

INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

Mike Bridges.....by Cliff Grubbs

Do you anticipate moving up or down a weight class in the years to come?

I would say that this is my last year at the 181 pound class and next year I will be in the 198 pounds class.

What new products or services for the powerlifter can we expect from Mike Bridges in the future?
Upon the receipt of an order the athlete will have the merchandise in 3 to 4 days maximum. As far as products go, I am preparing my second edition of my book *New Dimensions in Powerlifting*. I am also working on a calendar and a biography as well as an expanded vitamin line that will include liver tablets and protein powder.

Would you like to make a comment on the IPF ban that was first placed on you and then reversed?
The circumstances surrounding the test given in India placed considerable doubt on the validity of the test from the very start. In many cases the same specimen jar was used on several athletes without being sterilized. Security precautions to protect the specimens were almost nonexistent. I did not see my specimen jar labeled with my name or even my country. I have no idea where that specimen went after that and there is no telling who could have tampered with the specimen. It is my understanding that many other lifters from other countries had the same problems. I would welcome any test that could reliably test for steroids or amphetamines. But, we must be careful with such tests because if an error is made and an athlete is disqualified not only is his reputation damaged but possibly his business interest if it is tied to powerlifting.

The legal implication of such an error could very realistically damage the sport beyond repair. Also, if any test is given made available to each athlete, the athlete should be given a complete list of what was in his system and not just given the results that state, if the test was positive or not. I would love to see a test that could put both steroids and amphetamines out of the sport forever.

Are you still experimenting with training routines and can we expect another breakthrough like the 'Bridges Flare' in the near future?
Yes, I am experimenting with new styles and these will be included in the second edition of my book. I would like to stress that I do not claim to know all there is to know in powerlifting. Also, any time you attempt late weight and give predictions for the Seniors'...

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MIKE BRIDGES SEMINAR

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The first time I met Mike Bridges I was minding my own business, working out at Doug Patterson's Metro Athletic Club. I heard he might start training there, but did not expect to have a living legend walk in right in the middle of my workout. I was surprised by Mike's conduct in the gym; it was very normal. Unlike many great lifters, he didn't brood in the corner refusing to talk to the mere mortals around him, and didn't try to be the center of attention. Who would have thought a gym rat like me struggling for a Class I total could actually be on the same platform with Mike Mullet U. could see me now.

I found out a few days later that Mike was going to be putting on a seminar locally. I thought this would be a great way for me to pick up some tips and to save Mike the anguish of my interrupting all his future workouts with questions. Mike began the seminar by going over his stretching routine in detail. He believes that "Proper stretching breaks down the injury factor by 70-80%." He attributes his lack of injuries to proper stretching practice

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of wrapping knees that in my opinion was worth the admission price itself. (Hey, I can't give everything away.) Mike also wraps his wrist on the bench and squat and he believes the grip with the thumb around the bar is the best for both lifts. Mike wears a supportive suit for both of his squat workouts pulling the straps up only on his heavy day. The suit he wears in the gym is a size or two larger than the suit he wears in a meet.

As the conversation turned to the meet day itself, Mike went over how he picks his attempts. He believes the lifter should pick his opener around 65-70% of his recent gym max. The first attempt should be a confidence builder. He then follows with a second attempt around 85-90%, and a third attempt around 95-105% of a recent gym max. Attempts for his deadlifts may vary from the above percentages, as he believes in going for the win first. If he only needs a 500 pound deadlift to win, that's what he will open with. As far as psyching up, Mike believes in a low key approach with little psyche and a great deal of concentration on form. Mike said, "I feel the psyche is worth only about 10 pounds per lift and that is not worth leaving yourself open to injury."

He discussed the auxiliary exercises he does and which specific exercises should be used to correct specific weaknesses in the power lifts. Mike's complete training, stretching and auxiliary programs are included in his book, "New Dimensions in Powerlifting." There is a chance Mike will come out with an expanded version of his book sometime in the future.

Mike usually trains 8-10 pounds over his weight class and then cuts back his weight the last two weeks before a meet, however, he does not recommend this process for the novice lifter. Mike also included a very candid talk about steroids in this section of the seminar. He didn't brush lightly over the topic as

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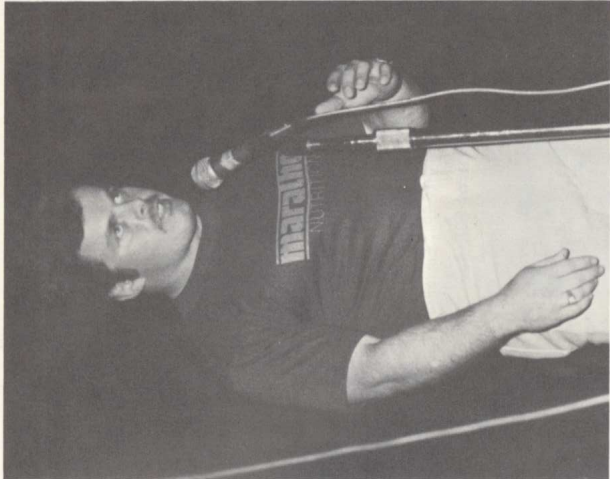
The highlight of the seminar was Mike's demonstration of the proper form. At this point even the veteran lifters in the crowd sat up straight and strained their ears. The interest was understandable because while Mike has a powerful build, it is hard to believe that he can handle the meet of at least a week or two important for long term gains.

The focus of the seminar turned to the nutritional aspect of powerlifting, one of the most important aspects of the iron game. I hate to ruin the weekend for you but Mike maintains that he doesn't eat pizza either. Well, I don't know about you but if I have to give up beer and pizza to be a World Champion then I guess I am destined for Mulletian the rest of my life. As far as vitamin supplements go, Mike takes a high potency formula that

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Mike Bridges is a man who needs no introduction in powerlifting circles, but to refresh your memory, Mike has been competing for six years and in that time he has set 53 world records and has won the Teenage National championships, Junior National championships, the Senior Nationals 4 times and the World Championships 4 times (once as an NPA lifter). At the last World championship in Calcutta, India, Mike totaled a world record 2083 pounds. The nearest lifter to him totaled 1719 pounds. In fact, Mike's total as a 181 pounder would have won him the world championship in the 198, 220 and the 242 pound weight class as well. Mike's best lifts in competition are, squat 832 pounds, bench 529 pounds, and deadlift 771 pounds, at the tender age of 25. Many are already calling him "the greatest powerlifter of all time." I have gotten to know Mike since his move to Texas and he was kind enough to grant me an interview for Powerlifting USA.

How has your relocation to Texas worked out for you, business wise, lifting wise and personally?
"Business wise my relocation to Texas has increased my company sales by 30%, and not only am I selling my products but I have opened up an equipment line and I am now handling the Texas Power Bar and the rest of Doug Patterson's fine MAC Barbell equipment. Lifting wise things could not be going better. I am training at the Metro Athletic Club in Grand Prairie where the atmosphere is terrific and my lifts are moving very well. I also love the weather down here and the people could not be more friendly."

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