

INTERVIEW

JAMIE "BIG EVIL" HARRIS interviewed for PL USA by Ben Tatar of Critical Bench



"Jamie Harris was able to combine a hardcore image with a charismatic personality. He added entertainment value to the sport, and he was on top throughout the whole 90s era. Not only did Jamie make bench pressing fun to watch, but he dominated and had longevity throughout one of the best eras in bench press history. When you saw Jamie your blood would either burn because he was such a powerful person, or you felt like you were seeing a great friend. There will never be another Jamie Harris again."

- Kara Bohigian Smith

"Jamie Harris was a great guy and he brought some much needed color to the game of powerlifting. I remember him saying, 'Anthony, do you hear me?' Anthony, do you hear me?' And playfully taunting him, Jamie even had Priscilla believing that the king had returned."

- Rob Carbo

Where has Jamie Harris been lately? What does Jamie Harris think about powerlifting as he looks back? Who was Jamie Harris outside of being the world-record holder who we all loved or loved to hate? Powerlifting USA brings you an in-depth look at one of the most colorful and one of the greatest benchers in bench press history.

Critical Bench: Jamie, welcome back to the powerlifting world. As any powerlifting fanatic knows, you were on top of the powerlifting world not for a week, month or a year, but for over a decade. Looking back at your powerlifting journey, what was your favorite part?

Jamie Harris: Looking back, the best part of the sport was the camaraderie between friends—who are forever—your training partners and other lifters you meet in your travels. Being friends with people in powerlifting is amazing because it is almost like being in a team together. I have been fortunate enough to have had a tight team of guys that have helped me. You need a support system to set world records. It's not like bodybuilding where you train by yourself all the time; it's a team concept. You also spend a lot of your leisure time with these guys because we would all be in the same mindset. BEING WILD!

CB: Jamie, when you got better in the sport of powerlifting, what was it like? Did you experience more negativity as you improved?

JH: It seems like when you're first starting out, everyone wants to help you, because you are no threat to anyone's ego. And then,

if you cross me you will be confronted, end of story. I see myself as helpful and encouraging. I like to see others succeed with their goals because I believe life is all about goal setting and that's how I live my life. I'm basically silly and love to laugh and have fun. I play Xbox 360 so you can say I'm like a big kid. I enjoy simpler things in life now. I enjoy riding my quad and since I do so much cardio now I'm going to start riding mountain bikes this spring with my training partners. I also still enjoy the simplicity of weight training, lifting for a good pump instead of lifting crazy heavy weights.

CB: It seems like a lot of people are having fun with you in this day as you do Elvis shows. Jamie, how are you different now compared to when you were the top bench presser in the world?

JH: I am a full time Elvis Presley Tribute Artist. I play events all over the United States including corporate events and casinos. I have even done some shows with some of Elvis' remaining back-up singers. I have been doing this since my powerlifting retirement about 10 years ago and have reached about the highest level you can at that profession, being sought out as one of the top Elvis entertainers in the United States. I have spent thousands of dollars on wardrobe, vocal training and constant practice including doing about three or more paid shows weekly. I have put as much hard work into this as I have into powerlifting and it has now paid off. Check us out on the web at www.shadowsoftheking.com to see where we are going to be and to check our availability for booking.

I also run a personal training business. Believe it or not, I have been working with young strength athletes now for some time and have been incorporating a lot of my training techniques that made me a champion, which help make them successful as well, both in mental and physical aspects. I have been doing some training seminars and personal appearances. If anyone is interested in booking me for a seminar or interested in one-on-one training, feel free to drop me an email at outje@aol.com and someone will get back to you shortly.

I feel the need to help young powerlifters and encourage them to be the best they can be. It's all about being positive and helping people along the way. I'm going to try and give back to the sport that has been very good to me. I'm also

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Shawn Frankl - Team MHP
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going to try and bring back some of the "old school" ways of thinking and bring some of the camaraderie back to the sport. I don't care what fed you lift in; I don't care if you're RAW or equipped; I don't care if you're clean or use. Remember, we are all brothers and sisters of iron. I believe it will take someone of my stature to help strengthen everyone's belief in this issue. Considering how the world is today, all of powerlifting's ideals are a bright spot compared to other negative ideas that exist in this world. I believe we stand for what is good and right in the world: camaraderie, goals, dedication, hard work, and character.

CB: What makes Jamie Harris different from everyone else?
JH: Basically I live my life not worrying about how others judge me. If I wanted to try something or if I wanted to accomplish something, I just set my sights on it and put blinders on and focused on that goal. I had no support at



Jamie BELIEVES TO ACHIEVE! (c. Harris)

all from friends and family coming up in powerlifting—it put a massive wedge between my dad and myself. It's hard being an over-achiever sometimes—the lazy ones don't want you to succeed because they don't have the guts to put their asses out there to do big things. So to all the nay-sayers who are reading this...who's laughing now? I have learned this in life. Don't ever settle for less and don't ever give up on your goals. BELIEVE TO ACHIEVE!

CB: A lot of people think that the Jamie Harris/Anthony Clark rivalry was the best rivalry that the sport of powerlifting has ever seen. Why do you think people think that?

JH: I think it was the most real. Two driven monsters who wanted to be the best in the world. The sparks flew. I can tell you though, I thought the world of Anthony. He was one of my childhood heroes. I also think that Anthony and I, at that time, made the concept of lifting insane weights believable.

CB: What moment in powerlifting has changed you the most?

JH: I didn't see it at the time, but tearing my pec might have been it for me. It was a powerlifting death sentence, but it freed me up to do other things with my life. I believe it was a message from God. I had to readjust my life in general. It was tough for the first couple of years, but I have done pretty well. I have made many changes in my life. I also have lots of great memories from powerlifting. You evolve into the next part of your life and not everyone can make that transition well. I made that transition well.

CB: Jamie it has been great talking to you. What a powerlifting career you have had! You have made powerlifting colorful. You have always been real and a great human being. The mark you left on powerlifting will be with the sport forever! In closing, who would you like to thank?

JH: I would like to thank all of my supporters, present and past. Powerlifting has been a great experience for me and I will treasure my ex-

Jamie Harris attempting a whopping 705 pound bench press during his powerlifting days experiences for the rest of my days. Remember, BELIEVE TO ACHIEVE and always reach high for your goals, and never stop until you get there! God bless and stay strong.
CB: What a bench press journey Jamie Harris oajtz@aol.com or via facebook.



Jamie Harris is now The King (c. Harris)



A Big, Bad, Bench Pressing Machine (this photo & p. 10 photo courtesy of Bert Wagner)