



the Pap

CHRIS PAPPILLION

Many are aware of Chris on Facebook for his calling out of high squats at (mostly) multi ply meets by posting videos of those high squats. He has challenged several lifters who claim world records that on video have clearly squatted 4-6" above the classic standard, which is the top of the hip crease passing below the top of the knee. He often challenges these lifters to go against him in single ply gear in federations that are known for consistent squat depth judging. You can debate which is better – raw, single ply, multi ply, even monolift vs. walked out, but the lift itself should never be in question. There needs to be consistency across all federations as far as standard depth is concerned; otherwise, there is no standard at all and in a few years a half squat will be a "world record". Most lifters agree with this, so an interview with the "lone wolf" attempting to restore powerlifting consistency was in order.



Interview by Jim Curley

# UPHOLDING THE STANDARD

## of powerlifting history

### **How old are you and what's your height and weight?**

I'm 35 years old, 5'8" and weigh 252. I own a personal training gym called Texas Elite in Victoria, TX.

### **You're a pugnacious guy that has gone through a lot of personal stuff but you take a vocal stance on why high squats in meets shouldn't be allowed and you're willing to take the heat for it.**

The problem I have with all these "high squat" federations and lifters is history. I grew up in this sport and got introduced to it when I was in a Boy's Home away from my family. I got in a lot of trouble when I was young. I started doing push ups and pull ups and one of the officers in the home gave me a Muscle And Fitness magazine. I read about Dorian Yates who had also been in a Boy's Home, so he became the first guy I

looked up to in weight lifting. When I was 14 I moved back in with my family and started playing sports in school. A guy named Jim Ashworth introduced me to powerlifting.

### **You were 14 years old?**

I've been powerlifting for 21 years straight, including the five years that I was in prison for getting in a fist fight.

### **When was the prison stint?**

That was from 2003-2008. I got out and won USPF Nationals in 2009. The history of the sport – Joe Bradley, Coan, Hatfield are the reasons I take powerlifting history to heart. I'll even challenge guys to go against me and place a bet, and I've only lost once. Everyone says I'm crazy, but everyone shakes my hand after the meet is over. Even when I lose, we're friends. It's just

competition. I went against Juha Sumeroja at the Olympia in 2014 and paid most of his way to come from Finland. He's a multi ply guy, huge numbers at 242, but when I watched him warm up he couldn't hit depth in single ply. I opened lower and he bombed. Most multi ply guys can't hit depth in single ply. They just can't get down that last four inches that is required so they bomb. I've got the third largest total, 2238, walked out in single ply gear. Goggins has a 2303 and Ed Coan has a 2463.

### **You lift single ply. Why don't you try multi ply and see what you can do?**

I've used single ply since I was a little boy. That's all they had back then. I haven't changed, because it's always been single ply. I get disrespected because I do things

correctly.

**You've taken it upon yourself to be the advocate for deep, walked out squats and locked out benchpresses. Why?**

Some people say that powerlifting is a sport. When I was young and away from my parents, this was my life, my outlet. When I was in jail and had nothing, this kept me alive by giving me a vision, a goal to keep after. This is something I've always done through the trials and tribulations of life. It gave me something to dream about and hold onto. You don't have much to live for in total confinement and this was my dream, to get better. That's why I'm passionate about it. It kept me alive. When I see people cheating for the sake of their egos, it just pisses me off to the point where I feel I have to say something. Somebody has to say these things and call people out; otherwise, our history books of powerlifting will just be washed away.

**A lot of people don't like you because of your one man crusade against high squats and non locked out benches.**

Well, everyone wants to be liked, but I can't change who I am. I can't change the way I think. Everyone likes PR's in a meet, but to me, powerlifting is like a war. Whenever I call someone out and challenge them in a meet, that's competition. It's like a fight – real strategy is involved and that's the adrenalin rush of real competition. I call out someone who squats high in multi ply gear in loose feds, we meet in the middle at a fed with strict judging, and man, that's what it's about! I like facing someone that's as good or better than me, calculating each lift, really going head to head. Even if you're not a top level lifter, you

compete against your buddies in the gym without actually calling each other out. We all do it.

I always talk about the negative side of the sport, but there are so many lifters I really respect – Kade Weber, Greg Panora, Dan Green, Chris Duffin, Jay Nera, Jason Mannenkoff, Garrett Griffin, BJ Whitehead; I can name a thousand more.

**You were in "the news" a while back regarding a steroid bust that you ultimately beat.**

A friend was staying with me after getting kicked out of his house. I

**WHENEVER I CALL SOMEONE OUT AND CHALLENGE THEM IN A MEET, THAT'S COMPETITION.**

had been in a car wreck and broke my arm. I did a meet shortly after my accident and my house had been robbed. My friend moved in and said he could keep an eye on the place while I was gone. That friend had a history of dealing drugs and a police informant was told to buy drugs from my friend. They picked up three other people that hadn't been shaken down by the police, so they might have had drugs already on them. The informant gave one of those guys the money to buy, and the judge determined that the drug deal was between those guys and had nothing to do with me. A legal technicality, but we beat the case. I'd just gone through all of that, but I faced Juha at the Olympia and still won. If someone can learn from my mistakes, that's good.

**In your crusade to return powerlifting to it's historic roots,**

**have you ever tried multi ply?**

I've got video of me squatting 1015 in multi ply and a monolift, and 955 in MP walked out. I squat high in training because I try to avoid injury if I don't have great spotters, but in a meet I do what I need to do. I don't comprehend failure; I just go for it with no fear.

**Is your ultimate goal to standardize the lift across all federations?**

I've talked to Karwoski, Coan and Goggins and when they say I'm doing the right thing, even though lots of people hate me for what I'm doing, it's worth it. Taking the grief makes me smile if I'm doing the right thing. If the right people get on this bandwagon and stand up for this, where we have a records committee and a chairman over that committee, where we can replay video like they do in the NFL and disallow obviously high squats and bad benches, then yes, things can change. Even with the thirty or forty feds out there, we go off powerliftingwatch and their records. It's really up to powerliftingwatch.com because they're the ipso facto record book these days. If Plwatch doesn't acknowledge these high squats then those feds can run their meets and make money doing that, but they're basically blackballed from the sport for altering the history books of the sport. If you're a lifter doing trash squats in trash feds, it's not the judges fault – it's your fault for even lifting there! We all know what's going to happen at certain fed's meets – high squats! So as a professional, it's your fault if you lift there. You have to take responsibility for your own actions. I lift in the USPF and the USPA because I know I'm not going to get gifts there.

**A lot of lifters like to blame the**

**judges instead of personally acknowledging that they squat high.**

Some lifters have hit huge totals but where do they go from there? Instead of a true all time record, the squat was obviously way high and their “all time best” is now a joke because of their lack of integrity. Everyone tells my gear sponsor to drop me because I’m a loudmouth, but that’s how I feel and I’m allowed to feel that way. This is my sport and it’s what I chase every day and it irks me that they have no respect for the rules of it. Do I change who I am and just sit back and watch the sport get destroyed for a few egos? Or do I state my opinion and take the grief that comes along with it? If you cheat and put yourself on a pedestal as one of the greatest of all time, I have no respect for you and I’ll challenge you to a meet in a strict fed. I hold myself to a standard all the time and if you haven’t squatted deep in six years, then your ego will get in the way and you’ll bomb. That last 2-6 inches to hit depth is tough. Dave Passanella, deceased, walked out 1047 in the 90’s in barely more than a singlet. It was an inch high, impressive as hell, but they didn’t give it to him because it was high! That’s what true judging is – following the rules all the time. Back before video and the internet we had to take their word that the lift was good. Now we can see the credibility of each lift on Facebook or YouTube, and that causes controversy and that’s the changing of the times.

**Speaking of the times, I’ve got an article in here about Texas High School powerlifting as a huge, acknowledged sport. Is that the future of powerlifting, getting these kids to stay with it?**

When I was a senior in high school I lifted at 198. The guys that were in the top five at that meet aren’t

in it anymore. I’m not sure where powerlifting is going.

**Who would you like to thank or mention?**

Steve Denison, Ed Coan, Steve Goggins and Fred Hatfield, Lamar Gant and people who did things the

right way that set the standard for the sport. I appreciate the legends of powerlifting who I admire today. Also Rudy Rosales of Overkill for great gear. **PLT**

