



MUSCLEPHARM POWER SPOTLIGHT

BRUCE MASON

BY KEN WHETHAM



There are always new lifters emerging onto the powerlifting platforms that are younger and stronger than ever. Once in a while, you get a sense that a lifter is going to become one of the best and strongest in the game. Even though raw lifting seems to be taking the lion's share at most meets, there are still athletes lifting in gear and trying to achieve insane numbers. I believe Bruce Mason is going to be one of the

best geared lifters in the immediate to near future. At 26 years old, Bruce has already squatted over 1000 lbs in competition and an 1100 lb squat will be within his reach in the early New Year. Keep your eye on this young stud and watch him post some amazing numbers very soon!

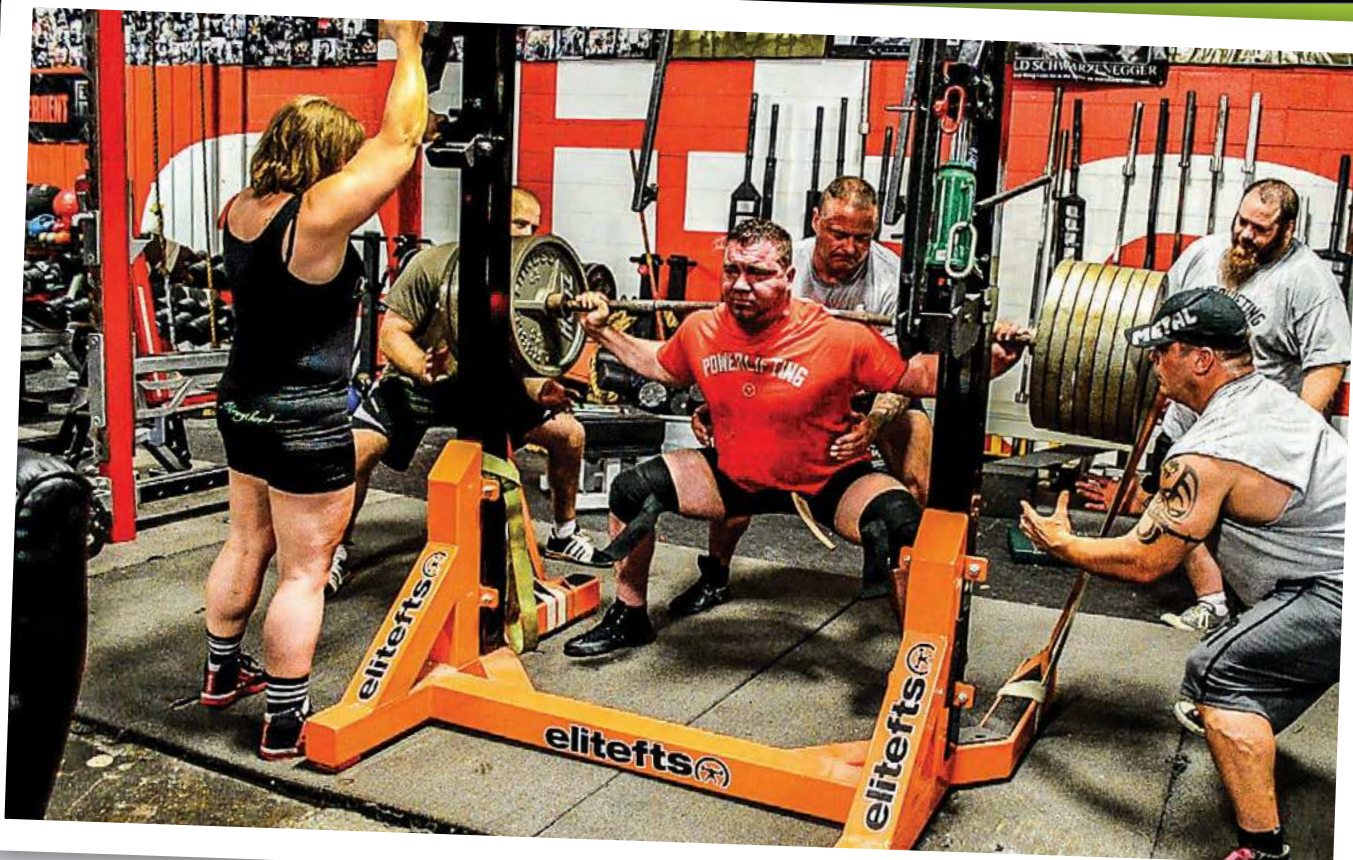
Where are you located, how old are you and what do you do for a living?

I was born and raised right outside the greater New York City. I currently

reside in Akron, Ohio. I am 26 years old and I'm a Chemical Technician, creating synthetic rubber in the Research and Development branch for Bridgestone America's.

What is your educational background?

My educational background is a Bachelor's in Exercise Science with a Minor in Foods and Nutrition at Ashland University. I received my Master's Degree in Exercise Physiology with a



concentration in pulmonary and cardiac rehabilitation while teaching at the University of Akron for two years. I am now back in school in order to pursue a degree in Chemical Engineering.

What are your current rankings and records?

My current ranking in Powerlifting Watch is 6th in the nation. I have the 38th all time squat record in the 275lb multi-ply weight class. In 2014, I took 1st in the APF Senior Nationals and 3rd in the WPC World's. My best overall competition lifts are a 1,003.8lb squat, 644.5lb bench and 705lb deadlift at 275lbs. My best meet total as a 275lb multi-ply lifter is 2,310lbs as of April of 2015.

How long have you been powerlifting?

I have been powerlifting since the age of 18. When I started my undergraduate studies, I was fortunate enough to join a very well ranked team

at Ashland University. We competed in single-ply gear in the USAPL Federation. After 4 years of competing, I started my journey into multi-ply gear. Since then, I have changed gyms twice to where I have found my little piece of heaven at Duke's Iron Zoo.

What got you interested in the sport?

I became interested in this sport long before I knew what powerlifting was. In high school, there was a 1000lb club where you got to write your name on the wall (box squat, bench, trap bar deadlift). I wanted to be strong enough to one day write my name on that wall. Finally, when I was a senior in high school, I was able to receive that pleasure but it wasn't enough. The iron bug bit me. From that experience on, I wanted more.

You recently squatted 1003 lbs in competition and you're only 25 years old. What are your short-term and

long-term goals in the sport?

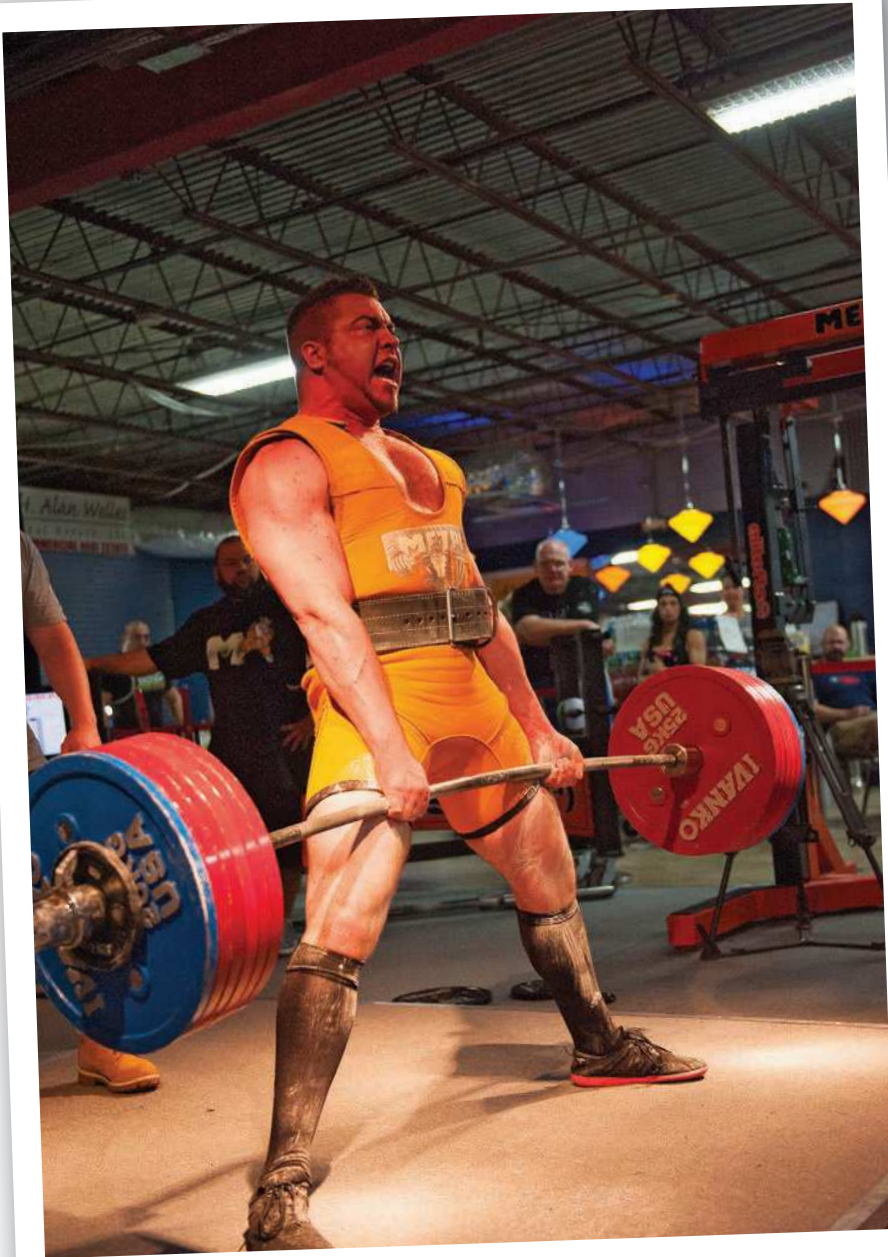
My short-term goal is to slowly increase my total while staying healthy. I am here for a career in lifting. This is something I would like to do all of my life. My long-term goal is to squat 1,200, bench 800 and deadlift 900 in competition. I will be transitioning to the 308 lb weight class by next year.

Have you always competed in gear and have you ever considered lifting raw?

Yes, I have always competed in gear. When I have reached my goals in multi-ply gear, I will transition. I am not sure what I will transition to yet but I am sure that path will show itself when I become the powerlifter I long to become.

What is your most memorable competition and why?

My most memorable competition happened this past year when I finally squatted my first 1003.8lb



squat. Everything was perfect that day. I dreamt of that day since I first started competing. Overcoming injuries and completing my first long term goal was a feeling that I can only explain as the "Pink Mist." Powerlifting is not a three-day per week job for two hours at a time. It is a 24/7 job - if I am not eating, I am training. When I am not training, I am rehabbing, and when I am not rehabbing, I am sleeping. Putting so much effort into your passion

and reaching your goal is incredibly rewarding. I am so thankful for the support [I have received] over the years because the only time it is not a team environment is when you walk onto the platform.

Canadian bacon, beer and maple syrup are some of the best kept training secrets that Canadian lifters don't want anyone to find out about. Are sausage gravy, grits and Bud Lite your best kept secret to a

bigger total?

The best kept secret that I have found is called the "get big shake", coined by my best friend. Chocolate milk, quart of ice cream, corn syrup, peanut butter, raw eggs and malted milk powder as a drink. A minimum of 3000 calories of heart attack and bloat. This is not a meal replacement, as he would tell me. It is to fill you up between meals.

Have you ever suffered any significant injuries during your powerlifting career?

I suffered a very bad car crash 3 years ago. It shifted my spine to the point where I could not get out of bed, let alone workout. It took 2 years to get to a point where I was able to finish a powerlifting meet. I met many specialists and doctors who were able to do very little due to it being my spine. With time and many different types of treatment, I am now almost completely pain free.

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

I train out of a gym called Duke's Iron Zoo in Akron, Ohio. I have many training partners who truly create the perfect powerlifting atmosphere. We all push one another and correct form through each lift. There is not one lifter who doesn't need coaching in one form or the next.

Do you have a particular training protocol that you follow like West-side, Cube or 5-3-1?

Truthfully, I do not have a set protocol. I like to follow a conjugate training method where I alternate different bars with bands and chains. I set up 4 week phases with sets of 5s, 3s, 2s, and a ME [Max Effort] day of 1 rep sets. I alternate squat, bench, and deadlift to where I never max out on all three in the same week. All accessory work and main movements are there to increase my weak point movements.

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

I am a huge believer in accommodat-

ing resistance. I use bands and chains in almost every workout. They are great for explosive movements and overload—the top end of almost any exercise.

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

The only plan I follow as a rule of thumb: 6 to 7 meals a day with 1000 calories per meal. I try to only have two of those meals as protein shakes. There is nothing that can fully replace real food.

How do you prepare mentally for an attempt?

I am a very calm lifter overall until I get under the bar. I do not believe in expelling lots of energy or yelling or shaking the weight before I go to lift. I like to feel every little motion my body is under before I unleash my inner drive. Moments before I go to lift, you will see me stare into an abyss where there is no longer a crowd, judges, or even family – there is only the bar and I. With every attempt, there is no hesitation that I will miss that lift. If you second guess yourself or are unsure if you can complete the lift, then you have already missed it.

What are your best competition numbers?

Squat-1003.8
Bench-644.5
Deadlift-705

Best gym numbers?

Squat-1040
Bench- 665
Deadlift-755

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

The biggest change I have made to training is taking my ego out of gym lifting as much as possible. Training is to increase my lifts for meet day, not the gym. Training weak movements is not easy because you cannot go as heavy and you can really wreak havoc in your mind if you don't look at the

bigger picture.

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

The lifters I grew up admiring were Christian Mello, Jim Wendler, Jeremy Fry, and Donnie Thompson.

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

The best advice I can give is to be patient when entering powerlifting. In my opinion, learning technique is more important than being a genetic freak of strength. The person who has perfect technique will have more success if the drive and passion to be great is present.

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

I still get very excited and amped when competing at meets. Many times I have felt like I have forgotten how to squat under my first attempt at a meet because my adrenaline is rocketing! These movements have become second nature to me where I must trust the training that my coach has put me through. I don't see a meet where I would no longer become excited to compete.

What is your favorite lift and why?

The squat is my favorite lift. It reminds me of Charles Atlas holding the world on his shoulders. In my mind, squatting is the ultimate technical movement. There is nothing like [trying to] balance with over 1000lbs on your shoulders as you try and stand up with it.

What assistance exercises helped each of your lifts the most?

For the squat, it was band tension box squats. The power and force needed to jump off of a box as the weight increases is indescribable. For my bench press, it was medium and high pin presses.

For the deadlift, it was purely deadlifting more. There is nothing that can replace the deadlift.

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

In my spare time, I enjoy eating and prepping new meals for myself. I eat all of the time. Keeping the food I eat interesting can be difficult at times. I am also a part-time student. There is always plenty of learning and homework to be done. I believe, above everything, that as long as I am learning, I will be happy. Even if it is just random trivia.

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

Being an athlete, I will always be impatient. I wanted to be one of the greats yesterday, not today, or in the future. Everything I do is to embody my beliefs. I want to, and will, make a positive impact on this sport.

What drives you?

Passion drives me. Fear drives me. Being average drives me. The feeling of the Iron on my back, sinking into my soul and overcoming any doubts I once had drive me. Knowing that this sport is about longevity and every choice I make will impact my total at my next meet. When you only have about 2 meets a year, that is 363 other days where every choice will dictate how you compete on that day. That is what drives me.

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

The superhero I would be is my granddad. He fought and was injured in WWII while being legally blind in one eye, raised a loving family and owned his own hardware store. He gave back to the community/church without cost or second thought. He fought cancer and always laughed about life. That's a superhero.

Is there anyone you would like to thank?

The people I want to thank most are my family and Duke from Duke's Iron Zoo. He saw something special in some runt of a kid. [I'm also thankful for] all of the friendships I have gained from being under the Iron. Team EliteFTS has been a second family to me, as well as my Canadian family way up north.

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