protégé Dane Steadman put on an amazing display of strength. Dane started things off with a junior IPL world record 518 squat, followed up by a WR 347 bench and WR 534 deadlift. Of course his massive 1399 total was yet another world mark. Dane also took home the best lifter award for junior men's classic raw division. Michael Xiong handled lifts of 341/214/391 and a 947 total for the silver medal. Joey Saechao totaled 920 in the 18-19 165's. Robert Gray pulled a solid 540 and totaled 1300 in the 20-23 181's. Carlos Ferreyra went 451/303/496 and totaled 1251 in the 16-17 198's. Colin Ripley, ripped up a huge 617 junior WR deadlift to go with his WR 573 squat and 297 bench to total a big 1488 in the 18-19 198's, also a WR. Andres Cuadros totaled 1212 as a 20-23 198'er. Abraham Bevel had a solid 1488 total in the 20-23 220's. Tyler Carpenter, in the same class, bombed in the bench after making a big 562 squat, and moved on to pull a huge 633. Hunter Rossman lifting in the 18-19 junior 242's used solid attempts of 518/308/617 to go 1444, with his pull being an IPL junior world record. In the 20-23 242's, Missouri's Ken Jones totaled 1317. Josh Sanderson, in the 20-23 275's, had a big total of 1625, with lifts of 650 squat, 336 bench, and an IPL junior world mark 639 deadlift. Big Joshua Battersby set all new junior world marks in the 18-19 SHW class, starting out with a 666 squat, 391 bench, and a 600 pull for a 1658 total.

In the men's open classic raw competition, Devan Richter was the victor over Josiah Price in the 132's, going 358/231/407 and 997 total to Josiah's 275/192/341 and 810. In the 165's, Chris Godoy took top honors with a nice 1482, comprised of a big 545 squat, 286 bench and a massive 650 pull. His squat and deadlifts were both new IPL world records. Dane Steadman took the silver with a 1399 total and Steve Acosta registered a 1306 for the bronze. Take note, Chris and Dane are only 17 and 16 years old, respectively, and just getting started in the sport. Look for some big numbers to come from them in the future. Six men lifted in the highly-competitive 181's. Cesar Navarro nabbed the win with a 1581 total and lifts of 573/402/606. Only 2.5 kg behind with a 1576 total and the silver medal was Jon Gerhold, going 578/413/584, with his bench being a new IPL world record. Bronze medalist Gary Slater

posted the biggest squat of the class with a 600, and totaled 1493. The 198's was the biggest class among classic raw contestants with 10 lifters. Jon Vaughn used a big 633 squat to take the early lead, along with a 363 bench and secured the win with a 567 pull to total 1565. A.J. Praparar registered an IPL world mark with his 413 bench and placed second with a 1521 total. Rounding out the podium finishers, third place went to junior 18-19 winner Colin Ripley and his 1488 total. David Smith took home the gold medal in the 220's, with his 551/402/611 and 1565 total. Silver went to Abraham Bevel with a 1488. The bronze medalist was Fabian Mora with a 1311. Jarad Dale balanced out his 424 bench with equal 655's in the squat and dead to total 1736 for the 242 class win. Christian Lee took home second with his 1388. The 275 winner was Matthew Barba. Matthew posted a big 1802 total going 738/391/672. Second went to junior victor Josh Sanderson with his 1625. Garrett Brassington landed in third with a 1598. Steve Maday was the lone lifter in the 308's but couldn't succeed with his 473 bench. In the SHW, J.P. Price posted the biggest total in the open with 2000. His whopping 832 squat and 507 bench were new IPL world marks. J.P. also took home the best lifter award for classic raw.

As for master men's classic raw, Sean Sauer went 1295 in the 35-39 220's. Josiah Price totaled 810 in the 50-54 132's. Iconic Ron Scott, lifting in the 65-69 165's, went 308/126/363 for a 799 total, with his pull being a new master IPL world record. In the 40-44 181's, Gary Slater, who took the bronze in the open, posted new IPL 40-44 master world records with his 600 squat, 380 bench and 1493 total. Newly-anointed state referee Roy Taylor, went 248/137/369 and 755 total in the 70-74 181's. Las Vegas local and good friend Victor Calia did his usual exceptional lifting in taking the win in the 50-54 198's and best master lifter in classic raw. His 540 squat and 358 bench were new master IPL world marks. Combined with his 606 pull, Victor put up a big 1504 total. Joe Martin took the silver award with his 1184 total. Former training partner Al Morentin used solid form and set modern-day p.r.'s in the 45-49 220's with his lifts of 402/303/468 and a nice 1173 total. Greg Baxter ditched the gear and elected to go classic raw, posting a great 1322 total in the 55-59 220's by way of 512/281/529. Greg's squat, deadlift and total were all new IPL master world records. Mike Womelsdorf placed second in the class with his 903. Scott Blake went 462/363/545 for 1372 in the 40-44 242's. In the 45-49 242's, Darren Robuck was the winner with his 1405 total with lifts of 529/352/523. James Grant placed second with his 1306 total. Neal Ortiz had lifts of 462/374/518 for a 1355 total in the 49-44 275's. Joe Dentice, another local, took home the gold in the 55-59 275's, going 473/358/523 for 1355. Joe's bench and deadlift were new IPL master world marks. Mark Busby placed second with his 1256 total.

Not too many lifters among the single ply classes. Beginning with the women's classes, Keystone State's Jessica Kratz, doubled up and took gold medals home in the 132 open and master 40-44 classes with her lifts of 330/242/407 for a big 981 total and all new IPL master world records. Jessica was also the best lifter among open single-ply women. Bernice Fuss also took home a couple gold medals with wins in the 165 open and 55-59 class. Her 374 squat, 275 bench, and 374 deadlift resulting in a big 1025 total. In addition to her squat being a new IPL master world record, Bernie also took home the best master lifter in the women's single ply competition. Betsy Spann put up IPL master world records in the squat and deadlift with 281 and 330 respectively, along with a 165 bench to total 777 in the 55-59 181's. Aura Morris went 424/281/380 and 1085 in the 198 open. Hawaii's Rowena Bagayas went 981 in the 45-49 198's.

In the junior men's single-ply, Gabriel Valdez, lifting in the 16-17 242's, took home best lifter in the junior men's, with big lifts

of 540/479/584 and a 1603 total. Stetson KInnison went 1290 in the 18-19 242's. Big Nick Pastorello set some p.r.'s, going 540/440/501 and 1482 total in the 16-17 275's.

Open men's competition began with Hawaii's Julius Fajotina totaling 1173 in the 148's with 407/352/413. Close competition ensued in the 181's, with Jon Yamada taking the win with his 1399 total by way of 540/363/496. Ivan Palomino was 12/5 kilos back with a nice 1372 total and lifts of 529/330/512. Jon Marshall took the gold in the 198's with a solid 1581 total via 611/418/551. Silver went to Kyle Planeaux with his 1322 total. Two decent deadlifters squared off in the 220 open. Winner of the 55-59 master's and best lifter in single-ply master, George Pessell (me, lol), also took the gold in the open, going 639/457/661 for a 1758 total, all new IPL master world marks. Jason Kelske totaled a big 1603 for the silver via 567/380/655. The 242 open was solid entertainment to watch as Chris Pappillion made a successful return to the platform. Taking the early lead with a big 777 squat, Chris never looked back. A 556 bench and 727 deadlift followed to post a 2055 gold medal total. Good enough for the best lifter among single-ply open. Andreas "Luigi" Gallagher, another outstanding local lifter slimmed down to the 242's resulting in a 705 squat, 600 bench, and 672 pull for a 1978 total and the silver. Junior lifter Nick Pastorello took home another gold in the open 275's with his 1482 total. Mark Menslage unfortunately had some bad luck in the deadlift after registering a 600 squat and 380 bench and didn't finish the meet. Likewise for training partner David "Beast" Douglas lifting in the 308's. After Dave set a huge squat p.r. of 870 and a big 771 bench, a torn bicep on his opening pull cost him a chance to establish a huge total. Dave has since undergone surgery to repair the damage and will be back soon to resume his quest.

Among men's master single-ply lifters, Jose Hernandez once again made time away from his referee duties to post a nice 1190 total to win the 45-49 181's. Nestor Bagayas placed second with his 970. Arthur Fu, in the 60-64 181's, ran into some trouble with his deadlift and didn't finish. 40-44 198 lifter Jon Marshall totaled 1581 with lifts of 611/418/551. Bob Kinsey totaled 848 in the 70-74 198's. Asa Barnes DQ'd attempting a huge 512 bench in the 50-54 220's after posting an excellent 666 squat. Mult-WR holder Roy Eriksen, competing in the 70-74 220's, went 451/314/407 for a big 1173 total, all new IPL master world records. Delbert Shay went 512/347/518 for a nice 1377 total in the 50-54 242's.

At the close of the meet, once all calculations had been completed, the first place team award went to Team Mana. Old Skool Iron placed second, with Impact Elite taking third.

In summary, this was another well-executed national championship produced by Steve and Shelley Denison. With an array of amazing performances, there are plenty of new records which will require updating. It was good to see so many new lifters on the platform, even with a more stringent qualifying total required. Also of note were the many women are competing, representing approximately 25% of the lifters at this meet.

On behalf of Steve, Shelley, and all the lifters, thank you to all the sponsors, referees, spotters, loaders, and scoring table officials. See everyone again this November at the IPL World Championships. **PLT**

MARTIN DRAKE

VICE CHAIRMAN OF

AAU

"AAU POWERLIFTING WAS RE-BRANDED TO COVER POWERLIFTING, OLYMPIC LIFTING AND FEATS OF STRENGTH, WHICH ARE QUASI STRONGMEN EVENTS."

How old are you and how long have you been involved in powerlifting?

I'm 63, and I actually entered my first meet when I was 13, so 50 years. It started through Olympic lifting. My folks got me a sand filled barbell set, as many did. Powerlifting was just getting its start and you had to be 14 to compete, so I lied about my age and gave it a try. I was hooked!

You still train and compete?

I competed four days ago in Hawaii at AAU Raw Nationals. I weighed 170 pounds and got a 303 bench. I still compete and have most every year. I compete in olympic lifting and feats of strength and have fun. I hope to outlast John Gilmore, who at 91 and 181# benched 209 raw. I think lack of good technique and getting away from the basics are what's causing most injuries today.

Do you squat and deadlift in competition?

I popped my hernia 2 years ago pulling 744 at 165, so I just do enough to win. I don't push deadlift at all, but I could pull 700 if I wanted to tomorrow. I'm just built to deadlift, but I only pull what I need to and no more because of my wife's request. As part of back training, I pull 935x3 from the knee in the rack, no straps. I pulled my first 606 in 1979 weighing 150 raw, so I've always had a good pull.

We all pay heed to our wives, but why is she so adamant about you not pulling heavy?

In 1980 I was paralyzed from the waist down, and it took 18 months to recover. I have 4 disks that are rotated greater than 90 degrees. She's fearful that I'll

permanently injure myself, so I've developed my upper back so much that it takes the compressive load off the spine. As long as I train 3 times a week I have no back problems, but if I skip a week of training I can hardly walk. I do many lat pulldowns, rack pulls, barbell rowing. Reps are usually five. I'm old school and my training is very basic.

What makes a good deadlifter?

Long arms. I'm 5'10" and 165, and the typical guy who's 5'10" wears a 32" sleeve length. I wear a 37 and it's too short. This makes for a tough bench. I've got long legs, short torso and long arms, so squat is tough, bench is tougher, but deadlift is the best. If I can pull it off the floor I can finish it. I think that most people that have trouble from the floor need to think about pulling the bar into the legs and telescoping the legs. You must be explosive and not have a big belly.

You're the "head" of AAU. What exactly is your title and what do you do?

I'm the vice chairman of AAU Strength Sports. AAU Powerlifting was re-branded to cover powerlifting, olympic lifting and feats of strength, which are quasi strongman events. We offer combines, which are similar to college football combines. A subset of feats of strength is MAS wrestling.

Are the non-powerlifting events growing or staying static?

They're all growing and powerlifting is the one staying static. The feats of strength (strict pull ups, weighted pull ups, farmers walk, etc.) first meet was in 2012. There are athletes that want to do a lot of things, especially younger athletes who want to do non-specialized events. Now in

an event, you might have powerlifting, olympic lifting, feats of strength and a lot of athletes want to do all three. This annexing of sports is causing all the events to grow and getting a lot of spectators, who in turn want to try it.

Let's focus on powerlifting. You've done a lot of research and tracking powerlifting numbers. Can you give me some of those? What is the number of competitive powerlifters in the country and are those numbers on the upswing?

My data was gathered in 2012 by going through meet results from most of the federations, so the numbers aren't exact





but they're close. In 1980, there was basically one federation and there were 25,000 sanctioned lifters. In 2012 there were about 36 organizations and looking at results, trying to eliminate duplications, there were about 17,000 lifters in sanctioned events. We had gone in 32 years from one federation and 25,000 lifters to 36 feds and 17,000 lifters, a decrease of 8,000 lifters!

What do you attribute to that?

The sport has stagnated and it's stagnated for a number of reasons. Number one, it has lost its identity. Each fed defines its view of powerlifting in its own way, with its own rules, each somewhat different from the other. Second, it's a boring sport to watch. Some have tried a WWE approach with monster lifters lifting monster weights and that didn't work. Third, some have tried to be totally exclusive rather than inclusive. If you look at high school powerlifting in TX and LA, their high school powerlifting associations are much larger than 17,000, but by the time these kids graduate, virtually none of them continue with powerlifting.

Why?

I feel that no one shows them how powerlifting can help them in most anything they do and they don't show

them how they can keep doing this sport into their 70's, 80's and even 90's. They're focused on powerlifting helping other sports in school, rather than showing them that powerlifting is its own stand alone sport that they can do all their lives. There is no formula for growth. When they hit that "transition" age of 18, you've got to retain them by showing that the sport is both fun and safe to do. The demographics of most feds is heavily skewed toward master lifters that came back to the sport or came in in their 40's. What is the marketplace telling you? The sports that are growing are multifaceted and viewer friendly.

So AAU is trying to make these sports more interesting to an audience. Is AAU one of the largest feds today?

It's got to be close, but AAU is primarily a youth organization covering virtually every sport. All told, in all its sports, AAU has over 800,000 total athletes. I think powerlifting should have 100,000 athletes, because almost everyone benches, squats (even if it's way high! and deadlifts in one form or another. We need to get these people on the platform competing. A lot of people see inflated lifts like 1000# bench presses and use that as a measuring stick for whether or not they should be on the platform. Maybe that 1000# bencher weighs 350,

uses a multi ply shirt and may or may not be able to pass a drug test. The athlete weighing 150 needs to forget all that and just compete against themselves initially while having fun doing it. If they do that, they've attained success. If you can bench an empty bar, theoretically you can compete. For example, take major league baseball. It's professional, but kids play T-ball, Little League, adults play softball and in beer leagues. Everybody plays some form of baseball, so they have a huge base and lots of people watch baseball because they are exposed to it. We in powerlifting don't have that base.

So you're trying to get people acquainted with powerlifting in a low pressure, fun environment.

Absolutely! We've been accused of being the federation that's fun to lift in and we're guilty as charged. For example, we've got a meet that will be done very well. We're going to have a bench-for-reps contest and a MAS wrestling event. An athlete walking around can say, "I'm going to try one of those, maybe even that powerlifting. I'll try bench repping and maybe next time try a max single in a powerlifting meet." If you go to any nutrition store in the country, almost all hold a bench-for-reps contest. Why doesn't this translate to guys doing a single in a sanctioned meet? If these

"WE WANT PEOPLE IN THE SPORT. WE TELL ATHLETES TO COMPETE WHEREVER THEY LIKE. WHEN A FED DISCOURAGES ITS LIFTERS FROM COMPETING ELSEWHERE THEY HAVEN'T DONE THE SPORT AS A WHOLE ANY FAVORS. AAU IS UNIQUE."

non-sanctioned contests were done with meet standards and certified judges, these benchers might think that they should go in a meet. Many beginning powerlifters enter a meet or two and quit 18-24 months later. Our average powerlifter competes for 8 years. We're retaining them. Now that we're doing feats of strength, many are coming back and they're staying doing that.

Suppose some of those bench-for-reps guys figure out that they're pretty strong, they compete but want a higher level of competition and leave AAU. Isn't AAU then a "feeder" organization into competing feds?

We want people in the sport. We tell athletes to compete wherever they like. When a fed discourages its lifters from competing elsewhere they haven't done the sport as a whole any favors. AAU is unique. Out of the top six feds, loosely defined, four will provide a meet director who pulls a sanction a million dollar liability policy. We're one of the four, but we provide a ten million dollar policy, including accidental medical insurance. Our membership card is \$24, and for another \$3, now that medical insurance goes with you, even if you compete in another federation's meet and get injured. Our policy is supplemental if you don't have insurance and even if yours runs out, ours will pay up to the limit. We're confident that if we hold well run meets that are fun, lifters may go elsewhere but they will still return and lift with us. A lifter may compete in 5 other feds with our blessing and protection, but we know that we'll be one of those feds. It's a simple philosophy – put out a great product rather than telling people they can't lift in other feds. Our philosophy is different. I would rather have 100,000 beginner or average

weekend warrior types than 1000 elite level lifters. 1000 elite lifters doesn't grow the sport.

Is it working?

Our events and sanctions are growing dramatically. In 2015 we're holding a World powerlifting meet, olympic lifting meet, feats of strength and a MAS world championship event. We expect over 1000 competitors.

What is MAS wrestling?

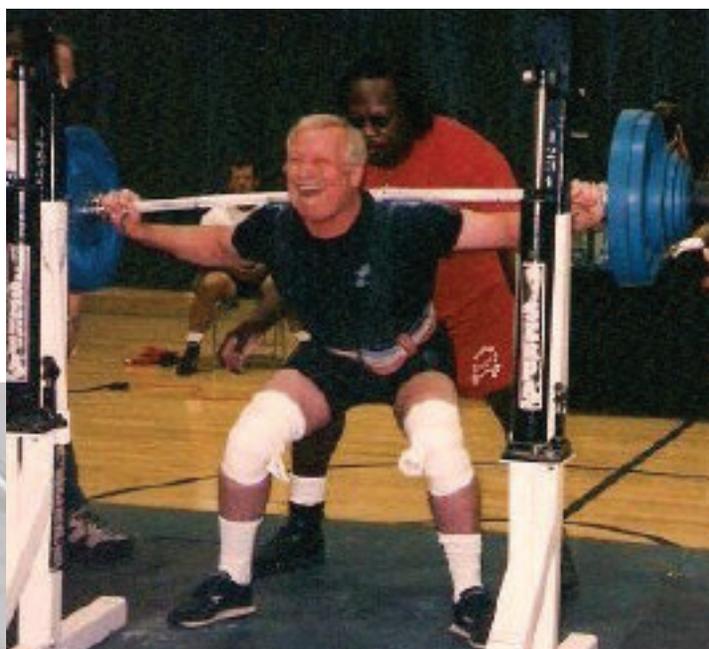
It's stick wrestling. Two competitors face each other with their feet pressing against a board. They both grab the same stick and try to pull the other over the board, kind of like a tug-of-war.

AAU is a drug tested federation. What's your protocol?

We used to do it lottery system but have switched to a third party system. This was done for liability and fairness procedures. Not every meet is tested, because third party testing is about 3 times as expensive. It takes away prejudice and politics. It includes out-of-meet testing up to a year after the card expires and results in an extremely low incidence of drug test failures.

What is your best guess as to percentages of drug use as opposed to non drug in the sport as a whole?

I would guess that 60-70% of lifters are drug free. Most tested feds are by their nature drug free, but just because a fed



isn't tested doesn't mean that many of those lifters aren't drug free also. They may just compete because a meet is near their home whether or not it's a non tested federation. AAU has an identity as a drug tested, mostly raw with some good single ply lifters federation.

Will you ever bring in multi ply?

Very doubtful since the bar path in multi ply lifting is different than raw or single ply. The judging should be consistent across the board but instead has adapted to the gear. Head tracking in multi ply is almost a given to place the bar correctly, and our rules require the head to stay on the bench. My personal opinion is that most multi ply squats don't get to correct depth (hip joint below top of knee) so we don't want to change our judging standards to conform to gear. Whether they're geared or raw, 123 or SHW, squat depth needs to be the same. Raw lifting is not a transitory event like many thought, but I think it's here to stay.

Anything I missed, or anyone you'd like to thank?

I want to thank all the lifters who compete with AAU and the time with all these people who have become our friends. They know who they are. **PLT**

You know

you're a

Powerlifter

when....

1. You plan business trips according to what big gyms are in the area.

2. You give short, concise verbal cues that are too loud during sex.

3.

You can redlight squats just by hearing the federation.

4.

You check your depth while taking a dump.

5. You consider "hardgainer" a Latin word for "undereater".

6. You think Ed Coan is a super hero.

7.

You are the only one in your gym who knows how to use the GHR.

8.

Your wife asks you, "what are you thinking about," and you lie because you don't want to tell her you're thinking about your next bench workout instead of her or the kids.

Excerpted with permission from Tim Henriques new book, **ALL ABOUT POWERLIFTING.**

CREATINE

Ryan Ragsdale owns several nutrition/supplement stores in the Midwest and has been actively involved in the supplement industry for 15 years.

W

hat does creatine do? A daily question around here.

Over the years I've heard a lot of different myths about what creatine is or what it does.

The most common misunderstanding about creatine is the belief that it is only to increase water retention. And while it is true that water retention can sometimes be a side effect of creatine, the function of creatine is actually to increase workout performance.

Creatine has been shown in several studies to increase performance and power in high-intensity anaerobic workouts. So what does that mean to you? Most weightlifters will most likely see quite a bit of benefit from supplementing with creatine, particularly in their rep range. However, endurance athletes like runners and cyclists will probably notice very little change in performance.

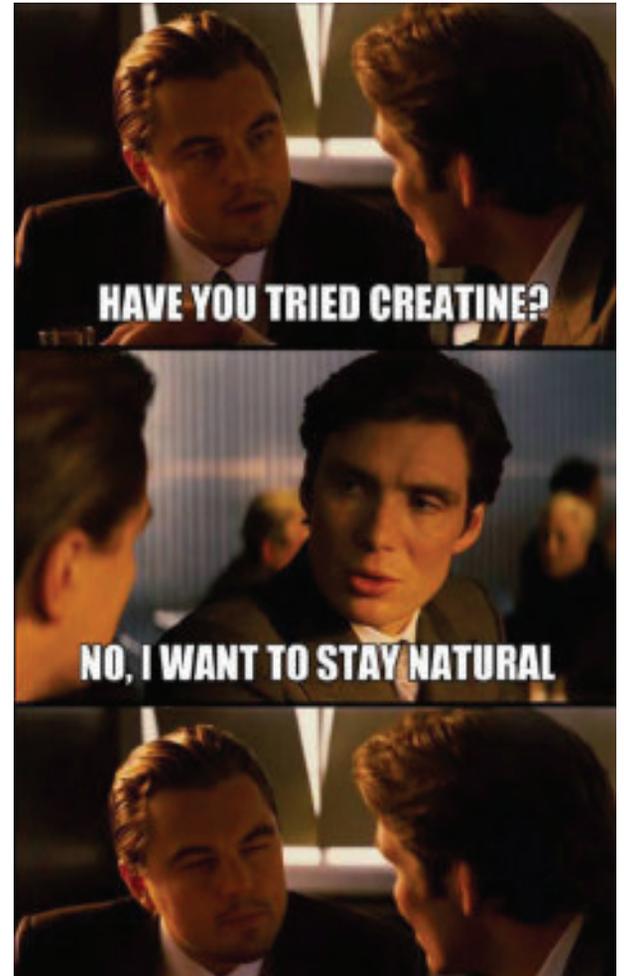
Another frequent question I hear is about the nature of creatine, particularly if creatine is a steroid. The answer to that question is no. Creatine is naturally made from a combination of the amino acids arginine, glycine and methionine. Your body will naturally produce some creatine on its own, or more easily obtain it through your daily diet, mainly from meat and fish.

How Do I Take Creatine?

The most common dose is between 5-10g of creatine monohydrate mixed with a sugary drink one to two times daily. Fruit juice tends to be the easiest for most people, but as long as you're getting about 30g of sugar anything will work. Loading isn't necessary, so don't bother with doubling up the first week or two. However, always make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Overall creatine is a very effective supplement for increasing weightlifting performance, and if you haven't tried it before, is definitely worth considering.

Disclaimer: Always be sure to speak with your doctor before beginning any diet or supplementation program.



BY RYAN RAGSDALE

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