

Mike Tuchscherer Discusses Training, Competing and RTS

POWER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016

**THE SCIENCE
BEHIND
ATTEMPT
SELECTION**

BY HANI JAZAYRLI

**ZAHIR
KHUDAYAROV
IS FIRED UP!**

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016 • VOL 7, NO 1
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World Record Bench

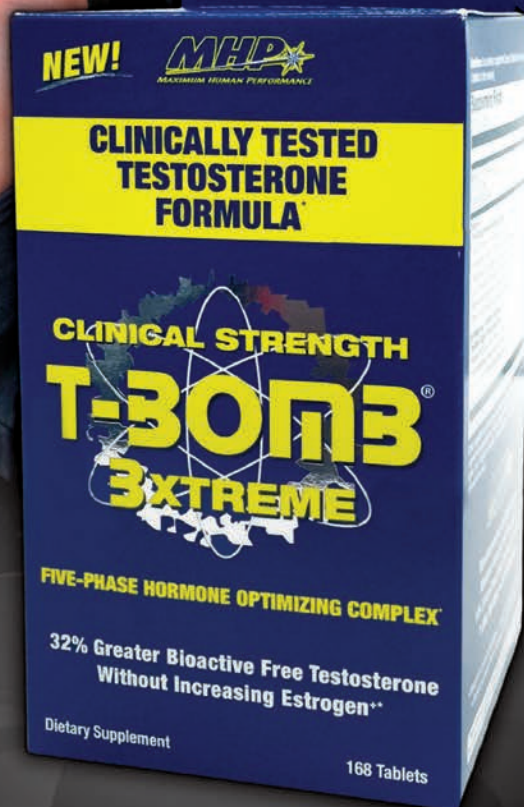
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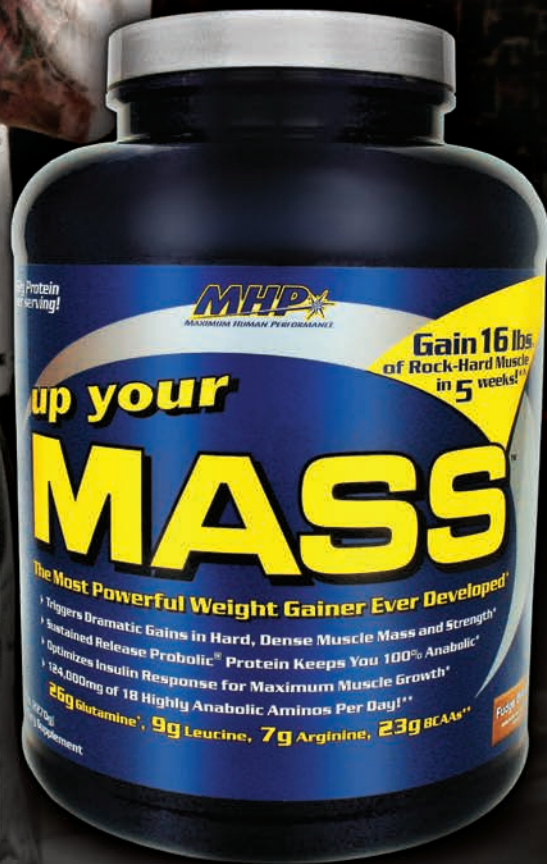


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The Dragon Breathes Fire

An Interview with Zahir Khudayarov

Currently lifting in the 275 lbs. class, Zahir recently posted the highest raw squat in history, regardless of bodyweight, at 1041 lbs. Videos on Zahir's own YouTube channel routinely receive over 10,000 views. Yet, he remains a mystery in many ways, as few people have had a chance to push past the hype in order to gain insight into his motivations as a lifter. John Greaves was able to attain such access and reveal what makes this amazing athlete tick.



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Mike Tuchscherer

Jeff "Robot" Irion sits down with 29 year old Mike in order to discuss all that he has accomplished at such a young age. He is the founder of Reactive Training Systems, a powerlifting training and education company that focuses on auto-regulation. Mike is also the first male from USA Powerlifting to win a gold medal for powerlifting at the World Games and he has won USAPL Nationals eight times. To top it all off, he boasts a 785 lbs. squat, a 480 lbs. bench, and an 850 lbs. deadlift!



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Attempt Selection: Planning for the Win

Picking your attempts at a powerlifting meet is almost as important as the training that got you there. Don't screw it up by not thinking it through...Hani Jazayrli breaks it all down and helps you plan for the win every time!



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Brandon Smitley - One of the Strongest Lightweights Ever!

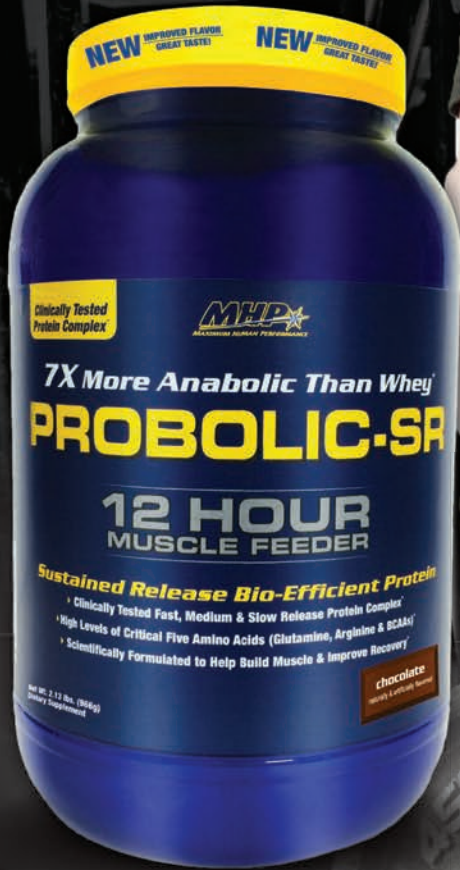
You can never judge a book by its cover. With a small and powerful stature, Brandon Smitley is perhaps the best pound for pound powerlifter currently competing in

the raw division. Competing in the 132 lbs. division, this small package of nitroglycerin is just getting started in the powerlifting game. Ken Whethem sits down with Brandon to see what we can expect from him in the near future.

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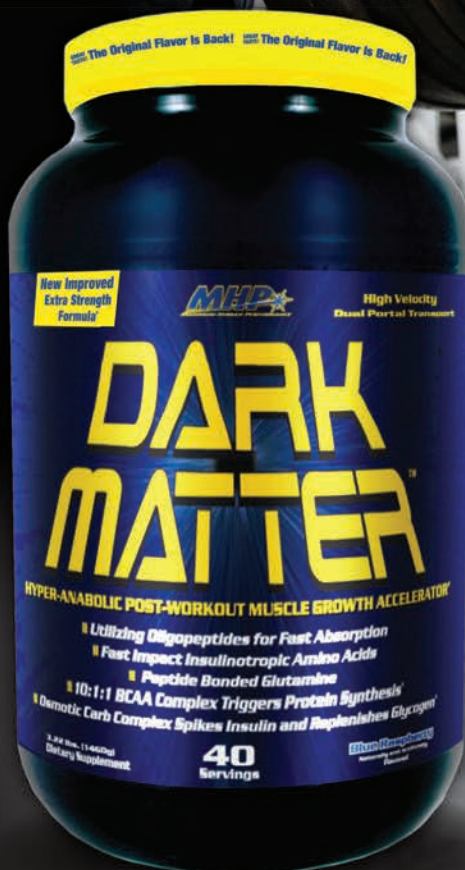
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MUSCLEPHARM POWER SPOTLIGHT

ANDREA WHITE

BY JOHN GREAVES III

Powerlifting is possibly the most blue collar sport. Top competitors reach the pinnacle of the sport after years of toiling away in dimly lit garages or in the corner of commercial gyms. It's a sport for grinders, not overnight success stories. But don't tell that to Andrea White. After training for only a couple of years, Supazanii [her Instagram name] made quite an impression at USAPL Raw Nationals, 2015. She took the platform rocking blue braids, American flag socks and bright orange lifting shoes to win the 57kg class in her final pull at the largest powerlifting meet ever!

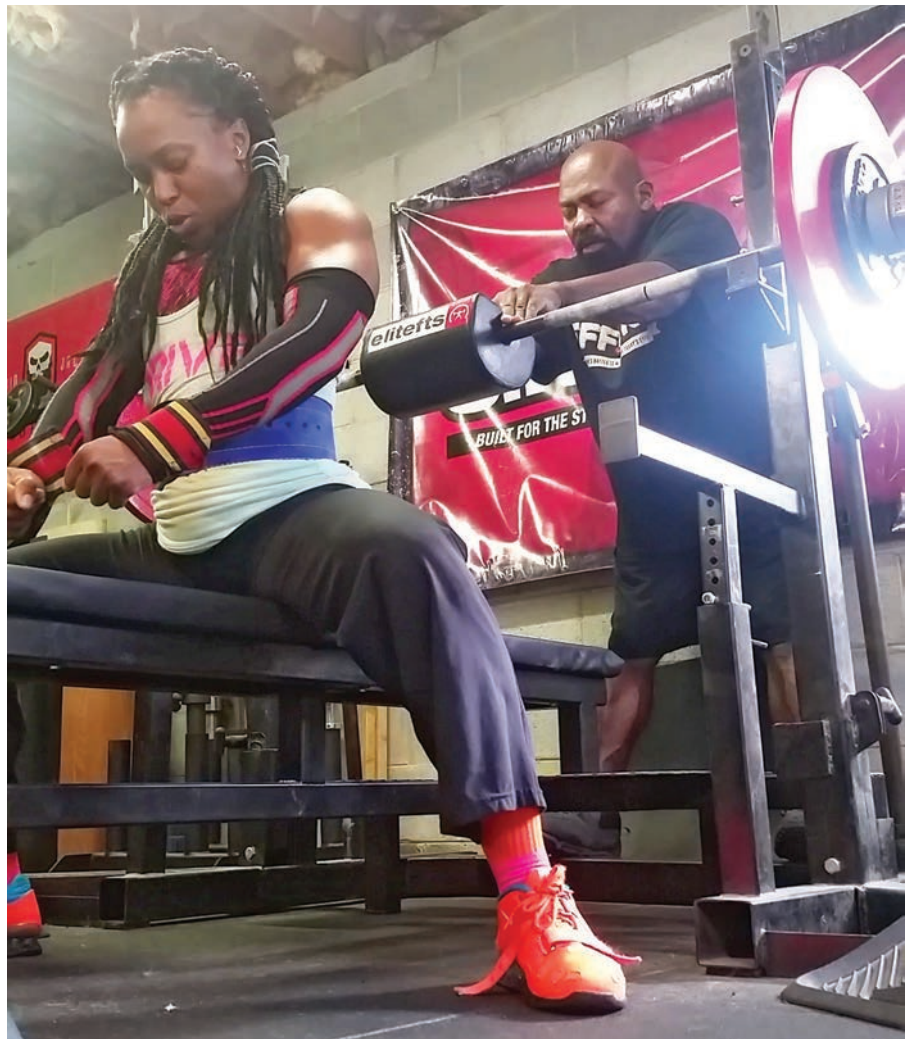
I met Andrea White when she stopped by Steve Goggins' facility in Marietta, Georgia and soon discovered that she is fired up about training. This led to a back and forth email exchange filled with capitalized words and exclamation points!

Andrea, thanks for taking the time to talk to me. To start with, you said that you're from Brooklyn, NY. I know that everybody in Brooklyn isn't a rapper, so what do you do for a living?

I'm a Customer Service agent for Delta Airlines.

I assume that with your job, you're able to fly down from New York fairly often now that your coach is in Georgia, but where do you train when you're back home? What about if you have a layover somewhere that's not home or Georgia, do you have a network of places you like to train?

Yes, working with the airlines makes



my travels for training a breeze. When I have the time, I fly down to Georgia and train at Goggins Force. In my hometown, I train at Richie's Gym. In between NY and Georgia, it's good old North Carolina, training at Body By Silk Fitness Center and Super Training Gym in Burlington.

You said you started powerlifting when you went to watch a friend's

meet. Was that your first experience with competitive lifting?

Yes, it was! My friend invited me to support him at a bench press competition. Then, he invited me to train with him. I was filled with so much adrenaline; I had no time for nerves. I won that day and soon after, I started to look for another competition. I was all in!

What do you weigh and what

weight classes do you compete in?

My "walk around" weight is around 128-130lbs. I currently compete in the 57kg class (125lbs). In previous times, I competed in the 63kg class (138lbs) and the 67kg class (148lbs) but I often weighed-in light for those classes.

What are some of your accomplishments in powerlifting?

Two World Championships Titles and National Title with 100% Raw Powerlifting Federation, National & State Title with WNPF [World Natural Powerlifting Federation], as well as State and National Title with USAPL.

COMPETITION LIFTS EQUIPPED

I've never lifted equipped

RAW

Squat: with knee wraps - 315lbs @ 67kg; without wraps- 305 @ 57kg

Bench: in 67kg - 214lbs.; 63kg - 203lbs.; 57kg- 198lbs.

Deadlift: in 67kg - 415lbs.; 63kg - 407lbs.; 57kg - 410lbs.

What was your athletic background before powerlifting?

In high school and college, I was a cheerleader for a short while, but mostly a sprinter in track and field.

Do you have any lifters who you look up to in powerlifting, male or female?

Wow! First thought - Kimberly Walford.



She's definitely an inspiring choice and your former teammate!

What's it been like training with her? Does it motivate you when you have someone else who is so accomplished in strength sports there with you day in and day out?

For me, training with Kim is my pre-workout! Watching her lift speaks volumes to me. I'm more fired up training with the greats. It helps me dig deep and discover strength that I

didn't know I had. It's also an opportunity for me to learn from the best. And Kim Walford is one of the best! Aside from being a phenomenal lifter, she's also a great mentor.

The IPF and USAPL are often criticized for being overly strict in meets and in restricting members of Team USA from competing in other federations. You're relatively new to powerlifting so what's your experience with USAPL been like so far?

I've only competed under the USAPL umbrella, not the IPF as of yet. USAPL is strict, as some would say. Lifters know the rules when they sign up for the meet. If we train according to the rules, there should be no surprises come game day. We don't always read the rules, and that's when it becomes an issue. I've had good experiences; no complaints. I also competed in other federations prior to competing with USAPL. As for the IPF restricting its lifters, I'm sure there's a reason behind it that has been explored before the decision was made.

You got a coach fairly early in your career, All Time American Bench Press Record Holder Jason Manenkoff. Why was it important to you to have a coach so early on?

Being an athlete, I had already experienced different aspects of training - some of it dealt with weight lifting by way of bodybuilding, but powerlifting was unfamiliar. I started off without a coach for two months but I soon learned that I needed to acquire key technical aspects in order to increase my strength and prevent injury.

What was it about training with his team that helped get you to where you are now?

The team at Iron Arena Powerlifting & Performance is great. All of its competitive lifters are very supportive of each other. There's a heightened energy at the Arena, [people] rooting for each other during lifts. They are great athletes and I'm happy to have them as friends.

I met you during one of your early squat sessions with your new coach, powerlifting legend Steve Goggins. How has the transition been from Iron Arena to Goggins Force?

The training had its familiar parts, such as volume, which I'm accustomed to. But I now have heavy days, which I love, and recovery days, which I also adore! I can also definitely appreciate the technical breakdowns of the lifts and utilize them going forward. Training at "The Force" just had its own energy and it commands strength. I was privileged to be there.

"MY EXPLOSIVENESS HAS BEEN INCREASING THROUGHOUT EACH NEW TRAINING CYCLE. IT DEFINITELY HELPS WITH SPEED. STEVE GOGGINS GAVE ME A TECHNICAL CUE ABOUT FORM AND TIGHTNESS. SO WHILE I CAN BE EXPLOSIVE, I STILL WANT TO MAINTAIN MY FORM. IT'S ESSENTIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL LIFT"

When you were pause squatting, I heard Steve tell you not to worry so much about having the weight come up fast. Do you consider yourself an explosive lifter? Is that because of your background as a sprinter?

My explosiveness has been increasing throughout each new training cycle. It definitely helps with speed. Steve Goggins gave me a technical cue about form and tightness. So while I can be explosive, I still want to maintain my form. It's essential for a successful lift.

What's a normal training week look like for you right now? You're gearing up for the Arnold, right?

Normal? What's that? I do 4-5 days a week of heavy lifting with some speed/recovery days, as well as tons of accessories. Yes, the Arnold will be another adventure - I'm looking forward to it.

Guys like Jesse Norris use strongman training as GPP [General Physical Preparedness] and Sam Byrd and Grant Higa use CrossFit for conditioning. Deadlifting monster, Richard Hawthorne, credits gymnastic movements like the hollow body hold with helping him handle in excess of 600lbs raw at 148lbs. You mentioned calisthenics training...what other non-powerlifting movements do you incorporate into your training plan?

I credit lots of accessory work to my track and field and dance background. I recall the stretching drills and sprint work from my running days when it comes to using my hip flexors for squatting and powering up with leg drive in the deadlift. Flexibility came from being a dance major, which helps in my stretch and recovery - it also helps to increase my arch on the bench. Both of these activities contributed to me being able to lift, recover and they also helped in preventing me from getting hurt.

Although a lot of women struggle with the bench press, you've managed to push 198lbs in competition. What has been your secret to pushing heavy weight in the bench?

Ha! Prayer! I've incorporated a lot of volume and I train the bench sometimes 3 times a week - my joints and muscles become familiar with the movement. My calisthenics training helped, as well; a plethora of pushups and pull-ups helped me to build a strong foundation for benching.

Are you a barbell, kettlebell, dumbbells person or do you like to use machines and other specialized equipment?

Barbells and dumbbells for me! I use machines mostly for accessory work.

What about specialty bars and bands? Do you use any of them in your training?

I like the overload you get using the bands for heavy deadlifts and the safety bar for squats. I also use the Sling Shot by Mark Bell for overloading the bench - it works wonders.

Hey! Unscripted product placement! Now everybody's going to think that I planted that question in there to get you to big up the Slingshot!

What are the most important elements to hitting big numbers from meet to meet?

Planning your training. Revisiting the previous cycle to see what worked and what didn't.

Your last meet was Raw Nationals and it came down to the last deadlift

in a tight battle with Meghan Pellat. What were your thoughts going into that final deadlift?

Oh, the last lift! Well, I came there with one goal in mind. Going into the lift, I took a moment not to focus on anything or anybody else, but to pray to and thank God for already giving me the strength to succeed. I reminded myself that I walk by faith and not by sight. That was all the charge I needed to get me through that final lift.

You've said that you sort of block out the world when you train. Is this a part of your normal psyching up process? What other rituals are important to you?

I'm basically in a zone - the music is up loud and I'm focused on getting through my training. I don't care to socialize; I'm using carbs with casual chatter when I could be resting properly between sets. I get psyched up by talking to myself and reminding myself of what I came to do! I say a quick "Thank You Lord" and attack the weight!

You've only been competing in powerlifting for a short time. Do you have concrete goals for the future or are you just trying to ride this train and see where it goes?

I'm definitely on the train and I'm enjoying the stops it has made thus far. I want to take over the world! Isn't that what all athletes think? My goals develop as I continue on this journey. Do I want to leave my fingerprints on the sport like so many that have come before me? Oh yeah! But whatever door God opens up is the door I'll walk through.

So, speaking of doors opening - Abbye "Pudgy" Stockton on Muscle Beach in the 1940s, Cory Everson, Lenda Murray and Iris Kyle on the Olympia stage, Kim Walford and Samantha Coleman in powerlifting... these are all examples of women who have stood up to be counted in all phases of strength sports. You've got fresh eyes on the sport. Where do you think female powerlifting needs to go from here in order to

"I'M BASICALLY IN A ZONE - THE MUSIC IS UP LOUD AND I'M FOCUSED ON GETTING THROUGH MY TRAINING. I DON'T CARE TO SOCIALIZE; I'M USING CARBS WITH CASUAL CHATTER WHEN I COULD BE RESTING PROPERLY BETWEEN SETS"

continue progressing?

Have exhibitions of strength, perhaps at other athletic venues - those [venues] that get much more exposure. A Deadlift Battle: Last Woman Standing could be the intermission for the games! These need to include cash prizes. This topic is one for Girl Talk!

The International Powerlifting Federation General Assembly just met. The meeting agenda that was released prior to the Assembly meeting mentioned that the IPF needs more females in key roles at the top. Do you aspire to one day move into the decision making side of things as a judge, meet promoter or even higher?

Yes, I see myself judging in the future. I also see myself promoting meets, hosting seminars in schools and in other community events. Being able to dig deep within and lift what others may think is impossible takes courage. That's how dreams are built and our youth can use a lot of dream building. That can be accomplished through powerlifting. Setting PR's may boost the esteem of a failing student and encourage them to try harder at their studies.

Let's talk about other strength/fitness sports. Would you consider doing another bodybuilding show in the future, a weightlifting meet, or trying CrossFit?

I would absolutely do a bodybuilding

show! I competed in past times and won Overall titles. It was a different experience. The diet itself was tough. Weighing your food, preparing meals, waking up to eat...however, it brought in the results that I needed. I would definitely be interested in doing a show again.

You're a powerlifter but your sister, Davina, doesn't compete. She was still there filming your every set. Are all of your family members supportive of your efforts in this sport?

My whole family is supportive of my efforts. We grew up very athletic. A family of runners, swimmers, boxers, basketball players - the works. They have always been my greatest fans with the loudest cheering section. They're amazing!

Okay, jump forward twenty years into the future. You're at a meet and you're about to get an award. What do you want that award to be?

An Olympic Gold Medal in the Master's Division representing the USA Team. This is followed by a ceremony of being inducted into the Powerlifting Hall of Fame.

Would this Olympic Medal be in Powerlifting? Are you one of the people who hope to see it become an Olympic Sport?

I would love to see powerlifting in the Olympics. Often, when I share my accomplishments with family and friends, they ask, "When will you be on TV and are you going to the Olympics"? Now that would be hands down amazing! Yes! An Olympic Gold Medal is the award I want around my neck. It will be part of my family history forever, and every coach and teammate that I've had in my life will be included in my gratitude. It will be a salute to all of them! Can you imagine?!

Where can people follow your training and learn more about you?

On Facebook: Andrea White (Health Rocks)

On IG: Supazanii

Thank you again for a great interview. PM

This Chick Can Kick Your Ass... And You May Like It!

Kaylie Anne Klitzing

PHOTOS BY BRIAN WILLIAMS PHOTOGRAPHY

How old are you? Where are you from? What are you wearing?

I am twenty three years YOUNG!

I was born in Fremont, Ca., but I moved around a lot.

I am currently wearing yoga pants and my trainer work shirt. Workout clothes are kind of all I wear. They are comfy and cute - it's a win-win!

Where do you train?

I normally train in between clients at the Livermore 24 Hour Fitness.

What do you do for work?

I am a personal trainer at 24 Hour Fitness.

How did you get involved in figure competitions?

Hmm..I started off as a cheerleader who just wanted to be as tiny as possible. Then, I started dating a bodybuilder, so one thing led to another and he got me into weight lifting. One day at the gym, I saw this girl who I thought looked so awesome! Then I found out she competed in Figure. I looked up the shows and I originally was going to shoot to compete in Bikini. But as I continued lifting, my physique grew a little too much. So, Figure it was.

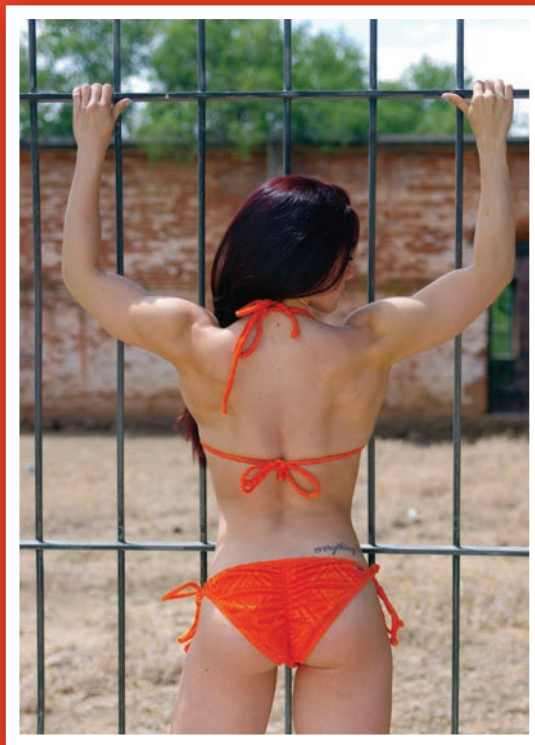
What do your "normal" friends think of what you do?

At first, my "normal" friends thought that what I do was weird. It took them a while to get used to my new physique. But, like always, they love me no matter what, and supported me.

Are you married, have a boyfriend or single?

I am single. At the moment, I am putting my all of my time and effort into my clients, my shows, and school.

Do you remember the first time you out-lifted a guy? How did it make



you feel?

The first time I ever out-lifted a guy was in elementary school. I did more pull-ups than him. I have always been really into fitness and I am quite competitive. But recently, when I am able to out-lift the guys at the gym, I just feel very proud. I have worked so hard to get where I am.

Do you wear make up at the gym?

I do not wear makeup at the gym. I rarely ever wear make up.

What do you have to say to women who don't lift weights because they think they'll get too big?

Being a trainer, I hear that all the time from women. "I don't want to get too big or look like a man." I just tell them that they won't unless they really "try" to and it is hard work to get big - so just lift and have fun.

How has lifting helped you?

Lifting has changed my lifestyle for the better. I eat cleaner. I think more positively. And I work harder in everything I do.

What is your favorite lift?

I like all of my lifting days.. But I think shoulders are my favorite. I love dumbbell shoulder presses and dumbbell lateral raises. I enjoy seeing my shoulders work! I used to hate them because they were my weak point. But then I started training them twice a week...and now I love them!

Tell me about your current best lifts.

Best lifts? Hmm. All of them. Just kidding. Before I got really into competing, I just lifted and focused on strength. But now that my focus is bringing the best package to the stage, I train for conditioning and symmetry. I've squatted 225 for up to 12 reps, I've deadlifted 265 for 8. I also got the 70lb dumbbells for 6 reps on incline bench. I got the 60s for 3 on seated shoulder press. Those are all off season lifts though.

What are some of your goals in lifting and in your sport?

At this very moment, my goal is to maintain a lean "off season" physique. I also want to work on my leg conditioning. So, basically, my goals are just bringing up my weak areas and adding on some quality muscle.

Anything else you'd like to add?

The only thing I would like to add is that hard work really does pay off. And if you have a goal or a dream, work towards it and don't let anything or anyone get in your way, especially yourself. Stay positive and love yourself throughout the entire process! Keep grinding! People can find me at @kayliebaby_ifbbpro on Instagram. **PM**





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The Dragon Breathes Fire

AN INTERVIEW WITH ZAHIR KHUDAYAROV

BY JOHN GREAVES III

Zahir “The Dragon” Khudayarov is a study in contrasts. Powerlifting fans know him for his electrifying and over the top YouTube training videos and his incredible platform intensity. To his fellow athletes, he’s known for his competitive drive and willingness to change his plans at a moment’s notice in order to help other lifters succeed on the platform. He’s been seen motivating Konstantin Konstantinovs and encouraging his rival, Dan Green, before a lift. Speaking of Dan Green, Zahir is one of the few powerlifters to successfully challenge “Boss” on the platform as a 242 lifter.

Currently lifting in the 275 class, Zahir recently posted the highest raw squat in history, regardless of bodyweight, at 1041 lbs. A YouTube video posted in September of 2014 by TheD-JSkay, "Rise To Greatness", has already received in excess of 45,000 views. Videos on Zahir's own YouTube channel routinely receive over 10,000 views. Yet, he remains a mystery in many ways, as few people have a chance to push past the hype in order to gain insight into his motivations as a lifter.

I caught up with Zahir a few days after GPA [Global Powerlifting Alliance] Worlds in Athens, Georgia to discuss his career, his relationships with other lifters, his training approach, as well as his plans for making history in the sport of powerlifting.

Zahir, thanks for giving me this interview, my friend. To start off, you just had a birthday. How old are you now?

I'm 32, so I am still a few years away from the naturally strongest age.

Where are you from originally and where do you live now?

I'm originally from Azerbaijan, city of Sumqayit. I did my schooling and studies in Russia (my first written language was Russian), so it feels like another home country to me. Now I live in Finland and I've been here since 2013, to stay with my Finnish wife, Anna.

Wait...you're originally from Azerbaijan, you studied in Russia, and Russian was your first written language. We spoke English when you, Anna and I met and she's from Finland. How many languages do you and Anna speak?

I speak Azerbaijan, Turkish, Russian, and English. Anna speaks Finnish, Swedish, and English. We speak to each other in English, but Anna understands my English better than

other people do. Anna is also trying to learn some Russian.

Wow. That's impressive. You two are a blend of so many cultures. You told me at GPA Worlds that back home, you're considered to be a black guy. What is the reaction you receive when you show pictures of your trips to the United States?

In the USA, I have both black and



white friends. Anyone should see from the pictures with these friends that I am neither black nor white. I do not choose my friends by their skin color and I want people to see that, too.

You have this huge YouTube following - your videos get in excess of 12,000 views on a regular basis. However, you're still relatively unknown. So, could you break down your stats for us? How tall are you, what do you weigh and what weight classes do you compete in?

I'm 178 cm tall and 125 kg (5'10" and 275lbs). I used to compete in the 110kg/242lb weight class, but I'm not interested in dieting down into that

class anymore. So right now, I compete in the 125kg/275lb class, and I might go up later.

What are some of your accomplishments in powerlifting?

COMPETITION LIFTS

EQUIPPED (110 kg/242lb weight class years ago)

Squat 380kg/837.7lbs
Bench 300kg/661.4lbs
Deadlift
382.5kg/843.2lbs

Raw

Squat 472.5kg/1041.6lbs
Bench 280kg/617.2lbs
Deadlift 380kg/837.7lbs

GYM LIFTS

Squat 470kg/1036lbs
Bench
280kg/617.2lbs
Deadlift 390kg/859.8lbs

I heard that you played soccer and trained in martial arts as a kid. What made you start lifting?

I was a sprinter and I also did boxing for a while. When I was 16, I decided to start bodybuilding, so I went to a gym. I saw a bodybuilder picture on the wall of the gym when I went in for the first time. I told my father, "I am going to look like that someday". I never doubted it, though

I only weighed 39kg (about 85lbs) at that time.

You originally wanted to be a bodybuilder, correct? In an interview with Dr. Mike Israetel, he said that you did the Azerbaijan National Bodybuilding Championship in 2003.

I have competed once in bodybuilding. I did not take the bodybuilding competition very seriously - I was already powerlifting at that time. My first PL meet was in 2002.

What drew you to the sport of powerlifting?

At first, I didn't understand the difference between strength training and bodybuilding. I did heavy training

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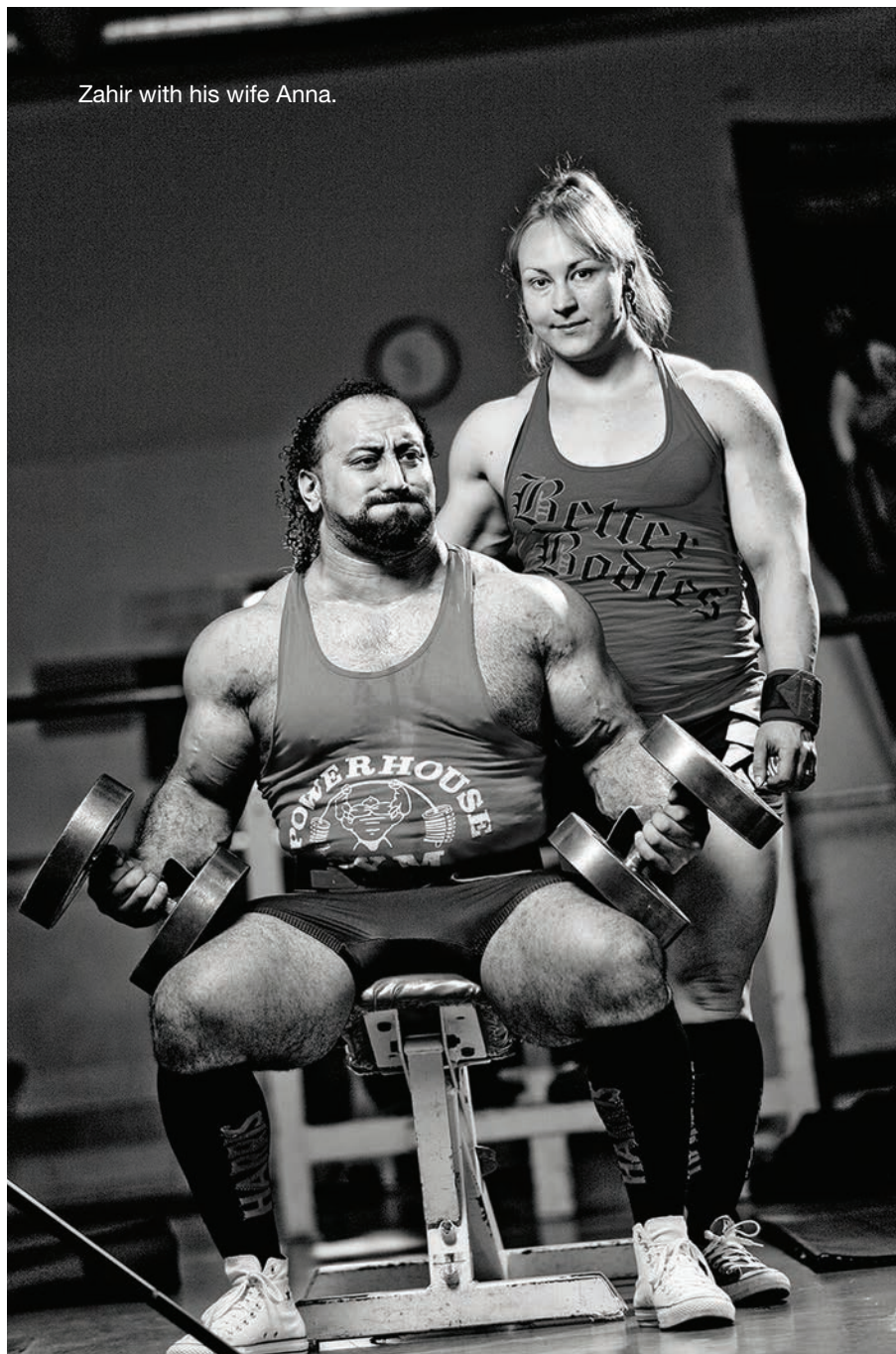
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Zahir with his wife Anna.



because I liked it. Soon, I noticed that I was more talented in strength sports than in bodybuilding.

Who are the lifters who inspire you in the sport, past and present?

Andrey Malanichev has always been my favorite. And I used to aim at breaking Ed Coan's records. Now my wife, Anna Khudayarov, who is also a great lifter, is my main source of motivation and inspiration for powerlifting.

Describe the powerlifting scene where you live. Do people stop and stare when you walk by? Are you and your friends always the biggest

and strongest people in a room?

Let's start with the fact that I do not choose my friends by their size or strength. Most of my friends are not powerlifters. I draw attention at the gym - many [people] want to come and chat and ask for training tips. When I do my last few hard training sessions before a competition, almost everyone at the gym gathers to watch my training.

I saw a video of you and Andrey Malanichev, which I didn't understand a word of because I don't speak Russian, but you two looked like you were getting along pretty

well. Do you get to train with him and other well-known lifters from that area?

I train with Malanichev when I visit Moscow. I am very good friends with many Russian lifters. In a way, they are my family.

Speaking of Malanichev, have you two ever considered doing an Eastern European remake of the movie "Pumping Iron" with Malanichev, you, Konstantin Konstantinovs and Mischa Koklyaev?

I am a huge fan of Arnold Schwarzenegger, and I have been thinking about doing a movie trailer style video, which would quote some Schwarzenegger movies. We like to do videos with the "Russian Kings", but we have not been thinking about an actual movie.

Speaking of being friends with lifters, I saw an Instagram picture of you and Dan Green playing with each other's hair. Was this hair rivalry the real reason you two battled so hard on the platform?

I have been compared to Dan Green in many ways, and one of the things that I have in common with him is our very unique hairstyle. It is not real rivalry - we are very good friends.

You said that you don't have any bad feelings towards any lifters that you compete against. Do you get tired of people asking you if you get along with Dan Green or Eric Lilliebridge?

I just think it's funny. I might tease people and tell them, "I'm going to kill my opponent", whoever it happens to be at that time. It's just fighting spirit - I would never really fight anyone.

Piggybacking off of that question, you started getting a lot of attention in powerlifting when you were gunning for Dan Green's 242 world record total, but you weren't able to make weight and you've since decided to stay at 275. Do you think that the move up to 275 will bring more attention to your career or do you not care about that?

I would rather say that I don't care. I want to reach my own maximal lifts regardless of my weight.

Yes, I've heard that you don't care so much about records in specific weight classes - you want to lift more than anybody else in history

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regardless of weight. Is this accurate?

That is correct. Only the largest lifts get real popularity - small weight class lifters are relatively unknown. I want to become a legend whose name stays in the minds of powerlifting people for dozens of years.

You get a lot of YouTube views, however, at GPA Worlds you told me that you haven't gotten a lot of attention from magazines. Do you think that's because of where you live or is it because you've been in weight classes that are stacked with other high profile lifters like Eric Liliebridge and Dan Green?

I think "fighting" high profile lifters has actually brought me plenty more attention than I would have otherwise received with the same results. In Finland, powerlifting is a relatively small field of sport, so magazines or TV are seldom interested. It is getting more popular now, though.

What organizations have you competed in and where do you plan to compete next?

GPA, WPC [World Powerlifting Con-

gress], and GPC [Global Powerlifting Committee]. Next year I will also compete in WRPF [World Raw Powerlifting Federation]. My next main competition is Arnold Classic Australia 2016.

What is behind your motivation to post an All Time World Record total?

I can feel my own potential inside, and I want to set it free. No less is enough than my own ultimate result.

Once you achieve that goal, what are your plans for strength sports? Would you ever consider doing strongman or going back to bodybuilding?

After I have reached my own ultimate result, I want to retire from powerlifting and concentrate on my family life and gym business.

As a World Record holder and someone pursuing an All Time World Record, how do you feel about Powerlifting Watch's announcement that their All Time records list will only count record attempts made on calibrated plates? Do you think this is good for the sport, or will it drive up costs for meet directors?

This means that there will be less

results from Russia and the nearby countries, which again means that soon there will be plenty of huge results that are not in the PWL, and you can't trust that you are the strongest even if you are at the top of the list. It's good to have rules, but I don't think that the calibrated discs are the answer. There are more problems in making sure that the weigh-in rules are observed.

Right after anybody posts a big raw squat, the Internet goes crazy with people talking about depth. It happened to Sam Byrd when he got the 915lb squat at 219lbs and it happened to you when you got the 1041lb squat. Why do you think this is and how do you handle it when people throw dirt on your achievement?

The squat rules are the hardest to make identical in different federations and different countries. It is always nasty if someone gets the record posted with a high squat. But we have to believe what the referees decide - no one can judge squat depth from a video.

On the flip side, the IPF [International Powerlifting Federation] came



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under scrutiny recently for red lighting squats at World Championships that a lot of people thought should have passed. Do you think it's the lifter's responsibility to demonstrate that he hit depth beyond all doubt or should the judges give lifters the benefit of the doubt if the squat is border line?

The rules should be the same for every lifter; that is all I can say.

What do you think of the idea that

powerlifting should get rid of the squat from competition in the same way that Olympic lifting eliminated the strict press? Do you agree or disagree that it would clear up a lot of the controversy and make for shorter meets that are more spectator friendly?

Powerlifting is a three-lift competition and those who don't want to do it can do a push-pull meet.

How do you, as a lifter, feel about

meet promoters and federations addressing the issue of consistent judging?

Every meet should have a "referee meeting" before the competition, where they decide about the consistent judging.

You mentioned your wife Anna - she is a highly accomplished powerlifter in her own right, correct?

The lifting careers of Anna and myself have developed together, and we started breaking All-time World Records at the same time. Anna now has All-time World Records in three different classes, as well as a squat All-time World Record.

What are her best lifts?

Anna's records are a 250.5kg/552.4lb squat, 142.5kg/314lb bench press, 237.5kg/523.5lb deadlift, and 615kg/1355lb total.

Did you get her started in lifting or was she already doing it when you met?

We met at the WPC European Championships [a powerlifting meet] in Portugal in June of 2013. We got married that same year. So powerlifting brought us together.

How has it helped your career to have someone that close to you with similar goals? What role do you two play in each other's careers?

Training is our "family time". Neither of us would ever think about skipping our training and it's hard to stay home and rest if your partner starts packing up their gym bag. We choose our main competitions together and we cheer each other on towards our chosen goals.

Let's talk training. Your coach's name is Hany Pink, correct?

Hany Pink is not my coach and he never was. He used to be my training pal and he did some of my videos. We stopped training together when too many people started to think that he was my coach.

Okay. You train with a crazy amount of volume especially compared to some American lifters. Describe your normal training week - let's say if you're 12 weeks out.

12 weeks out, a normal week would have two squat sessions (one speed squat session and one hard squat session), one deadlift training day, one

day of bench pressing and two training days for accessories. In the same training session with squats, I do legs and in the deadlift session, I do lats and core. During my bench press session, I do arms. Accessories means training my upper body and core in the style of a bodybuilder.

I watched a lot of your training videos and I saw that you do jumps, jogging and other bodyweight exercises along with lifting weights. Is the bodyweight stuff your warm up or is it part of recovery?

I very seldom use bodyweight exercises, but when I do, I might do them either before my workout or after the hard part of my training.

How does training change as you get closer to the meet?

Closer to a meet, I do hard squat training only every other week, and a hard deadlift training session every 2-3 weeks. I might do bench every week, but I don't go hard every time. The amount of speed training goes up. I do 6 training sessions per week until very close to a meet - the last week, I might do only 2 sessions. I need more than 2 weeks to recover from my last hard

training session.

Your squat strength exploded last year leading up to GPA Worlds. One week, you squatted 859 for 3 and you looked like you were going to die! Yet a couple weeks later, you hit 947 for two, and a couple of weeks after that, you squatted 1014! How were you able to make such crazy progress?

Actually, even now, my small squats look heavy. They might even start looking lighter when I go up in weights. I like to try out my max 3-4 weeks out from a meet, but I aim at hitting the same numbers or more in the meet.

You have said that, in your opinion, powerlifters should train to peak on the platform not to look good on YouTube. As someone with a lot of crazy lifts on YouTube, how are you able to consistently perform in meets while also posting such high numbers in the gym?

The videos might give an image of consistently high numbers, but I really go down in the weights during my off season. I don't post off-season videos because no one is interested in them.

Your bench doesn't get talked

about enough. In addition to your crazy squatting strength, you've also put up 617lbs in competition. How are you able to put up those kinds of numbers, a crazy squat and then a very high bench in the same meet?

I think squat training actually helps bench pressing - I get more stability from my legs and my butt gets bigger, which helps as much as a better arch. I also train a lot of bench and especially, bench accessory exercises.

What are your top assistance exercises for each of the powerlifts?

For the squat, it is lunges, for bench it is push-downs and for the deadlift, it is back extensions or reverse hyper.

What special training equipment do you like to train with or do you prefer to stick to basic barbell and dumbbell training?

In addition to free weights, I use pulleys, the Smith machine and the Scott bench.

While we're talking about special equipment, why do you squat out of that blue lean-away squat rack thing instead of your gym's monolift? Is there something special about the angle?

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I'm not used to the monolift - we did not have one at my family's gym in Azerbaijan.

Legendary coaches Boris Sheiko and Sergey Smolov are well known for the success of their programming methods. How much of your own training is influenced by their work?

I learned my training methods in Russia and the Russian training methods are derived from the same ideology. I never used actual Sheiko programming, though.

In your opinion, are programs like Sheiko and Smolov good for year round programming or are they better for breaking through plateaus?

Sheiko and Smolov programs drive most athletes to overtraining. I guess that worked in the Soviet, where there was a large lifter population to comb out. Generally, I think lifters should know their own limits and know how to modify the program before trying Sheiko or Smolov programs. At the same time, I think these kinds of "ready-made" program templates are not meant for professional lifters - they should have totally customized and unique programs suitable for them.

Do you find that you have to de-load after meets or are you able to bounce back pretty quickly?

I need a radical change in my training program after every meet. The training might still be hard, but I do more reps and less weights.

What are the most important elements to hitting big numbers from meet to meet?

A proper off-season is vital before a hard on-season. If I don't have a proper off-season but do too many meets in a row, my results go down no matter how much I train.

If you could go back in time to the beginning of your training in powerlifting, what would you do differently, knowing what you know now?

If I could do something differently, I would've never tried lifting with a bench shirt. My first bad injury, which I did not mention above, came from bench pressing with a shirt. I was not very good with the shirt - I did most of my training raw. At my family's gym, I tried benching 300kg(661.4lbs) with the shirt. I only had my younger brother spotting and I dropped the bar on my

jaw. My jaw was broken, I lost many teeth, and I had to spend two weeks in a hospital with my teeth tied together with wire.

Yikes! Not that a broken jaw isn't bad enough, but have you had any other injuries in training?

I have had a pectoralis tear and more than one disc prolapses. I did not want to be operated on and those [injuries] healed by themselves with some time.

How did those injuries and setbacks shape you as an athlete?

When I got my first disc prolapse in 2011, I went to many doctors and specialists, seeking a cure. At the end, I think time treated my injury, not a specialist. When I got my pectoralis tear in 2013, I was very upset (I actu-

"I THINK LIFTERS SHOULD KNOW THEIR OWN LIMITS AND KNOW HOW TO MODIFY THE PROGRAM BEFORE TRYING SHEIKO OR SMOLOV PROGRAMS"

ally cried after the meet where I got it), but I knew that all I could do was wait and see. I got another disc prolapse in 2014. I took it quite easy that time - I already knew that it goes away in a couple of months. These injuries taught me patience when they made me take my time and listen to my body before I went back to real training. Before an athlete can learn to win, he has to learn to lose. Injuries are very similar. They are part of an athlete's career.

One thing that impressed me when I first met you was how excited you were about helping other lifters on the platform. I watched the video where you broke a brick of chalk on Konstantin Konstantinovs' head and you did the same thing at GPA Worlds when you were handling Marcell Allen. Is being amped up about other people's success something you were brought up in the sport to do or is it just in your nature?

I think it is both - learned and nature. All of my family is competitive athletes, and I have learned that we need to help each other.

You have your team and you're in the gym a long time every day. Do you also do any online coaching?

My wife and I have an online coaching company. Our web site is www.khudayarovpowerlifting.com. Right now there are six people on my online coaching team. I only take ten trainees at the same time. So, right now there is space for a few more.

At what point in their career do you think powerlifters should seek out a coach to handle their programming?

When a powerlifter is on a level where they are ready to give everything for this sport, they should either find a coach or gain enough knowledge to build their own, unique program. It does not help to copy someone else's program; everyone is different and needs a different program.

Do you coach Anna or would that make things too crazy around the house?

I would not say that I coach Anna, but she has slowly started following the same kind of training program that I do. I also helped her to change her deadlift technique from conventional to sumo.

As a coach, what are some common problems you see in the squat, bench and deadlift and how do you fix them?

Squat: The most common problem is knees turning in or too narrow of a squat. To get your back straight, you need to turn your knees out and the stance should be a little wider than your shoulders.

Bench: The most common problem is not turning your elbows inwards.

Deadlift: The most common problem is having a rounded lower back. The best way to avoid rounding the back actually starts from the right high: if your bottom is too low or too high when you start lifting, you end up starting with a round back. You can't make your back straight by thinking about making it straight.

How do you identify weak points?

It is normally easy and straight forward to see weak points in one's lifting.

At GPA Worlds, you were handling a lifter and after he missed a world

record on his second attempt, you had him go into the back and lie down. No pre-workout, no stimulation, just relaxing before coming back for his third. Is this your preferred method of dealing with missed attempts or just what you saw that he needed at that time?

I think that is what anyone needs after a missed lift. Pre-workout drinks help in a couple of minutes.

How do you relax when you're not in the gym? Are you able to turn it off when you're not training or are you the type of person who is pretty much on all the time?

I try to sleep a lot, though I know it is not the same thing as relaxing. It is just something that an athlete must do. When I do on season, the competition is in the back of my mind all of the time.

Let's say you didn't get the all-time record total. What would you want your legacy in powerlifting to be?

I don't know if I understood the question, but I hope to be the first one to squat 500kg/1102.2lbs raw.

"I TRY TO SLEEP A LOT, THOUGH I KNOW IT IS NOT THE SAME THING AS RELAXING. IT IS JUST SOMETHING THAT AN ATHLETE MUST DO. WHEN I DO ON SEASON, THE COMPETITION IS IN THE BACK OF MY MIND ALL OF THE TIME"

Okay, you're posting big numbers at meets, you get tons of views on your YouTube videos, your Facebook page has 11,000 plus likes and continues to grow. You just got on Instagram and already have 9,000 follow-

ers. How has that panned out as far as sponsorships? You are sponsored by Harris Stability Systems, correct? Are they your only sponsor?

I am sponsored by Harris Stability Systems, and I'm starting to work with a nutrition company (I can't give the name yet before I have the final contract). It always requires some activity and good timing to get good sponsoring.

Is there anybody you'd like to recognize or thank before we close?

I would like to thank my wife for supporting me in every aspect of my life. I would also like to thank all of my training partners on my team.

Where can people follow your training and learn more about you?

Everyone should search Zahir Khudayarov Powerlifter on Facebook or ZahirKhudayarov on Instagram. There is also information about my next meets and seminars and my current records on our web page: www.khudayarovpowerlifting.com.

Thank you again for a great interview. PM

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MIKE TUCHSCHERER

BY JEFF "ROBOT" IRION
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In the off chance that someone reading POWER doesn't know who you are, please tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm Mike Tuchscherer and I'm 29 years old. I compete in the 120 kg / 264 lbs weight class. My best unequipped lifts in competition are a 785 lbs squat, a 480 lbs bench, and an 850 lbs deadlift. I've won USAPL Nationals 8 times. In 2009, I became the first male from USA Powerlifting to win a gold medal for Powerlifting at the World Games. I am also the founder of Reactive Training Systems, a powerlifting training and education company that focuses on auto-regulation (which I'm sure we'll discuss more in a bit).

You forgot the part about holding the IPF world record unequipped deadlift in the 120 kg class! What do you do for a living?

I'm the owner of Reactive Training Systems. Most of my job is coaching other powerlifters through our various coaching programs, but my work also heavily involves myself in education. One of the ways that I do that is by teaching a class in RTS Classroom. RTS Classroom is an online webinar-based class where we teach all kinds of things from program design to psychology of training. The way that technology is today, we can even cover technique work. It's really a pretty cool thing.





Before you were a household name in the powerlifting world, I simply knew you as “Power275” on YouTube. You were a relatively unknown guy putting up huge lifts in a crappy commercial gym. Just how long have you been training for powerlifting?

Haha, yeah I remember those days. I’ve been training for powerlifting since 1997. Back then, I was a powerlifter at heart who played football in the off season. I started posting workouts online probably around 2007 when I was graduating from the Air Force Academy as a way to keep in touch with my buddies from the team.

When did you start lifting weights?

Did you have an athletic background prior to powerlifting?

I started lifting in ‘97 or maybe just before. Initially, it was to be a football player. But I found out that I was good at it and it really developed into a passion. I didn’t start at any crazy strength levels and I don’t remember what I did the first time I benched, but I do remember having to train a bit to bench 135 pounds. I remember that being a big deal -- one “big boy” plate on each side. I played some sports growing up, but I probably wasn’t that athletic. I played baseball for a while and football, too. Once I got into high school, I focused on football and lifting weights.

You were a top single-ply lifter

-what makes that all the more impressive is that you trained on your own. You even had some videos about how to put on a bench shirt by yourself! But then you pretty much quit equipped lifting cold turkey. When and why did you make the switch to raw lifting?

The whole reason I got into Powerlifting was to be a strong guy. I never liked the suits and shirts much, but I did it because I wanted to compete on an international level. After winning the World Games in 2009 (as close to the Olympics as you can get in Powerlifting), I wanted to shift gears a bit. Raw Unity was getting big at the time so I thought I’d take a season and do some raw meets. At the end of that season, the IPF opened an Unequipped World Championship. That was it for me -- a way to compete internationally and drug tested without equipment. I signed up immediately and haven’t really looked back.

Have you ever thought about making a return to single-ply lifting? Maybe throw on some equipment and jump into IPF Worlds?

I had a friend who really wanted me to try single-ply lifting again a few years ago. At the time, I was training alone again and the thought of spending an extra hour each session, struggling to get in and out of the gear and not knowing if a training cycle was effective because I’d dropped 3 pounds and now the suit fits differently - it was just not appealing to me. That said, I wouldn’t rule it out at all. If the situation was right, I’d do it. I’d really love to go back to the World Games -- it was by far the most epic sporting event I’ve ever been a part of. But for now, I really enjoy raw training and since there’s an unequipped IPF Worlds, I’ve got plenty of competition.

Let’s switch gears from geared lifting and talk about training. You created the Reactive Training System (RTS). Describe RTS for us in one sentence.

RTS is all about listening to the signals that your body gives you and adjusting your training appropriately. So that’s one sentence, but since I can’t leave that well enough alone, I’ll add another layer to it! Every good training program that has existed has employed

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some auto-regulation techniques. Many of them use the eye of a very experienced and knowledgeable coach. If you don't have that, or if you just want to refine your coach's eye and communicate more clearly, then the tools that we teach offer you that ability.

A big part of RTS is the RPE scale, which stands for Rate of Perceived Exertion. What is the RPE scale and how do you use it in your training?

RPE basically means "how hard did it feel," but not in a hyper emotional way. I'm not asking about your innermost feelings, I'm asking about performance. Another way to look at it is "reps in reserve." It's on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being maximum effort (no reps in reserve). But say you do a set of 5 and when you put the bar down you say, "Yeah, I could have done one more rep." We'd call that a 9 RPE. This allows us

to do some really cool stuff. First, we can communicate clearly. If you say, "Jeez, that felt heavy," it's hard to know how "heavy" is heavy. How "easy" is easy? On the other hand, if you say, "that set was @8 RPE" then I know exactly how hard it was for you.

But it does more than just communication. It also does auto-regulation. If you use this tool, the weight on the bar will automatically adjust up or down to your capabilities of the day. I'll send guys to the gym with instructions to squat up to 3 reps at a 9 RPE. If they're strong that day, it takes more weight to produce a 9 RPE. If they're off, the weight will automatically be less. The thing is that top coaches have adjusted the weights of their athletes since forever. But it takes decades of experience and a close relationship to be able to read athletes that way. The RPE system

gives this kind of ability to lifters who don't have a great coach in the gym with them. And it helps coaches get a better understanding of their athletes.

You're known for using a 'tendo unit in your training, which is obviously short for Nintendo unit. I played Nintendo a lot as a kid, but it never made me any stronger! How do you use the 'tendo unit? Do you use it together with the RPE scale, or is it an either/or type of thing?

Mostly by playing Track & Field. Man, running on that stupid pad will make you so fast! (Just kidding, it will probably make you worse at everything in life.)

The Tendo measures bar speed. A hard lift moves slower than an easy lift (up to a point). I've used this thing for years and I've eventually settled as far as using it in training. I use it as a



tie-breaker for RPE. So if I get done with a set and think, "Was that @8 or @9 RPE?" I'll use the tendo to help me decide. For consistent lifters it works pretty well. It's useful feedback. Video is another great feedback tool that you can use almost the same way. Plus, video is very reliable, relatively cheap, and can take into account things like technique errors (which the Tendo can't).

How many times per week do you train? And how are those training days laid out?

Right now, I'm training four days per week, though that will probably go back up to five days soon. What I train on which days varies, but in a full training block, I'll be squatting three times per week, deadlifting twice per week and benching four to five times per week. I have no qualms about go-

ing heavy either. During meet preps, I'll sometimes go up to a second attempt single. I'm often over 90%. Once you get used to the high intensity, it isn't that big of a deal. I think the reason people find lifting 90%+ weights to be stressful is because they don't do it very often, so they aren't used to it. It becomes a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy.

How are you able to train the competition lifts as often as you do? Was it something you had to work up to? Do you do soft tissue, mobility, or recovery work?

Training frequently is something I evolved into and I recommend that others do the same. I used to train with more conventional frequencies (upper/lower splits and so on). I developed into the higher frequencies and gained a lot of strength and surprisingly size too from doing it. It's not something

that you want to jump into cold turkey though. It's not that it won't work or that you'll get hurt -- most people can make the adaptation if they stick to it long enough. I just think phasing into higher frequencies over a long time is better for a lifter's career. I do some soft tissue work, but probably not as much as I should. That's a tricky thing, though, as you're robbing Peter to pay Paul. You can neglect things like soft tissue work for a while, but eventually you have to pay back that debt.

Assistance work. Do you do it?

Haha! Depends on what you call assistance work! I do train movements other than the contest lifts but it's important to remember that the further you get away from the contest lifts, the more you'll lose in the transfer (i.e. wasted effort). So when I do "assistance work", it's things like Pause

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Squats, Deadlift + chain, or Pin Presses from chest level. They are very close to the contest lift with maybe one or two variables changed to target a weak ROM [Range of Motion] or specific skill.

That leads right into my next question. It seems to me that there are three ways to modify the competition lifts: #1 change the resistance (e.g. add bands or chains), #2 change the range of motion (e.g. deficit deadlifts or board presses), and #3 change the tempo (e.g. add a pause at some part of the lift). What are your thoughts on each of these methods?

Yeah, those three methods are probably the most reliable and direct ways to change the contest movement. Bondarchuk identifies five criteria to Dynamic Correspondence, which is basically what we're talking about here. (1) So changing the resistance as in bands and chains is like changing the accentuated region of force produc-

tion. (2) Changing ROM, like deficit DL or board work, fits in the category of changing Amplitude and Direction of Movement. Something else that fits here is Incline bench or Military press. (3) Then changing the tempo fits in the category of Dynamics of Effort. This is about how you try to move the bar. So if you add a long pause, that changes how you try to move the bar.

There are two remaining categories. One is Rate and Time to Maximal Force Production, which is how quickly you get to Fmax [maximum force]. Think of a deadlift where you slowly squeeze the bar and accelerate it once you get it moving. Compared to a deadlift where you just rip it off of the floor as fast as possible, the former has a longer time to Fmax. It's similar to Dynamics of Effort, but not the same. Then lastly there is The Regime of Muscular Work. The easiest way to think of this is with repetitions - if you're a power-

lifter, you compete doing singles. So, if you're training for 5's, then the Regime of Muscular Work is different. All that means is that the lift is less specific and it will require more transference. That's why a gain in your 5RM is more likely to translate to increased contest results than a gain in your 1ORM.

It's worth mentioning that many exercises fit more than one of these categories. Take bands for example - yes, they change the accentuated region of force production. They also affect rate and time to Fmax. Lots of movements can affect more than one variable.

How do you go about building the competition lifts and bringing up weak points?

When it comes to weak points, we don't have to be fancy. Often times, simple works best. So rather than trying to identify a weak muscle, we focus on a weak range of motion. Weak muscles can be misleading. It's often

very hard to diagnose - it's rarely just one muscle in isolation, and even if you could identify the exact weak muscle, the best fix would look exactly the same as it would if you had been looking at weak ROM anyway. So just cut out the middle man and target the weak ROM. So for example, if you identify that your weak ROM is the bottom of the squat and you train it with pause squats - it doesn't matter if the weak muscle is glutes, quads, or something else. It might not even be muscular at all but just a lack of skill in maintaining tightness in the bottom. The exact reason doesn't matter because if you're weak in the bottom, the pause squat will fix it. It's pretty specific, so it will develop all of those skills the exact way that they're needed to squat. I think that's an important thing people tend to forget. The competition lifts won't develop you in perfect balance, but they get pretty damn close. Think about it -- what exercise trains your hamstrings in EXACTLY the way they need to be trained to deadlift, even considering your individual nuances in stance

width, toe angle, and all the rest? The deadlift! Training the deadlift will be the most specific training you can do.

To summarize, the competition lifts are specific to the competition lifts. But some argue that such specificity in training can be a downfall and that it will lead to imbalances and injuries. What do you have to say about that? For the purpose of powerlifting, is there a need to train a wide variety of movements in order to develop everything in balance and avoid injuries due to training the exact same movement patterns over and over again?

I think it's worthwhile to use a wide variety of movements for beginner and intermediate lifters. It doesn't take a tremendous volume of specific work for these lifters to make progress, so using a wide variety does keep things in balance and develops work capacity. As you develop as a lifter, it takes more and more stress to make further gains. This is the principle of overload. You have to lift heavier weights to bench 300 than you do to bench

200. And it's got to be more than just lifting heavier -- you'll have to gradually do more volume, too. That's just the nature of it. We're not talking about more volume all of the time - deload weeks are still beneficial. But over the years, it will take gradually more and more work to produce continued results. At some point, usually around intermediate stages, it takes more work than the lifter has time or energy to do, so we begin the process of specialization. We start dropping the stuff that doesn't contribute to the total. At first it might be dropping some running or energy system training. Later, you start dropping movements that tax the prime movers in non-specific ways (things like GHRs [Glute Ham Raises] or triceps extensions). All of this is to make room for more specific work that you need to continue to improve. If you don't need to drop it, then don't. But when progress stalls and things need to change, that's the direction to change them in.

Have you ever been injured? What measures do you take to stay injury-free?

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Yes, but fortunately not severely. I've had lots of strains over the years (calves, hamstrings, back, pec, etc). I've sprained my SI [Sacroiliac] joint quite a few times. A few others too. I can't say conclusively what keeps me injury-free, but of all the times that I've been injured, the common thread is not auto-regulating my training. That may sound ironic because I'm supposed to be all about auto-regulation. Well, I screw it up sometimes too. For instance, the last time I was at Super Training Gym, I sprained my SI joint deadlifting heavy. I should have known better as I was driving in a car for 13 hours the day before. I strained my hamstring about 2-3 weeks out from the World Championship in 2012. I was having a crappy workout and on any other day, I would have

bagged it and lived to fight another day. But that day I didn't because, damn, I'm 2 weeks out from the first ever IPF Raw Worlds! Of course I'm training! Well, that wasn't smart and it cost me. Then most recently I was pushing for a big meet and really did too much volume for a long time. I didn't back off because I was pushing for this meet. I didn't suffer an acute injury, but I'm still dealing with irritated tendons and stuff -- even now months later.

I have been able to stay fairly injury free and in large part I think that's because I DO have systems in place to keep me from doing dumb stuff. It's when I don't listen to those systems that I get in trouble.

Do you ever deload? If so, is this auto-regulated in some way? What

do your deloads entail?

Yes. This is new-ish for me too. Deloading was always justified to me as a way to let your body recover after three weeks of pushing hard. That never made sense to me as it seemed like the problem was poor stress management rather than a need to deload. But there are other reasons for deloading, too. The big thing is that it naturally helps to vary your training volume. This helps a couple of ways. Volume variance helps to improve your work capacity over time. As we discussed earlier, you'll have to do more volume to continue making progress, but that's not going to work if you can't recover from the volume. By varying your training volumes and building work capacity over time, you improve your ability to

recover. The other thing that deloading can do is to restore a bit of sensitivity to training volume. So you get a bit of a double benefit there. It improves your work capacity so you can handle more volume in the future. But it also allows you to get all of the gains that you can from the volume you're doing now.

We do auto-regulate them in some ways, mostly based off watching the lifter's progress. When the progress slows from what it normally would be, we *MAY* try a deload or a transition phase (basically a longer deload) to see if we can maintain strength while restoring some volume sensitivity.

Deloads usually don't feel like deloads. At least that's what my lifters tell me. We still go pretty heavy. We just do minimal volume and probably drop a workout, too. So the work you do is still work, but you just don't do much of it. Lower level lifters tend to need longer deloads, but they need them less frequently. Advanced lifters need more frequent deloads, but they are much shorter -- at very high levels, maybe only a few days.

Well, I feel like we've covered training pretty thoroughly! Let's briefly cover nutrition. You're a solid 264 lbs. What does your diet look like? Are you as meticulous with your diet as you are with training? Do you have any top secret tricks you use when it comes to nutrition?

My nutrition is very simple. I think that in terms of priorities, training is much more important for a powerlifter than nutrition. So when it comes to nutrition, I try to keep it simple enough to follow in real life. First, I manage my calories to manage my weight. If I need to gain weight, I eat more calories. If I need to lose weight, I eat less calories. My second priority is to get enough protein. The general rule I follow is 1 g/lb up to about 220 grams per day. If I get to 220 g per day, I'm doing quite well. I cap it at 220 g per day because I find it really difficult to get more and myself and my lifters tend to not feel so great if we go beyond that 220 g mark. That seems to be plenty for our purposes anyway. I'm sure there are other priorities after that, but for most of us, that's

about all we have attention for.

And now, the question everyone wants to know the answer to: how do you manage to pass IPF drug tests?

Haha. Seriously though, the best way to pass an IPF drug test is to actually follow all of the rules on banned substances. I don't mess around with anabolics or any of that stuff because, frankly, it scares me. Now if someone else wants to take anabolics, that's up to them. I'm just glad that there are places where everyone agrees to the rules of competing without it. Of course, some will cheat, and some of them get caught too. But I'm glad there is a place to compete where the standard is to abstain from those substances.

Where can people find out more about you?

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ATTEMPT

A high-angle, close-up photograph of a male powerlifter in the middle of a bench press. He is lying on a black padded bench, wearing a grey t-shirt with 'TAP' visible on the back. His face is contorted with effort, and his eyes are closed. He is wearing a black wristband with 'ANGST' written on it. His hands are gripping a barbell with a red weight plate. The machine is red and has a black safety bar. The floor is dark and has a diamond plate pattern.

PLANNING FOR THE WIN

BY HANI JAZAYRLI

Success in powerlifting is not always simple or easy. There are so many factors at play in regards to training, diet, and recovery – these only cover the biggest and most evident three [of those factors]. We train our butts off all year so that we can step onto the platform, some of us no more than once, always with the intent of giving it our absolute best. I think that there isn't enough focus on eliminating controllable factors that make us fail on these key competition days. Keeping this in mind, it's

SELECTION





important that you read the following words carefully. If your goal is to win your class, your meet, or to set a personal best total, you should not treat a powerlifting competition as a venue for testing your strength. If your only goal is to set personal bests on single lifts, then this article probably isn't for you. This isn't to say that you cannot set a personal best at a meet, but taking the guesswork out of your attempt selection is an easy way to prevent missed lifts and maximize your end result. At the meet, your placing is solely determined by the sum of all three of your lifts, and not by that squat number that you've been so focused on for over a year. After reading this article, you may think this style of plan is overly conservative - I

"IF YOUR GOAL IS TO WIN YOUR CLASS, YOUR MEET, OR TO SET A PERSONAL BEST TOTAL, YOU SHOULD NOT TREAT A POWERLIFTING COMPETITION AS A VENUE FOR TESTING YOUR STRENGTH"

disagree. There is plenty of evidence that proves otherwise. An esteemed coach and good friend of mine, Matt

Gary, has done significant analysis on what the best competitors in the world are doing to take home their medals. I'll give you a clue - haphazard attempt selection isn't part of it. Take a minute, get over yourself, and get onto the path to building a better total. The best way to do this is to plan attempts strategically and realistically.

I would argue that the most important puzzle piece here is the projected third attempt. Think of it as the keystone for an arch. If it isn't placed properly or if it is too big, everything falls out of place. It is pivotal to your success that all of your attempts are planned backwards from a realistic number. Picking this number appropriately will set you up for success on your opener

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and your second attempts. From there, it will help you hit the number that you've established as your goal for the day. That being said, if you've competed or recently tested [your max], the best third attempt you can plan from is likely going to be your best lift from the last meet or your test result. This is assuming that things were all to [your] expectations. With a calculator, you can estimate from a low rep max as well. Note that in most cases, a rep max beyond five is going to start to introduce a fair amount of inaccuracy in the estimated single rep max. There is inherently more inaccuracy here but so long as you're within this range, I don't think you'll end up with anything out of the realm of possibility. Once you've got this number figured out, and no sooner,

"IF YOU OPEN WITH TOO HEAVY OF A WEIGHT AND MISS FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN A MINOR TECHNICAL INFRACTION, YOUR ODDS OF MAKING IT ON YOUR SECOND OR THIRD ATTEMPT GO DOWN TREMENDOUSLY"

you can begin to plan for your opener and your second attempts.

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS WITH A RELIABLE OPENER.

The opener should not be a difficult lift. If anything, it should be closer to the "too easy" side of the spectrum. There is an old saying that the opener should be treated as the last warm-up - while I disagree, overall, I like the idea that it shouldn't be hard weight to move. From a competitive standpoint, this lift will put you on the board and ensure that you are able to post a total in the competition. If you're considering opening with something close to your max or a new personal best, then now, before the meet, is a great time to

abandon that terrible idea. If you open with too heavy of a weight and miss for anything other than a minor technical infraction, your odds of making it on your second or third attempt go down tremendously. If you miss your opener, it is best practice in all but very rare cases, to repeat it. Nobody wants to bomb out from a meet. Don't be that person. Open with a smart number! Generally speaking, something in the 90% range of your projected third attempt should be ideal. Depending on your strength level, you may want to open slightly higher than this on the bench press to avoid taking massive jumps, but that is highly individual and will depend on how you normally train. Listen to your body carefully as you execute this lift. How it feels should play a big role in your mentality going into the second attempt.

BUILD YOUR TOTAL WITH YOUR SECOND ATTEMPT.

The second attempt serves two purposes. The first is the overall goal of

“THE KEY IS TO LISTEN TO YOUR BODY AND FOCUS ON KEEPING YOUR ORIGINAL GOAL AS YOUR FOCUS. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE WRITTEN INTO ANY TRAINING PROGRAM THAT YOU WILL PERFORM AT 100% ON MEET DAY – NONE THAT I KNOW OF, ANYWAY”

building your total. The second is that it gives you an opportunity to handle weights that are approaching your maxes –this puts you within a few per-

centile of your best projected total with completed lifts. This will also allow you to feel how well you are handling heavy weights on this particular meet day. An ideal number here is going to be in the 95% or 96% of [your] projected third attempt range. This should be mildly challenging but definitely not the grind of a lifetime. From here, you should use bodily feedback and some keen decision making skills to choose the wisest possible number for your third attempt. If you really had to fight to make this lift then you should certainly reconsider the attempt you originally planned for your third.

MAXIMIZE YOUR TOTAL WITH YOUR THIRD ATTEMPT BY LISTENING TO YOUR BODY AND NOT YOUR EMOTIONS.

It's very easy to set yourself up for an emotional and competitive failure by not having picked a number here that is something you can really achieve. If you projected your third attempt realistically then you should be right in line to nail

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it. However, be prepared to accept the fact that on meet day, things may not go to plan and you may not have all that you thought. This may mean taking less weight than what you projected in the first place. The key is to listen to your body and focus on keeping your original goal as your focus. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee written into any training program that you will perform at 100% on meet day – none that

I know of, anyway. This is due to the inherent balance of recovery, skill, and strength that is required for optimum performance – this is really the most difficult aspect of powerlifting to master. It is also one of the best reasons to get a coach with some competitive experience, but that is a topic for an entirely different discussion.

So, with that projected third attempt in mind, you're wondering what you

should actually pick for your third, right? Your best bet is going to be taking only the best lift you have in you on that particular day. Obviously, for newer lifters, this is going to be harder to judge but probably easier to call, as they tend to perform precisely as expected. Most importantly here, though, is going to be a strong understanding of your body and complete honesty with yourself. Generally



“SO, WITH THAT PROJECTED THIRD ATTEMPT IN MIND, YOU’RE WONDERING WHAT YOU SHOULD ACTUALLY PICK FOR YOUR THIRD, RIGHT? YOUR BEST BET IS GOING TO BE TAKING ONLY THE BEST LIFT YOU HAVE IN YOU ON THAT PARTICULAR DAY”

SUMMING IT ALL UP

Start the process of picking attempts by determining a reasonable and smart third attempt. Ideally, this will not be far above your current best lift, but if your training indicates otherwise, go with what you feel confident about. Open conservatively. Go with something in the range of 90% for the squat and deadlift, and slightly higher for the bench press. Treat your second attempts as stepping stones to the third attempts. Using around 96% of your projected third will build your total, put you within very close range of your best, and give you an understanding of how strong you’re feeling that day. Listen to your body on your third attempt and stick with the plan. Something slightly above or below your projected third attempt should be perfect, assuming you did your homework when picking that number. Do not let emotions get the best of you. If the strength you anticipated just isn’t there that day, you can still take a conservative number for your third and continue building your total. If you have more than you planned for in the tank, you can always go for it in the gym or at your next meet.

There you have it. This is a simple set of guidelines that you can take to your next meet and use to your advantage. I hope that it helps you put up the best total that you have to date! **PM**

speaking, this will range somewhere between 98% and 100% of this projected third attempt that you determined before the meet. It will possibly be slightly higher than 100% if you used a conservative projected third [attempt] or results from your last meet. Erring on the side of caution will likely pay off in a made lift and, in a close competition where every pound is important, this can make all

the difference. Also, depending on the organization in which you compete, there are different rules about changing your third attempt deadlift when jockeying for position. Use these to your advantage if you understand them or if you decide you’ve chosen too heavy a weight for your third. If you don’t know the rules, just ask! There are referees at these meets for more than just giving red lights.



BRANDON SMITLEY

ONE OF THE STRONGEST LIGHTWEIGHTS EVER!

BY KEN WHETHAM

You can never judge a book by its cover. With a small and powerful stature, Brandon Smitley is perhaps the best pound for pound powerlifter currently competing in the raw division. He has totaled over ten times his bodyweight and holds the All Time World Record in the squat with 565 lbs., which is over 4 times his bodyweight. Competing in the 132 lbs. division, this small package of Nitro Glycerin is just getting started in the powerlifting game. We can certainly expect some big numbers and accomplishments from Brandon in the near future.

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

I currently live in Terre Haute, Indiana and I'm 27 years old. Currently, I work in town as a personal trainer at Indiana State University and I also own a small business, Smitley Performance Systems, where I design training and nutritional programs (for powerlifting, general fitness, and those looking to take their training to the next level) and I also offer coaching services, if desired.

What is your educational background?

I have earned my Bachelor's degree from Purdue University in Health and Fitness, and my Master's Degree from Indiana State University in Physical Education and Coaching, with an emphasis in strength and conditioning. I also hold my CSCS [Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist], USAW [USA Weightlifting], and CPT [Certified Personal Trainer] certifications.



What are your current rankings and records?

I am currently ranked #1 raw (with wraps) in the world at 132 pounds. Currently, my squat is also #1, bench press #4, and deadlift #8.

My personal records are:

Squat – 565 (the all-time world record)
Bench Press – 325
Deadlift – 510
Total – 1360

How long have you been powerlifting?

I have been competitively powerlifting for 3 years.

What got you interested in the sport?

I initially got interested in the sport after a few years of competing in bodybuilding and seeing where my numbers lined up. I wanted to compete for almost two years, but I never found a meet that was close enough to me to "jump in". Eventually, when one came to my local area, I went for it and have never looked back.

Have you always competed raw and have you ever considered lifting

in gear?

I have actually competed in one multi-ply bench-only meet at 148. I bench pressed 450 at 143 pounds with less than 10 sessions in my Metal Jack shirt. Other than that, the rest of my meets have been raw. I do plan to eventually compete in multi-ply powerlifting. I will never give up my raw lifting or competing, but I do want to be a well-rounded powerlifter.

What is your most memorable competi-

tion and why?

By far, it's the 2015 XPC [Xtreme Powerlifting Coalition] Finals. At this meet, I hit my all-time world record squat, a bench press PR [Personal Record], a deadlift PR, a total PR, and I also won the overall lightweight division. It was a perfect alignment, so to speak. I never thought I'd hold an all-time world record. I knew I was knocking on the doors, but it's still surreal to this day.

However, my most memorable powerlifting moment is the day that I joined Team Elitefts. I can never thank Dave and Traci Tate enough.

Canadian bacon, beer and maple syrup are some of the best kept training secrets that Canadian lifters don't want anyone to find out about. What are some of your powerlifting secrets?

Oooh, this is a good one. My meet "secret" is puppy chow. A whole gallon. I never get through it, but when we're talking about caloric density, I'm not sure there is a food with more of it than puppy chow.

Have you ever suffered any significant injuries during your powerlift-



ing career?

Luckily, I have not. I did tear my MCL [Medial Collateral Ligament] during my wrestling tenure though.

Where do you train and do you have a coach or training partners?

I train out of my garage that is fully equipped with Elitefts equipment. I do not have a coach, as I write my own programs. I've had a few [coaches] and have learned tremendously in that time, but I've found a very good system and a solid understanding of my body to know how to train instinctively. I treat myself like my own client. However, I do consult with Dave Tate, Matt Smith, Vincent Dizenzo, and JL Holdsworth from time to time. They've been invaluable in regards to giving me ideas and they've been honest about certain aspects of my training. I do have two training partners that I have picked up, and I'm very thankful for what they do to help make me a better lifter.

Do you have a particular training protocol that you follow like Westside, Cube or 5/3/1?

Most people would say that I run Westside. But really, it's a true concurrent model. I still have two max effort

days and two dynamic effort days. I also have two "mini sessions" per week, which are designed to increase blood flow and just promote recovery. They are very "bodybuilding-like" and never over 30% [effort]. For most people, you'd rarely even break a sweat.

I do things pretty differently though compared to the typical "Westside" set up. Here is how each day breaks down in detail:

Max Effort Lower

- Always start with a squat variation without a box. This is where things can get creative. Specialty bars, chains, bands, etc. I always work up to a heavy set of 3. I don't say a 3-rep max because I like to leave a rep in the tank. After that, I do 2-3 back down sets between 80-95% of the triple that was hit.

- Then, I usually hit a supplemental movement that will build the main movement for the day. This is usually another squatting movement. Here we work up to a heavy set of 8-10, depending on the day.

- Accessory work then follows for the glutes, hamstrings, low back, and abs. I hit my accessory [work] with moderate

volume on this day. Sets and reps vary from 2-6 sets with 10-40 reps. Yes, 40.

Max Effort Upper

- For this day, it's usually a full range of motion press (but not always). Again, I get creative with my exercise selection. The work sets are the same as the max effort lower (heavy triple with back downs).

- The supplemental movement is another pressing movement, again, usually in the 6-10 range for a top set. This is where more partial movements tend to fall (but again, not always).

- Accessory work tends to be more triceps heavy. Usually 2-4 exercises with 2-4 sets each. There will also be rear delts work and abs. The volume is higher for the triceps work (as I'll explain further in a minute).

Dynamic Effort Lower

- I perform this pretty similarly to Westside. Sometimes I'll use a box and other times I won't. Right now, I am using a box to bring up my hamstrings more. Squats are usually 8-12 sets of 2 reps between 40-50% against bands or chains. Speed deadlifts are done with



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4-8 singles with 50-60% with bands or chains.

- Every other week (sometimes every third week), I will deadlift maximally. So, after my speed work, I will pick a variation that I need to address and work up to a heavy triple (like on max effort day). However, there will be no back down sets performed.

- For the supplemental movement, this will vary, but things that work well here are good mornings, front squats, SSB [Safety Squat Bar] squats, RDL's [Romanian Deadlifts], etc. It should be a compound movement that you know you suck at and really need to bring up. This should be hit hard for a minimum of 6 weeks. I usually rotate on trying to hit certain rep PR's from week to week (undulation).

- Then, accessory work is done. Here, I always have a single leg variation for hip health. Then, I usually do hamstrings, glutes, low back and abs. Volume on this day is high, especially when I don't pull maximally.

Dynamic Effort Upper

- Again, this is pretty typical of West-side - usually about 40-50% on speed benching vs. chains/bands for 8-12

triples.

- This is followed by a supplemental movement. Similar to the dynamic effort lower days, this needs to be a movement that you suck at and needs to be worked on. Close grip bench, overhead press, floor press, etc. all work well. Again, it should be ran hard, undulated, for 6 weeks or so.

- Usually a DB bench press variation of some sort is next. 2-4 sets of 10-15 reps.

- Then, for accessory, I hit about 3-5 back exercises for 3-4 sets of 10-20 reps. This is where volume is high on the back and rear delts. This is why triceps volume is high on max effort upper days. Again, I do more abs work at the end.

Do you utilize any accommodating resistance like bands or chains in your training?

Yes, especially on dynamic effort days. They do get used on max effort days from time to time.

Do you follow any specific nutrition plan to keep strong for powerlifting?

I used to fall into the carb backload-ing camp. However, now I just eat

more like a bodybuilder. My carbs are cycled based upon the training day (lower days are high carb, upper days are moderate carb, non-training days are low carb). The majority of my carbs fall around the workout window. When carbs are higher, I drop fat to pretty low levels, and vice versa. I'm a pretty "clean" eater for the most part. But I do have my ice cream and cereal like normal people.

How do you prepare mentally for an attempt?

I tell myself, "Strong ____". So, for a squat I tell myself "Strong back, strong legs", for example. I believe in positive reinforcement. I also read a psychology or mental training book before every meet. I believe that this is the most overlooked part of powerlifting. Some Nose Tork helps every now and then, as well [laughter].

What are your best competition numbers?

Squat - 565 (all-time WR)
Bench Press - 325
Deadlift - 510
Total - 1360

Best gym numbers?

Oh man, this is tough. Umm...
Squat - 540

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Bench Press – 330

Deadlift – 525

What are some of the changes that you've made to your lifting over the years?

I've really focused more on volume. I still train heavy, but I don't go balls out from week to week. While I do work up to heavy triples on max effort day, 9 out of 10 days, I always have something left. There is just no reason to kill myself when a meet isn't in sight. I've also used a lot of my bodybuilding experience to really fill out my weight class and stay healthy. If anything has changed though, it's the minor adjustments to the Westside programming that I've made for myself. That's the key thing that is so important about that system. It has to be adapted for the individual. It's also why I like it more than any other system.

Who are some of the lifters you grew up admiring when you first started lifting?

My number one go-to guy is Brian Schwab. The dude is a walking legend in powerlifting, and in my opinion, he is the most underrated powerlifter. But of course, people like Ed Coan and Steve Goggins are also on that list (even though they were done when I started getting interested...so, thanks YouTube). Al Caslow is another stud I really admired watching.

Do you have any advice for someone entering the powerlifting game?

Learn the proper technique, find a mentor, and take your time.

First, take the time to learn the lifts properly from the get-go. Once you do this, everything else will come much easier. You don't want to be years deep into the game and have to make major overhauls to your technique. You'll get stronger so much faster and you'll be safer and healthier for it.

Find someone that can mentor you and help you along the way. Whether that is hiring a coach, nagging that old guy in your gym, or just finding someone that is stupid strong and has been lifting for 15 plus years. Just find someone that can tell you when to stop doing stupid sh*t, show you how to do stuff right, and answer questions when you have them.

And lastly, take your time. There is no reason to be in any rush to become

“TAKE THE TIME TO LEARN THE LIFTS PROPERLY FROM THE GET-GO. ONCE YOU DO THIS, EVERYTHING ELSE WILL COME MUCH EASIER. YOU DON'T WANT TO BE YEARS DEEP INTO THE GAME AND HAVE TO MAKE MAJOR OVERHAULS TO YOUR TECHNIQUE. YOU'LL GET STRONGER SO MUCH FASTER AND YOU'LL BE SAFER AND HEALTHIER FOR IT”

strong. It will come with time. The majority of the people that are super strong have 10 plus years training under them. Just try to become a little bit better than yesterday for years straight. It'll take you a long way.

Do you still get excited and amped up when you go to compete at a meet?

Absolutely. Even if I don't PR, it's always a fun time. The day that competing doesn't become exciting and fun, I know it'll be time for me to step away. As of right now, I plan for that to be quite a ways from now.

What is your favorite lift and why?

The squat, hands down. There is just something about putting heavy weight on your back and having to stand back up with it - that is a thrill, both mentally and physically. It's also a sign that the longest part of the meet is almost over [laughter].

What assistance exercises helped each of your lifts the most?

Squat – SSB squats and front squats
Bench Press – Close Grip Bench Press, Close Grip 2 Board, Arnold Presses
Deadlift – Good Morning variations, pulling from 2-3" mats/blocks, GHR [Glute Ham Raises]

What do you do in your spare time when you're not competing or training?

I spend a lot of time reading, writing and contributing to Elitifts. But when I'm not doing that, I'm usually reading or writing - just trying to learn more about training, the body, or business.

But when I want to get away from all of that, I really enjoy keeping up with my sports teams. Purdue basketball and

football, Philadelphia Eagles, Phillies, and 76ers.

Now that you're at your current level of strength, do you get impatient trying to make specific gains?

Not at all. Quite frankly, the quest of trying to figure out how to get those gains on each lift is what I love about powerlifting. There is no right or wrong way to train or make progress. There are so many variables at play, and trying to figure out how to manipulate them in order to make progress is why I love coaching and programming for others. No one is ever the same, so it's just like a giant puzzle with no real end.

What drives you?

Numbers are certainly enticing and I'd be lying if I said that I don't go after certain numbers, but they are not at the forefront. If they happen, they happen. I'm driven by just pure will to see what my body can do. I've always been picked on for being short and I've always been told that I can't play sports because of my stature. Powerlifting has given me an outlet to show that my body is capable of so much more than what people told me it could do. It's for this reason that I've become fascinated with what the body can do and I've gone on to study that field and make the most of it physically, as well.

If you had the choice of being any superhero, who would it be?

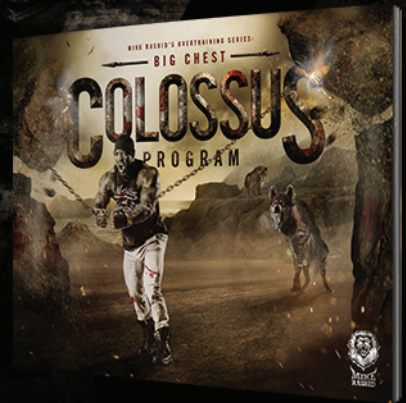
Is Mighty Mouse a superhero?!
Hahaha.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank my parents and sister for their relentless support. They've really come to appreciate my passion for powerlifting and I'm truly thankful for that. I would also like to thank Dave and Traci Tate from Elitifts. They have done so much to help me improve me as a person and a lifter over the past few years. I've learned so much about things other than powerlifting from them, as well. A huge thank you to Mark Glazier from Nutra-Bio for giving me a shot years ago to represent a brand of supplements that is untouched in terms of quality and integrity. And my final thank you is to my academic advisors, mentors, training partners, and close friends. They've really helped mold me into the person that I am today. **PM**

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The plan of attack for the day was bench followed by some chest accessory work. We typically take as much time as needed in between our main movements (2-5 minutes) and speed up breaks (1-3 minutes) for accessory work. The training begins after warming up with just the bar for a few sets in order to loosen up.

BENCH PRESS:

88% x 3 x 5 sets

CLOSE-GRIP BENCH PRESS:

75% x 5 x 3 sets

Next, we moved onto some dumbbell and cable work to get jacked:

INCLINE DB [DUMBBELL] PRESS:

5 sets x 8 reps

FLAT DB PRESS: 2 sets x 20 reps

CABLE FLYES: 3 sets x 15 reps

Remember, the key is to always be perfecting your craft. Working on form and speed is a significant factor for progression. Make sure you check back next issue as we continue to share the routines of Super Training Gym - "The Strongest Gym in the West"!



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Current Top 50 Rankings: Men, 242 lbs...

For these rankings, we're taking the top lifts out of raw, raw with wraps, single-ply, and multi-ply.

SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Bench
1	Brian Carroll	RPS	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	1100
2	Jimmie Pacifico	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	1025
3	Chuck Vogelpohl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	1020
4	Matt Minuth	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	1000
5	Patrick Warren	APF	2015-07-18	Multi-Ply	992
6	Abraham Harrod	APF	2014-12-20	Single-Ply	940
7	Chris Della Fave	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	925
8	Kevin Frey	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	903
8	Jeffrey Miller	UPA	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	903
10	Bob Merkh	RPS	2015-05-16	Multi-Ply	900
11	Patrick Mihalik	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	860
12	Anthony Dittilo	RPS	2015-01-25	Multi-Ply	850
12	Mike Taylor	IPA	2015-03-14	Multi-Ply	850
14	James Pettit	APF	2015-03-22	Multi-Ply	848
15	Chuck Brightbill	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	845
16	Nerijus Cekas	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	837
17	Tee Cummins	SPF	2015-02-21	Raw with Wraps	830
18	Timothy Baker	UPA	2014-12-13	Multi-Ply	821
19	Nick Puorro	RPS	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	820
20	Kevin Oak	UPA	2015-04-18	Raw with Wraps	815
20	Brandon Hill	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	815
22	Casey Williams	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	810
23	John Rivas	USPA	2015-05-30	Raw with Wraps	805
23	Bob Merkh	RPS	2015-08-15	Raw with Wraps	805
25	Dayan Neely	UPA	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	804
25	Aleksey Kashirin	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	804
25	Daniel Dalenberg	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	804
25	Tony Carlino	GPA	2015-10-10	Raw with Wraps	804
25	Justin Jackson	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw with Wraps	804
30	John Lenz	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	793
31	Ben Goyette	APF	2015-03-22	Multi-Ply	788
32	Keith Price	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	780
33	Nick Graves	RPS	2015-05-02	Multi-Ply	775
34	Jason Colley	APF	2014-12-14	Raw with Wraps	771
35	Mike Cantu	UPA	2014-12-13	Raw with Wraps	766
35	Tee Popoola	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	766
37	Chris Bartl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	765
38	Clint Smith	RPS	2015-10-03	Raw with Wraps	760
38	Justin Perez	UPA	2015-01-31	Raw with Wraps	760
38	Quintin Meyer	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	760
38	Allen Antonelli	IPA	2015-03-14	Multi-Ply	760
42	Sean Green	IPA	2015-01-31	Raw with Wraps	755
42	Anthony Oliveria	IPA	2015-03-14	Multi-Ply	755
42	Chris Hughes	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	755
45	Mindis Jumas	SPF	2015-02-28	Raw with Wraps	750
45	Mike Matlock	RPS	2015-09-03	Single-Ply	750
45	Mindis Jurenas	SPF	2015-02-28	Raw with Wraps	750
48	Edward Zende	XPC	2015-03-06	Raw with Wraps	745
49	Luigi Fagiani	USPA	2015-05-09	Raw with Wraps	744
49	Mitchell Fountain	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	744

BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Bench
1	Matt Minuth	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	850
2	Jim Phraner	RPS	2015-08-28	Multi-Ply	800
3	James Phraner	RPS	2015-08-29	Single-Ply	780
3	Brian Carroll	RPS	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	780
5	Rick Marrama	WABDL	2015-02-07	Single-Ply	777
6	Scott Mecham	APF	2014-12-13	Single-Ply	771
7	Jimmie Pacifico	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	735
8	Chris Della Fave	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	720
9	Joe Breda	RPS	2015-08-28	Multi-Ply	705
9	Patrick Warren	APF	2015-07-18	Multi-Ply	705
11	Eric DeCaires	RPS	2015-08-28	Multi-Ply	680
12	Matt Whittingham	USPA	2015-06-13	Single-Ply	672
13	Jeff Johnston	APF	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	666
14	Mike Smothers	USPA	2015-05-02	Single-Ply	661
15	Abraham Harrod	APF	2014-12-20	Single-Ply	660
16	Scott Schaeffer	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	650
16	Mike Taylor	IPA	2015-03-14	Multi-Ply	650
16	Andrey Paley	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	650
19	Anthony Dittilo	RPS	2015-01-25	Multi-Ply	645
20	Jon Brown	USPA	2015-02-07	Single-Ply	639
21	Joey Murphy	APC	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	633
22	Nick Puorro	RPS	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	630
22	Jason Kemp	SPF	2015-06-06	Multi-Ply	630
24	Jeremy Hoonstra	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	628
25	Chris Bartl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	620
26	Joe White	USPA	2015-02-07	Single-Ply	617
27	Dan Hebert	RPS	2015-09-05	Multi-Ply	610
28	Brodie White	USPA	2015-08-15	Multi-Ply	606
29	Will Kuenzel	RPS	2014-12-13	Multi-Ply	605
30	Keithyon Gunter	SPF	2015-07-18	Multi-Ply	600
30	Kevin Frey	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	600
30	Rob Pizzuti	SPF	2015-11-22	Multi-Ply	600
33	Alexey Fedyayev	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	595
34	Paul Lauffer	SPF	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	585
35	Aleksey Kashirin	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	584
36	Stephen Pollock	RPS	2015-09-19	Single-Ply	575
37	John Berding	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	573
38	Tom Favata	RPS	2014-12-07	Single-Ply	570
39	Ed Dufour	WPC	2015-07-25	Multi-Ply	568
40	Cliff Rhodes	USPA	2015-03-25	Multi-Ply	567
40	Connor Senft	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	567
42	Nerijus Cekas	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	562
43	Matt Phelps	UPA	2015-09-19	Raw	560
44	Timothy Baker	UPA	2015-04-25	Multi-Ply	551
44	John Barker	APF	2015-03-28	Multi-Ply	551
46	Dale Menefee	APF	2015-02-08	Multi-Ply	550
46	Oran Smith	RPS	2015-09-19	Raw	550
46	Keith Price	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	550
49	Austin Pappas	UPA	2015-09-19	Raw	546
50	David Walker	USPA	2015-05-23	Single-Ply	545
50	Marc White	USPA	2015-02-14	Single-Ply	545

Free For All! (Raw, Single-Ply or Multi-Ply)

DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Deadlift
1	Sean Green	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	843
2	Chris Della Fave	RPS	2015-08-28	Multi-Ply	830
2	Sean Green	IPA	2015-03-07	Multi-Ply	830
4	Luigi Fagjani	USPA	2015-10-21	Raw	821
5	Andrew Herbert	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	810
6	David Lamartina	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	804
6	Jimmy Paquet	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	804
6	Kade Webber	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	804
9	William BJ Barabas	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	800
10	William Barabas	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw	793
11	Steve Maday	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	782
12	Brian Carroll	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	780
13	Eli Burks	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	777
13	Joshua Dakin	USPA	2015-08-15	Raw	777
15	John Rivas	USPA	2015-05-30	Raw	772
16	Gregory Johnson	USAPL	2015-03-08	Single-Ply	771
16	Mason Cervantes	USPA	2015-03-28	Raw	771
18	Jimmie Pacifico	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	760
18	Thomas O'Malley	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	760
18	Justin Jackson	SPF	2015-02-21	Raw	760
18	Dustin Ellis	SPF	2015-07-18	Raw	760
18	Mike Eaton	RAW	2015-01-17	Raw	760
18	Tee Cummins	USPA	2015-01-24	Raw	760
24	Chuck Vogelwohl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	755
24	Vasil Gushterov	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	755
26	Sean Green	IPA	2015-01-31	Raw	750
27	Nerjusz Cekas	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	749
27	Aleksey Kashirin	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	749
27	Mike Francis	USPA	2015-06-06	Raw	749
27	Andy Rohner	USPA	2015-04-11	Raw	749
27	Charlie Lyons	USPA	2015-02-07	Raw	749
32	Mike Lackey	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	744
33	Pete Rubish	SPF	2015-02-21	Raw	740
33	Kyle Sheridan	RPS	2015-08-08	Raw	740
35	Bryce Lewis	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	738
35	Brian Hopper	RPS	2015-11-14	Raw	738
35	Casey Williams	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	738
35	Andrew Burnell	UPA	2015-03-27	Raw	738
39	Chuck Brightbill	RPS	2015-04-18	Multi-Ply	735
39	Alex Marchini	RPS	2015-02-28	Raw	735
39	Matt Minuth	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	735
42	Frank Ball	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	733
43	Alex Alexander	HERC	2015-11-21	Raw	730
43	George Cottrell	SPF	2015-02-21	Raw	730
43	Ed Knoblock	UPA	2015-06-27	Raw	730
46	Nicholas Tylutki	IPF	2015-06-06	Raw	727
46	Chad Kurian	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw	727
46	Tee Popoola	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	727
46	Nick Tylutki	USAPL	2015-03-06	Raw	727
46	Tyler Cummings	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	727

TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Total
1	Brian Carroll	RPS	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	2640
2	Matt Minuth	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	2585
3	Jimmie Pacifico	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	2520
4	Chris Della Fave	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	2445
5	Patrick Warren	APF	2015-07-18	Multi-Ply	2375
6	Chuck Vogelwohl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	2305
7	Abraham Harrod	APF	2014-12-20	Single-Ply	2260
8	Mike Taylor	IPA	2015-03-14	Multi-Ply	2185
9	Kevin Frey	UPA	2015-03-27	Multi-Ply	2154
10	Nerjusz Cekas	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	2149
11	Aleksey Kashirin	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	2138
12	Anthony Dittilo	RPS	2015-01-25	Multi-Ply	2135
13	Nick Puorro	RPS	2015-06-27	Multi-Ply	2100
14	Casey Williams	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	2088
15	Chris Bartl	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	2070
16	John Rivas	USPA	2015-05-30	Raw with Wraps	2067
17	Patrick Mihalik	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	2065
18	Kevin Oak	UPA	2015-04-18	Raw with Wraps	2050
19	Timothy Baker	UPA	2014-12-13	Multi-Ply	2039
20	Tee Popoola	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	2031
21	Andrew Herbert	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	2028
22	Chuck Brightbill	RPS	2015-01-25	Multi-Ply	2025
23	Scott Schaeffer	SPF	2014-12-06	Multi-Ply	2015
24	Tee Cummins	USPA	2015-01-24	Raw with Wraps	2006
24	Kade Webber	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	2006
24	Daniel Dalenberg	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	2006
24	Jimmy Paquet	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	2006
28	Justin Jackson	SPF	2015-02-21	Raw with Wraps	2000
28	Mike Lackey	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	2000
30	Luigi Fagjani	USPA	2015-10-21	Raw with Wraps	1989
31	Quintin Meyer	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	1962
32	Jon Brown	USPA	2015-02-07	Single-Ply	1956
33	Nathan Westbrook	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1951
34	Joseph Walraven	RPS	2015-05-30	Single-Ply	1935
35	David Lamartina	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw	1934
35	Shae Jones	RUPC	2015-02-07	Raw	1934
35	Chad Kurian	UPA	2015-05-16	Raw with Wraps	1934
38	Keith Price	RPS	2015-05-30	Multi-Ply	1930
38	Will Kuenzel	RPS	2014-12-13	Multi-Ply	1930
40	Tony Carlino	GPA	2015-10-10	Raw with Wraps	1929
41	Sean Green	IPA	2015-01-31	Raw with Wraps	1925
41	Bob Merkh	RPS	2015-08-15	Raw with Wraps	1925
41	Brad Davidson	SPF	2015-11-22	Multi-Ply	1925
44	Jay Nera	RUPC	2015-02-07	Raw	1923
45	Clint Smith	RPS	2015-10-03	Raw with Wraps	1920
46	Mindis Jurenas	SPF	2015-02-28	Raw with Wraps	1910
46	Mindis Jurnas	SPF	2015-02-28	Raw with Wraps	1910
48	Tyler Cummings	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	1906
49	Greg Panora	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw with Wraps	1905
50	Mitchell Fountain	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1901
50	Jason Colley	APF	2014-12-14	Raw with Wraps	1901

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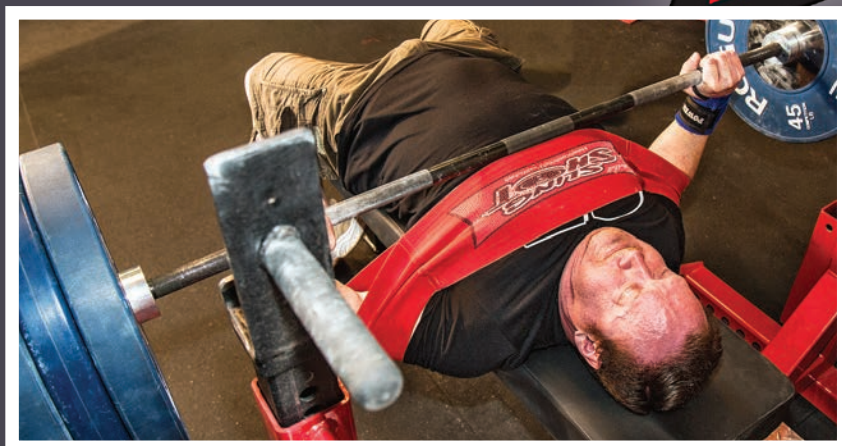


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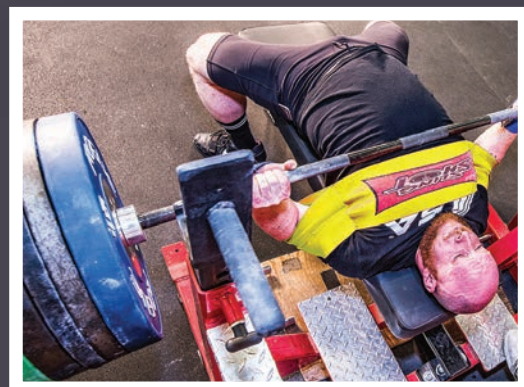
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Current Top 30 Rankings: Women 165 lbs...

For these rankings, we're taking the top lifts out of raw, raw with wraps, single-ply, and multi-ply.

SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Squat
1	Rheta West	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	650
2	Nina Kondrasheva	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	550
3	Liz Freel	USPA	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	534
4	Debbie Dammiga	APF	2015-07-25	Multi-Ply	529
4	Marisa Nallie	UPA	2015-04-19	Multi-Ply	529
6	Darilyn Doddy	APF	2015-10-23	Multi-Ply	507
6	Nina Kondrasheva	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	507
8	Marissa Nallie	RPS	2015-02-07	Multi-Ply	505
9	Caitlin Sullivan	APF	2015-06-26	Multi-Ply	501
10	Sarah Cattan	SPF	2015-10-10	Raw with Wraps	470
11	Kristie Smith	SPF	2015-09-12	Raw with Wraps	465
12	Dakota Young	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	462
13	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-06-27	Raw	457
14	Shanie Dasrath	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	451
15	Donna Williams	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	450
16	Jill Mills	USPA	2015-01-31	Raw	442
17	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-03-29	Raw with Wraps	440
17	Sarrah Cattan	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw with Wraps	440
17	Michelle Keaulana	UPA	2015-04-19	Raw with Wraps	440
17	Angie Denney	SPF	2014-12-06	Raw	440
17	Shaina Petit	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	440
22	Alaina Cordone	RPS	2015-08-28	Raw with Wraps	430
23	Talor Parker	USPA	2015-07-11	Single-Ply	429
24	Erika Myers	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	424
25	Iryna Piatrovich	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	418
26	Laurie Smith	USPA	2015-08-29	Raw with Wraps	407
27	Stephanie Walker	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	405
28	Charity Whitt	APC	2015-06-27	Raw with Wraps	402
28	Molly Mullikin	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw with Wraps	402
28	Caitlin Sullivan	RPS	2015-11-14	Raw with Wraps	402
28	Natalie Barrera	SPF	2015-01-10	Single-Ply	402
28	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2015-09-26	Raw	402

BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Bench
1	Darilyn Doddy	APF	2015-10-23	Multi-Ply	407
2	Rheta West	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	405
3	Monique Jackson	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	352
3	Liz Freel	USPA	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	352
5	Marisa Nallie	UPA	2015-04-19	Multi-Ply	341
6	Nina Kondrasheva	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	335
6	Marissa Nallie	RPS	2015-02-07	Multi-Ply	335
8	Nina Kondrasheva	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	330
9	Monica Dearman Painter	APF	2015-01-17	Multi-Ply	314
10	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw	308
11	Sonja Baldwin	RUPC	2015-02-07	Raw	303
12	Leonetta Richardson	USPA	2015-02-07	Raw	292
13	Shaina Petit	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	286
13	Jill Mills	USPA	2015-01-31	Raw	286
15	Donna Williams	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	285
16	Monique Jackson	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	281
16	Shanie Dasrath	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	281
18	Iryna Piatrovich	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	270
18	Irene Michaelis	USPA	2015-04-25	Single-Ply	270
20	Kristie Smith	SPF	2015-09-12	Raw	265
21	Erika Myers	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	264
22	Priscilla Ribic	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	255
22	Stephanie Walker	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	255
24	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2015-09-26	Raw	253
24	Talor Parker	USPA	2015-07-11	Single-Ply	253
24	Ashley Gicas	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	253
24	Chelsea Savit	USAPL	2015-10-15	Raw	253
28	Angie Denney	SPF	2014-12-06	Raw	250
29	Victoria Yarbrough	USPF	2015-05-01	Raw	248
29	Skyler Briggs	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	248
29	Natalie Barrera	SPF	2015-07-18	Single-Ply	248

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Free For All! (Raw, Single-Ply or Multi-Ply)

DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Deadlift
1	Kimberly Walford	USAPL	2015-03-08	Single-Ply	562
2	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw	537
3	Jill Mills	USPA	2015-01-31	Raw	535
4	Alyssa Hitchcock	USAPL	2015-03-08	Single-Ply	534
4	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2015-09-26	Raw	534
6	Nancy Sariéh	USAPL	2015-07-18	Raw	512
7	Debbie Dammíngá	APF	2015-07-25	Multi-Ply	507
7	Monique Jackson	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	507
9	Stephanie Walker	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	490
10	Molly Mullíkin	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw	485
10	Rheta West	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	485
12	Kristie Smith	SPF	2015-09-12	Raw	475
13	Liz Freel	USPA	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	473
14	Shaina Petit	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	462
15	Leah Smith	APA	2015-04-18	Raw	451
15	Iryna Píatrovích	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw	451
17	Sarah Cattán	SPF	2015-10-10	Raw	450
17	Donna Williams	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	450
19	Jessíca Belt	USPA	2015-04-18	Raw	447
20	Carrie Gríssíngér	USPA	2015-06-13	Raw	446
20	Príscílla Ríbic	IPF	2015-06-06	Raw	446
22	Sarráh Cattán	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw	440
22	Shaníe Dasráth	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	440
22	Aláína Córdóne	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw	440
25	Roselynn Tírrító	USPA	2015-04-18	Raw	435
25	Suzánné Prúsnek	APF	2015-06-13	Raw	435
25	Monique Jackson	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	435
28	Melínda Húrt	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	430
29	Denísha Meláncon	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	429
29	Kimmy Brooks	USPA	2015-10-17	Raw	429
29	Nína Kondrasheva	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	429

TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Division	Total
1	Rheta West	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	1505
2	Liz Freel	USPA	2015-10-03	Multi-Ply	1361
3	Nína Kondrasheva	XPC	2015-03-06	Multi-Ply	1310
4	Darílyn Dóddy	APF	2015-10-23	Multi-Ply	1300
5	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-11-08	Raw	1298
6	Marísa Nallíe	UPA	2015-04-19	Multi-Ply	1284
7	Nína Kondrasheva	USPA	2015-09-18	Single-Ply	1267
8	Jill Mills	USPA	2015-01-31	Raw	1264
9	Maríssa Nallíe	RPS	2015-02-07	Multi-Ply	1250
9	Debbie Dammíngá	SPF	2015-04-11	Multi-Ply	1250
11	Kristie Smith	SPF	2015-09-12	Raw with Wraps	1205
12	Shaina Petit	USAPL	2015-03-07	Single-Ply	1190
12	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2015-09-26	Raw	1190
14	Donna Williams	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	1185
15	Kristy Hawkins	SPF	2015-03-29	Raw with Wraps	1179
16	Shaníe Dasráth	APF	2015-10-17	Multi-Ply	1173
17	Stephanie Walker	SPF	2015-04-11	Raw with Wraps	1150
18	Iryna Píatrovích	RUPC	2015-02-08	Raw with Wraps	1140
19	Cáitín Sullívan	APF	2015-06-26	Multi-Ply	1135
20	Sarah Cattán	SPF	2015-10-10	Raw with Wraps	1120
21	Molly Mullíkin	USPA	2015-07-11	Raw with Wraps	1113
21	Dakota Young	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1113
23	Monique Jackson	USPA	2015-05-02	Raw	1102
24	Erika Myers	USAPL	2015-04-11	Single-Ply	1096
25	Aláína Córdóne	RPS	2015-08-28	Raw with Wraps	1085
26	Leonetta Richardson	USPA	2015-02-07	Raw	1080
27	Sarráh Cattán	USPA	2015-08-22	Raw with Wraps	1069
28	Angie Denney	SPF	2014-12-06	Raw	1055
28	Melínda Húrt	RPS	2015-10-17	Raw	1055
30	Príscílla Ríbic	IPF	2015-06-06	Raw	1053





www.youtube.com/user/scruffylizard

Let's start with the question on everybody's mind: Why did you choose "scruffylizard" as your YouTube name?

Scruffylizard is a moniker I've been using on the Internet since I was around 18 years old, possibly younger. Pretty early on in my Internet use, I realized that using a gender-neutral handle, or better yet, one that suggested I might be male, would make interacting in online communities easier. I still feel that this is the case and I have even partaken in online strength forums under usernames that suggest I am male just so I can capitalize on being "one of the guys" in conversation.

On top of that, your Facebook page says "Babyeater" under your name! Between you and George "Babyslayer" Leeman, what is it with great American deadlifters and babies?!

I definitely don't plan on having any, so I feel like the next best thing is to use them as a food source. Particularly when trying to move up a weight class or two. I'm not sure if that's how George Leeman feels about it, but it makes sense to me.

With those important questions out of the way, let's get down to business. What are your best competition lifts?

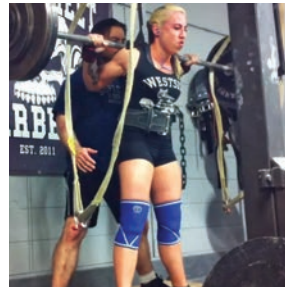
My best competition lifts are a 303 unwrapped squat, a 192 bench, and a 454 deadlift at 122 pounds bodyweight. I have totaled 900 at 132 prior to hitting those numbers this past August. I'm just all over the place with weight class, but 950 at 123 is my best total.

You have two world records (the 123 raw deadlift and raw without wraps total) and you're married to featured YouTube Channel alumnus, Kyle Keough, who used to have the raw without wraps total record at 148. Since you're the only current record holder in your household, does that mean that you wear the pants in the relationship?

Well, Kyle and I are pretty much going to be competing with each other over the next few decades over who has broken the most world records, so I look at my current household leader status as a temporary one. Sometimes I bring it up when we are trying to make each other take the dog out early in the morning, but mostly I remember that my time as household ruler is limited and therefore run more of a democracy than a dictatorship. Being World Record Stalin would probably come back to haunt me at some point.

Speaking of Kyle, he has a video on his channel of your deadlift progress over time. In September of 2012, you were a scrawny brunette who looked like she was about to snap in half while deadlifting 250. Less than 3 years later, in August of 2015, you were a jacked blond and you broke the 123 world record with a 454 pull! What have been the keys to your amazing progress?

One of the biggest keys to my short career going as well as it has thus far is not being a prisoner to weight class. I tell people--with pride--that I have competed at 105, 114, 123, 132, and 148. I will continue to bounce around between weight classes because long-term, I see it as extremely important to my development as a lifter. I take the idea of relative strength very seriously, but I also take what is best for my body long-term seriously. I have no problem competing as a light 132 or 148 - whatever. The amount of importance people



attach to identifying themselves as a lifter in a certain weight class is insane to me. I cannot imagine where my lifting would be right now if I had decided to just pin myself down to lifting at 114 or even 123. I honestly only decided to lift at 123 a week before that competition. I realized I could make the weight, that I was within range of breaking several all-time world records, and

that cutting the weight wouldn't be very stressful to my system. So I did it because it put me in range of doing something truly amazing. My next meet might very well be at 148 because I am working on growing and developing - I am only about three years into training in this sport. Ego will stall progress every time.

You've made some posts on Facebook about women and bodyweight. Can you summarize for us what your message is for female lifters?

So, what I said regarding weight classes carries into my response to this. I had to build myself from a walking human skeleton into a decent strength athlete and it took a lot of eating and bulking up and cutting down and bulking up again and cutting down, and I am not remotely done with this process. I strongly believe that if you want to be a great female strength athlete, you will have to be open to being psychologically uncomfortable with your size, your shape and your body composition. I am not going to impose my issues on others. As a former eating disorder sufferer for nearly 10 years, I have them [issues]. However, in general, I run across many women who struggle with doing what is physically necessary to reach their potential athletically because of how they might look at some stages in their athletic career. It's a horribly frustrating thing to both watch in others and experience in myself. I believe far more in what I do than in how I look. So, when I don't like how I look, that discomfort is secondary to what I believe in above all--continuing to build myself as a lifter. If nothing else, I hope that I somehow help other women ultimately feel comfortable making the same choice by leading through example.

What's next for Janis Finkelman?

I think the biggest thing about my future plans is that I am going to do what is best for my lifting ten years from now, not this year. So whatever my gut tells me is best for my long-term development - that is what I will do. I'll probably compete at 148 a time or two before dropping back to 132 or whatever, but I'll just do what my body seems in range of around a time I feel good competing at. I may try out competing in wraps at some point but squatting in wraps is probably never going to be my strength, although, who knows. Other things on the to-do list: having fun and meeting people I have thus far only communicated with on social media in the strength world. Eating weird things, including babies. I may start running a coaching business; this is something I do already but haven't really promoted in a formal way. I'm always happy to help other lifters out, particularly women who struggle with the conflicts between traditional concepts of beauty in Western culture versus what's probably going to be best for their bodies as powerlifters. So, bottom line, I hope to be doing more of that.



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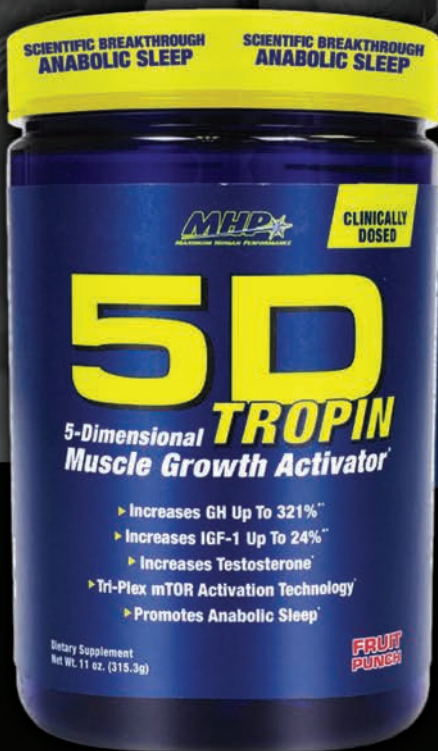
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