

# DAVE HOFF

as told to Powerlifting USA by Curt Dennis Jr. of Critical Bench

**Critical Bench:** Hi Dave. Thanks for doing the interview. Tell us about yourself.

**Dave Hoff:** I'm Dave Hoff and I'm 21 years old. I was born, raised and live in Columbus, OH.

**CB:** What are your best PRs right now?  
**DH:** I compete in two weight classes—242s and 275s. My current my best lifts at 242 are a 1025 squat, a 785 bench press, a 790 deadlift and a 2600 lb. total. In the 275s, my best lifts are a 1015 squat, 825 bench press, 800 deadlift, and a 2615 lb. total.

**CB:** How long have you been into powerlifting?  
**DH:** I've been powerlifting for about seven years now. I started as a pup.

**CB:** Tell us about your childhood and how you got into powerlifting?  
**DH:** I had a great childhood. I have very supportive parents who always encouraged me to do the best I could. I have two brothers and two sisters. I got into powerlifting when I started messing around with weights in—if you can believe it—probably around 4th grade. I always wanted to be the strongest kid in my class, so I started lifting weights. Then from there, I would say around junior high, I started training with the football team. That's where I had my first max out and from then on I was hooked on lifting. From there I lifted in a little gym called Murph's in Grove City, Ohio, where I met a guy named Travis Fletcher. He had this crazy thing I had never seen before—a bench shirt—and he was benching like 500 lb. I was amazed. I was like, "I want to do that!" Who the heck doesn't want to bench 500 lb.? So from there I trained with him for two weeks, then I was brought to Westside Barbell at the ripe old age of 16—and that's how my powerlifting career began.

**CB:** Who did you look up to when you were coming up as a powerlifter?  
**DH:** Hands down Chuck Vogelpohl. The first time I ever saw him compete was at the Arnold Classic. The guy is so freakin' intense and has power and explosiveness unlike anyone else on earth. That man is a one-of-a-kind specimen! From the second I saw him walk out, I wanted to be just like him. I don't know any other 40 plus year olds that are still breaking all-time world records. He's done it again and again. Over the course of 20 years he's had the 220 world record squat and currently has the 242 world record squat and has also broken the 275 world record squat, not to mention 800+ deadlifts in all three of those classes and a monster 2605 total. Simply one word can describe him and it's a FREAK. My whole career, that's who I have tried to be like because in my opinion he's one of the best ever. I still look up to him to this very day.

**CB:** What is the craziest thing you have ever seen at a powerlifting meet?  
**DH:** Fortunately for me I have had the privi-



Dave Hoff of Westside Barbell benching big

lege to train at Westside Barbell with some of the strongest lifters on the planet for my whole career, so I've been at a lot of meets and seen a lot of strong lifters. I will just throw out a few because I have seen a lot of crazy stuff. The one that stands out the most is Chuck Vogelpohl's 1150 squat. It was the fastest 1100 plus squat I have ever seen. You couldn't have dropped it any faster. Also his 1140 at 242. Some others are Andy Bolton's 971 deadlift, Vlad Alhazov's 925 deadlift and 1250 squat, Chuck Fought's 900 lb. deadlift, Frankl's 850 bench at 198 and that crazy 2630 total at 198; DANG SHAWN LET THE FAT GUYS CATCH UP! Probably one of the craziest benches I've seen was Jason Fry's 770 at 198 and Rob Luyando's 948 at 275.

**CB:** What would you say to a novice lifter or to a lifter who's just starting out in powerlifting?  
**DH:** Set goals and take small but consistent steps to reach your goal; don't get caught up in a number. Just do what you can do and build up, be smart and stay injury free. It's hard to make any kind of progress with an injury.

**CB:** Do you have a favorite out of the three or is it all three lifts?  
**DH:** When I first started out I hated squats because I knew nothing about it, but as I have gone through the sport I like all three. If I had to pick one I would say it's the squat because that is my biggest number.

**CB:** What are your goals and when is your next meet?  
**DH:** My first goal is to be number one. I would like to achieve an all time world record. After that I would like to jump a class and have multiple world records at one time. Also, I want to be number one at Westside Barbell. I just did a meet on December 5, so I think I will take a little time and let my body heal. I'm planning on the IPA Worlds in York, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 2010.

**CB:** What are the challenges of coming up as a powerlifter?  
**DH:** There are a lot of challenges. I personally have faced a lot of adversity. A lot of negative people—we call them haters—are always out there and have nothing good to say about anyone or anything. Also you have to deal with numbers changing. As soon as you think you are there, someone comes out of nowhere and sets the bar higher. So, you

legally to train at Westside Barbell with some of the strongest lifters on the planet for my whole career, so I've been at a lot of meets and seen a lot of strong lifters. I will just throw out a few because I have seen a lot of crazy stuff. The one that stands out the most is Chuck Vogelpohl's 1150 squat. It was the fastest 1100 plus squat I have ever seen. You couldn't have dropped it any faster. Also his 1140 at 242. Some others are Andy Bolton's 971 deadlift, Vlad Alhazov's 925 deadlift and 1250 squat, Chuck Fought's 900 lb. deadlift, Frankl's 850 bench at 198 and that crazy 2630 total at 198; DANG SHAWN LET THE FAT GUYS CATCH UP! Probably one of the craziest benches I've seen was Jason Fry's 770 at 198 and Rob Luyando's 948 at 275.

**CB:** What would you say to a novice lifter or to a lifter who's just starting out in powerlifting?  
**DH:** Set goals and take small but consistent steps to reach your goal; don't get caught up in a number. Just do what you can do and build up, be smart and stay injury free. It's hard to make any kind of progress with an injury.

**CB:** Do you have a favorite out of the three or is it all three lifts?  
**DH:** When I first started out I hated squats because I knew nothing about it, but as I have gone through the sport I like all three. If I had to pick one I would say it's the squat because that is my biggest number.

photos courtesy Dave Hoff/Critical Bench

page 88 »



**LEO "THE FREAK" INGRAM**  
 720-LB. RAW SQUAT  
 585-LB. RAW BENCH

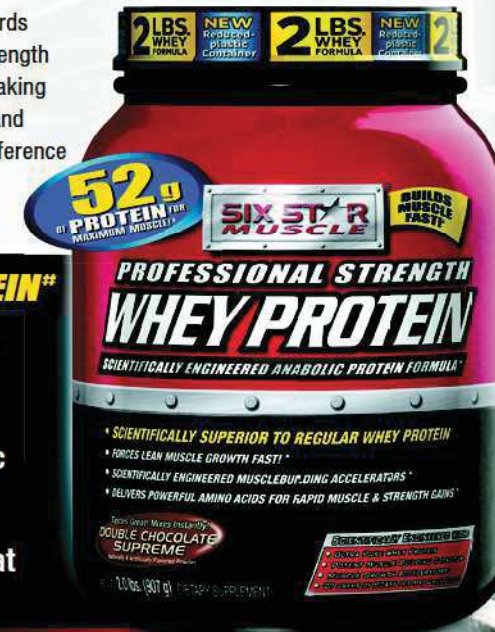
TEST SUBJECTS GAINED

# 160% MORE RAW STRENGTH\*

Some people spend years trying to build the bar-bending strength needed to shatter past records and set new PBs. Those taking a key ingredient in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein built more strength in just weeks! Here are the documented results: In one third-party, university study, subjects taking a key ingredient in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein gained 160 percent more strength, pushing and pulling more weight in just 10 weeks!† For you, 160 percent more strength could mean the difference between record-setting poundages or disappointing failure. Physically and mentally prepare yourself by taking Six Star Muscle Whey Protein. Get yours today!

**SCIENTIFICALLY SUPERIOR TO REGULAR WHEY PROTEIN#**

- Key Complex Shown to Build 5x More Muscle\* and 160% More Strength Than Inferior Milk Protein Formulas!
- 52 g of High-Quality Protein and 7,024 mg of Other Anabolic Cofactors per Max Serving!
- Developed Based on Cutting-Edge Research Conducted at Multiple Leading Universities!



www.sixstarmuscle.com



In one 6-week study, subjects taking the key ingredients in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein gained, on average, 340% more lean mass than those using a placebo (8.8 vs. 2.0 lbs.). \*In the same study, subjects taking the key ingredients in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein gained, on average, more lean mass than subjects using regular whey protein (8.8 vs. 5.1 lbs.). †In one 10-week study, subjects taking a key ingredient in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein increased their one-rep max bench by 160% more than those using casein protein (105 vs. 40.7 lbs.). \*In the same study, subjects taking a key ingredient in Six Star Muscle Whey Protein gained, on average 5 times more lean mass than those using casein protein (11 vs. 1.81 lbs.). © 2010.

## DAVE HOFF »

get in this battle of getting to the top before someone else does, because there is always someone out there who is hungry and wants to be number one.

**CB:** Tell everyone here the difference between someone who wants to look “pretty” and someone who does what we do? The difference between a workout and a training session.

**DH:** I would say the pretty people try to look pretty—you know, the beach muscles. On the other hand, someone like us trains for strength, muscle endurance and adapting one’s body to heavy weights.

**CB:** What would you tell a powerlifter if they are trying to get to the next level in the sport? Do you believe that powerlifters have a lifestyle of their own?

**DH:** In my experience, going to the next level is a lot of little things—things that normal people don’t look at or know what to look for. It’s shoring up all the loose ends that will take you to the next level. Do all you can do and then some more, constantly changing to keep your body guessing. Everything from the way you train, what you eat, the calories you eat, your gear and how well it fits you. Look at all the little things and break it down and go a step at a time. Powerlifting great Travis Mash told me that powerlifting isn’t a sprint—it’s a marathon—so go slow and pace yourself. You don’t get brownie points for getting there fast. I’ve met a lot of powerlifters and they all have different lifestyles, but in a way yes, I will say they have lifestyles of their own because all or most of your time is devoted to the gym.

**CB:** How driven would people say you are about being a powerlifter? How does it affect you outside of the gym?

**DH:** I would say if you talk to someone who knows me personally they would say I’m a driven person. I have a passion for powerlifting. I love doing it and I have a lot of fun. I’ve met some great friends through powerlifting. I think outside the gym it carries over into my lifestyle. I’m very goal oriented and I have expectations for myself and I try to live my life the way I’m supposed to live.

**CB:** How has powerlifting made you a stronger person away from the sport?

**DH:** It’s taught me to bounce back from adversity. In powerlifting you have a couple bad meets in a row. Do you give up or go back to the drawing board and try and fix what you’re doing wrong? It’s the same in life. When I get thrown a left hook that I didn’t see coming, powerlifting has taught me to bounce back and move forward.

**CB:** Do you have any training partners? How have they helped? Tell us about Westside Barbell.

**DH:** Training at Westside Barbell my whole career has allowed me to train with the best. I’ve had the honor to train with Chuck Vogelpohl, John Stafford, Louie Simmons, Matt Smith—the list goes on and on and on. Currently I train with Joe Jester, Jason Fry, Brad Bishop, Bob Coe, Jeff “gritter” Adams, Louie Simmons and on occasion, Mike, but we call him BULL., John Kerr, Amy Weisberg and Arnold Coleman. For the most part,

I will say this—your training partners are everything. If you don’t have good training partners, it will reflect on your lifting. They are the ones that tell you when you’re doing something wrong and that’s how you get better. I had Bob Coe bring me up through the sport and if it weren’t for his help I wouldn’t be at the level I’m at now. Westside Barbell is a Gym full of tradition and pride. The second you walk in that door you better be prepared to go to work or get out. You are always reminded of what you have to achieve. The famous chalk board with the best weight class lifts—some of the best powerlifters in history are on that board—Chuck Vogelpohl, Tony Bologone, Greg Panora, the list goes on. Every one in there is strong and wants to move big weights around. The environment there is unlike any other gym. You have to come to Westside Barbell to experience it.

**CB:** What are your workouts like? How are they setup? What training methodology do you follow?

**DH:** Get the Westside Book of Methods—it’s all in there. A lot of the training comes straight from Louie. A small percentage are things I have been taught by top lifters that I incorporate into my game plan. Westside training methods brought me to the level I am today. I think that’s the best way to train.

**CB:** How did you end up at Westside Barbell?

**DH:** After I left Murph’s Gym I went to a gym called Big House Powerlifting. I was there for about two weeks and Travis Fletcher told me that Louie Simmons wanted to meet me, so I was like, “Heck yeah!” I went and met and talked with Lou and worked out. I was nervous—sweating bullets—because he was watching me the whole time and here I am the 16 year old kid thrown to the wolves, I learned really, REALLY quick how things were to be and are. It was “put up or get the F\*&% out.” So long story short, that’s how I came to Westside and I’ve pretty much been there ever since.

**CB:** What bench shirt do you use and why? Do you have any tips about how to get your bench shirt and use it to get the most of your lifting efforts?



Hoff showing off his denim bench shirt

**DH:** I use a double-ply Karin’s extreme denim bench shirt. It’s the only bench shirt I have ever used. It has lasted all seven years of my powerlifting career and it’s still going strong! If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. I never changed shirts because I always made continual progress, so I just went with it and I’m still getting PRs today. Sadly though, I can’t even get another shirt because I think Karin stopped making bench shirts. So it would be hard to obtain a Karin’s, but I like denim. I think if you know how they work they are just as good if not better than anything out there now.

**CB:** What would you suggest to someone on how to get stronger on all three lifts?

**DH:** Pick your exercises right, don’t go balls out every work out, be consistent, do a lot of volume work.

**CB:** What drives you as a lifter? What is your mindset like during training?

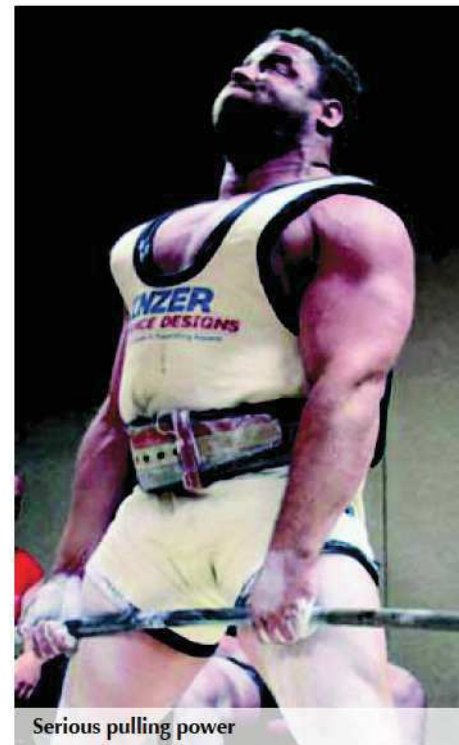
**DH:** I just want to be the best. I want to be number one. My mindset in training is very focused. When I start slacking I think, “Who is training harder? Me or my opposition? Does he want it more than me?”

**CB:** Was your training any different prior to your last meet?

**DH:** To be honest I couldn’t even tell you because no training cycle is the same. I do something different every time.

**CB:** Do you think using bench shirts/gear are cheating?

**DH:** No, I think that’s stupid to think. It’s cheating when I enter a raw bench meet with a bench shirt on. To think using a bench shirt is cheating is shallow. It’s a part of the sport that has evolved. To take it to the next level you have to be willing to do whatever it takes. If you want to bench raw, more power to you, but I want to bench the biggest weight I can.



Serious pulling power

**CB:** What is your view on training in equipment and learning them?

**DH:** I think there is a time and a place for everything. I believe you should have good balance between geared lifting and raw training. I believe one complements the other. Learning gear will help with better technique, and better technique leads to strength gains and minimal, if any, injuries.

**CB:** What do you think is the reason for all the big numbers as of late like Kennelly’s 1075 and Frankl’s freakish total or Hoorstra’s raw strength? Has strength training evolved?

**DH:** Those three mentioned are special lifters. They are one of a kind. They have the genetics as well as the mental drive and will to do whatever they have to do. That’s what sets them apart from the rest. I never thought I would see a 1000 lb. bench, but obviously anything is achievable if you want it bad enough.

**CB:** Do you think the standards went up in the sport?

**DH:** In a way I believe they have. Judging, for the most part, is impartial and fair. I would rather miss than get a gift and I’m sure most lifters feel the same way.

**CB:** What is your nutrition like now?

**DH:** I had to lose some weight. I was too big and didn’t feel too peppy so I dropped to 242 pounds. I use a lot of Get Diesel Nutrition—

that guy has some good test boosters that I

think are great. I like Large Nutrition too. I have a high protein diet so I usually eat a lot of red meat and fish, and chicken when I don’t feel like fish.

**CB:** What changes are you going to have to make to go to the next level?

**DH:** New gear every so often, eventually I would like to grow to be a full 275, I was 257 lifting in the 275s, so down the road I would like to be a solid 275 at that weight I think I will have better leverages.

**CB:** Is there anyone you would like to thank right now?

**DH:** First and foremost, Louie Simmons. He gave me the opportunity to be what I am today. He’s been very generous and giving and the road would have been a lot harder had he not been there. Also, Bob Coe for keeping me injury-free and for giving me the motivation and drive he instilled in me. That man put a lot of time into me. Chuck Vogelpohl too—not only for inspiration, but if it weren’t for him I would have never gotten out of my squat funk. He got me on the right track, which is a big part of how my squat came back. He also taught me how to deadlift the way I should. Phil Harrington taught me a lot about training and going to the next level. Also, all my training partners and teammates at Westside Barbell. They keep me motivated and on track. «



Dave has a super powerful squat

**FREE REPORT**

[www.criticalbench.com/plusa.htm](http://www.criticalbench.com/plusa.htm)

Here are some tips you can use right now to increase your max in the bench press and set a personal record.

Implement some or all of these techniques next time you workout to bust through your own bench press rut and add pounds to your one rep max.

**Full 12-Week Program Provided!**

**Free For Powerlifting USA readers  
Claim Yours Here for a limited time!**

[www.criticalbench.com/plusa.htm](http://www.criticalbench.com/plusa.htm)

