

**DEATH TO THE DELOAD** BY HUNTER CHARNESKI

# POWER

JULY/AUGUST 2017

**A PASSION FOR  
POWERLIFTING WITH  
BRYCE  
LEWIS**

BY HANI JAZAYRLI

**DENNIS  
CORNELIUS  
COUNTRY  
STRONG**

BY JOHN GREAVES III



JULY/AUGUST 2017 • VOL 8, NO 4  
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# FIRST WORD



Welcome to another exciting edition of POWER Magazine, from Sling Shot and Supertraining HQ. We've got a lot of exciting things going on over here at Slingshot headquarters. We're moving into a new facility that's 20,000 square feet. We have also launched new apparel, so check out [HowMuchYaBench.net](http://HowMuchYaBench.net) for all the new shirts, shorts, tanks and hats – new stuff for both men and women.

Let's talk about some of the people that are in the only strength magazine in the world – POWER Magazine. Ben Pollack talks about how to wrap your knees. A lot of people have a lot of questions about knee wraps, and Ben not only tells you how to get used to your knee wraps, but goes into the history of supported lifting.

Joseph Pena is a teenage kid that may one day re-write the record books in the squat. He's off to a very fast start. At 18 years of age, he's already squatting over 800 lbs. I went to the Onnit Academy in Austin, TX and saw the kid squat 765 lbs. for a very easy set of 5 reps. Pretty unbelievable for such a young athlete. Joseph is coached by his dad, which I think is really cool – to have his dad in his corner as a coach and a mentor and someone who is just giving him support. It's his goal to one day squat over 1,000 lbs. and end up in that Ray Williams epic squat list of great lifters.

In Super Training Corner, we talk about squat accessories, overloading your squat with some reverse band work and box squats. To get more in depth about how to correctly execute a box squat, you can go to [YouTube.com/Supertraining06](http://YouTube.com/Supertraining06) and check out our boy Matt Wenning, who goes over how to execute the box squat with perfect form.

We like to connect the dots between the POWERcast and POWER Magazine, and we had a very special guest come into the gym to podcast with us, bench press, inspire us, and fire us up – and his name is Kevin Ogar. Kevin is paralyzed from the waist down, but still has an amazing way about him. He still has a lot of the same goals that many people who read this magazine have – he just wants to get stronger. He doesn't ever want to be viewed as any different than anybody else. He doesn't want anybody's help doing anything. He can help himself – he's a very capable, strong-minded person. Having Kevin on the podcast was amazing, and some of the things he shared on the podcast transcend his message to other people that are in his position. He said that every day you should do three things: take a shower, go outside for a cup of coffee, and exercise. I think that's great because it applies to everybody, not just people who are injured or are in life altering situations like Kevin. It's just a good reminder to take care of yourself. Having Kevin in the gym was awesome. It got me fired up, and it got a lot of the other guys fired up. We not only got to podcast with him and get a couple great training sessions in with him – we had a lot of laughs with him and also got to eat a lot of food, which is I think when he was his happiest. But Kevin, even though he's paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life, he's still walking around with probably 19-inch arms and a 405-lb. bench press. So, he still has goals, he's still working hard, and he's not allowing anything to get in the way of those goals.

Strength is never a weakness, weakness is never a strength. Until next time.

## Mark Bell

Sent from my iPhone 8 and Sling Shot HQ

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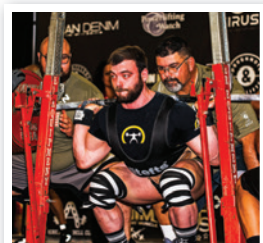
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# **"AT ONE TIME I STOOD ALONE..."**

*I was almost the only believer in weight training for athletes. Now there are thousands of coaches who are teaching weight training to their teams, and hundreds of thousands of athletes, improving their athletic ability through weight training" – Bob Hoffman*

## **...Still standing ALONE**



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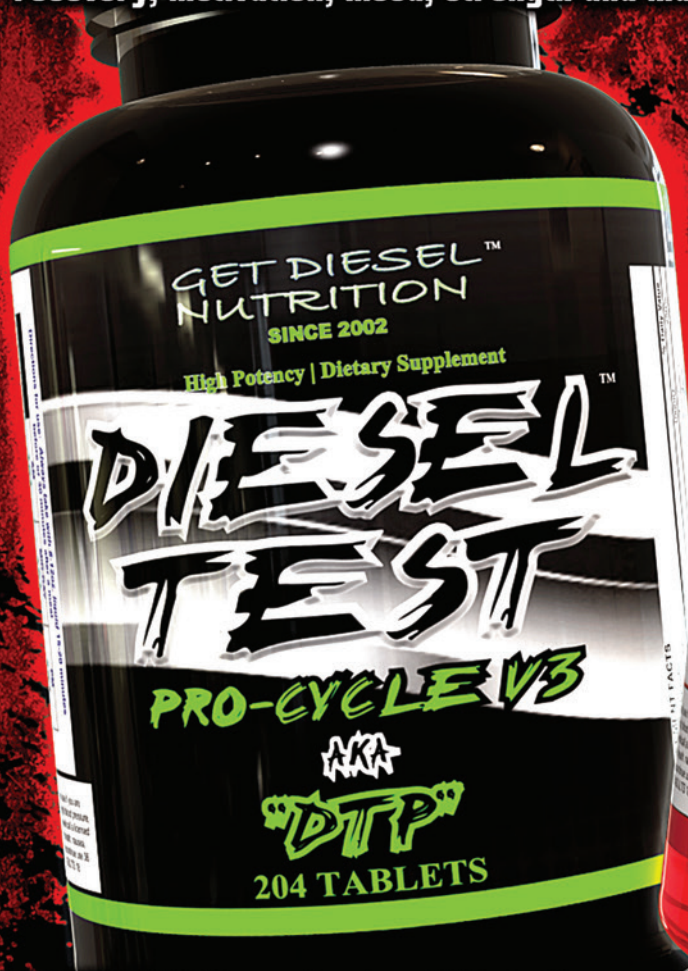
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## HAYDEN BOWE



**Height:** 5'9"

**Weight:** I compete at 82.5Kg/181lbs I train around 190lbs.

**Age:** 25 (born June 5th, 1992)

**Gym you train out of:** Hybrid Performance Method Gym, Miami

**Athletic background:** I played Hockey competitively from age 4-18. I used Olympic Weightlifting as a method to train for Hockey from age 15-18. In my second year of university I started competing exclusively in Olympic Weightlifting. After an injury a few years later I started competing in powerlifting.

**Year you started powerlifting:** 2014

I had a friend, Francesco, who was competing in powerlifting at the time and he was always trying to convince me to do it with him. I was allowed to squat, bench and deadlift so I signed up for the Ontario Collegiate Powerlifting Championship. I ended up winning my weight class and getting the second highest Wilks score in the competition, I was immediately hooked!

**You do weightlifting and powerlifting. Do you train both consistently or separately, and what makes you continue to do both? Do you have one that you enjoy more than the other?**

I love them both equally and I train both of them all year round but my focus changes depending on what competitions I plan to do. Powerlifting has been more of a focus lately because I have the goal of cracking the top 10 on the all-time 181lb rankings in 2017.

**Do you have a background in other sports?**

Hockey, Soccer and Rugby were all sports I played growing up. Hockey was my main passion but as I got older I started enjoying training more and more, eventually it got to the point where training for hockey (in the gym) became more enjoyable for me than the sport itself.

**What are your best lifts on and off the platform?**

**GYM:**

**Squat-** 290kg/640lbs

**Bench-** 184/405lbs

**Deadlift-** 292.5kg/645lbs

**MEET:**

**Squat-** 280g/617lbs

**Bench-** 175kg/385lbs

**Deadlift-** 290kg/640lbs

**Best Snatch:** 145kg/319lbs

**Best Clean and Jerk:** 180kg/397lbs

**Best Clean:** 185kg/407lbs

**What are your biggest powerlifting accomplishments?**

USPA Florida State Squat Record  
280kg/617lbs @ 181lb BW - 2017

APA Raw nationals - Gold Medal -  
2016

WPC World Championship (Portugal) -  
Silver Medal - 2015

**What is your favorite lift? Why?**

Squat is my best lift but the deadlift is my favorite lift. You can cheat a squat or bench with depth, touch-n-go, short pause, etc... But with deadlift, sure you can hitch it but you're either strong enough to lift the weight or you're not.

**How and when did you get into powerlifting?**

I tore my patellar tendon when I was competing exclusively in Olympic Weightlifting. When I was ready to start training again, I still couldn't go back to my old style of training right away. The Olympic lifts were too high-impact and if I started training them right away I would have likely re-injured myself.



see in our lifetime, it's tough to compete with that! Ed truly loves the sport of powerlifting and is always looking for ways to give back. The first time I met Ed was in a grungy underground gym in Chicago, he had no idea who I was but introduced himself and chatted with me about my upcoming meet. He stuck around for my whole workout and gave me tips along the way. He's one of the most humble guys you'll ever meet, despite his incredible list of accomplishments.

**What are your 2017 goals?**

I'd like to break into the top 10 181 lb. lifters in the all-time ranking.

**Long-term goals?**

Break the all-time squat world record in the 181 lb. weight-class (raw, raw classic, or both).

**What do you do for work?**

Hybrid Performance Method is our

full-time gig and by the time this article comes out the first Hybrid Performance Method gym will be open for business in Miami, FL!

**What lifter do you admire the most?**

There are two: 1. Ed Coan because he's the best there ever was. With 71 World Records in his career, and some of the most amazing feats of strength we'll ever

2. Mark Bell for making powerlifting cool. CrossFit has done a great job at bringing attention to sports like Olympic Weightlifting and Powerlifting but people wouldn't stick around if there were personalities like Mark in the industry. He's shown a lot of people that you can actually make money in powerlifting and that's pretty awesome! **PM**

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# THIS CHICK CAN KICK YOUR ASS.... AND YOU MAY LIKE IT!

# CYNTHIA LEU

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: JESSICA DI BELLA PHOTOGRAPHY

**Age:** 24

**Height:** 5' 6"

**Weight:** 140 lbs.

**Hometown:** Santa Clara

**Occupation:** Corporate Recruiter (Talent Acquisition)

**Gym:** My garage and Anaheim Crossfit West

**Current Maxes:** 314 lbs./142.5kg squat, 165 lbs./75kg bench, 369 lbs./167.5kg deadlift

**Athletic Background:** I grew up swimming competitively before trading that in for club and varsity volleyball all throughout high school. I started competing in powerlifting while I was attending college at UC Davis and enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves.

**A lot of lifters consider you a trailblazer for raw female powerlifters. How do you feel being one of the first to be lifting some heavy weight?**

That's such an honor to hear! It feels amazing knowing that sharing my life and journey on social media has impacted other women to get into the sport. I know that my impact in the lifting community will never be because I am the strongest raw female powerlifter out there. My impact has been about normalizing the sport and showing women that they can lift too! It's important for women to see that you can lift heavy weight while still living a seemingly "normal" life and embracing

your femininity. I love that so many women have been empowered to seek strength.

**Where do you see the sport of powerlifting go in the next five years for female athletes?**

I have noticed a huge explosion of raw female power lifters stepping onto the platform just in the past two years, and I believe it's just getting started. My junior "records" are long gone, and that's so exciting to see because it means that the sport is becoming more and more competitive. I see many more high-level athletes joining the ranks as powerlifting becomes the sport of choice among other lifting related sports like bodybuilding, CrossFit, and Olympic Weightlifting. I love that raw powerlifting is so accessible and doesn't require a huge monetary investment. You need a gym membership, and that's about it. Most powerlifting meets are affordable, and





you can be successful without extremely pricey gear, as well.

**Every time I see your Instagram account, you have a pint of beer and some delicious looking hamburger. How do you balance your food to allow you to compete in the 132 lbs. and 148 lbs. weight classes?**

I have a troubled past with food. In fact, I found the sport of powerlifting while attempting to recover from bulimia. It wasn't until I signed up for my first powerlifting meet that I was able to break the unhealthy cycle that I was in due to the fact that I had to keep food in my body in order to lift heavy weight in the gym. It was a refreshing change to start viewing food as fuel. Since I spent years dieting, restricting, and counting macros, I have a general idea of what I'm putting into my body even if I'm not weighing out my food anymore. I understand what my body needs in terms of carbohydrates, fats, and protein. There are some days when I am eating a surplus of calories, and [there are] some days when I am eating at a caloric deficit and make sure to supplement with a protein shake. It's all about balance. Allowing myself delicious foods "whenever I want" keeps me from bingeing or having bad cravings. There are no "cheat days" here because delicious food (and beer) is just part of my diet. I also tend to cycle bigger eating days around times when I know I could use the extra energy for a big training day. I did my last powerlifting meet without cutting weight. I walked in at 140 lbs. which is right between the 132 and 148 weight class. One day I plan on cutting back down to the 132 lb. weight class in order to get ranked again!

**Give us a simple run down of you training split.**

I'm currently coached by Hani Jazayrli with The Strength Athlete. Due to my work schedule, I only lift three days a

week. I bench 3x a week, deadlift 2x a week, and squat 2x a week. There are some deadlift and squat variations involved with my training as well as some basic core, back, and glute/hamstring accessories.

**You used to be on a low calorie, high cardio lifestyle kick. What would you say have been the biggest advantages and disadvantages to focusing more on powerlifting?**

Let me tell you... I do not miss those days! I remember feeling like I over-ate because I would eat over 1400 calories and then slave away with extra hours of cardio. The biggest advantage of focusing on powerlifting has been my renewed healthy relationship with food. The biggest disadvantage is that since the main lifts can take a lot of my time, I haven't spent much time focusing on my overall aerobic health. That's something I am planning on putting a little more effort into. It's not impossible to do both—it just hasn't been a priority for me

**Your job requires you to travel a lot. How do you maintain your training while on the road?**

I'm constantly researching strength gyms! One of my favorite parts about traveling for work is getting to check out small strength focused gyms. I love seeing the culture of lifting in different cities and towns. I also have a 24hr Fitness membership, so I do just go to commercial gyms if necessary. Otherwise, sometimes I must push my training back by a day and make it up when I can. This is also why a 3-day training split works best for my schedule, even though a 5-day split would be the most optimal. You do what you gotta do. **PM**

**Social media info:** Instagram: @cynthialeu

YouTube: @cynomgthia

# BRYCE LEWIS

BY HANI JAZAYRLI

**Weight Class:** 105kg | 231lbs.

**Current Raw:** (105kg) USA Powerlifting National Champion

**Current Best Competition Lifts:** 313kg|690 lbs. squat, 215kg|474 lbs. bench, and 350 kg|771 lbs. deadlift

**Current Best Gym Lifts:** 700 lbs. squat, 495 lbs. bench, and 805 lbs. deadlift

## **You've gone from volleyball player to bodybuilder to powerlifter. How did you chose these pursuits?**

I've had a habit of essentially falling into sports, which I don't think is too outside the norm for how people [normally] get engaged in new activities. When I was in my sophomore year of high school, my friend Brian and I saw a poster for volleyball tryouts and decided to try it out. This was one of the best decisions I've [ever] made. Volleyball gave me an amazing foundation of athletic ability. [It also gave me] the feeling of accomplishment and [allowed me to realize the] relationship between effort and reward in a way that I hadn't experienced before. In my first year of college, I began looking for ways to make myself a better volleyball player, and I discovered bodybuilding.com and a slew of pre-made training plans [on this site] that promised muscle gain. After learning more and engaging with the online community on the forums there, I started enjoying the lifting more than playing volleyball. I saw a winner of a local novice bodybuilding competition and set myself the challenge of competing in bodybuilding. In all of these cases, it was an important fact that I had friends competing in the sport in question, and it was for these same reasons that I decided to do my first powerlifting competition—loving the lifting more than the dieting and seeing some friends enjoy competition.

## **Do you find yourself daydreaming about trying any other sports or hobbies at this point in your life?**

I still love powerlifting, but I would be lying if I didn't look at the training and competition of other sports with a tinge of envy. Maybe the grass is always greener in the other sport! I've looked at weightlifting as the cousin of powerlifting—as something I think would be a ton of fun. [I've also looked into] hammer throwing just because it looks so cool. I've even loved CrossFit and how varied its training is. It's the polar opposite of my own training and how specific things are—I like that there are elements of gymnastics, plyometrics, weightlifting, and so on.



Unattained		345	PL Total		870				
Deadlift 3		Event	362.5	PL Total	870				
Open Men		Open	362.5	PL Total	870				
Current Status	Good	NoLift	Novet	Auto	Sub Total	UK 1	UK 2	UK 3	
Name	Level	Div	Weight	IFF	Wt	Ch			
Joseph Francis	UNA	MR-O	104.8	105	980	490	262.5	277.5	282.5
Brandon Jeter	UNA	MR-L	103.2	105	985	470	277.5	282.5	282.5
Michael Petrovich	UNA	MR-O	103.2	105	985	470	277.5	282.5	282.5
Colton Ripley	UNA	MR-O	101.6	105	993	450	285	295	297.5
Colton Ripley	UNA	MR-L	102.4	105	993	430	285	295	297.5
John Norwood	UNA	MR-O	102.4	105	994	490	287.5	307.5	312.5
Wesley Brashers	UNA	MR-O	103.6	105	982	450	300	317.5	322.5
Patrick Greer	UNA	MR-O	104.8	105	984	540	310	328	333
Patrick Greer	UNA	MR-O	100.8	105	981	430	305	322.5	327.5
Scott Givens	UNA	MR-O	101	105	981	430	317.5	327.5	332.5
Scott Givens	UNA	MR-L	101	105	980	440	325	340	345
Michael Petrovich	UNA	MR-O	103.6	105	983	480	300	317.5	322.5
Michael Petrovich	UNA	MR-L	103.6	105	983	480	300	317.5	322.5
Kevin Moore	UNA	MR-O	103.4	105	989	520	323	338	343
Current Status	UNA	MR-O	103.4	105	989	520	323	338	343
Byron Lewis	UNA	MR-L	100.8	105	981	410	300	317.5	322.5
Byron Lewis	UNA	MR-L	91.95	83	942	220	157.5	162.5	167.5
Byron Lewis	UNA	FR-O	81.3	63	910	227.5	160	172.5	177.5
Byron Lewis	UNA	FR-O	82.1	63	911	230	162.5	172.5	177.5

PLATE



USA POWERLIFTING  
RAW NATION





**I think you're right about CrossFit and the potential for the fun you can have there. This takes the powerlifting you already know and combines it largely with some of the weightlifting you want to learn. Additionally, it includes some aspects that are quite foreign with gymnastics and the like. Do you see yourself trying it out in the near future?**

At least in the near future, I've committed myself just to powerlifting—I feel any exploration of other sports would mean a decrease in skill and strength for powerlifting. That might not always be the case, but it's time to ride my wave of powerlifting now and for some time. I may hate powerlifting at times, but deep down, I still love lifting heavy

**There is so much going on for you in life. You're a world-class lifter. You run a successful online coaching business. You have a wife and two dogs. All of this along with so many other hobbies. How do you keep it all together?**

I barely keep it together and times

**THAT ELUSIVE "BALANCE" IS WHAT I'M TRYING TO HIT, BUT STAYING OPTIMISTIC AND SETTING ASIDE TIME FOR THE IMPORTANT THINGS HAS HELPED ME NAVIGATE MY DAYS. MY WIFE HAS DEFINITELY PROVIDED SUPPORT, WITHOUT WHICH, MUCH OF THIS WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE"**

have been challenging, but I think starting and running any small business alone would be difficult—not to mention living a life outside of that. That elusive "balance" is what I'm trying to hit, but staying optimistic and setting aside time for the important things has helped me navigate my days. My wife has definitely provided support, without which, much of this wouldn't be possible.

**Elaborate on what you mean by staying optimistic?**

For me, waves of pessimism about the industry of strength coaches, my place in it, and my own strength progress along with my general struggles of life, finance, and prospects of the future can weigh me down tremendously. I'm sure this is the case for most people. But seeing the positive in situations is really it—adapting and maintaining a healthy outlook hasn't always been easy, but it has been really important.

**Speaking of other hobbies, how else do you fill your time?**

I really enjoy making things. Whether that's food or art, I like new pursuits with lots of little pieces and procedures to follow. I enjoy having some path to mastery. Recently it has been prosciutto and cheese for food, and photography for art. Salami and lattes are next on the list.

**What does a normal day look like for you?**

I spend much of my day at home in front of a computer with breaks and





more than time at the computer. I set aside time to train on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday, Fridays, and Saturdays at 4:30pm until training is complete. After that, I'll come home, have some food, and work some more. I respond to athlete updates during the middle part of the day when I'm more clear-headed. Usually, I try to complete billing and accounting for TSA in the morning, try to make time for creative pursuits, and spend time with my wife when she comes home from work. On the weekends, we like to get out to a local dog park with a lake and let our dogs play and give them some much-needed attention. I aim to do as little work on the weekends as possible to protect that free time.

**What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in life so far?**

Wow—tough question. I don't really think I have a greatest achieve-

**"I'M PROUD OF SOME COMPETITIVE PERFORMANCES TOO, BUT THE JOY OF LIFTING FOR ME HAS MAINLY BEEN ABOUT LIFTING ITSELF AND NOT ABOUT COMPETING—THOUGH I DO HAVE SECONDARY GOALS NOW OF GETTING TO AND COMPETING AT THE WORLD LEVEL"**

ment, at least one I'd be comfortable placing above all others. Marrying my wife Sarah, starting and running The Strength Athlete, and varied successes in powerlifting are high on the list. For me, it's more about the little successes and seeing those add up over time. I feel that I have lots of growing still

ahead of me, and I'm looking forward to getting there.

**What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in powerlifting specifically?**

I'm very proud of my 805 lbs. deadlift in training, and of my 700 lbs. squat in training, as well. The 700 lbs. squat was very emotional for me, not only because it was a big ol' round number, but [it's due to the fact that] I missed 675, retook and made 675. Then, I took a wild jump to 700 and just squeaked it out. Looking back to that moment not too long ago, I'm reminded how much my mental attitude affects my performance. My confidence has to be high—I have to trust in myself and my abilities in order to come out with successful performances.

The 805 lbs. deadlift was very similar—just one of those magical days where everything seemed to click. I'm proud of some competitive performances too, but the joy of lifting for me has



mainly been about lifting itself and not about competing—though I do have secondary goals now of getting to and competing at the world level.

**I think that is something that gets lost on a lot of people through the majority of their years of lifting and competing. We compete because we love to train and have such joy in the pursuit of maximal strength. At the same time, lifts that are validated by judges and critical standards tend to hold more water in a figurative sense. How do you think people can change their outlook or perspective to value the “out of meet” performances as much as those in competition?**

Yes, I totally agree. I mean yes, doing three maximal attempts in a specific place in front of judges says, “Yes, I’ve mastered this weight, and here’s me showing you all that.” At the same time, I know the loads I’ve hit in training with a high degree of competitive standard,

**“WE TRAIN IN THE OFF HOURS AROUND OUR DAY JOB AND DO IT BECAUSE IT’S FUN. WE GET TO CONNECT WITH OTHERS WHO DO IT, AND [WE DO IT] BECAUSE IT KEEPS US HEALTHY. I THINK IT’S EASY TO NOT NECESSARILY FORGET THAT, BUT [TO] BE DISTRACTED BY ALL THE SHINY LIGHTS OF COMPETITION AND COMPETITORS”**

and I feel great about those. I think it’s important to have a healthy dose of “I don’t give a crap what people think,” where that’s applicable and to really just have fun with the thing that is

fun to you. We don’t get paid, at least not much, through powerlifting. We’re not obligated to do it. We train in the off hours around our day job and do it because it’s fun. We get to connect with others who do it, and [we do it] because it keeps us healthy. I think it’s easy to not necessarily forget that, but [to] be distracted by all the shiny lights of competition and competitors.

**There’s something to be said for those days in the gym where we just have it. You described it as ‘those magical days where everything seemed to click.’ Conventional coach wisdom will tell you to save it. Emotional drive will tell you to take it. How do you decide the days when you are going to go “off plan” versus the days when you stay the course?**

If I were pressed to an answer, I think at five weeks or closer to a competition, I behave and stay very close to the training plan. Further out, I’ll allow myself a little freedom once or twice



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per-lift, per-training-cycle. That looks like an off-plan heavy single taken every 8-12 weeks if I'm feeling extra froggy. I figure that it can't hurt too much if I'm not dumb and somewhat conservative, though the other half of my brain tells me that's sending a signal to my coach that I don't respect him and the plan he's put in place. We've kind of settled on this happy medium that gives me a bit of freedom if I'm feeling fresh enough for it.

**Passion is the only word I can think of to describe the look in your eyes after a made lift. What was going through your head after seeing the white lights for your third pull and knowing you had become na-**

**"IT HASN'T BEEN A DREAM OF MINE FOR TOO LONG, BUT THIS WAS MY THIRD NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND SECOND TIME IN THE 105KG CLASS. AFTER I GOT A TASTE OF WHAT NATIONAL COMPETITION WAS LIKE IN 2014, AND AFTER SEEING PERFORMANCES AT THE WORLD LEVEL ON THE LIVE STREAM, I KNEW I WANTED TO COMPETE AT THAT LEVEL"**

**tional champion this past year?**

It hasn't been a dream of mine for too long, but this was my third national championship and second time in the 105kg class. After I got a taste of what national competition was like in 2014, and after seeing performances at the world level on the live stream, I knew I wanted to compete at that level. In a sport where it's easy to delegitimize much of what we do, I felt that competing at the world level meant that I had really become an athlete in an objective sense and reached a level with other athletes who had done the same. People can often bicker about competition equipment, federations, press commands, and rules of competing to

sap away some of the successes from athletes. We don't have the Olympics and with raw powerlifting, we don't have the World Games either. IPF World Championships is the next closest thing, and that third pull meant getting to seek out that next step.

**I couldn't agree with you more about people sapping away the success of athletes by bickering over where they compete and what equipment they're using. What do you think—can't we all just get along?**

Sometimes I get caught up in thinking about competitive equipment. Things like Eleiko bars vs. Rogue bars vs. Texas bars or whether or not a lift was actually legitimate. Other times, I remember seeing a video of some guys training for powerlifting in Africa with a broke ass bar, concrete weights—[he was] outdoors with no shoes and still enjoying what they're doing and making progress. I'm reminded that I'm super lucky to be in the place that I am [currently]—that enjoyment matters most. It does make me upset though when there are established standards for competing

**"NOT AS MUCH ATTENTION HAS BEEN PAID TO THE MENTAL ASPECT OF PERFORMANCE EVEN MORE GENERALLY ACROSS SPORT FOR NOVICE TO SUB-ADVANCED ATHLETES. IT'S BEEN VERY "SELF-HELP" OR, ALTERNATIVELY, THIS ATTITUDE OF "YOU'VE GOT IT OR YOU DON'T".**

and lifting, and it seems someone has purposefully violated those standards because it's dishonest and disrespectful to other lifters.

**It is worth mentioning that very few people show quite as much emotion after making a lift as I've seen come from you in meets over the past few years. Is this something you've always done, or have you found a particularly strong emotional connec-**

**tion to powerlifting?**

I do think some of the background for celebration comes from volleyball. In volleyball, you celebrate every kill your team makes. As the setter in high school and college, I was intimately involved in my hitter's success by placing the ball in time and space exactly where he needed to do his job. I got to have this sense of accomplishment and shared victory every practice and every game when the hitter, who also perfectly times and executes, manages to crush a ball past a block for a point. Celebration was so normal in volleyball because it helps keep team momentum and shared interest in future success. You're basically constantly celebrating earning or working toward points, or encouraging your teammates in some way. I think I brought some of that celebration over to powerlifting and then amplified it because the lifts mean so much more to me, as there are so many fewer chances for success. I just express what I feel, and thankfully that's well received!

**So, this higher passion is particular to powerlifting—what do you think**

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### **has made that difference for you?**

Powerlifting is special because you grind for so long in training and then finally get to experience the product of your work in short, defining moments. In that sense, it's similar to many track and field events or other individual skill-based sports where you finally get to shed fatigue and just crush progress. It's that nature of "work, work, work, doubt, work, boost in confidence, work some more, shed some fatigue, feel like you could lift the world, finally see these outstanding performances you're capable of" that draws many people to powerlifting. So, I think I'd be fulfilled in other sports too in some ways, but powerlifters are uniquely capable of delayed gratification. Then, we get to feel that deep passion in celebration.

It's important though to not delay gratification so far as to not enjoy your normal training. With competitions so thinly spread, not enjoying 95+% of what you do is a recipe for burnout and demotivation. Celebrating not only the big wins, but also the small wins along the way is super important.

**Finding ways for each day to be a win can be hard for so many of us. How do you think the average person can dedicate more of their day to finding and celebrating small successes?**

In the past, I journaled "wins" for the day, but ultimately cultivating an attitude of optimism in sport goes a long way. We can:

1. Link success to effort and not innate ability
2. View successes and failures as temporary and not final
3. Give power to action—that acting can make a difference
4. Lean on a coach-athlete relationship and support network.

Further, explain positive events to yourself as internal (within your control), stable (this reason will always be there), and global (the reason you succeeded here also applies elsewhere). Explain negative events the exact opposite—external (outside your control), unstable (the reason is only temporary), and specific (failure only affects this situation).

**You've said before that your main goal has always been to get to the true world level competition. Now**



**that you've managed that and thrown a national championship in there with it, what are your current competitive goals?**

Pack it up and go home! Haha. I haven't really redefined what I want to aim for, besides coming to worlds again in future years. I'd like to bring the focus back to myself as I have a tendency to get lost in what other athletes are lifting and get down on myself [for that]. When I am just focusing on the next incremental PR [Personal Record], I'm really happier and more content.

**Your airline tickets to Minsk have already been purchased and your hotel has already been booked. This question has certainly run through your mind. Are you going to win first in your class at the IPF Classic World Championship this year?**

I know it's a possibility, even among a stacked class. I told myself that even competing at the world level was the prize and anything else is icing on the cake, and I'm trying to hold myself to

that. I think I train and perform better when I'm focused on me and incremental progress and less on external successes like placing and wins. Looking at the numbers though, a good day and it's certainly in the cards.

**Speaking of numbers... What are you thinking would be a perfect day for you on all three lifts?**

Going in, I'd be over the moon with a 700+ squat, a 490+ bench, and an 800+ deadlift

**What's next for you after Belarus?**

I've got a seminar to present in Limerick, Ireland immediately following Belarus. I'd like to continue to keep my head down and focus on progress, but I'd like training to be a bit lower intensity and more varied for a little while. Competitive I think it's Nationals, the Arnold, and Worlds on a rotating basis if I can manage to win again this year. Otherwise usually swing three competitions per year with Nationals being one of them. Business-wise, I'd like to continue providing more and better for TSA



athletes, and also pursue the creation of a sport psychology tool/aid for athletes that I hope can help athletes avoid some of the common mental traps I've fallen into before.

**What do you envision this idea of a sports psychology aid to be?**

When modern ideas of nutrition came to powerlifting, that made a huge difference in performance and weight class management, and I think there's been another influx of great information from exercise science for how to effectively train people for powerlifting. Not as much attention has been paid to the mental aspect of performance even more generally across sport for novice to sub-advanced athletes. It's been very "self-help" or, alternatively, this attitude of "you've got it or you don't". That's not productive and I think making some basic ideas about motivation, confidence, resilience/mental toughness will go a long way toward creating happier, more fulfilled athletes.

**If you could see any one thing change about powerlifting or the community of people within it; what would that one thing be?**

It's easy to lose sight of one's own

**"WHEN MODERN IDEAS OF NUTRITION CAME TO POWERLIFTING, THAT MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN PERFORMANCE AND WEIGHT CLASS MANAGEMENT, AND I THINK THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER INFLUX OF GREAT INFORMATION FROM EXERCISE SCIENCE FOR HOW TO EFFECTIVELY TRAIN PEOPLE FOR POWERLIFTING"**

progress in the bombardment of everyone else's displays on social media. Comparison can serve us, but it often detracts from feelings of success and accomplishment. I feel there's a commodification of training footage in social media that I wish did not exist, and that individuals felt more comfortable in being authentic to themselves—that they

didn't need to display this message that everything is positive and life is always just the highlights. Additionally, I feel that people can be swayed too easily from a single news source or comment to an opinion that isn't justified, though this isn't particular to powerlifting.

**Do you have any sponsors you'd like to thank?**

YES. I've been lucky to pair with good people first, and good companies second. The biggest thanks to 3D Muscle Journey and my coach Eric Helms for putting up with my shit and helping me realize my potential. Citadel Nutrition for believing in me and supporting me through several years already, and moreover being great friends. Barbell Brigade for being the first place I ever had a seminar to help other people, and now I get to continue that relationship as a brand ambassador. SBD for their support and believing in my success and attitude. Barbell 1 and John Bosse for his support as well. Also to 9for9 Media for the photos we've used here. And finally, to a collection of other companies filled with bright and creative minds who have interacted with me and helped me along the way. **PM**

# TURNING PASSION INTO BUSINESS

## RUNNING A PRIVATE POWERLIFTING GYM

BY ZAC WHALEN

**L**et's face it: good, hardcore powerlifting gyms are scarce. If you compete in the sport and aren't lucky enough to find one of these places near your home, it's probably not by choice. Years ago, this was my situation, and I took matters into my own hands and co-founded RiverCity

Barbell, a private powerlifting facility located in Newport, Kentucky. From a business standpoint, we have been able to support a lot of growth without a lot of personal investment. I want to tell our story to help others with similar goals to achieve their dreams.







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## BACK STORY

RiverCity Barbell started as most such gyms do, in a two-car garage owned by my training partner Jason. At the onset, we were allowed half of the space, and his wife was to park her car on the other half. This allowed us room for a power rack, portable bench, a few dumbbells and plates, and a couple of bars. Little by little, we added a piece here and there, from a Glute Ham, to a sled and prowler, to a monolift attachment for the rack, and eventually a reverse hyperextension. It wasn't long before his wife allowed us to take on the rest of the garage, and at this point we started looking for more training partners.

I had been out of commercial gyms for a few years by this point, so finding training partners wasn't the easiest of things to accomplish. We would ask around at meets, but most people lived too far away or already had a gym. On a whim, I decided to run a Craigslist ad under the Sporting: For Sale category looking for powerlifters. I got a few responses but nobody really wanted to commit. That is, until Jim Phillips entered the picture. Jim was the poster child for powerlifting, already benching 405 for reps raw at around 300 lbs. bodyweight out of a commercial gym on pure genetics. Jim came in with no knowledge of powerlifting, but he did have a lot of drive and willingness to learn, and a lot of business sense. Jim started training full-time with us right away, and not only did our lifts get bigger and bigger, but so did our business goals. It quickly became clear that while the two-car garage met our needs at that point, it wouldn't be a good long

**“IF YOU DON'T LOVE WHAT YOU DO AND FIND A LOT OF PASSION AND FULFILLMENT FROM THE JOURNEY, IT WILL BE HARD TO JUSTIFY THE TIME (AND MONEY) SPENT”**

term solution for what we wanted to accomplish.

Fast forward 5 years from that point, and we have gone from a 2-car garage with 3 training partners, to an 800-square-foot warehouse space with five training partners, to a 3,500-square-foot facility with upwards of 70 members. We've gone from one power rack to three. We currently have three monolifts, three deadlift platforms and three competition benches. Dumbbells up to 150 lbs., any bar you can think of, and a whole room full of accessory machines. All of this with very little out of pocket investment. But how did we do it?

## DEFINING THE BUSINESS

It took a lot of effort from a lot of people and some solid decision making along the way. I'll get into the logistics later, but I will preface with this: if your primary motivation for opening a warehouse gym is for profit, read no further. The harsh reality is that very few private gyms ever reach the point of profitability. For Jim and myself, the goal was selfish – to create a top-notch training facility for us to use. To be able to support that, we knew we needed members to help to cover the overhead. As we started to bring new members on

board, we quickly realized that passing on our knowledge and helping people improve themselves was a huge driver for us as well. Improving the experience for our lifters will always be the primary goal of RiverCity Barbell. Before we take any profit out, we must first ensure that we have all the right tools for our lifters and that we always maintain the equipment. For both of us, powerlifting is a hobby and a passion, and we both have full time jobs outside of running the gym. This gives us an edge that a lot of gym owners don't have, as we have reinvested every dollar of revenue we made (and sometimes a lot more until we could pay ourselves back) into the gym. For most private gyms, it's going to be very hard to become profitable for the first several years, if ever. If you don't love what you do and find a lot of passion and fulfillment from the journey, it will be hard to justify the time (and money) spent.

## MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

1. Build very slowly and carefully, and keep your overhead at a minimum. For basic equipment items, look for deals at auction, on Craigslist, or from local high schools that are upgrading. For powerlifting specific items (bars, benches, racks, bands), we shop EliteFTS and have always been very satisfied. We try to buy quality with the intention of never replacing. Make sure that all of your equipment meets the standards of the meets that your athletes will compete in.

2. Look for an opportunity to sublease space, and only lease what you can afford to support at that time. Never assume that growth will happen when you take on a new space, and always

assume worst-case scenario: that you will have to come out-of-pocket to cover any gap between current revenue and the lease. Only expand when it is a necessity and you can afford it. Also, make sure the space you take on is your own and not shared with any other businesses. I'll never forget the time we had to cancel a squat session because our landlord wanted to turn the gym into a nightclub for the evening.

3. Invest in client management software once you get beyond 8-10 members. It does add additional cost, but it eliminates a lot of headaches for the management and the members. We use FrontDesk and have had a very good experience, although a lot of other options are available as well. The monthly debit is critical as very few people carry cash any longer, and it makes the bookkeeping simple.

4. From a culture standpoint, make sure your core group is invested fully in the goals and vision of the gym. When I say core group, I'm referring to the unspoken leaders. These are usually some of the strongest, most tenured, most



experienced lifters. When these people speak, others will stop what they're doing to listen. If your core group doesn't put weights back, nobody else will either. If they don't embrace and coach new lifters, neither will anyone else. If they are the last to pay dues or don't pay at all, others will follow this lead. Be selective on the company you keep and the culture you create. Members will be spending a lot of time within these walls, and they must respect the equipment, the facility, and each other.

5. The progress that your lifters make is directly related to the growth of the gym. Make sure you have resources in place to coach lifters at every level, and be open to people with no prior experience. Private gyms spread mostly by word of mouth, and the more progress members make, the more likely they are to tell their friends. Success breeds success, and PR's are contagious. A good gym should have a certain kind of energy that you feel the moment you walk into the door.

### CONCLUSION

Owning a private gym can be a very rewarding endeavor, and I have loved every second of it along the way. I have met some great people, and most if not all of our members would consider the gym a family. With the spread of the corporate gym chains, a lot of the knowledge and practices of the past have been lost, so it's nice to have our own sanctuary where we can chart the direction. After five years, I feel like we are just getting started, and I can't wait to see what the future holds. **PM**



# THE POWERLIFTING PT

# Steph Cohen

**Age:** 24 | **Height:** 5'0" | **Weight:** 123 lbs.

**Hometown:** Caracas, Venezuela

**Current gym:** Hybrid Performance Method - Miami

## BEST LIFTS:

**Squat:** 370 lbs. | **Bench:** 190 lbs. | **Deadlift:** 455 lbs. | **Snatch:** 191 lbs. | **C&J:** 231 lbs.

**Athletic Background:** Played soccer for the Venezuelan National soccer team 2006-2011, Olympic Weightlifting since 2013, Powerlifting since 2016.

## Were you born in Venezuela or in the US?

I was born in Venezuela and lived there until the age of 18

## How did you get into powerlifting?

When I got into grad school I quickly realized I wouldn't have the same time or energy I needed to keep improving at Weightlifting in order to perform at the level I wanted. Spending 8 hours a day in class plus 3-5 hours a day at the library didn't allow me to train during normal gym hours, so I didn't even have access to bumper plates and platforms by the time I was done with school work. I met Hayden and it was his idea to get me into Powerlifting! I felt like it was easier for me to



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grind through a heavy squat/bench/DL workout since I can just shut my brain off and put in work, than it is for me to have to use more brain power to think about my technique in the snatch and CJ when feeling so brain dead from studying. It was then that I realized that getting stronger could only help me get better at Olympic weightlifting, so since then I've been mainly training Hybrid style – focusing on Powerlifting with the intent of improving my snatch and clean and jerk. My workouts are now a lot more productive and I've really been enjoying competing in Powerlifting for the time being.

**You seem to travel a lot. Is that for work, pleasure, or both? How does that affect your training and nutrition?**

One of my favorite things to do is to explore the world, to learn about new cultures and get out of the daily routine. My travel plans are usually “train-cations”, I do my research on what the cool gyms of each place are and make sure to

## “I’VE BEEN MAINLY TRAINING HYBRID STYLE – FOCUSING ON POWERLIFTING WITH THE INTENT OF IMPROVING MY SNATCH AND CLEAN AND JERK”

go to all and meet as many people as I can. Since expanding my fitness network is considered “work”, it becomes a win-win situation! I get to see the world while writing it as a company expense!! If I’m in the middle of a prep for a competition I would avoid remote destinations, to make sure I have access to gyms every day and so the trip doesn’t interfere with my training. But if I don’t have competitions in sight, I allow myself to be flexible, enjoy the trip, drink, have awesome food

and worry about the collateral damage later. As far as food, I find that the hardest thing is to get in enough protein, so I bring my protein powder and bars with me, and track my macros as best as I can.

**Do you do your own programming or do you have a coach?**

I follow the Hybrid Performance Method programming which is written by myself and my boyfriend Hayden, who is also my powerlifting coach. The person who introduced me to Olympic Weightlifting, his name is Camilo Garcia, still oversees my technique and helps me stay motivated.

**What is the hybrid performance method and how are you involved?**

I’m co-owner of Hybrid Performance Method along with Hayden Bowe. HPM is what we call a “Virtual Gym”. We have gathered experts in each discipline (gymnastics, Olympic weightlifting, powerlifting, CrossFit) to write the best programming possible for each sport and to coach our online community with tech-

“MY TRAVEL PLANS ARE USUALLY “TRAIN-CATIONS”, I DO MY RESEARCH ON WHAT THE COOL GYMS OF EACH PLACE ARE AND MAKE SURE TO GO TO ALL AND MEET AS MANY PEOPLE AS I CAN”

nical analysis, competition planning and peaking and much more. We have over 2,000 members worldwide and members on every continent!

**What made you want to get your degree in Physical Therapy?**

I wanted to pursue a career in something that relates to fitness and human performance – something that I could do that would have an impact on people and would improve their quality of life or help bring them closer to their goals. At the





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same time, I wanted to study something challenging and that doesn't come easy. I might cry and complain about spending endless nights studying and sitting down to listen to lectures for 8 hours a day, but having this degree and knowledge is something that I know will open many doors in the future.

**What are your goals for 2017?**

In Powerlifting, I want to break ALL OF the All Time World Records in the 114 lb. class, and to get back my All Time Squat WR and Total in the 123lbs class! In Weightlifting, I want to keep improving my numbers, but I don't like to stress that much about it... a 200 lb. snatch would be awesome though. **PM**





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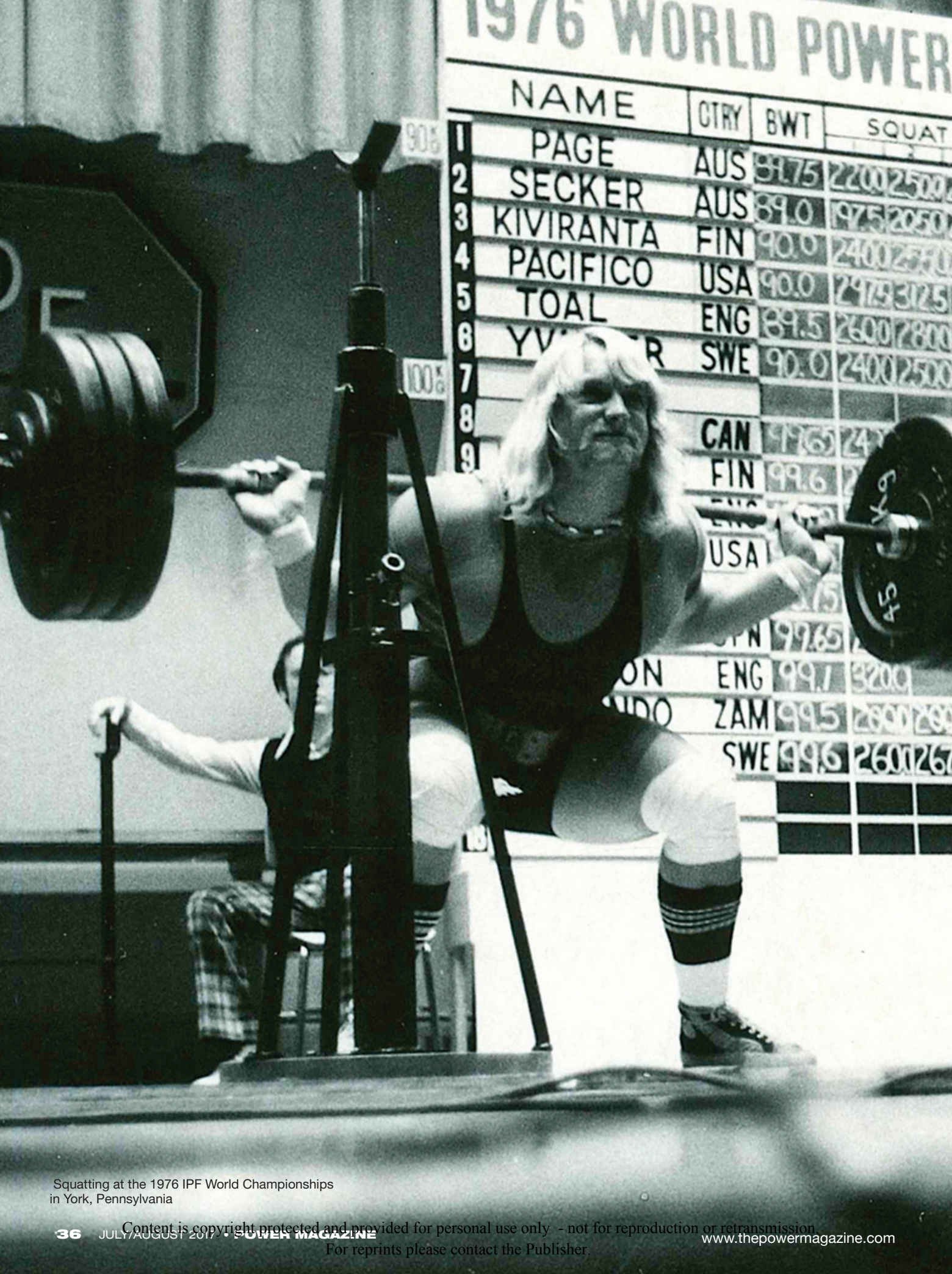
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# 1976 WORLD POWER

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4	PACIFICO	USA	90.0	2975/3125
5	TOAL	ENG	89.5	2600/2800
6	YVONNE	SWE	90.0	2400/2500
7				
8				
9				
		CAN	99.65	2400
		FIN	99.6	2400
		ENG	99.5	2400
		USA	99.5	2400
		FIN	99.65	2400
		ON	99.7	3200
		ZAM	99.5	2800/2800
		SWE	99.6	2600/2600

Squatting at the 1976 IPF World Championships in York, Pennsylvania



# GEARED UP

## THE HISTORY OF SUPPORTIVE EQUIPMENT IN POWERLIFTING – AND HOW TO GET STARTED WITH KNEE WRAPS

BY BEN POLLACK

**Ben Pollack took first place at the US Open in the 82.5kg weight class as well as the lightweight overall. His best lifts were a 733-pound squat, 396-pound bench, and 755-pound deadlift. His 755-pound deadlift was an All-Time World Record!**

**I**'ve competed in powerlifting for about five years now, and all but the past six months of that time I only trained raw, with a belt, knee sleeves, and wrist wraps. But when the CETC US Open was announced with a \$200,000 pot, it seemed like the obvious time to make the transition to using knee wraps.

It wasn't an easy transition. Dozens of great companies manufacture hundreds of styles of knee wraps, and many of them are intense, and take a lot of practice to use. The first time I tried a pair of jacked-up Sling Shot World Record Wraps with 700 on the bar, I stumbled out of the rack, barely caught my balance, started the descent, and everything went to shit. I ended up bailing, uninjured, but I had to buy the gym a new power bar since the one I was using suddenly had a nice, uneven camber.

Until then, I had been skeptical, maybe even scornful of lifters who stuck to geared lifting and claimed it was more technical than raw lifting. But if I struggled that much with just a pair of knee wraps, how would I manage a squat suit?

That's actually more than a rhetorical question – it gets at the history and evolution of supportive equipment in powerlifting. In my day job, I'm a doctoral student studying physical culture at the University of Texas at Austin, so the history of the sport is really important to me. And if you're concerned about the way powerlifting is growing and developing, it should be important to you, too. If you don't really care, skip to the end of this article for some ideas about how to incorporate knee wraps into your own training. Otherwise, read on!

### THE EARLY DAYS OF POWERLIFTING

It's hard to pin down exactly where and when powerlifting was born, since "physical culturists" – people who trained to strengthen and develop their bodies – started squatting, pressing, and pulling over a hundred years ago. Olympic weightlifting had been contested since the very early 20th century, and many held informal competitions with many different lifts. A YMCA in St. Paul, Minnesota held a meet in 1956 that included the bench press, squat, and deadlift. But it wasn't until September of 1964 that the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) planned the first "true" powerlifting meet, called the "Powerlifting Tournament of America."



Squatting at the 1982 IPF World Championships in Munich, Germany

Knee wraps, bench shirts, squat shoes: none of it existed in 1964, so instead, lifters wrapped their knees with Ace bandages and lifted in leather loafers. That primitive gear didn't last long. The push to get stronger, to set records, and win championships was so intense that three years later, guys were cutting tennis balls in half and putting them under their knee wraps for more rebound out of the hole. Tom Overholzer, a top 181-pound lifter, allegedly wrapped his entire torso in bedsheets and Ace bandages, and stuffed it all under his singlet before squatting an American record 655

pounds. His getup was so tight, wrote Powerlifting USA editor Mike Lambert, that "the minute the guy got the bar out of the rack he looked like he was going to die... he's shaking... the bar's shaking... the plates are rattling... the guy's face is purple." The judges weren't happy about it, but at the time, Overholzer wasn't breaking any rules, and there was nothing they could do.

It took four more years of similar antics before the AAU finally banned all wraps, sleeves, and supportive equipment except for a 10-millimeter thick, 4-inch wide belt (today, the limit is 13

millimeters). That extreme solution went over just as poorly as the free-for-all that allowed for Overholzer's egregious bandage-and-bedsheet strategy. Lifters just weren't used to lifting with scarcely any equipment, and they didn't have time to adjust. Some British lifters had taken to using 6-meter long knee wraps – twice the length allowed in the most lenient federations, three times the length allowed in equipped IPF meets. They complained about joint pain and increased injuries. The ban lasted one year before widespread outrage led the IPF in 1973 to allow one-meter wrist wraps and two-meter knee wraps, and a thicker belt (similar, but not identical, to modern standards).

#### LARRY PACIFICO & THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF GEARED LIFTING

It was nine-time IPF champion Larry Pacifico who took Overholzer's idea and in 1974 turned it into something more refined. He called Spanjian Sportswear, a company that manufactured wrestling singlets, and together they designed the Super Suit: a singlet made out of a stiffer, canvas-like fabric that could easily add 15 or 20 kilos to a max-effort squat, without a significant change in technique. (In 1976, George Zangas negotiated his own exclusive deal with Spanjian, and Pacifico allowed Zangas to use the Super Suit name in exchange for distribution rights.)

At around the same time, John Inzer was designing a shirt made of a similar



John Marshall squatting at the 2017 IPL Masters' World Championships in Spring, Texas (photo courtesy of Tammy Marquez)



Kaiser Young squatting at the 2017 IPL Masters' World Championships in Spring, Texas. Notice how the styles of wraps and wrapping technique shown here and in the previous photo differ from those seen at the 1976 and 1982 World Championships. (Photo courtesy of Tammy Marquez).

heavy fabric, with sleeves designed in a forward-facing position to help add strength off the chest in the bench press. He bought patent rights to the design from a New York fashion designer, and held a virtual monopoly over the bench shirt industry until 2002. But according to Ted Arcidi, the first man to bench press over 700 pounds, the early shirts were tame – “like a sweater.”

Still, even the relatively small edge that the new equipment provided meant that everyone wanted to wear a super suit and a bench shirt. Otherwise, even a top-level lifter simply couldn't compete at the highest levels of the sport. The legendary Jill Mills – who won the title of World's Strongest Woman in 2001 and 2002, and set numerous powerlifting world records – explained to me that when she started competing in 1995, she did so without using any equipment. “Back then,” she explained, “Powerlifting USA came out with rankings, and when I would see my numbers, they wouldn't ever say, ‘This was done raw.’ There was no division in the rankings, so my numbers would be under someone else's, even though I knew I was stronger.” So equipped lifting became the de facto standard for powerlifting.

Today, of course, that's not an issue. Most federations keep separate records for raw and equipped lifting, and plenty of elite men and women compete in both divisions. There's no reasons you can't, too, but take it slow. Gear takes a long time to learn to use effectively, and requires intense attention to technique

and sometimes different training methods. I haven't made it into a squat suit or bench shirt yet, but I have had a lot of fun training in wraps, so – from my admittedly biased viewpoint – I recommend starting there.

#### TRAINING WITH WRAPS TODAY

I've struggled to implement knee wraps into my own training. They seem

simple, but the almost overwhelming number of options, the slightly different technique, and the heavier loads that wraps require makes the switch from sleeves to wraps pretty challenging. Still, I've managed to squat over four times my bodyweight in wrapped meets on a couple of different occasions. If you're just starting out in knee wraps, here's what I recommend:

Experiment with different wraps.

Different wraps offer different benefits for your squat. Wraps are usually marketed as providing rebound or casting, and sometimes tightness, too. If you're not familiar with those terms, here's what they mean:

- *Wraps with good rebound help you to reverse direction at the bottom of the squat and get out of the hole faster.*
- *Wraps with good casting help you to stop your descent at parallel.*
- *Tighter wraps are usually less comfortable, but provide more support and/or rebound.*

Generally, raw squatters will prefer wraps with more rebound, and equipped squatters will prefer wraps with more

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Ben Pollack squatting 733 to win the lightweight class at the 2017 US Open in San Diego, California

casting. That said, it's largely personal preference, so don't hesitate to try a wide variety of options. Also, keep in mind that the benefit that you'll get out of any wrap depends in part upon your squat technique. Squatters who descend faster or use a narrower stance will usually get more rebound out of any wrap.

### FIND YOUR GROOVE

The above section hinted at the importance of technique when squatting with wraps. That said, the technique you use with wraps will probably differ a bit from the technique you use in sleeves. When I'm using wraps, I cue myself to push into my knees, which helps me descend faster. In sleeves, I think more about using active dorsiflexion to begin the movement. It's a subtle distinction, but one that makes a big difference.

Similarly, there are many different ways to put the wraps on, and the style and tightness you use can change how the wraps work and what technique you need to use to take advantage of them. I prefer a very tight wrap, starting just above and ending just below the knee, trying to maximize the amount of material behind the kneecap. With the wraps I use, this style affords a lot of rebound even with my relatively slow descent, but with very thick wraps, too much material behind the knee will make it

difficult for a slow squatter to hit depth. There are so many variables here – some lifters find wrapping very tightly to be too uncomfortable or restrictive, but others need that tightness to get enough support or rebound. Again, you'll have to experiment with different wrapping styles to find what works for you.

Once you've found your proper groove, you need to practice that groove. The first time I threw my wraps on, I hit a small PR, so I figured that I could do the majority of my training in sleeves and just use wraps a week or two out from a meet. That's not the case. Because there are so many variables to any lift, you need to practice how you play. I recommend transitioning to wraps 6-8 weeks before a meet, and doing all your squats in wraps for that period of time.

Work into heavier weights slowly. Used properly, wraps can add a lot of weight to your squat – sometimes 100 pounds or more. But working into those heavier poundages too quickly is a mistake. First, you'll deprive yourself of the opportunity to experiment with and practice different techniques, as described above. More importantly, you risk injury: while your knees will benefit from the extra support and protection of the wraps, your hips and ankles don't have that advantage, and need time to adjust. Furthermore, the heavier loads

will impact your overall recovery; if you add weight to your squat too quickly, your deadlift and even your bench will probably suffer as a result. So be patient, increase your poundages slowly, and build a strong foundation rather than risk squatting on a shaky one.

### WRAPPING UP

Raw training has made a huge resurgence in the last few years, powerlifting as a whole is growing, and that's terrific. But for some reason, there's a lot of conflict when it comes to raw and equipped training – conflict that doesn't really make sense because equipment has been part of powerlifting since the very beginning, and modern federations offer separate divisions and keep separate records for raw and equipped lifting. Part of the conflict comes from the very fragmented nature of powerlifting, but that's a topic for another article.

In the meantime, it's enough to recognize that equipped training is a very different experience compared to raw lifting. If it's an experience you're interested in, and you're just starting out, try starting with knee wraps. It's just dipping a toe into the water, but wraps are a fun, challenging addition to training that can have big carryover to your squat in knee sleeves, if you go about using them in a smart way. **PM**





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# MARK BELL'S POWERCAST WITH KEVIN OGAR





**MARK:** Kevin what are your thoughts on this John Cena doll we have on the table? That's holding a massive amount of weight in a curl position with one arm.

**KEVIN:** I'm really impressed. That bar is bending and that's like 900 lbs. that he's doing a strict curl with.

**MARK:** You missed the answer.

**KEVIN:** What's the answer?

**MARK:** The answer is 'How is that weight floating in the air like that?' So, John Cena has joined the ranks of Jesus Christ, Superman and Bo Jackson, to be on the podcast table. It's about time.

**JIM:** It is about time. But since we can't get him on the podcast due to legal restrictions, we can at least get him up here on the podcast table.

**MARK:** He knows he would talk about dirty stuff that would condemn him forever. But we're here today with Mr. Kevin Ogar, a former Crossfitter, and now more of a powerlifter.

**KEVIN:** I'd say a little bit of both but yeah.

**MARK:** You're doing a little bit of Crossfit still?

**KEVIN:** Yeah, I use Crossfit for a lot of my hypertrophy work and accessory stuff.

**MARK:** Keep the heart rate going.

**KEVIN:** Yeah, a nice little bump in my heart rate so I don't get so bored with stuff.

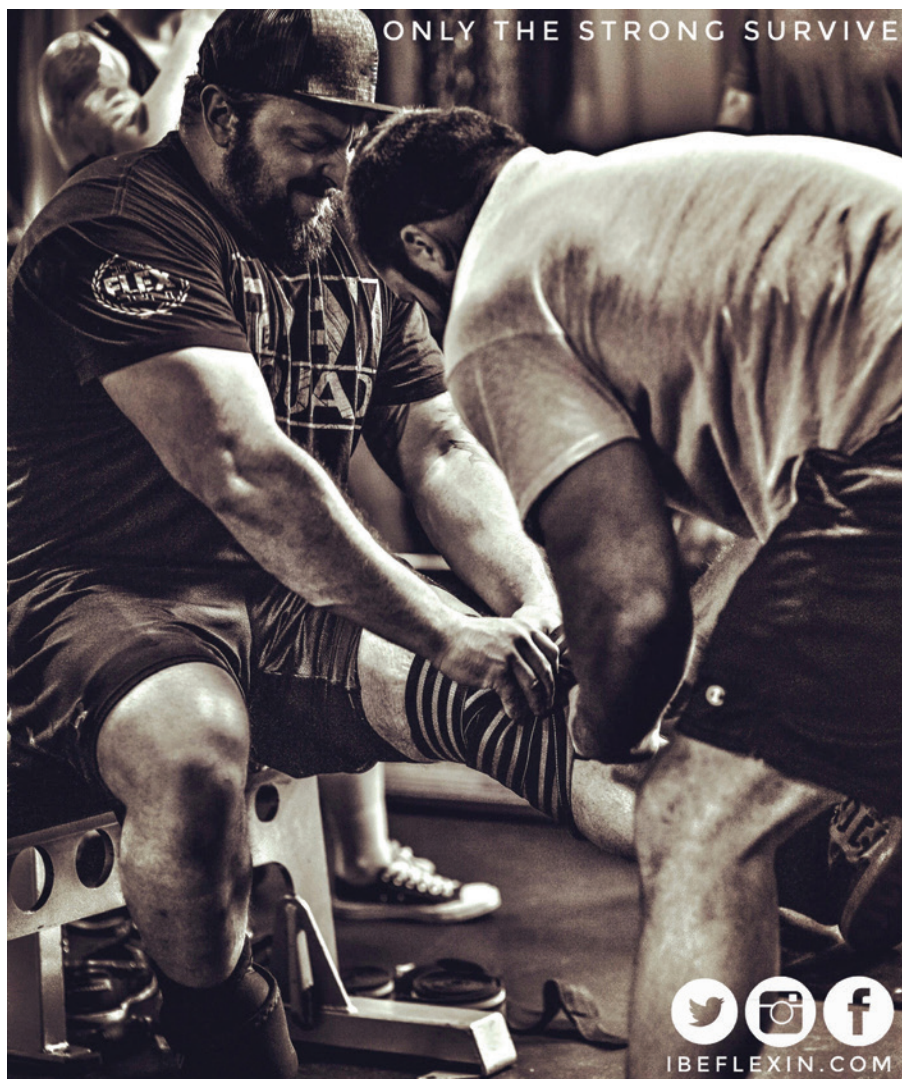
**MARK:** Anyway, we're here with Kevin Ogar, someone who many

people have been motivated by and inspired by. Many people have had a real attachment to you since the injury. Kevin was paralyzed three

"I PLAYED SPORTS FROM THE TIME I WAS 5 ON. EVERYTHING FROM SOCCER, BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, SWIMMING. YOU NAME IT, I PROBABLY PLAYED IT FOR A WHILE. I RAN TRACK, GOT INTO COLLEGE, SWITCHED OVER TO RUGBY AND POWERLIFTING, AND ENDED UP GAINING LIKE 60 LBS. MY FRESHMAN YEAR"

years ago in a weightlifting accident. A crazy set of circumstances. But let's first talk about your life before that. Where did this journey of fitness and strength start?

**KEVIN:** I was around 12 years old when I started working with a barbell.





"I LOVE THE BARBELL SPORTS. ALL OF THEM. WEIGHTLIFTING, POWERLIFTING, CROSSFIT. I THINK THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT ALL THE BARBELL SPORTS, EVEN MORE SO THAN ALL THE OTHER SPORTS. BUT IF I HAD TO PICK A TRUE SPORT, I'D HAVE TO SAY RUGBY"

**for some of that. You can't gain like that without some beer.**

**KEVIN:** No, beer was responsible for a lot of it. Then I ended up getting introduced to Crossfit by one of my bosses at the time, and one of these 120 lbs. girls could kick my ass in a workout. So, I decided that, since I couldn't run up the stairs without breathing heavily, I should probably give it a shot. So, I gave it a shot and started competing in it and that was the story.

**MARK:** What was your favorite sport to participate in?

**KEVIN:** I love the barbell sports. All of them. Weightlifting, powerlifting, Crossfit. I think there is something special about all the barbell sports, even more so than all the other sports. But if I had to pick a true sport, I'd have to say rugby.

**MARK:** So, this injury that happened a few years ago has changed a lot of the things that you can do. But you're still in there lifting like a mofo. Give us a rundown of what happened. I know it was the OC Throwdown. You were doing a snatch. You were kicking some ass, and it wasn't a weight that was unfamiliar to you.

**KEVIN:** No, at the time I was snatching around 300 lbs. for my one-rep and this was a three-rep max hang snatch. So, a snatch from above the knee for a triple. And I had just hit 245 lbs. in the warm up because that's where I was planning on starting. When I was going out, my coach let me know that no one had snatched more than 225 or 230 lbs., so I bumped my number down because I didn't want to waste the energy if I didn't have to. So there was 235 lbs. on the bar. I went out there,

My parents got me a weight set and I would go down to the basement and just squat and bench press. I started lifting then, and got into powerlifting when I was young.

**MARK:** Were you playing other sports?

**KEVIN:** Yeah. I played sports from the time I was 5 on. Everything from soccer, baseball, basketball, swimming. You name it, I probably played it for a while. I ran track, got into college, switched over to rugby and powerlifting, and

ended up gaining like 60 lbs. my freshman year.

**JIM:** That's a lot of beer! From what to what?

**KEVIN:** I think I was 180 – 185 lbs. when I graduated high school and I was 245 lbs. by the end of my freshman year in college.

**JIM:** You didn't weigh that doing Crossfit though, right?

**KEVIN:** No, this was strictly drinking, rugby and powerlifting.

**MARK:** I knew beer was responsible

“ I HAVE A COMPLETE SEVERING OF MY SPINE BETWEEN T11 AND T12. SO IF YOU LOOK AT THE X-RAY, MY SPINE IS ON TWO DIFFERENT SIDES OF MY BODY. SO IT HIT ME SO PERFECTLY THAT I DON'T HAVE ANY FRACTURES IN MY VERTEBRAE. IT JUST CAME IN AT THE RIGHT ANGLE TO HIT THE DISC AND TEAR IT STRAIGHT IN HALF”

I went to go hit the first snatch and it felt a little off balance, so I went to bail backwards so I didn't (oddly enough) injure myself. I went to go jump forward and couldn't get out of the way of the barbell because there was a slight slant to the platform. My right foot got out of the way, but my left foot kind of stuck where it was at. And the barbell came down and hit my left shoulder. We have the HD video so we can see exactly what happened. The barbell hit my shoulder, ricochets off me, hits the bumper plates behind me and come straight back and hits me in the back.

**MARK:** So you got hit twice. And it just happened in a half a second.

**KEVIN:** Yes.

**MARK:** And what exactly is the injury?

**KEVIN:** I have a complete severing of my spine between T11 and T12. So if you look at the x-ray, my spine is on two different sides of my body. So it hit me so perfectly that I don't have any fractures in my vertebrae. It just came in at the right angle to hit the disc and tear it straight in half.

**JIM:** Yeah, I think we had a conversation with John Welbourn right after it happened and he said, "You guys don't understand. This was such a freak thing that it could have happened this way."

**KEVIN:** Yeah, doctors said that if it was 1/4 of an inch in any direction, I'd either be instantly dead or have stood up from it and be perfectly fine.

**MARK:** Do you think that throughout the course of the competition that anything was too close quarters or



**anything shouldn't have been there? I mean you can't live in the past, and I'm sure you're the king of not living in the past. But do you ever feel like that stuff shouldn't have been there?**

Kevin: It's pretty standard practice not to have bumper plates within 5-6 feet of a lifting platform in weightlifting. That's actually in the rulebooks for this exact reason. So, having those weights where they were at was pretty negligent. No one did it on purpose, but it was pretty negligent to have weights stacked up in that position.

**MARK:** Is there more awareness

**now? Is there a Kevin Ogar rule?**

**KEVIN:** I sure hope so. You're still going to see some people do some dumb things and not think about safety. But you're going to see a lot of the major competitions take great care to make sure their athletes are safe. You even see it more and more at regionals and the Games. They're very concerned with the safety of their athletes and how everything goes.

To hear the rest of this POWERCAST, visit the SuperTraining06 YouTube Channel at [www.YouTube.com/Super-Training06](http://www.YouTube.com/Super-Training06)

# DENNIS CORNELIUS: COUNTRY STRONG

BY JOHN GREAVES III

**Let's talk about your background. You played football as a kid and a little bit in high school, right? Then you did Jiu-jitsu and ran 5k races. Somewhere in there you started lifting weights to help you with your Jits? Weren't you lifting when you played football in high school?**

Yeah, the chronological order was: I played football in high school and then I ran 5ks after high school because I graduated in '99 and there wasn't really anything athletic to do unless you went to college. I had some interest from some smaller colleges, but I wanted to be an engineer. So, I went to Oklahoma State to study engineering and just be a regular student. So I ran 5ks.

**How much were you weighing then?**

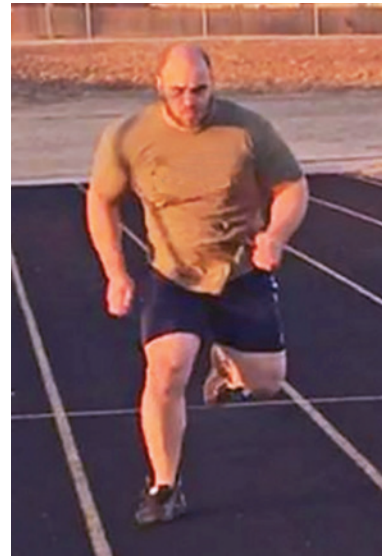
I was big for a runner. I remember weighing about 212–215 lbs. I graduated high school at about 195 lbs. About 2001, I started putting on weight just naturally and I was trying to keep it off! I remember one night running for 45 straight minutes just trying to get the weight off! It just wasn't coming off. Then I started lifting weights heavy in the college gym, and fell back in love with lifting weights then.

**Did you know about powerlifting back then? I know they do a form of powerlifting in some high schools with the football team, typically the squat, bench and power clean.**

Well, I knew about it but it was all geared stuff back then. Raw didn't really take off until 2010. I was interested in lifting but I wasn't interested in lifting in gear.

**You had the USPF and Rickey Dale Crain in Oklahoma, right?**

Yeah. If you're a little more advanced and the main competition was in gear I could see going to that but there was nobody around that I knew that wore gear so I just lifted heavy. I became a PowerBuilder until 2009. That's when I started doing Jiu-jitsu – I did that pretty hard for two years. Then in 2012, I did



my first meet and started doing it almost exclusively. After my first meet I was in love with it!

**What federation was that?**

NASA (Natural Athlete Strength Association) – I did their national meet in the Novice category.

**I asked you what federation because you're most well-known for your International Powerlifting Federation records but you actually compete in multiple drug-tested federations. Is that because you like to compete more frequently or are you like Perry Ellis Jr. who told me (see the March/April 2016 POWER Magazine) he just likes to go where the best competition is?**

Kind of the same thing. I like to compete. But being drug free, you gravitate towards the most competition for a drug-free lifter. Obviously the IPF is the big stage for that and it being in Texas last year it was a few hours' drive but I compete in multiple feds, most of them have been local meets.

**You're saying that you gravitate towards competing drug-free, but about a month ago as I write this you were in a YouTube video training with some lifters who compete in non-drug tested feds and you not only hung**

**with them, in some cases you were stronger. I think you're ranked #5 on Michael Soong's All Time List. How does it feel to know that you can hang with anyone, drug tested or non-drug tested?**

It's fun to keep up with the guys that are not tested – obviously there's more competition on the non-tested side, but the flip side of that is this: say I do a meet and there's a guy there that's putting up numbers that are real close to what I'm doing and he's not drug free and I am, it's not really fair.

You mean it's not fair to him? I mean you're pretty freaking strong!

I feel it's not fair to me because I'm not pumped up with hormones to get to a certain strength level, I'm doing it naturally. I don't care if people do drugs; I want to make sure that I'm known to be drug free. So with that said, I like to compete in the IPF but I like to do the USPA too because I think it's a good federation. I just like to compete in the IPF so it's known that I'm drug free.

**And the IPF can drug test you any time they want right?**

Yeah they basically just show up. You have to give them an hour time slot every single day and tell them where you're

going to be. It kind of sucks, it's a pain to fill out, but on the flip side it's good because they can come test you.

**That helps with credibility, I get it. That's huge because in this world, especially when someone's as strong as you are, people never want to believe that you're not taking anything.**

**So tell me your best numbers in the gym and on the platform.**

Gym  
Squat 826x3  
Bench 585 touch and go  
Deadlift 800  
Competition  
Squat 870  
Bench  
Deadlift 795

**While we're talking, I'm watching the Instagram video of you squatting at Sioux-z Hartwig Gary's gym doing like 826 for three. And the bar's whipping all over the place!**

Yeah, I did two reps and stumbled on the second rep so I re-racked it and came back and hit it again. It was still wobbling but I was able to finish. I'm used to training with a 55 lb. bar; that was actually a 44 lb. Eleiko bar which is actually IPF spec bar. I mentioned that I need to quit training with a 55 lb. bar because I'm spoiled by it. I've been using a 55 lb. bar for weeks.

**Yeah, in the video I see you having to stabilize before you lift. It's funny because I've trained at her gym twice, she and Matt are really nice people. She says she made you not train barefoot; she did the same to my 13 year old when he kicked his shoes off to squat. Is that why you train in your garage so you can make your own dress code?**

Ha, ha! People ask me all of these scientific reasons why I train barefoot and I'm honestly just country. I just walk out to my garage and train barefoot. There's no reasoning behind it at all, I'm just lazy. Ha ha!

**I understand. I've been to Oklahoma, ha ha! But that segues right into the next question. Is that why you wear the same shoes throughout your meet? Don't most lifters at your level have a specific shoe they like to**



**squat in, another pair for bench and maybe some deadlift slippers for good measure? It doesn't even look like you lace your one pair of shoes all the way up!**

I don't! I have them laced so I can just slip them on and off. The last time I tied them was probably when I bought them.

**Oh Lord. Let's just talk about something else — regarding your training style, would you still describe it as basically 5/3/1 but with extra volume?**

Yeah, I kind of use the template — I have since I started. I've added a lot of accessories. I squat twice a week and do some leg accessories on Thursday. Same with bench — I bench twice a week. I just recently started to deadlift twice a week.

**To quote Mark Bell when he first interviewed Layne Norton, "How many days in a week do you all have out there in Oklahoma?" I mean I'm no engineer but by my count we're running out of days in the week!**

Ha ha! Typically, I squat and bench on the same days. Then I deadlift the day after.

**Is that because of competition, so you're used to doing multiple big lifts in one day?**

Yeah, when I started doing it, it seemed to help my endurance during a meet. I'm stronger, longer. I'll do a heavy squat session and a heavy bench session at the beginning of the week. And I won't do any accessories on that day. The deadlift, a lot of time, I'll do military press and then deadlift after that.

**You started doing strongman training. Is that for conditioning or do you use specific movements to improve**

**certain lifts?**

When I was doing strongman I kind of change it up. I do some strongman for a few weeks and I'm kind of on a kick now where I sprint once a week.

**Yeah, I saw that! You're kind of fast. What's your 40 time?**

I'm quick but I'm not that fast. Somewhere around a 5.3, 5.2, I've ran 5.1 before but I was a little bit lighter; I mean, I'm 5'10 and 280 lbs. When I graduated high school I could run a 4.7.

**That's that lineman speed — you know within 10 yards get to the quarterback speed. What about your vertical?**

I've never tested it.

**I was just wondering because that goes back to how you are on the platform. When you squat, it's almost like you don't have a sticking point. You go down slowly but then you come up really explosively.**

I guess I'm just naturally explosive. A lot of powerlifters aren't very athletic — I'm very athletic. I mean I'm quick, that's one reason why I did the grappling and wrestling thing. I was just naturally good at it. When I get done with powerlifting I'm going to try to get back into it and try to do it competitively.

**You still train Jiu-jitsu on the side don't you?**

I was up until about a year ago. I'm getting to a level now where I don't want to get hurt. That's why I've kind of phased out the strongman too and just focused on the powerlifting. I run sprints once a week and that's it. Everything else is to get a bigger total.

**You were doing strongman for cardio — I saw you doing keg carries and things like that for cardio. They also help you with your bracing is that why you chose to use them?**

Kind of, I also used it for grip strength and GPP.

**And going back to Jiu-jitsu for a moment, I've trained it as well and one thing that surprises a lot of people is how much time you spend using isometric strength. Holding a guy off or pulling him into you. Do you find that helped your ability to grind?**

Oh absolutely! I find that's one thing that separates me from a lot of other powerlifters is the ability to grind. A lot of people aren't used to that. They struggle to get through multiple sets of multiple reps and I struggle a little bit less. It toughens you up. I don't have to get real hyped to struggle through reps. Your mind just kind of gets numb and gets used to it.

**It makes sense. I talk to Bud Jeffries on occasion and he says sort of the same things about how it's related to meditation, where you're able to focus.**

Yeah, he's a good example of that! I used to do a lot of the stuff he does – barefoot lifting etc. after high school and before I started running 5ks.

**When I started to get a little more serious about powerlifting as my main competitive outlet, one of the things I saw is powerlifters slapping each other. And I understand, you're trying to get your arousal increased, but because I'd competed in kickboxing and done other martial arts where you want to remain calm in the middle of the chaos, it felt like I was going against my nature to try to get fired up. I couldn't do it. Is that why you're so calm on the platform – your martial arts background?**

Sometimes, if it's a maximal effort attempt, I'll get a little more hyped up to get the crowd into it. It makes it more fun – but for the most part doing heavy top sets and lead ins to first and second attempts at a meet, I'm just focused on getting that attempt. But yeah, I don't like the slapping. I just lose my focus, people have done it to me and it doesn't really do anything for me.

**Every time I've seen you compete, you look like even on your third attempts it looks like you've got more in the tank. I know you use SSPT for your game day coaching do you guys intentionally set it so the numbers you're going to do are numbers that you've hit before, or numbers that you know you can hit?**

No, they're confident but I feel like it's a stretch for me. For instance, the 865 I did at Nationals, I had no idea that I



**So you're doing a friendly competition with Andy Huang. I see you all going back and forth on Instagram.**

Yeah, but deadlift, that's his thing! I kind of am, but he's a little ahead of me.

**And he's probably thinking the same thing about your squat while you're both trying to stay ahead of Garrett Griffin. That dude is crazy strong for his weight class!**

Yeah, he's got a good bench man. Low to mid 500s as a 220 guy!

**You don't train lifters do you?**

No I don't. My thought is it's kind of foolish to go get a powerlifting coach until you've powerlifted for a few couple of years and gotten good at it under your own education. I think somebody who needs to seek out a coach or an advisor is somebody with some years and that has tried a few different things and then you get a coach to put icing on top of the cake.

**Ok, so it's like Michael Jordan before he tried out for high school ball, he spent hours on the court by himself. Like you're bringing better raw material to a coach for them to work with?**

You get all of the basics. I think you tend to be better that way. If you go to a coach right at the beginning of your powerlifting career, people tend to stick with that one coach and they never learn anything outside of that. I've read a lot of articles, I've followed a lot of people who I've looked up to see what they do. I've tried several different things outside of any one coach. I've been coached by several people as far as training techniques and perfecting form but I've never stuck with one person. If you're going to be the best MMA fighter, you want to train with a variety of people that are good.

**Okay, yeah so you get different looks. I got you.**

And you get different feels from different people because you never know what you're going to come up against. It's the same thing with powerlifting. You need to start lifting weights and getting several different perspectives before you get a coach. And when you do settle on a coach, do it but if it's not working feel

would be able to squat that let alone squat it with ease! They saw it after I did the second attempt at 826 – same with Worlds when I did the 833 lbs. at Worlds for my third attempt, I didn't know if it was going to be there because 800 felt heavy! I'm so much stronger in my squat than my deadlift that it's my squat that looks easy. In my squat at the Arnold for instance, they did my game-day coaching for that and my last attempt on bench was really heavy! And that was a number that Matt and Sioux-z had picked out. It was right on the money.

**Let's talk exercise selection: what are your favorite exercises to bring up the competition lifts? I saw that video of you doing the Hack Squats with the girl but I've got to believe that's not the sort of thing that Megan Cornelius (Dennis' wife) allows on a regular basis.**

Ha ha ha! Yeah no definitely not!

**Squat and Deadlift: Bulgarians and Good mornings.**

Bench: I started to do a bunch of back work for my bench. Upper back work, pullups, pulldowns. A lot of rows.

**Any bands or chains?**

I use bands a little bit to do shoulder mobility but as far as attaching them to a bar, I don't use them and I don't use chains at all. To me chains seem like kind of a waste of time. I could be totally wrong but I don't know that you get that much out of chains.

**Well it looks like what you're doing is working. And it occurs to me that those are tools to address weaknesses that you may not have.**

Yeah, that's true.



free to move on.

**That makes sense because powerlifting isn't really a team sport. So there are going to be times when you might end up at a competition by yourself. So if you need the comfort zone of having your team around you to perform well, what are you going to do when they're not there?**

Yes! Exactly! I've gotten advice off of people locally, stuff from Matt and Sioux-z Gary, stuff from Mike Tuchscherer, stuff from Bryce Lewis; I'm going to get some stuff from Chad Wesley Smith. There's no way I'm going to stick with just one coach.

**You were walking around at 264 but now you're at 280 lbs. I was actually going to ask you if you considered dropping weight classes.**

After Worlds I just started gaining weight and I don't know why. Before Worlds, I walked around at 262!

**So then why didn't you cut to 242, you just wanted to stay where you were strong? I mean, it's not like you were struggling!**

And again in the IPF it's 231. A 10-15 lb. weight cut, I could almost work that but I could only do certain feds at 242.

There's just no point in trying to cut down to that weight.

**Okay, to wrap up I'm going to throw some random questions at you. Yes, you have to answer all of them.**

**What would you tell your younger powerlifting self if you could?**

I don't know. There's nothing I really regret. I've poured everything into what I've done.

**What's your beef with people who don't walk out squats? I'm reading what you've put on the Internet now.**

That's a big one for me. I kind of wish that Powerlifting Watch and whoever keeps these records would quit recognizing monolift squats outside of multi ply. I think the monolift was made for multiply and that's it. Anybody that hides behind the whole safety issue is lying to themselves. They're only doing it to pad their total. Walking out a squat is traditional powerlifting. Monolifts didn't come on the scene until the multi ply stuff started. The best squatters in the world are all walking their stuff out; it goes back to mental toughness.

**Couldn't you take that a step further and say your bench press shouldn't be**

**judged against anyone who doesn't have a start command?**

I would agree! I don't want to come across as a douchebag but whatever the strictest form is, that's what I would go to. I think other than that it shouldn't count in an All Time World Record situation.

**What the hell possessed you to put tomato juice in beer? I mean I understand you don't like shoes; I didn't talk about you too much when you said that, but tomato juice in beer?**

Oh man, ha ha! I think it's awesome! It's like my number one, red beer? Oh yeah I love it!

**Wow. You're definitely not like everybody else. Let's end there. I appreciate the chance to help you share your story. I'm going to petition the IPF to allow an IPF legal flip flop so Dennis Cornelius can wear that instead of shoes on the platform.**

Ha ha! That would be awesome Dude! If I could do a whole meet barefoot it would be awesome!

*John Greaves III is the founder of [garagegymlife.net](http://garagegymlife.net), a blog dedicated to promoting and connecting athletes who train at home.*

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# death to the deload

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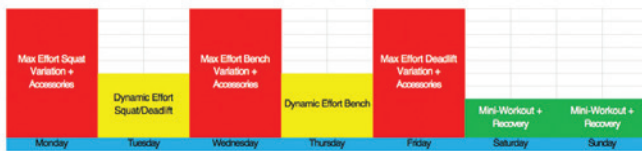


Great sport begins where good health ends. By its very nature, training for, and competing in, elite powerlifting is unhealthy. Any compromise in the name of health, while it may potentially lead to a longer, healthier post-career life – and indeed, perhaps even a longer career – will by definition compromise ultimate, optimal performance.

To prolong one's career, recovery sits alone at the top of the "to-do" list for any elite powerlifter. Training is stressful – extremely stressful. Don't believe me? Know this: a training session is more stressful to an athlete than a broken arm. Why? Training is global, head-to-toe, toe-to-head, while a broken arm is local, miniscule in comparison. Naturally, one's knee-jerk reaction would be to simply prescribe a deload now and again, and with good reason, as some of the best in the industry do so (Matt Wenning, Jim Wendler, Chad Wesley Smith, etc.). What if I told you there is a way to train harder, for longer periods of time, and essentially eliminate the deload? Now, I know what you are thinking, the answer is obviously "drugs". Not the case, so put down your trenbologna sandwich and take notes.

## The High/Low Approach

While it is known that my area of expertise is in the long-term development of elite (team sport) athletes, the methods and principles I utilize are applicable to the sport of powerlifting as well. At the age of 26, my mind is bombarded with information but always aware of the individual's response to a stimulus is highly specific to that individual. I have also used several periodization concepts to get my athletes bigger, stronger and above all, faster. The one concept I have used with unbelievable success is Charlie Francis's vertical integration (high/low) approach to performance enhancement (with some Westside revolved around it of course). My good friend, Derek Hansen, whom I consider to be one of the best physical preparation coaches in the industry, introduced me to the High/Low approach a little over a year ago. In essence, the High/Low approach to training begins each week with an intensity day (95-100% of PR) followed by a low intensity day (<75% of PR) and so on for the remainder of the week. Here is what a typical week may look like:



**FIGURE 1. HIGH/LOW APPROACH APPLIED TO POWERLIFTING TRAINING WEEK**

**A CLOSER LOOK AT HIGH/LOW INTENSITY ZONES**

High intensity or high CNS stress training. Intensity is defined as the degree of effort when compared to maximum capacity. This is referred to as lactic power and capacity work. It enables the athlete to rehearse the sporting activity (squat, bench, deadlift) at high intensity efforts. It is anti-circulatory and sympathetic (fight or flight) dominant. It increases neural demand and strength reserve and requires 48 hours of recovery between sessions. It produces a feeling of fatigue hours after completion, especially with power development.

On the other end of the spectrum, low intensity or low CNS stress training refers to aerobic power and capacity. This is pro-circulatory and resets PNS (parasympathetic nervous system) tone, entering the lifter into the arena of “rest and digest,” if you will. It increases capillary density, slowing blood flow down. This enables blood to stay in contact with tissue longer increasing nutrient transfer and waste product removal. It also keeps motor neurons hot, lowering electrical resistance and increasing motor unit activation. Low stimulus requires 12–24 hours of recovery between sessions. The athlete is also able to maintain muscular heat from the general warm up. Two of its most important properties are: 1) it secures the adaptation of the high CNS stressor from the previous training session and 2) promotes recovery as the lifter maintains bar speed. Dr. Bryan Mann says, “Velocity recovers everything.” It is this property that is overlooked and never mentioned. If you pay close attention to Charlie Francis’ work, it is made clear that the organism (lifter) can have a high CNS component on a low CNS day as long as it is brief in nature – insert dynamic effort and voila, the lifter is actively recovering, addressing a critical aspect of the sport in bar speed, and maintaining a high CNS component each training session.

Monday	Max Effort (1-5 reps) Squat Variation (8-10 sets) + 1-3 Accessory Exercises	60-75 min.	High Intensity
Tuesday	Dynamic Effort Squat/Deadlift (6-10 sets, 2 reps/set)	20-30 min.	Low Intensity
Wednesday	Max Effort (1-5 reps) Bench Variation (8-10 sets) + 1-3 Accessory Exercises	60-75 min.	High Intensity
Thursday	Dynamic Effort Bench Variation (6-10 sets, 3 reps/set)	20-30 min.	Low Intensity
Friday	Max Effort (1-5 reps) Deadlift Variation (8-10 sets) + 3 Accessory Exercises	60-75 min.	High Intensity
Saturday	1-3 Accessory Exercises	10 min. or less	Low Intensity
Sunday	1-3 Accessory Exercises	10 min. or less	Low Intensity

**DISSECTION OF THE TRAINING WEEK**

**FIGURE 2. THE HIGH/LOW REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH TRAINING DAY**

We will begin with the High CNS training days. I am sure you noticed that each high day is in the order of any powerlifting meet: squat, bench, dead. The benefits of this ordering system are not only practical as it is the exact order of the lifts come the day of competition, but it also serves the lifter at a physiological level as well. Deadlift is placed at the end of the training week due to the incredible amount of CNS fatigue accrued from performing a max effort variation of its kind, anytime we grip an implement with our hands, we recruit more motor units therefore leading to greater stress and more accumulation of fatigue.

Squat is placed at the beginning of the week because it will provide a large enough stimulus to invoke an adaptation but not too much to hinder the lifter 48 hours later for his max effort bench session. Bench is placed in the middle of the week because it adheres to the Law of 72 Hours which states, “the same muscle group can be trained maximally but only after a period of 72 hours”. The bench press serves as a buffer between the squat and deadlift which are both primarily lower body exercises.

As for the accessory exercises on these days, weaknesses should be the primary focus. As Louie Simmons says, “It does



no good to be strong in the wrong exercises.” You are only as strong as your weakest link, train accordingly. Lastly, on a High CNS day, the training session should last no more than 75 minutes. Why? At that time, serum testosterone levels begin to plummet and will affect growth as well as recovery.

Onto the Low CNS training days, as you can see they both address velocity in the dynamic effort method. Why do the low days address the same body part(s) as the day before? First, you can train the same movement twice in one week, if the first session is low in volume and high in intensity and the second high in volume and low in intensity. Second, the bar speed will create a favorable circulatory response which will flush out any waste that accrued the previous day and promote recovery. Little-to-no accessory work shall be done on these days.

As for the mini-workouts, the lifter is given the most freedom in these sessions from an exercise selection standpoint. The lifter should pick three exercises that address weaknesses only and will perform 3-4 sets of 25 reps per set (again, low intensity, high volume). These sessions will take no longer than 10 minutes each and be aerobic in nature. How does one know if they are in an aerobic environment? Easy, if you are able to hold a conversation while exercising. If you are wheezing and cannot catch your breath, you are entering the “CrossFit zone” which is a no-no!

The biggest gripe I hear at first glance of this template is the concern that the lifter “isn’t doing enough”, to which I combat by stating, “Training is not what you can do, it’s what you can recover from – period.” If you work yourself too hard, day in and day out, eventually you will over train or worse – dig yourself a hole you are unable to crawl out of. Trust me, I have been there, it ain’t pretty. If you feel refreshed every single day and are making gains, correct me if I’m wrong, but isn’t that what the end goal is?! By recovering properly through the High/Low

approach, you are reaching a new level of preparedness each training session thus negating the need for a deload week.

### **Why the High/Low Approach?**

1. It utilizes the appropriate energy systems as powerlifting is an alactic-aerobic sport! Powerlifting? Aerobic? How can that be?! The aerobic energy system (what some may refer to as, “GPP”) and its development serves as the backbone, or base of alactic (high intensity, short duration) work from a recovery standpoint and repeatable efforts of high intensity bouts i.e. a powerlifting meet.

2. It will not confuse the body! If it is confusion you seek, then perhaps CrossFit is your calling in this life. This approach allows you to focus on the specific requirements (strength, hypertrophy, velocity) for each training session and distribute them as you see fit.

3. It allows the body to super compensate, not just seek homeostasis. Which will, in turn, allow one to train for longer periods of time without a deload. In other words, thrive not survive!

4. As a lifter’s level of preparedness (GPP) increases, the intensities must be separated into high and low to account for increasing recovery requirements from the high intensity training sessions. I am always puzzled when I observe coaches prescribe high intensity workouts daily – have you lost your mind? Let me help you find it.

5. The high/low approach will vastly improve absolute strength with low volumes. It is truly a no-brainer.

### **Training Considerations for Medium Intensity?**

To put it bluntly, training in “the medium” is a complete waste of time for a powerlifter. It is not an energy system demand of our sport. Medium CNS stress training (76-94%)

is lactic power and capacity. This sport is not lactic based, so quit training sub maximally for extended periods of time unless your goal is to become a puffy, weak, body builder. Additionally, this intensity zone presents the problem that is the superimposed glycolytic and aerobic training effects that cause a profound impact on adaptation. In other words, it confuses the body. This is exactly what we DO NOT want, remember?! It's too slow/light for gains in absolute strength and too fast for building a high rate of force development and promoting recovery. Thus, as preparedness increases, it must be accounted for as high intense CNS training. Plus, this type of training inhibits aerobic enzyme and mitochondria production. Hopefully now you get the picture.

#### CONCLUSION

Not only is competition at the highest levels of powerlifting not healthy, the training required to perform at this level to begin with is necessarily unhealthy also: this has more than obvious relevance to the developmental pathways required for

**“THE OPTIMAL POWERLIFTING EXISTENCE REQUIRES AN ALMOST SINGLE-MINDED NARCISSISM; A TRUE WILLINGNESS TO FOREGO THE TRADITIONAL “HEALTHY”, MORE “BALANCED” LIFESTYLE. NO MATTER HOW YOU SLICE IT, OUR SPORT IS DANGEROUS, AND IT IS AS TAXING AS IT IS DEMANDING”**

lifestyle. No matter how you slice it, our sport is dangerous, and it is as taxing as it is demanding. If you are looking to maximize performance in powerlifting, there will always be a competing dichotomy between health and performance. Odds are, if you are reading this, you have dived head-first into the sport, you have chosen the sword, and you are willing to pay the toll. Having said that, I deem it safe to assume that you want to train harder and longer. If that is the case, then death to the deload – enter the high/low approach and chase greatness. **PM**

a professional powerlifting career. To be elite in this realm requires an unhealthy obsession – in ultimately lifting a jaw-dropping amount of tonnage week in and week out, and the biopsychosocial stressors as well. The progression to ever increasing loads will take its toll on you over time. This “toll” requires payment every single day and is not limited to a lifter’s body, but also on other aspects of what many consider necessary in a “healthy” life.

The optimal powerlifting existence requires an almost single-minded narcissism; a true willingness to forego the traditional “healthy”, more “balanced”



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# ATHLETE TO WATCH JOSEPH PENA

**Age:** 18 | **Height:** 6' | **Weight:** 340 lbs.

**Hometown:** San Antonio, TX

**High School:** Holy Cross

**Current Gym:** Heavy Metal,  
Texas Strength System, Strong First-HC

**Best Squat:** 1025 lbs. single ply at the  
Texas HS State Championship

**Best Raw:** 805.8 lbs at 2016 IPF Raw  
Worlds in Killeen

**Best Bench:** 417 lbs. raw at Raw Bench  
Worlds, 515 equipped

**Best Deadlift:** 660 raw

**Tell us a little bit about your athletic background. How long have you been training, and what made you even want to take up powerlifting?**

My parents started me in soccer when I was 4 to get some energy out. I was a handful. I played T-ball, flag football and a little basketball also. I first got under the bar when I was 8 years old. I used the 15 lb. aluminum bar just to practice my form. I trained in the summers with my dad and his friend Sean Berry. I did my first meet with my dad and brother in 2008. It was fun – I liked traveling and staying in hotels and of course we



got trophies. They were training with the Starting strength program which is the program they were teaching me. I have been following the program for almost 9 years now and I realize I have always been in good hands.

**What does your diet look like? Anything specific, or do you eat like every other 18-year-old boy?**

When training I order my meal preps from the Lion's Den here in town. I'm allowed extra meat during training but I try to stick to a protein, a basic carb and veggies. I drink my milk, lots of water and some sports drinks – that's about it. When I'm not on meal preps I usually eat what I want in moderation.

**What advice would you give young kids who were looking to chase numbers like yours? Or just be successful in sports at a young age in general?**

I always tell someone who is just getting started to get really good at the basic lifts, just like the Starting strength program teaches. I have been on it for 8-9 years and it's still working. I use the barbell about 95% of the time. I sometimes use dumbbells, and of course the prowler, but the barbell has everything you need. The next thing I tell them is to find a good mentor – someone who has been around and knows a few things really well and not just a bunch of advanced stuff that's harder to master. Stick to the basic barbell lifts. Lift right, lift big, go eat.

**What motivates you?**

I hate losing. I am a very competitive person and I am always trying to do better so that I can win. In everything I do, as calm as I play it off, I can't stand losing. That is honestly my biggest motivator because I know there are people out there working just as hard as I am trying to beat me, and just by my nature I can't let that happen.

**What role does your dad play in your training?**

My father has played the most pivotal role in my training. He has helped me through thick and thin and he has helped



teach me how to work hard for what I want, as well as to have fun while doing so. He has solidified a strong ground for me in my strength training as well as being there to mentor for my training and in life. As much as we get on each other's nerves, I really couldn't ask for a better training partner.

**Do you have any specific goals? Where do you want to go with powerlifting?**

I want to be the youngest person to hit 1000 lbs. raw. That's my main goal. I'd like my bench to get better, and of course my dead lift is nowhere where it needs to be like for the open division. And you know what? 2200 lbs. raw sounds pretty good also. After college, I want to keep training but change my focus just a little bit. I would like to lift in the 308-lb. weight class, and then the 275s, and if everything goes well maybe the 262s. But that's after college.

**What's next for you? College? Sports? Powerlifting full-time?**

I'm hopefully going to play football in college. I think I can play anywhere. I'm just not 6 foot 5 so I can't go D1 for some reason but I would love to compete at the collegiate level. I was at Powerlifting Nationals this year and it was a great atmosphere. Lots of excitement, lots of cheering – it was a great team event.

**Where can we see you compete next?**

I'm doing the NAPFs in Orlando in July and one more local meet before August. Other than that, I have nothing on the schedule. **PM**

# Super Training Corner

There's something to be said about a 1,000 lbs. + skwaat. The POWER, ferocity, and tenacity it takes to drop down towards the ground and come back up with that amount of weight on your shoulders speaks volumes on what a person is made of. Whether you have 800 lbs. or 400 lbs. on your back, if you're giving it everything you have, then you're alright in our book. The skwaat is the first movement in any full-power competition and is often the most dangerous. If not done properly, under too much strain, the first movement of the day could be your last. We want to point out a variety of methods and tools that Super Training Gym uses to prepare for meet day. Methods such as a secondary skwaat day, reverse band skwaats, box skwaats, and belt skwaats are a handful of practices we use to increase the overall time under tension in order to strengthen both our body and our minds. On your next training cycle, try implementing some of these methods to increase your overall volume—this will help strengthen [you] and better prepare yourself for meet day.

## **METHOD 1- SECONDARY SKWAAT DAY**

By performing an additional skwaat movement throughout the week, you will spend more time perfecting your form and speed. The more confident and comfortable you are underneath a barbell, the lighter the weight will feel and potentially move. Typically, a secondary skwaat day should focus on speed or volume.

## **METHOD 2- REVERSE BAND SKWAAT**

Setting up bands above the bar on the skwaat rack in order to make the weights lighter in the hole and heavier at the top is a great way of getting used to maximal loads without taking the brunt of moving the weight for the whole rep. For example, pending how the bands are set up, a loaded 500 lbs. at lock-out could be 450 lbs. in the hole. This allows you to focus on speed with the "lighter" weight, but it also allows you to lock out the heavier loads. This is great after your main skwaat movement for some additional work.

## **METHOD 3- BOX SKWAAT**

A box skwaat is similar to a paused bench in the sense that you "rest" on the box and explode off [of it]. A box skwaat pairs well with specialty bars such as SSB [Safety Squat Bar] or chambered bar. Perfecting the box skwaat in the off-season or [during your] secondary skwaat day can directly assist your free skwaat.

## **METHOD 4- BELT SKWAAT**

A belt skwaat allows you to be free of any weights on your shoulders or back. By only applying weight to your lower body, you're able to stay clear of any upper body strain that could carry into your other lifts. Incorporated on your main skwaat day or on its own, the belt skwaat is a great volume builder for stronger and healthier legs.

All of these methods are used regularly at ST Gym. The goal is to use every tool in your toolbox to get Stronger. By increasing volume safely and in a controlled manner, you increase your ability to lift heavier weights on the platform. More training methods [to follow] in the next issue from Super Training Gym – "The Strongest Gym in the West!"





# Current Top 50 Rankings: Men

## SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Squat
1	Andrew Herbert	USPA	2017-04-15	881
2	Aaron Palko	RPS	2016-10-22	880
3	Kevin Oak	USPA	2017-04-15	870
4	Matthew Mitchell	UPA	2016-07-09	854
4	Matt Mitchell	UPA	2016-07-08	854
4	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2016-11-05	854
7	Joshua Smith	XPC	2016-09-17	850
8	Christopher Karmin	XPC	2017-03-04	840
9	Amit Sapir	UPA	2016-07-16	828
10	Mark Miller	RPS	2016-07-16	826
11	Victor Biryukov	USPA	2017-03-05	815
11	Eduard Khanjyan	USPA	2017-04-15	815
13	Jordan Wong	RPS	2016-06-11	804
13	Filippo Ingrosso	GPC	2016-10-30	804
13	Dal Gains	USPA	2016-12-10	804
16	Don Stemen	XPC	2017-03-04	800
17	Hifon Smith	USPA	2016-07-16	799
18	Joseph Sullivan	SPF	2016-11-05	788
19	Jared Skinner	USPA	2017-03-05	782
19	Jason LeGrand	365 Strong	2017-04-23	782
19	Courtney Church	RPS	2016-11-12	782
19	Kurt Roudebush	RPS	2016-11-12	782
23	Larry Williams	USPA	2017-04-15	777
23	Tony Montgomery	USPA	2017-04-15	777
25	Justin Bethune	WRPF	2016-08-20	766
26	Charly Joung	RPS	2016-11-12	765
26	Paul Oneid	XPC	2017-03-04	765
28	Pete Rubish	SPF	2016-11-05	760
28	Kyle Sheridan	RPS	2016-08-07	760
30	Brandon Martin	RPS	2016-11-13	750
31	Will Mobley	SPF	2016-12-17	735
32	Brandon Tunquist	UPA	2016-08-06	733
33	Ryan Daining	365 Strong	2016-07-10	730
34	Jordan Jarrell	RPS	2017-04-29	728
35	Jordan Shallow	USPA	2017-04-15	727
36	Aaron Pырzynski	RPS	2016-06-25	725
36	Justin Sowers	XPC	2017-03-04	725
38	Tyler Cummings	USPA	2016-10-29	722
39	Clint Smith	RPS	2016-09-03	716
39	Scott Beitzell	USPA	2016-12-10	716
41	Steffen Smith	USPA	2016-06-25	710
41	Taryn Jones	APA	2016-10-08	710
41	Shane Housmans	RPS	2016-12-10	710
44	Eric Leitman	USPA	2016-08-27	705
44	Benjamin Boettcher	APF	2017-03-26	705
44	Brandin Brenner	USPA	2017-02-25	705
44	Pat Thompson	APF	2017-02-18	705
44	Adam Hughes	USPA	2017-01-14	705
44	Mike Bianchi	RPS	2017-04-29	705
44	Logan Leverett	RPS	2016-08-06	705
44	Ed Knoblock	XPC	2017-03-04	705

## BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Bench
1	Nicholas Tsourounis	IPL	2016-09-24	600
2	Larry Williams	SPF	2016-11-05	573
3	Oran Smith	RPS	2016-10-15	568
4	Kirby White	USPA	2016-10-08	540
4	Mark Chieco	USPA	2016-09-10	540
4	Matt Phelps	USPA	2017-02-18	540
4	Tee Popoola	USPA	2016-09-03	540
8	Austin Pappas	USPA	2016-07-18	534
9	Mike Bianchi	RPS	2017-04-29	530
10	Rocky Ruiz	USPA	2017-03-25	529
10	Jared Burton	USPA	2017-04-01	529
10	Eric Downey	USPA	2016-08-06	529
13	Joshua Smith	XPC	2016-09-17	520
14	Shae Jones	USPA	2016-06-25	518
15	Carlos Reyes	RPS	2016-08-13	515
16	Rick Brooks	WPC	2016-08-06	512
16	John Rivas	USPA	2016-07-09	512
18	Tim Spoonmore	RPS	2016-09-17	510
18	Brandon Gooch	IPA	2016-07-16	510
20	Michael Dudley	RAW	2016-09-10	507
20	Jordan Jarrell	RPS	2017-04-29	507
20	Jason Julian	USPA	2017-04-15	507
23	Michael Bianchi	RPS	2016-10-08	505
24	Andrew Burnell	UPA	2016-07-08	501
24	Nathan Rapstad	USPA	2016-12-10	501
24	Tony Montgomery	USPA	2017-04-15	501
24	Bradly Bechel	USPA	2016-07-09	501
24	Mark Miller	RPS	2016-07-16	501
24	Steve Thompson	USPA	2017-04-08	501
24	Sean Brownstein	RPS	2016-06-11	501
24	Matthew Mitchell	UPA	2016-07-09	501
24	Jerome Odie	RAW	2016-09-17	501
24	Kevin Oak	USPA	2017-04-15	501
24	Matt Mitchell	UPA	2016-07-08	501
35	Kyle Lombardo	RPS	2016-08-27	500
36	Trevor Bryant	APF	2017-03-11	496
36	Andrew Herbert	WRPF	2016-08-20	496
36	Scott Beitzell	USPA	2017-04-01	496
39	Garrett Blevins	USAPL	2017-03-04	493
40	Luke Uribe	APF	2016-09-16	490
40	Kurt Roudebush	RPS	2016-11-12	490
40	Ed Knoblock	XPC	2017-03-04	490
40	Joseph Sullivan	SPF	2016-11-05	490
40	Dickie Spiroff	WPC	2016-11-10	490
40	Brandin Brenner	USPA	2017-02-25	490
40	Ivan James	USPA	2017-01-07	490
40	Cory Henry	WPC	2016-11-10	490
40	Cory Dexter	USPA	2016-09-10	490
40	Brandon Whitfield	USPA	2016-10-08	490
50	Joe Hardy	USAPL	2016-10-13	485
50	Shane Mounce	USPA	2017-02-11	485

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# 242 lbs. - Raw with Wraps

## DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Deadlift
1	Pete Rubish	SPF	2016-11-05	870
2	Michael Eaton	RAW	2017-05-20	837
3	John Rivas	USPA	2016-07-09	832
4	Andrew Herbert	WRPF	2016-08-20	826
4	Larry Williams	SPF	2016-11-05	826
6	Eli Burks	USAPL	2017-03-04	810
7	David Troutt	USPA	2016-07-23	804
7	Luigi Fagiani	USPA	2016-12-10	804
9	Ogden Myklebust	USAPL	2016-07-16	800
10	Chris Bastian	USPA	2017-02-11	799
10	Chris Lee	USPA	2017-02-11	799
12	Victor Biryukov	USPA	2017-03-05	793
13	Kyle Sheridan	XPC	2017-03-04	790
14	William Barabas	USPA	2016-06-26	788
15	Jamal Browner	USAPL	2017-03-04	777
15	Mark Miller	RPS	2016-07-16	777
17	BJ Barabas	RPS	2016-08-06	771
17	Hifon Smith	USPA	2016-07-16	771
17	Josh Gregory	RPS	2017-02-18	771
20	Ed Knoblock	XPC	2017-03-04	770
21	Brennon Peterson	IPL	2017-04-21	766
21	Tee Popoola	USPA	2016-09-03	766
23	Aaron Palko	RPS	2016-10-22	765
23	Brandon Martin	RPS	2016-11-13	765
25	Josh Dakin	USPA	2016-08-13	760
25	Ed Collins	IPA	2016-11-20	760
25	Bryce Lewis	USAPL	2016-10-13	760
28	Nathan Rapstad	USPA	2016-12-10	755
28	Andrew Burnell	UPA	2016-07-08	755
28	Justin Dubs	USPA	2016-12-10	755
28	Anthony Gargiulo	RPS	2016-11-12	755
32	Spencer Farley	IPA	2016-08-20	750
33	Jared Skinner	USPA	2017-03-05	749
33	Eduard Kharjyan	USPA	2017-04-15	749
33	Hugo Quinteiro	IPL	2016-11-12	749
33	Robert Knutson	RPS	2016-10-15	749
37	Wil DeJong	USPA	2017-01-14	744
37	Courtney Church	RPS	2016-11-12	744
37	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2016-11-05	744
40	Michael Pennacchia	USAPL	2016-10-13	738
40	Neal Dakmak	WPC	2016-11-11	738
40	Kurt Roudebush	RPS	2016-11-12	738
43	Dale Phan	XPC	2017-03-04	730
44	Garrett Blevins	USAPL	2017-03-04	727
44	Nathan Lester	USPA	2017-04-22	727
44	Matthias Maines	RPS	2016-10-15	727
44	Ryan Kimball	USPA	2017-01-14	727
44	Brandon Tunquist	UPA	2016-08-06	727
44	Joseph Sullivan	SPF	2016-11-05	727
44	Dal Gains	USPA	2016-12-10	727
44	Jeremy Oleson	WRPF	2016-08-19	727

## TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Total
1	Larry Williams	SPF	2016-11-05	2170
2	Aaron Palko	RPS	2016-10-22	2125
3	Mark Miller	RPS	2016-07-16	2105
4	Joshua Smith	XPC	2016-09-17	2090
5	Pete Rubish	SPF	2016-11-05	2070
6	Victor Biryukov	USPA	2017-03-05	2044
6	Brandon Franklin	SPF	2016-11-05	2044
8	Eduard Kharjyan	USPA	2017-04-15	2033
9	Kurt Roudebush	RPS	2016-11-12	2011
10	Joseph Sullivan	SPF	2016-11-05	2005
11	Hifon Smith	USPA	2016-07-16	2000
11	Tony Montgomery	USPA	2017-04-15	2000
11	Matthew Mitchell	USPA	2017-04-15	2000
11	Brandon Martin	RPS	2016-11-13	2000
15	Matt Mitchell	UPA	2016-07-08	1989
16	Jared Skinner	USPA	2017-03-05	1984
17	Dal Gains	USPA	2016-12-10	1978
18	Ed Knoblock	XPC	2017-03-04	1965
19	Courtney Church	RPS	2016-11-12	1951
20	Kyle Sheridan	RPS	2016-08-07	1950
21	Christopher Karmin	XPC	2017-03-04	1945
22	Andrew Burnell	UPA	2016-07-08	1940
23	Jason LeGrand	365 Strong	2017-04-23	1934
24	Filippo Ingrassio	GPC	2016-10-30	1918
24	Kirby White	USPA	2016-10-08	1918
26	Luigi Fagiani	USPA	2016-12-10	1912
27	Josh Gregory	RPS	2017-02-18	1906
28	Jordan Jarrell	RPS	2017-04-29	1901
28	Tyler Cummings	USPA	2016-10-29	1901
28	Nathan Rapstad	USPA	2016-12-10	1901
31	Spencer Farley	IPA	2016-08-20	1900
32	Ed Collins	IPA	2016-11-20	1890
33	Jordan Wong	RPS	2016-06-11	1884
34	Pat Thompson	APF	2017-02-18	1873
35	Matthias Maines	RPS	2016-10-15	1862
35	Justin Bethune	WRPF	2016-08-20	1862
35	Scott Beitzell	USPA	2016-12-10	1862
35	Jordan Shallow	USPA	2017-04-15	1862
39	Jake Grisewood	XPC	2017-03-04	1860
40	Brandin Brenner	USPA	2017-02-25	1857
41	Brandon Tunquist	UPA	2016-08-06	1846
42	Nick Molteni	RPS	2016-11-12	1840
42	Charly Joug	RPS	2016-11-12	1840
44	Benjamin Boettcher	APF	2017-03-26	1835
44	Mike Bianchi	RPS	2017-04-29	1835
46	Amit Sapir	UPA	2016-07-16	1832
47	Boris Terry	USPA	2017-05-13	1829
47	Jeremy Oleson	WRPF	2016-08-19	1829
47	Hugo Quinteiro	IPL	2016-11-12	1829
47	Sean Brownstein	APF	2017-02-19	1829

# BENCH HEAVY

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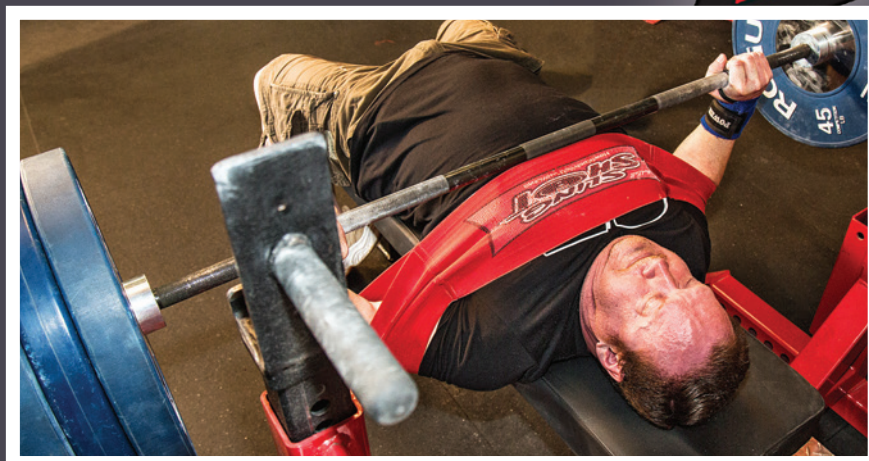


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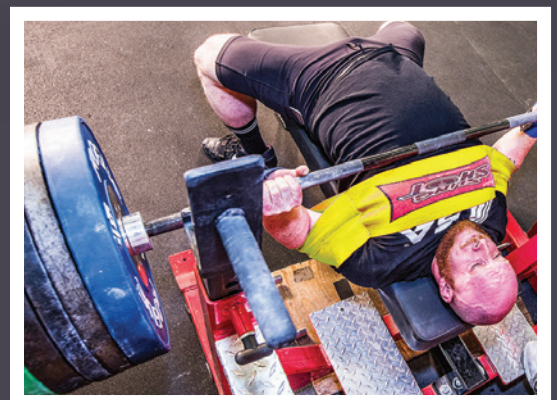
*Mark Bell*

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# Current Top 30 Rankings: Women....

## SQUAT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Squat
1	Sarah Lewis	SPF	2017-04-22	545
2	Kristy Hawkins	USPA	2017-04-15	540
3	Stella Krupinski	XPC	2017-03-04	455
4	Carrie Grissinger	USPA	2017-01-07	451
5	Molly Mullikin	SPF	2017-04-22	450
6	Laurie Smith	SPF	2017-03-11	429
6	Lacey Mesley	USPA	2017-04-15	429
6	Samantha Scott	UPA	2016-07-09	429
9	Sumer Johnson	USPA	2016-09-03	424
9	Jessica Belt	WRPF	2016-08-20	424
11	Amanda Pridgen	SPF	2017-04-22	415
12	Caitlin Sullivan	APF	2017-03-25	402
12	Zorahgail Balino	APA	2016-10-08	402
12	Tanya Peterban	RPS	2016-09-03	402
15	Nishea Martinez	USPA	2017-01-07	391
15	Jillian Prior	USPA	2017-04-08	391
17	Sherine Marcelle	XPC	2017-03-05	390
18	Sierra Nevels	RPS	2016-10-15	385
18	Sarah Gaither	RPS	2016-11-19	385
18	Jessica Zang	IPA	2016-06-25	385
18	Calley Shurgot	XPC	2017-03-04	385
18	Lanae Shockley	USPA	2016-12-10	385
23	Bridget Wilkinson	USPA	2016-10-15	380
23	Rachael Naseman	SPF	2017-04-22	380
23	Kora Whitaker	SPF	2017-04-22	380
26	Sabrina De Costa	RPS	2017-04-29	375
26	Megan Henschel	UPA	2017-01-22	375
28	Yael Nelson	XPC	2017-03-04	370
29	Jessica Wissmann	365 Strong	2017-04-22	369
29	Celeste Ramazani	RPS	2016-10-15	369

## BENCH PRESS

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Bench
1	Kristy Hawkins	WRPF	2016-08-20	319
2	Sarah Lewis	SPF	2017-04-22	290
3	Sumer Johnson	USPA	2016-09-03	264
4	Allison Hind	HERC	2016-06-16	260
4	Chelsea Savit	USAPL	2016-10-13	260
6	Jodie Sajor	USPA	2016-06-11	259
7	Rori Alter	USAPL	2017-03-04	253
7	Jessica Belt	WRPF	2016-08-20	253
9	Stephanie Burger	XPC	2017-03-04	250
10	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2016-06-25	242
10	Sierra Nevels	RPS	2016-10-15	242
10	Billie Jacobs	USPA	2017-02-11	242
10	Victoria Yarbrough	IPL	2017-04-21	242
14	Michelle Sothen	SPF	2017-04-22	240
15	Tanya Peterban	RPS	2016-09-03	237
16	Priscilla Ribic	IPF	2016-06-25	236
17	Deniz Appelbaum	RPS	2016-11-12	235
18	Bernice Fuss	USPA	2016-07-09	231
18	Tanya Reed	USPA	2017-03-25	231
20	Caroline Jarrett	SPF	2016-09-03	226
21	Amanda Wolff	USPA	2017-05-14	225
21	Rachael Chaskey	USPA	2017-04-01	225
21	Melinda Hurt	RPS	2016-06-25	225
21	Molly Mullikin	SPF	2017-04-22	225
21	Jessica Zang	IPA	2016-06-25	225
21	Calley Shurgot	XPC	2017-03-04	225
21	Kathryn Wagner	APF	2016-12-10	225
28	Lillian Mayo	IPL	2017-04-21	221
29	Tara Highbaugh	USPA	2017-01-07	220
29	Jessica Olson	USPA	2017-05-06	220
29	Kloie Dublin	USAPL	2017-03-04	220

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# 165 lbs. – Raw with Wraps

## DEADLIFT

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Deadlift
1	Sarah Lewis	SPF	2017-04-22	545
2	Kimberly Walford	IPF	2017-01-28	534
3	Kristy Hawkins	USPA	2017-04-15	529
4	Molly Mullikin	SPF	2017-04-22	525
5	Carrie Grissinger	USPA	2017-01-07	490
6	Stella Krupinski	XPC	2017-03-04	475
7	Jessica Belt	WRPF	2016-08-20	474
8	Leslie Hofheins	USPA	2017-04-21	457
9	Priscilla Ribic	IPF	2016-06-25	451
9	Sierra Nevels	RPS	2016-10-15	451
9	Sumer Johnson	USPA	2016-09-03	451
12	Amanda Pridgen	SPF	2017-04-22	450
12	Jessica Zang	IPA	2016-06-25	450
12	Maureen Bombaum	SPF	2017-04-22	450
15	Ciarra Hutton	IPL	2016-11-12	440
15	Lacey Mesley	USPA	2017-04-15	440
15	Terrian Ashley	USPA	2017-04-08	440
15	Amanda Wolff	USPA	2017-05-14	440
19	Laura Radecki	USAPL	2016-10-13	435
19	Suzanne Prusnek	WPC	2016-11-08	435
19	Chelsea Savit	USAPL	2016-10-13	435
19	Lian Hoffman	USPA	2017-01-14	435
23	Tawnya Fox	USPA	2017-03-25	429
23	Ellen Liverpool	USAPL	2017-03-04	429
23	Sue Metcalf	APF	2016-12-03	429
26	Ana Malagon	USPA	2017-01-07	424
26	Katie Rutherford	USAPL	2017-03-04	424
26	Rori Alter	USAPL	2016-10-13	424
26	Angela Bivens	USPA	2017-03-03	424
26	Britainy Chown	USPA	2017-04-08	424

## TOTAL

Rank	Name	Federation	Date	Total
1	Sarah Lewis	SPF	2017-04-22	1380
2	Kristy Hawkins	USPA	2017-04-15	1377
3	Molly Mullikin	SPF	2017-04-22	1200
4	Carrie Grissinger	USPA	2017-01-07	1162
5	Jessica Belt	WRPF	2016-08-20	1151
6	Sumer Johnson	USPA	2016-09-03	1140
7	Stella Krupinski	XPC	2017-03-04	1115
8	Lacey Mesley	USPA	2017-04-15	1091
9	Sierra Nevels	RPS	2016-10-15	1080
10	Amanda Pridgen	SPF	2017-04-22	1070
11	Laurie Smith	SPF	2017-03-11	1047
11	Jessica Zang	IPA	2016-06-25	1047
13	Samantha Scott	UPA	2016-07-09	1041
14	Calley Shurgot	XPC	2017-03-04	1030
14	Tanya Peterban	RPS	2016-09-03	1030
16	Maureen Bombaum	SPF	2017-04-22	1025
17	Amanda Wolff	USPA	2017-05-14	1019
17	Caitlin Sullivan	APF	2017-03-25	1019
19	Rachael Naseman	SPF	2017-04-22	1000
20	Sabrina De Costa	RPS	2017-04-29	995
21	Stephanie Burger	XPC	2017-03-04	985
22	Nishea Martinez	USPA	2017-01-07	981
23	Yael Nelson	XPC	2017-03-04	975
24	Kora Whitaker	SPF	2017-04-22	965
25	Bridget Wilkinson	USPA	2016-10-15	953
25	Tanya Reed	USPA	2017-03-25	953
25	Malinda Barnes	USPA	2016-07-09	953
28	Pamela Chapman	SPF	2017-04-22	950
29	Jillian Prior	USPA	2017-04-08	947
30	Zorahgail Balino	APA	2016-10-08	942



# POWER

## NEW PRODUCTS



## BuffBoxx

BuffBoxx is a monthly subscription box geared toward fitness, health, and wellness. Each BuffBoxx contains premium, brand name fitness apparel, supplements, accessories and gym goods, healthy snacks, meal plans, and access to workout programs! BuffBoxx ships directly to your door! Enjoy all your new fitness products and travel to the BuffBoxx Store to purchase more of your favorite fitness products! Shipping and exchanges are FREE! [www.BuffBoxx.com](http://www.BuffBoxx.com) IG: @BuffBoxx



## Primal Jerky

UFC featherweight contender and avid outdoorsman Chad Mendes has launched his new jerky line, Chad Mendes' Primal Jerky. This cowboy style jerky is MSG free and made from the leanest cuts of beef. It's a great for post workout or protein snacks on the go. Flavors include Teriyaki Honey, Teriyaki, Jalapeño Lime and Tangy Sriracha. [www.finzandfeatherz.com](http://www.finzandfeatherz.com)



## Torque

Meet TANK, the world's first and meanest All Surface Sled. Due to TANK's unique adjustable resistance, the harder you push it, the harder it gets. This resistance creates explosive, high-intensity workouts on any surface and helps develop all-out strength, muscle activation, endurance and creates a competitive and challenging workout unlike anything else. [www.torquefitness.com](http://www.torquefitness.com) IG: @Torque.fitness





## NormaTec

Recovery is your edge. NormaTec is designed to help athletes recover faster and beat sore muscles after an intense workout. The patented technology of the NormaTec PULSE Series Recovery System uses compression therapy to increase circulation to the limbs, reduce inflammation, and rejuvenate muscles. NormaTec is trusted by professional, Olympic, and serious athletes in all sports, from the NFL to Cross-fit, professional boxing to triathlon, the military, and beyond. Attachments are available for the arms, legs, and hips. Having a NormaTec Recovery System is like having a personal massage therapist on-call. NormaTecRecovery.com IG: @NTRRecovery



## Bar Shield

Simple enough, the Bar Shield is a conveniently designed, all-in-one kit that will clean and protect your barbells for years to come. It strips away rust, chalk, blood, and skin with ease. Not only does it clean your barbell, but it lubes it too. Simply putting a little in the sleeves and letting it sink in for 10 minutes or so brings life into old bearings and will have your bar sleeves spinning with ease. BarShieldUSA.com IG: @BarShieldUSA

## Till Death

Big J's "Intensity Till Death" Men's crew cut t-shirt in Heather Gray with Black print. Big J is a US Army Veteran, former competitive bodybuilder and powerlifter, and fitness personality. His YouTube channel "Big J's Extreme Fitness" promotes safe, positive, and INTENSE training for all brothers and sisters in IRON, no matter how young or old. RageCustomPrinting.com IG: @bigj\_extremefitness



# Nick Wright



**Age:** 25  
**Height:** 5'8"  
**Weight:** 200 lbs.  
**Hometown:** Warwick, RI  
**Gym:** Next Level Fitness & E.N.A.C.  
**Squat:** 534 lbs.

**Bench:** 365 lbs.  
**Deadlift:** 585 lbs.  
**Athletic Background:** Wrestling, boxing, and various ball sports that I sucked at.  
**YouTube Subs:** 226,000 +

**Your first YouTube video was uploaded on November 8, 2007 and shows a young 14-year-old you on stage. What got you into fitness, and what drove you to starting a YouTube channel?**

I had always been intrigued by larger-than-life characters as a kid. Arnold Schwarzenegger was a prime example [of this] in all of his action movies. Kane was my favorite WWF wrestler due to his sheer size! I was obsessed with the idea of being "huge and jacked" despite being a scrawny 104 lbs. freshman in high school with 11.5" arms—flexed! On January 16, 2006, I was watching a True Life episode about a bodybuilder. Upon seeing him track his measurements for progress, I was inspired to do the same. That's how I remember all of these numbers. From there, I began "googling" bodybuilders and became obsessed with the sport of bodybuilding, doing my first teen show at 15 years old.

I used YouTube to simply upload competition footage to look back at, and in 2009, I noticed the videos had gained some views and attention. I realized I could do something with this. At the time, the only bodybuilding series available were on Bodybuilding.com with only one of them being about teen bodybuilding, specifically. [It was] a series about a teen named Shane Giese prepping for NPC Teen Nationals, which I loved! I realized there was nothing for drug-tested teen bodybuilding. Bodybuilding.com had featured me in small articles a couple of times, but I knew I wasn't big enough to get my own series, so I decided I would bring natural bodybuilding to what I saw as a potentially more mainstream outlet—myself! The rest is history!

**You transitioned from bodybuilding to powerlifting. What changed that made you want to tackle a new avenue in strength?**

I did my seventh and last bodybuilding show in the summer of 2012 upon just turning 21 years old, and I noticed that the prep seemed more like a chore than a passion for the first time ever. I had also gotten over my body dysmorphic disorder by then, and I finally felt "good" in my own skin. That "bigorexia" is what fueled so much of my will to suffer through bodybuilding competition preps for so long. Without it, the "suffering" aspect became much more apparent. At the same time, I was also beginning to get bored with natural bodybuilding. I was at the point where I was no longer naive and knew just how rare a true natural bodybuilder really was—even in the tested federations. It got old watching an enhanced bodybuilder make leaps and bounds in physique progress on a year-to-year basis while I worked my butt off to look pretty much the same—at least on any noticeable level. On top of both of these realizations, I also really began missing competing in a physical sport—one that wasn't so subjective. I missed being able to get amped up to actually perform something on the day of an event. I loved bodybuilding for years and gained sponsorships, a magazine cover, and a TV spotlight from it, but it was beginning to feel like nothing more than a petty, subjective beauty pageant for men. I contemplated getting back into fighting—a martial art or pick boxing back up. I even contemplated Olympic lifting.

Eventually, I stumbled upon a video of Jonnie Candito responding to a Maxx Chewing "405 deadlift for max reps" challenge. Amazed by his strength, I checked him out. Until then, ignorant to the sport, I thought powerlifting was the stereotypical "fat guy, maxing out" with odd-colored plates that disguised how much weight was on the bar. However, seeing a kid my age and size lifting with real gym plates and displaying how technical the sport of powerlifting actually was opened my eyes, and I eventually fell in love. Now, I'm obsessed!

**What is your proudest moment on YT?**

Training with my first and biggest idol in bodybuilding and strength—Ronnie Coleman! Ronnie is the guy who inspired me to get into bodybuilding. I watched all of his DVDs dozens of times and knew every fun fact about the guy! For years, I saw him at expos, but the lines were always too long to meet him. My first time finally meeting my idol, I got to actually train with him and document it on camera for my YouTube channel! That video has almost 1 million views right now!

One other awesome thing that came from YouTube is getting noticed and supported (unlimited free shoes) by Converse! I've worked with, and have been paid by some huge companies like Gillette etc. and that's all basic marketing and business. But to have a cool and legendary, 100+ year-old company with top athletes, rock stars, and celebrities sporting their brand, notice little old me in my small, niche arena was an honor! They even specified they literally didn't need or want anything in return from menot even promotion. They simply wanted to support what I was doing!

**You've been around for nine years, what are some of the changes you feel are coming for fitness channels and YouTube?**

It's very hard to say. Fitness channels are really becoming lifestyle/vlogging channels with the focal point becoming wealth, business drive, success, and high quality filming and editing. These style of videos do very well view-wise, so they're not going anywhere, but with that, I have noticed more and more viewers complaining that they miss the old-school "just lift and progress in the gym" style content. There is still lifting footage included, but less and less of it is actually documenting progression towards a goal or competition. Since trends recycle, I'm actually curious to see if the old raw, "just lift" vibe will come back, full-circle, again.

**What are some platform goals for 2017 and beyond?**

Right now, I am contemplating competing in either USAPL Regionals or Raw Nationals, despite not being competitive number-wise at a national level, yet.

I want a 600 lbs. squat, a 405 lbs. bench and my deadlift to simply rise into the mid-600s at all. I hate my deadlift. The four-plate bench will be my biggest achievement on a personal level since I am genetically terrible at pressing! It took me two years of lifting to max out 135 lbs. The last time I tested, it was 365 lbs., but I may be good for 375-385ish by now. **PM**

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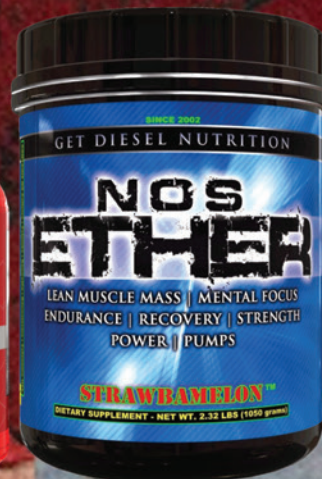
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