

INTERVIEW

DONDELL BLUE interviewed by Greg Jurkowski, Gearman Nutrition



Greg: At age 31, Dondell Blue is currently the strongest 220 pound powerlifter in the world, in all associations, coming off a 2500 total comprised of a 1050 squat, 700 bench and a 750 deadlift. He's an extremely balanced lifter, a rare thing in today's Powerlifting world. Since you have three great lifts, I need to know which one is your favorite and why, Dondell?

Don: The deadlift is my favorite lift, and the reason being is it's the most challenging for me. If something is challenging like that it's a big thrill for me to try and do better at it. The other one's come close, but the deadlift has to be my favorite. You know that saying, the meet don't start until the weight hits the floor.

Greg: I agree. What kind of deadlift suit do you use?

Don: Inzer has a single ply Fusion deadlift suit, which I'm wearing, to me by far the best suit I ever wore.

Greg: And you're a conventional puller, right?

Don: I tried sumo before, but it just didn't work out. I have to stick with the conventional.

Greg: John Inzer and Inzer Advance Designs do a lot for the sport today. To get to know you a bit, can you tell us a little about yourself personally?

Don: I'm a pretty humble and likeable guy. Most people who get a chance to meet me would say the same. It's not an act or a front, it's just me. I work a lot of hours a week. I currently got a job switch and this job allows me to be home every night so I can train. I'm a family man, with three kids and a wife. We've lived in Jacksonville, Florida for the past 12 years. That's it, wrapped up in a nut shell, I'm just pretty much a down to earth guy.

Greg: What do you do for a living?

Don: I'm a commercial driver.

Greg: Where did you grow up?

Don: I grew up in a small town in South Carolina, Yemassee, not too far from Beaufort, where I started working out and training in powerlifting.

Greg: Were you the strongest kid in PE class in elementary school?

Don: I have to say I was one THE weakest. I remember a time I was in high school running track and the coach told me I should start lifting weights. Here I am, a buck thirty five. In my junior year I tried to bench press my bodyweight. I was told if you could bench press your bodyweight, that was pretty good. I put those two 45s on the bar and it came crashing down. I didn't lift weights again until, I believe, it was three days before prom. That was the first time I really got into lifting weights. I have stuck with it since, but I was - by far - not the strongest guy.

Greg: I had you pegged as the guy taking all the lunch money away.

Don: If he wanted it, he could have it. Trust me. Little ole Me wasn't going to put up a fight for it.

federations are not that widespread, as they are mostly in one state. The APF seems like it's a more challenging federation with bigger lifters and bigger lifts. Maybe in the future I will venture off to other federations, but the APF is best for me.

Greg: The numbers being put up in the APF are very extreme. It's on fire with the quality of lifters, just unbelievable. Let's get to the meat and potatoes of the interview. To what do you attribute your current strength?

Don: You know, I have to say my current strength is attributed to different factors. On the training side, it's being smart about it, training hard, training smart, and resting - allowing my body to rest allows my body to come back and train harder each time. I have to say on the supplement side, I've been trying this new product for a few years now, called Strength in a Bottle. A lot of supplementations work, but Strength in a Bottle works. I've taken a lot of vitamin C, a lot of amino acids, a lot of glutamine. Those things really help. I don't care what else you take besides that, but those things truly, truly do help. I have to also say that eating consistently helps. Factoring in the protein that I need to train. Factoring in the carbs and the calories that I need. Those things are very important. You can always get better at it. At the top level or the small level, nutrition is a very important part of strength. Without all of those elements added together, I couldn't contribute just one to my strength.

Greg: Where do you train, and with whom?

Don: Well, I was training with Team Samson, but as time goes on and you lift with lifters, there can be a little animosity, and I just didn't feel like I was going to train with a guy or a group of guys that really wasn't for me 100%. I remember the last meet I did at the Southern States, a couple of guys on the team were rooting for

me. I can't wait to see what's the end result of this.

Greg: Charles Bailey and Jeffrey Vaughn have been putting up huge numbers and their techniques are amazing. They're really innovators.

Don: Yeah, that was the reason why I decided to ask Charles Bailey if I could squat with them. I remember a time when I was out-squatting him by 100 lbs., but in these last two years he's really come up, big time. I asked because he was making such drastic improvements. That's why I wanted to train with him.

Greg: Basically all your training is three weeks normally, then taking one week off. Then three back on again? One week completely off, no assistance or anything?

Don: Three weeks on and one week completely off. I have to say we train heavy those three weeks we're on. He really trains heavy. He really needs that week off. As heavy as he trains, you need that week off because I don't know if I could go on that fourth week. I understand why he does that three weeks on and one week off.

Greg: Do you change it for a training cycle for a contest, or is it a continual thing - off season to contest time?

Don: I had to change my squat technique. I was the guy who would squat down, knees would be in, and I would muscle up the weight. Now, looking at all these different videos, knees out, sitting back, chest up high, head up high, coming down low, hitting below parallel and coming back up, and it's such an easier squat. He has such a flawless technique in the squat. Sitting down and coming back up, like him and Jeffrey Vaughn did. They're a great group of guys. They're really there for me. They really got my back and want me to do well. That's why I started training with those guys.

Greg: Well, that 2500 total is unbelievable. Congratulations. What is your motivation?

Don: My motivation is just like everybody else that comes to the WPO, which is to, hands down, be the best. If you don't want to be the best you shouldn't come to the WPO. That is the only motivation that I got. To be the best, to make a legacy, to set world records. That's the true reason why I love the sport and I want to be the best at it. I don't want to give it up. I know I have another 10 to 15 years of powerlifting. If I can lift when I'm 45, competitively, then I know hands down I will do some amazing, amazing things. I got to say to be the best is the biggest reason for my powerlifting.

Greg: Where would you like to see the future of powerlifting go?

Don: The future of powerlifting should have been on to another level by now. We have internet exposure, where you can look at videos. That is a big plus, because you couldn't do that years ago. We got the Mountaineer Cup and other events on TV. That's a plus. I'd like to see the big full meets, like the WPO, the Senior Nationals on TV. You see high school football on TV, so why not local powerlifting? I'd like to see someone go to another level where someone can take the footage of a five hour powerlifting meet and break it down to an one hour segment and put it on TV on the sports channel. I would love to see this sport going to where it's put on ESPN, and getting that type of coverage. I'd love to see the athletes that train and bust their butts so hard to really get paid. I'd like to see powerlifters get paid consistently. To be the best, putting a thousand pounds on your back, week after week, is stressful. That takes a lot.

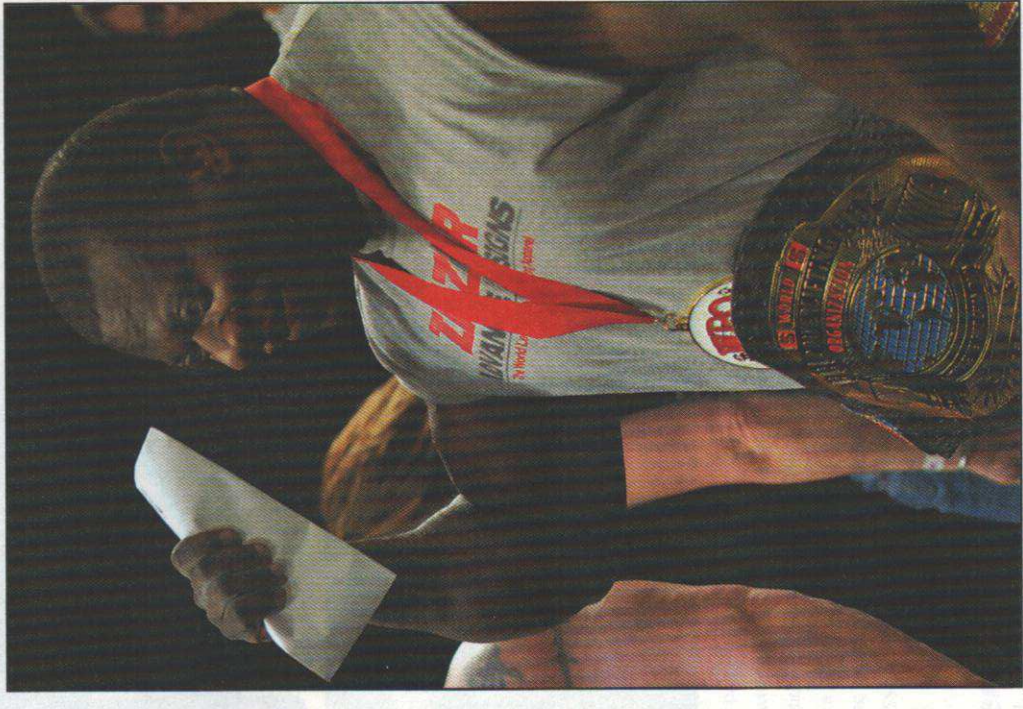
Then to have to wake up and go to work the next day. Powerlifters, in general, the one's at the top of the food chain, they put in a lot of time, a lot of money, a lot of heart and sweat into this sport. I'd like to see the sport go to that next level where we get the footage and publicity we need to continue to go on.

Greg: Thank you very much for all this useful information. Hopefully all this training insight will help make us stronger as well. Who would you like to thank for your success?

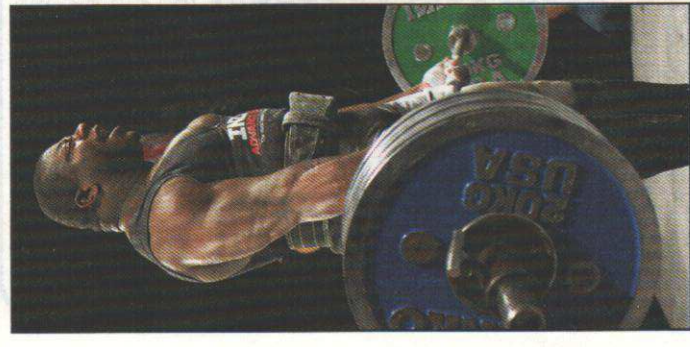
Don: Oh, man, there are so many people I'd like to thank for my success. First of all, I'd like to thank God above, because without Him keeping me injury free, keeping me focused, keeping me in the right state of mind to be able to do this, then I could do none of this. You can't do anything without being injury free. So, I'd like to thank God, first of all. Then I'd like to thank the guy that started me out in powerlifting, Ray Jones. I'll never forget that guy. I've lost contact with him, but I'll never forget him. I'd like to thank Team Samson. I'd like to thank all the guys that I worked out with in the past. I'd like to thank one of my biggest sponsors and I hope they keep me, Inzer Advanced Designs. I'd like to

thank General Nutrition products. Without that I guess my lifting would be like night and day. I'd like to thank my wife for being patient with me, being out of town for weeks at a time or coming home late from training. Personally, by name, I'd like to thank so many lifters that helped my lifting by giving me that knowledge that they had, Steve Goggins, Tony Conyers, guys like that who have put some really good knowledge in my head. I'd like to thank Charles Bailey, Jeffrey Vaughn, Adam Driggers - those guys have really helped me being able to do what I can do today. There's a host of people I'd like to thank, but those are some of the important ones that really helped my career. Curtis Warren, who is dead and gone now, but that guy has truly taught me a lot in this sport. It wasn't for him, I don't think I'd be doing this today. At one time I was going to give it up, but Curtis told me "You know, Blue, if you quit now, you'll regret it ten years down the road". He was a true, true, true friend and one of the biggest reasons why I continue to do powerlifting today.

Greg: Thank you very much Dondell. We're looking forward to some huge numbers coming up in the powerlifting season.



Show Me the Money ... Dondell Blue collects on his 2007 WPO title.



His Favorite Lift? It's the deadlift!

another guy in my weight class. After that I decided to forget it. I'm training now in my back yard, with a good group of guys who are with me 100%. I'm also going out twice a week training with Charles Bailey and Jeffrey Vaughn, two nice guys. Bailey really studies the game. It's mixed in between those two spots, but mostly at home, and twice a week I'm going out there to squat with Charles Bailey and Jeffrey Vaughn.

Greg: Are they still doing the "three off and one on" routine?

Don: Yes, they're doing the "three off and one on" routine and I'm currently doing it with them. It's been working great. I'm doing band squats for the first time. Everyone that knows me knows I've never done bands. There's a time to change. I've always done straight weight. That was me. This is something different. I can tell you that I've been band squatting for the last three and a half weeks, and my hips are killing me. I'm sticking with it. I can't wait to see what's the end result of this.

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Dondell Blue gets a jump start on his total with his squat abilities.

Just Touch, Baby Dondell is a master of bench press technique.

more local meets around my area that I can do. Some of the other

years at Florida powerlifting meets. How long have you been in the sport?

Don: I started off bodybuilding and powerlifting at the same time. Most of the moves that I did for bodybuilding was all powerlifting. A guy named Ray Jones, from Beaufort, South Carolina, noticed that, during my first three months of working out, I had a real good leg strength. That came from running track. He told me I should enter a powerlifting meet, so I did. That was back in 1994. I've been powerlifting for 12-13 years now. It's been progressing for me real well. I've been patient with it, not rushing things. It's been coming to me, slowly but surely. I started in the ADFPA.

Greg: That turned into the USAPL. Currently, what associations do you lift in?

Don: Currently I lift in the APF and the WPO. I have done a few other federations, like the NPF. There are