

INTERVIEW

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

CHRIS CONFESSORE

as interviewed for Powerlifting USA by Doug Daniels

On June 17, 1995, in Phoenix, Arizona, Chris benched an amazing world record 741 pounds. There have been several 700 pound-plus benches lately, but what makes this so spectacular is that he is not a 300 pound-plus superheavyweight, but a mere 236 pounds. Confessore is no flash in the pan or gym lifter. Chris has been setting world records in the bench since 1988. His resume includes about 16 world records and the most triple body-weight benches in history with a dozen. Not just a bencher, Chris has also distinguished himself as a top 3-lift competitor with YMCA and Junior National titles, registering an 804 squat and 2044 total in the 220 class, 1962 at 198 and 1878 at 181. His first meet showed there was some potential there with a 305 bench at 148 pounds in the mid-1980s. Chris managed to leave his mark on each weight class from 148 to 242 with a best of 350 at 148, 460 at 165, 562 at 181, 589 at 198, 662 at 220 and of course, the 741 at 242. The 741 is the highest rated bench by the Schwartz formula, the first to surpass 400 points. This dominance and longevity in the sport makes Chris the greatest bench presser of all time and he's not done yet.

DOUG: I've known you for about 10 years and have always been amazed by your power, but the last year has seen your bench go out of sight. To what do you attribute this?

CHRIS: I think my body is just now getting to where it wants to be. This is my optimum weight class. I'm relatively injury-free, and the heavy weights don't bother me much at this weight. Also, my mentors at Iron Curtain Labs developed an incredible bench cycle routine to maximize my explosive power. I don't want to reveal how it works at the present because I intend to use this system to shatter the 800 pound barrier by next spring.

DOUG: Is your training any different than it was in the past?

CHRIS: Not really. I'm just hitting heavier weights now more often at this weight. After getting the 662 in 1993, it seemed to wake my body up. I've made steady progress since then and I realized that 700 was a real possibility. When I started, 600 was not in my mind, let alone 700.

DOUG: I've always wondered how



Chris Confessore interviewed by Peter Thorne at the '92 APF Seniors

record setters handle mental blocks. Your PRs are world records.

CHRIS: I compete against myself. My last block was 600. 700 didn't phase me, I don't know why. To set records for as long as myself you must be totally fearless of heavy weights and in my case, if I come home without a record people look at it as a failure so that feeds my motivation and develops a strong mind as well.

DOUG: Of all your records, which one do you savor the most?

CHRIS: The 741 because it's fresh. It's the heaviest triple body-weight bench of all time and it's up there with what the big boys are doing, at a much lighter

weight. Just before the meet I doubled 705 and followed that with an easy 730, so I was ready for a big lift.

DOUG: You've got a lot going on right, how about the scoop?

CHRIS: I'm writing a monthly column for Muscle Mag called the "Power Page." It gives powerlifting some good exposure. I answer questions from readers. My bench press book has been selling well and I'm working on a bench press video. I'm also the spokesman for Iron Curtain Labs, a supplement distributor. I've gotten good results from all of their products, especially GH-1000. I highly recommend this special product.

DOUG: We know what you can

bench, but what type of weight do you use in other exercises?

CHRIS: I can overhead dumbbell press a pair of 150s for 15 reps, close grip bench 525x6. I've just started working my biceps hard lately. My brother Neil said my arms have gotten bigger since I've been doing them. The increased bicep strength has helped me stabilize the bar during the bench.

DOUG: PLUSA can't have an interview with a big bencher without getting some hints for us mere mortals.

CHRIS: I've found that the average bencher trains too much. I suggest benching once a week with a heavy close grip bench workout on the second day once every other week. Tricep work like pushdowns are also good for assistance. A reader from Muscle Mag wrote me for advice, and I basically suggested a routine similar to this. He wrote back a while later and made fantastic progress. Train hard with high intensity but do not live in the gym.

DOUG: Do you see yourself getting back into 3-lift meets again?

CHRIS: That's possible, but right now it's not a priority. I'm having fun upping the bench record and pushing the big guys.

DOUG: What are your near term goals?

CHRIS: I feel I can bench 800 by next spring. I've just moved up to the 242 class and my body has not fully grown into it yet. My strength will follow my weight over time. I may move up to the 275 class, say at about 243 or so, to set the record there too. The supers are out of the question.

DOUG: Thanks for the interview and good luck.

CHRIS: You're welcome and I'd like to thank Mike Lambert and PLUSA for the opportunity. And of course, all of my records would not be possible without all the great people behind me, my wife Diane, Neil, my whole family and all my great training partners throughout the years. A special thanks goes to all the great people at Iron Curtain Labs for all their help and supervision throughout my career. Without all of these great people helping me, I can honestly say I would not have come this far. So who says powerlifting is not a team sport? And, of course, thank you Doug.