

# INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between  
PL USA Magazine and the  
Sport's Greatest Names.

**BG:** Give us some information on yourself.

**JP:** My name is Joseph Ponnier, and I'm 40 years old. My address is 15 Rue du Chemin de Fer, 77340 Pontault-Combault, France.

**BG:** What is your profession?

**JP:** I work in the American firm ROHM and HAAS France.

**BG:** Joseph, how long have you been training?

**JP:** I have been training for 25 years, bench press only (neither squat nor deadlift), and competing for 20 years at the national level, and 2 years at the international level with the WDFPF (bench press only).

**BG:** How did you get started?

**JP:** I started training for power in 1967 in a gym in Paris. By luck, the gym was attended by the best powerlifters of the moment, and I took the opportunity of learning and increasing my strength, as I had the motivation.

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

**JP:** My best lifts at a body weight of 67.5 kilos: A. Maximum number of reps: 100 Kilos - 27 Reps; 180 Kilos - 3 Sets of 5 Reps Each; 150 Kilos - 13 Reps (Without bouncing on chest). B. Best lift -

## JOSEPH PONNIER

as interviewed for POWERLIFTING USA by Bob Gaynor

202.5 kilos at a body weight of 67.5 kilos, without any drugs or Blast Shirt.

**BG:** Joseph, what titles have you won and records do you hold?

**JP:** A. Titles - 16 times France champion; twice World Champion (WDFPF). B. World Records - 190 kilos in St. Malo (France) 1991.

**BG:** What are your future goals?

**JP:** My aim is to make 200 kg or 202.5 kg in a drug tested competition, and without a Blast Shirt. So, a 100% natural lift.

**BG:** Joseph, please share with us your views on steroids.

**JP:** I am absolutely opposed to the usage of any kind of drug. An athlete should have the opportunity of doing a sport without any danger for his health. Of course, we know some champions who die from drug abuse, or who become ill or disabled for the rest of their life. So controls must be made so that clean lifters are proud of being the best, without

cheating, not only with the other, but also with themselves.

**BG:** Do you follow any special diet or supplementation program?

**JP:** I don't have a special food; I never diet. I eat like anyone.

**BG:** Please give us a breakdown of your training.

**JP:** I train three times a week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and I only do bench press. I have stopped all bodybuilding work for 12 years to specialize on the bench press. After warm-up, I train like this: On Mondays- 150 kg., 5 Sets of 5 Reps. (with a pause on the chest at each rep.) On Wednesdays- 170 kg. X 5 X 1; 160 Kg. X 5 X 4. On Fridays- 160 Kg. X 5 X 5. On Mondays and Fridays I do not change my training. On Wednesdays, I change each week: Ex.- 170 X 5 X 1; 160 X 5 X 4. Then next week 170 X 5 X 2; 160 X 5 X 3. Then 170 X 5 X 3, 160 X 5 X 2, up To 170 X 5 X 5. Before a contest, I go like this: 170 X 5 X 1, 160 X 5 X 4.

Then next week 172.5 X 5 X 1; 162.5 X 5 X 4. Then- 175 X 5 X 1; 165 X 5 X 4 (On Mondays & Fridays, I always do 150 X 5 X 5; 160 X 5 X 5).

**BG:** Joseph, what advice would you have for beginners?

**JP:** In my opinion, sport must be a pleasure. One must be happy to train and to meet friends. So enjoy being at the gym. This is my first advice to beginners. Then, be patient, learn, know yourself through the training, and try to find your own training program. Never forget that a training program can benefit a lifter, but not all of them. A good training program is an efficient one, for YOU. Thirdly, our sport is not a money affair, do it cleanly, and never take any drug.

**BG:** Who are lifters you admire?

**JP:** I don't have a "hero" in powerlifting, or in bench press, but I must admit that I admire Betty Altizer, and all lifters who break records and can outclass drug users.

**BG:** Joseph, do you have any other hobbies besides lifting?

**JP:** My hobby is fishing (at the sea or in a pool).

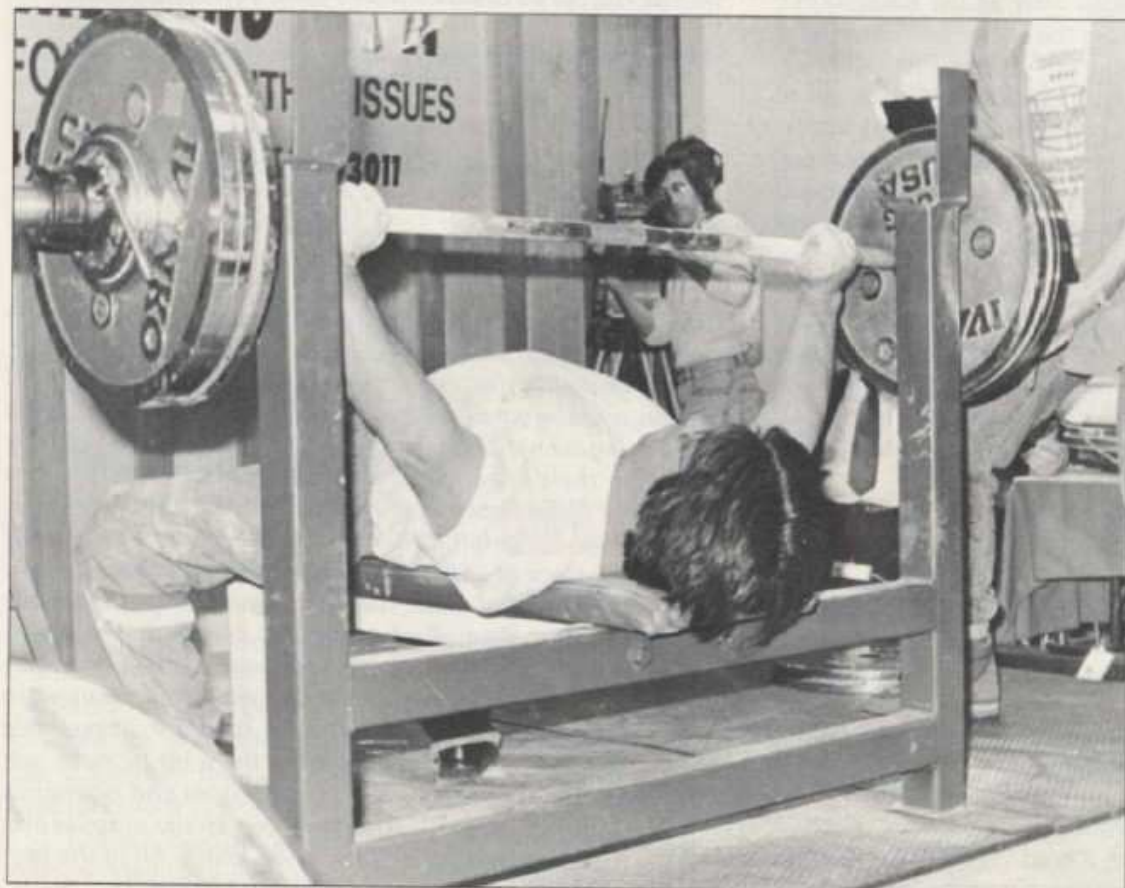
**BG:** Are there any other comments you would like to make?

**JP:** I personally think that bench press is going to be a very popular sport. We have to exploit this situation and develop it, as many young bench pressers will come to powerlifting through bench pressing.

I think that very soon, the WDFPF officials will have to set up rules about bench press competitions. When organized, this sport can become very popular; this is why nothing should be neglected. In national and international contests, the bench must be adjustable in height, and must be long enough to allow the lifter's head to be under the bar. If this is not the case, the lifter who doesn't want the bar to be given by spotters will NOT be able to take the bar in good conditions, so he will not be able to perform his best lift.

The popularity of the bench press has made a lot of benchers come to powerlifting in France. So, the WDFPF officials should bear in mind that the future of powerlifting is in some way conditioned by the bench press.

Have a good training, and see you on the platform!



Joseph Ponnier... one of the very best bench pressers in the world, especially in the drug free category.