

INTERVIEW

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

by Mike Lambert

To say that Bill Kazmaier has made a major impression on the sport of Powerlifting may be understatement. He was Junior and Senior National Champion in 1978, World Champion in 1979, World's Strongest Man in 1980 and 1981. Strongbow World's Strongest Man, breaker of many a Bench Press record, ending up early this year with a 661 effort and the heaviest official Powerlifting total on record. He's done television commercials for the telephone company, has a nice contract with Diversified Products (a giant weight training equipment concern), a nice gym in Auburn, Alabama with everything paid for, and drives around in a new Porsche. Recently he accepted an invitation from the Green Bay Packers to try out for professional football. Kaz is 'Back from the Pack' and talks about his adventure up in Wisconsin, his injury at the latest World's Strongest Man contest, and his plans for the future.

Why don't you tell the whole story about the football thing? How did the Packers get interested in you?

Well, it was more my interest in football and my chiropractor trying to get me out of the sport of powerlifting because of what it was doing to my joints and my body. He has worked with Green Bay on back on the field, getting guys started on a normal basis. He got talking with Bart and told him he had an interest in playing the game again and told him of my exceptional talents, strength, and my physique and all, and that it would be a shame if I didn't get the opportunity, Bart, after talking with him, agreed that it would be something which if I didn't try it, I'd never know, and possibly I could be proficient enough to fit in the long run. After meeting with him and making a visit to Green Bay he sent me a contract. I didn'ticker about

money. I just signed the contract, wanting to play the game, not thinking about making anything off it. I went on up to Green Bay for the camp this summer, and I spent just about 5 weeks there going through the 2-a days. I started off as offensive guard but their play book must be 3 inches thick and my head was spinning after trying to learn the offense, what all the backs are doing behind me, what the tight end is doing, and trying to figure out a 3-d block across the line, so to defend on the offense. I moved to defensive line position, where it's more strictly to just run many, many times, and to neutralize the center and towards the ball down the line of scrimmage, which is much more natural. I was picking it up rapidly but there were a lot of things involved with football that I wasn't really aware of on that level. I knew that I was 'meat on the hoof' and that an injured player had to go and play anyway, but I never thought it would be me. I twisted a knee one day in a scrimmage in Buffalo and



The KAZ...just before a serious thigh injury at the World Series meet put on by Tony Fitton in April 1980. He came back stronger than ever.

simply a fantasy and it's over now. At the age of 40 I might have looked back and said, 'I could have, I should have, why didn't I try it.' Now I've gone back - I got the opportunity from the Green Bay staff and I know that football's not for me. It's not the game that I want to play. I am committed more now to the game of powerlifting than I've been. I've tried to take an opportunity to get out of it, but I'm happy that I'm back. And that's the football story. Like I say, it just wouldn't have been worth what I would have had to put into it.



What are you going to do in lifting now? What's the immediate plan, anything specific?

With the shoulder problem, part of the pectoral is torn off the insertion into the humerus and on my bicep, the long head ripped off from the insertion. I'm bringing the shoulder around but until it comes, it's going to be slow. I am working hard on the deadlift and the squat. I'm looking forward to a meet later in the year, hoping to do a deadlift, something over the world record, and coming back in the squat, possibly at Gus Reithwisch's meet, and putting together a good squat and deadlift, and a decent bench press. I am looking ahead towards the Worlds Strongest Man, training for it this year, like I have never done before, so that I can possibly win all the events this time rather than just dropping out at the end without an injury going to the Senior Nationals. I don't feel from my heart, the Senior Nationals is worth anything. I think the Worlds Strongest Man (monetarily) is worth

Left: Kaz rubs his paws together in anticipation of a World Record bench at the 1979 Dayton Worlds. **Right:** before heading up for the Packers training camp, Kaz catches some rays with the latest issue of Powerlifting USA (photo by Fitton). **Bottom:** the sore muscles up in the Bear Bend area are the cause of the World's Strongest Man Contest. The blood was beginning to flow at the top of the biceps when Ted Kurbintz snapped this photo.



something and the title is worth more than being Senior National Powerlifting champion. I feel I can get the deadlift record later in the year, and my dream is to do that 1000 pound squat. With my body type I think that would be quite an accomplishment. If I get all 4 records, I think that's worth something, even more than the Senior National and World title in powerlifting.

You're not going to get any surgery done on your injury?

No, the bicep that ripped off, actually, is going to do me some good because I had a bicipital groove problem (technical term by my chiropractor) and what it is the bicep tendon slipping out of the groove in my shoulder causing a great deal of pain in my forearm and giving me a problem in bench pressing. My doctor has suggested that I surgically have the other one removed so that I could get my hands between the bar to squat. The bar is actually too small for me with my shoulder structure and the heavy muscles in the chest. Going along the lines that my shoulders are down and my hands are flat and my weight is down I should be able to hold the bar better. I can turn my arm for the deadlift; my shoulders are down, so I can lock out earlier

