

INTERVIEW

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

YUEH-CHUN CHANG as told to Powerlifting USA by Fred Rice

Yueh-Chun Chang won just another USA Powerlifting (ADFFPA) Women's National Championship this year and competed in the IPF Women's World Championships in Norway in May. Her total tied her with the second place finisher, although she ended up third on bodyweight, but she was only 5 kilos out of first place, and is hoping to be the IPF Women's world champion in the near future. Her rise to being one of the top female lifters in the world has been rapid, as she has only been in the sport for 9 years.

SUBJECT: Yueh-Chun Chang.
AGE: 28. **MARITAL STATUS:** Single. **HOMETOWN:** Seattle, WA.
JOB: Event promoter (PR) for Cascade Fresh Yogurt. **HEIGHT:** 5 ft. 1 in. **WEIGHT CLASS:** 114 lb.
TRAINING WEIGHT: 118-120 lbs.
EQUIPMENT USED IN COMPETITION: Suit: Marathon, Whist wraps; T-shirt, Knee wraps: Titan Shoes: Safe Shirt; Inzer.

FR: WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU USE IN TRAINING?
YC: I usually use no equipment in training, although I use a belt anytime I am above 135 lb. in the squat. I start using knee wraps about 4 weeks before a contest, and I start using a suit about 2-3 weeks out.

FR: CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR USA POWERLIFTING NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP THIS YEAR, AND ON YOUR PERFORMANCE AT THE IPF WOMEN'S WORLDS. TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE WORLDS IN NORWAY.

YC: The judging was great - it was very fair. The meet was extremely well run. It was the best run meet I've ever seen. It was very well organized. It was very accommodating for the lifters, the coaches, and the officials. The Norwegian people were really wonderful. It was also the most technological meet I've ever seen. There were computer screens everywhere that showed you exactly what was going on during the meet. Also, there was good news coverage of the event. The local news people were there every day, and Paula Houston and I were featured in the local paper. There was also some national coverage, and I understand that at least part of the meet was shown on Euro ESPN.

FR: IN ORDER FOR US TO GET



Yueh-Chun Chang... her best deadlift is 413 lbs. All photographs show her at the 1992 ADFFPA Women's Nationals in San Ramon, CA.

A FEEL FOR THE KIND OF PREPARATION NECESSARY FOR A MEET OF THIS IMPORTANCE WHICH IS HELD SO FAR AWAY FROM THE US, TELL US HOW FAR AHEAD OF TIME YOU LEFT FOR NORWAY.

YC: I flew out of Seattle on Friday morning and completed the following Thursday. We had five stops en route, arrived in Oslo on Saturday evening, and got to the meet site on Sunday. That Sunday was the Norwegian Independence Day, so we got to experience their fourth of July. We also didn't have any trouble sleeping, but it was difficult to keep track of time. After socializing in the evening, we would go outside expecting it would be dark, but it was as bright as day. I was glad that we got there as far ahead of time as we did so that I had sufficient time to acclimate to the time change and the environment.

FR: WERE YOU ABLE TO CHECK YOUR WEIGHT FREQUENTLY IN THOSE DAYS PRIOR TO IT

HE MEET?

YC: I only checked my weight the day before the meet. I wasn't too worried about my weight, as I normally would be because of the new 114 lb. class in which I competed. Not having to make 111 lbs., which I always had to do in the past, makes a big difference.

FR: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE IPF AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

YC: Last year I lifted as a guest lifter at the IPF Women's Worlds in South Africa, and ever since that experience I have been really impressed with the IPF. It is such a well organized and large powerlifting federation. It is truly an international organization, and just being there competing makes you feel like a great athlete. I think that this new affiliation of ours with the IPF is the greatest thing that could have happened for Women's Powerlifting, because it will make the sport more unified. I think it will increase the popularity of the sport. I've met many women lifters that I did not know before who are incredible lifters and really nice people. My participation in the IPF has changed my perception of myself as a lifter. I can only control what somebody else does. I know that I'm a drug free lifter, and I'm proud to be lifting at the level of these other outstanding lifters, and I hope that they're drug free, but I can't speak for anyone else.

FR: DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER INTEREST BESIDES POWERLIFTING?

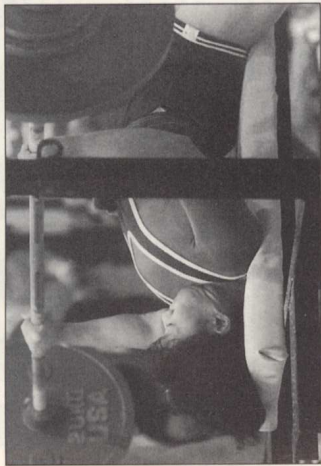
YC: I am active in the community. I teach elementary PE one day a week. I also go around to high schools and talk to them about weightlifting and help them with their lifting programs. Also, I help run a youth fitness program with Willie Austin's Austin Foundation. Willie owns the Gateway Athletic Club, located on the 14th floor of the Key Tower.

Through this program kids get to come to this club, which has a swimming pool, 3 squash courts, an aerobic room, a huge weight equipment room, and a separate powerlifting room. On Sundays from 3 pm to 6 pm the use of these facilities is free for kids from 14 to 19 years of age. They

get personal training, snacks, t-shirts and printed information. Various local athletes come in to speak and to help these kids. It's a chance for them to experience a health club environment and team exercises that they can take away with them. It gets them motivated to stay healthy and fit.

FR: I HOW DID YOU GET STARTED LIFTING, AND HOW OLD WERE YOU AT THE TIME?

YC: I was a gymnast for 12 years, and I ran track for 4 years. After high school I met Willie Austin, who was opening up a gym across the street from my first job location. He invited me down, and I



Yueh-Chun Chang... her personal record bench press is 203 pounds.

wanted to improve for track, so I started training there and this led to entering a local ADFFPA meet.

YC: I was 19 years old at the time. I did well in that first meet, so I entered a regional meet, and then a national meet in which I placed fourth. Since then I've just been chugging away. With only one exception, I've competed exclusively in USA Powerlifting/ADFFPA sanctioned meets.

FR: SPEAKING OF WILLIE AUSTIN, TELL US SOMETHING MORE ABOUT THE PACIFIC POWERLIFTERS TEAM.

YC: There are over 70 of us who are members of the Pacific Powerlifters Team, including a lot of women. There are a great variety of talents and backgrounds. The majority of us train at the Gateway Athletic Club. Most of us were also members of Willie's first gym - "The Gym of Seattle", which doesn't exist anymore. The team members are a really nice group of people and we really support each other. There's always another powerlifter at the club if you need a spot or any other kind of help. There's always somebody from the team who is willing to travel with you to a competition to help you roll

PROGRAM?

YC: I train 5 days per week, Monday through Friday, and I train quite rapidly, taking only about 1 minute between my bench press sets, 1-1/2 minutes between my squats, and 30 seconds between the assistance exercises.

Even during that "rest" time I do abs - every day between every set. My routine is really sort of a combination of bodybuilding and powerlifting. My abs have been featured in a Nauticus abdominal machine ad. I do them purely for ego, but I also feel that they really help my squat and deadlift. On Monday I do chest, shoulders, and triceps. After my warm up I do 3-4 sets of heavy bench presses, starting my cycle with sets of 10, then 8, then 6, then 5, and then



Yueh-Chun... her best mark in the Squat is 358

LIKE TO ADD?

YC: Powerlifting is a sport that has the potential to become very popular. Anyone can do a squat, a bench, and a deadlift. You don't have to be born with a great natural talent to do these lifts. With a little focus and some good training many people can do well, and it's a sport that can be used to assist with many other sports, like football or gymnastics. A lot of women have a stereotypical view of what it means to be a woman lifter. I hope that you can get rid of this and show women that you can be beautiful and at the same time be a lifter.

deadlift, and calves. For my back I do 3 sets each lat pulls, seated rows, and T-bar rows. For biceps I do about 3 sets each of 4 different movements. Wednesday I do abs and at least 1/2 hour of cardio work. Thursday I do light chest, shoulders and triceps. This is typically the same workout as Monday, only I do more repetitions with lighter weight. Friday I do deadlift, light legs, back, and biceps. At the beginning of my cycle I often do conventional deadlifts, but later on I do my competition style. Once again I follow the same rep and set pattern as in the bench press. For legs I do 3 sets each of step-ups, straight leg deadlifts, lunges, leg extensions/leg curls, and calves. I finish with biceps, as on Tuesday, FR: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TITLES YOU HAVE WON AND RECORDS YOU HOLD?

YC: I have been USA Powerlifting/ADFFPA Women's National Champion 6 times, and WDFPF World Champion a number of times. I hold all the Women's American records in the 114 lb. class. Also, in 1994 I was named one of Seattle's Top 10 Athletes of the year by the Seattle Post Intelligence, along with athletes from the SuperSonics, the Mariners, and the Seahawks.

FR: ARE THERE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD

LIKE TO ADD?

YC: I get closer to a meet. After this I do 3 sets each of other chest exercises: I'll do, for example, 3 sets of high neck benches and 3 sets of flyes. Then I do shoulders, 3 sets of behind the neck military presses, 3 sets of side lateral raises and 3 sets of upright row. Then I finish with triceps, 3 sets of lying triceps extensions, 3 sets of kick backs, and 3 sets of press downs or dips. Tuesday I do squat, legs, back, and biceps. I follow the same pattern with the squats as with the bench presses. For leg assistance I do 3 sets of each of the following leg presses, leg extensions/leg curls, stiff legged