

INTERVIEW

BRAD KELLEY

interviewed by Kate Tallion

Kate Tallion: Tell us about yourself.

Brad Kelley: I am 33 years old. Toni, my beautiful wife of 12 years, and I have two children, Job and Caleb, ages 4 and 5. I have been employed in the ecclesiastical profession for 11 years. Currently, I serve as an associate pastor for Mountain Creek Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. I hold a Divinity Degree from North Greenville College, Southern Baptist School and Anderson Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to my pastoral duties, I travel throughout the country speaking to youth groups, schools, colleges and churches. I started lifting in high school to build up my strength for football. I haven't looked back since that time. I am, and always will be, a drug free lifter.

Kate: What are some of the highlights of your powerlifting career?

Brad: Traveling to St. Petersburg in 1994 to take part in the Goodwill Games was a high point in my powerlifting career. Since I was only 22 at that time, I considered it a major accomplishment to be invited to such a prestigious event.

Benching 600 in the 242 class for the first time in competition in 2001 at the WNPF Palmetto Classic was a major turning point for me. Once I hit that 600, I knew that I had so much more left to accomplish in the benchpress. Since that time I have had the pleasure of competing in several WPO events, as well as Bench America 1, 2 and Bench America's World Bench War. My first 704 bench was in December of 2003 at an APA meet and I hit that using a double ply denim. I put up my second 704 lift at Bench America 2 in a single ply denim shirt.

Kate: What is your best lift in competition?

Brad: On March 5, 2005, I benched 772 at a bodyweight of 238 at the APA Battle of the Barbarians in Williamston, South Carolina. Prior to that meet, my best competition lift was 730 in December, 2004 at the APA Holiday Classic in Nashville, TN in the 275 weight class. No excuses, I was just too lazy to drop the 3.5 pounds that would have put me in the 242s.

Kate: What type of equipment do you train in?

Brad: I am fortunate to

be sponsored by Karin's Xtreme Powerwear. I wear a 2 ply, denim, open back when that style of shirt is allowed. For my last Bench America competition, I wore Karin's single ply, closed back denim. For squats and deads, I use a Metal Pro Squatter.

Kate: Do you use any supplements?

Brad: I take a multivitamin and I use glucosamine. I also take ibuprofen about 1 hour prior to heavy lifting. To aide in recovery, I try to get at least 8-9 hours of sleep a night.

Kate: What are your goals in powerlifting?

Brad: My ultimate goal is to bench 800. God willing, I would like it to be in the 242's. I am also planning on competing in my first full-power meet lifting in gear. Many years ago, I promised one of my partners that I would compete in a full-power meet, she is getting very impatient, and so I had better achieve this goal soon!

Kate: How important are training partners?

Brad: Currently I train with 3-4 partners on heavy bench day and one partner on squat and non-shirt bench day. Good partners are difficult to find and even more difficult to keep. Currently I have three primary partners. I am truly blessed since one of my partners is my twin brother, Bart. We constantly push each other and it was with great pleasure that I witnessed his first 600 bench at the same competition I benched 730. Bart was out for the past year with injuries and it was great to seem him making such a strong comeback. Mark Pritchard is our 4th bench partner. He has been training for almost 2 years and has made serious gains. He also is Bart's handoff person.

My squat, deadlift and bench partner is Kate Tallion. We have trained together for approximately 6 years. Without her encouragement, yelling and screaming, I never would have come this far. She is able to push me beyond my limits and is constantly searching out new techniques and devising new routines. I am fortunate to have partners/handlers that

travel with me to meets. When I compete, I totally rely on my handlers. Without them, it is much more difficult to compete, especially on an Elite level. You absolutely need someone to work the table, keep an eye on the competition and run the stats. A strong handoff person is also vital. I have been truly blessed with a great team.

Kate: What do you enjoy about powerlifting besides the competition?

Brad: I take pleasure in the camaraderie of the sport. I have met so many great people throughout the years, many of which I still correspond with regularly. On the flip side, I do see a lot more internet bashing happening. I am totally amazed at the amount of people that are so quick to judge lifters via internet without ever meeting them, or seeing their lifts. Apparently, once you hit big numbers you are subject to be judged by people that know nothing about you, your lifting (save posted results) or even your character and the type of person you are. Unfortunately, this is now a fact of life.

Kate: When is your next meet?

Brad: My next meet will be Bench America 3 on October 1st, 2005. My training routine will change slightly to accommodate the use of a one ply, closed back, bench shirt.

Kate: Do you have any closing remarks?

Brad: Yes, I would like to thank all the people that have supported my lifting career throughout the years, especially my wife Toni, my two sons, Job and Caleb, and my partners, Bart, Kate and Mark. I would also like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for giving me the will, desire and determination to constantly move forward in all my endeavors.

Kate: What advice would you give to a newcomer to the sport of powerlifting, namely benching?

Brad: Be true to who you are. Make sure you learn the sport. Always employ proper form. Be open minded to new training routines and techniques.



Brad Kelley: flanked by his twin brother Bart (left), Kate Tallion, and Mark Pritchard. (Leon Josaitis photograph)