

INTERVIEW

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

TRAVIS MASH interviewed by Keith Payne

Keith Payne: How about some background information.

Travis Mash: I am 31 yrs. Old. I have a beautiful girlfriend - national figure competitor Julie Childress, a perfect little daughter Bailey Alexandra, and my dog Stella. These three are my life. I competed in powerlifting in high school, along with varsity football and basketball. I played varsity football at Appalachian State University. Afterward I started powerlifting again. In 1997 I started Olympic lifting, and by the end of 1998 I was at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs with Shane Hamman. Along the way, I was recruited for the United States Bobsledding Team. The WPO lured me back into powerlifting in 2001, and here we are today.

Keith Payne: How and when did you get started in the sport of powerlifting?

Travis Mash: Like I said before, I started in high school. However, I didn't know what I was doing, but in college I met Mike

and Linda Higgins, formerly from Hickory, and Grant Pitts, the former Heavyweight Phenom. They were able to give me enough knowledge and encouragement to take it to the next level.

Keith Payne: What organizations have you lifted in?

Travis Mash: USAPL, IPF, APA, WPA, IBP, APF, and most recently the WPO. I don't care who or what. I just want to go against the best.

Keith Payne: What weight class are you in and do you hold any records?

Travis Mash: I am in the 220 lb. class. I hold the all time record in the total with 2410. I hold several world, national, and state records in other federations. I held the world record bench at the WPO for about 15 minutes, but - thanks to Kenny Patterson - no longer. 15 minutes of bench press fame, oh well!

Keith Payne: What are your best lifts and where have you competed?

Travis Mash: My best lifts are a 948 lb. Squat, a 696 lb. Bench, and a 800 lb. deadlift with a 2410 lb. Total. I have competed all over the United States. I have also competed in Vaasa, Finland in 1996 at the IPF Junior Worlds.

Keith Payne: Can you share your views on drug testing?

Travis Mash: I just think people who are taking shouldn't compete in drug free meets. That is hypocritical and unfair. I like the federations that give both options.

have an outline, and you change it constantly based on your weaknesses. When I write workouts, I follow the Westside structure really close, but for me I am a fool when it comes to training and percentages. I am trying to break PRs every workout. I don't know what comes over me. I walk into the gym with the intention of following my game plan, and then the pre-training demon takes over, and the next thing you know the bar is full of weights. It has worked so far, but I really need to start toning things down as I get older.

Keith Payne: What are your views on supportive gear?

Travis Mash: I think that the equipment companies are some of the biggest sponsors of our sport, and for that I appreciate all of their work. A lot of the equipment is the reason that lifters are lifting at an elite level for a lot longer. Say what you want, but it protects hips and pec tears without a doubt. On the other hand, I don't care what the rules are because I take a lot of pride in my raw accomplishments as my training partners know. I think a mid 500 raw pause bench press isn't bad at 220.

Keith Payne: What type supportive gear do you wear?

Travis Mash: Metal Squat Suit and briefs, and the Metal Deadlift Suit. I wear a Karin's Bench Shirt. I believe that my equipment is by far the best. Elitefts.com had the Metal Gear, and Karin's extreme power.com has the bench shirts. Both are committed to excellence, and it shows in my performance.

Keith Payne: How do you utilize supportive gear during training?

Travis Mash: It depends on where I am at in my training, but I usually like some light briefs for my hips in the squat. I do a lot of raw training year round, but 10 weeks out I definitely start trying to master my equipment.

Keith Payne: What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment to date?

Travis Mash: The 2410 total and victory at the WPO Show of Sirens.

Keith Payne: You said in an interview a couple of years ago that you were chasing Ed Coan's records. How did it feel to finally break Ed's record?

Travis Mash: Unexplainable! I mean you spend your whole life waiting on one moment, and then after 11 years you are there, WOW! I am still trying to let it all sink in. I still see Ed Coan as the King of Powerlifting, along with Steve Goggins, but I hope that I took my seat at the table somewhere with them.

Keith Payne: What goals do you have in the sport of powerlifting?

Travis Mash: 2500 at 220 at the Arnold Classic! Then I am going up to the 242s or 275s to give the big boys a try.

Keith Payne: A 2500 total would be huge. Do you anticipate any significant changes in your approach to this meet as far as training goes?

Travis Mash: A lot more intensity. At this point in my

career, everyone will be gunning for me, and I don't have any intention of being a one meet wonder. I want to stay on top for a while, if God's willing.

Keith Payne: Who do you consider to be your chief competition at the WPO / Arnold Classic this year?

Travis Mash: As always Chuck V. I am sure that we will be battling for a while, but I don't plan on moving over for anyone. I am sure that he will be training with some crazy intensity this time, just as I did after watching him win the Arnold. That was no fun, and the two of us are the same in the idea that winning is the only acceptable outcome. I think that the Arnold Classic 2005 will be the clash of all clashes.

Keith Payne: Any newcomers out there that we should be watching that could contend for the championship?

Travis Mash: At the WPO you never know who will step up and be a challenger. I would say Dondell Blue surprised a lot of people. Kenny Patterson is steadily improving, so you can't forget about him. His squat has really come around, and I personally believe he is the best bench in the world (for now).

Keith Payne: Who are the people you admire and who inspires your lifting?

Travis Mash: I admire Ed Coan, Steve Goggins, Gary Frank, Joe Ladinier, Chuck V., Jesse Kellum, and several of the lifters of the past like Gene Bell, Larry Pacifico, and Fred Hatfield. I am inspired by accomplishments, and I judge myself based on these people.

Keith Payne: What is your opinion of the WPO and the direction it's going?

Travis Mash: I love it. Nowhere else do you have so many champions in one place. The atmosphere is great. I hope that KK is able to get some more sponsors, so that more lifters can share in the money, and the purses could go up more. All I know is that the WPO always packs the house, so interest is there.

Keith Payne: What is your favorite lift?

Travis Mash: The deadlift because it is the purest form of brute strength. I can just imagine a caeman looking at his caeman friend and saying, 'I bet I can pick up a bigger rock than you.'

Keith Payne: Any training tips?

Travis Mash: Open your mind to new ideas. Always keep looking for better ways to do things. Believe me, I am always looking. At the WPO, I probably drive Jim Wendler, Dave Tate, and Louie Simmons crazy trying to dig out information.

Keith Payne: Any funny stories that have happened to you in powerlifting?

Travis Mash: Not really on the

platform, but in 1996 I got lost in the Heathrow Airport in England. I come from a very small town in the mountains of North Carolina, so getting lost in a huge airport definitely panicked me - big. Big tough powerlifter lowered to sissy lost tourist.

Keith Payne: Anything you would like to see changed in powerlifting?

Travis Mash: First, I would like to thank God for my many blessings in life. I would like to thank Julie, Stella, and Bailey for putting up with me. The HOPG Gym rocks - thanks to Keith Payne for having the vision. Believe me, you are going to hear a lot more out of Keith Payne and Iron Boy Powerlifting in the near future. Bulk Nutrition for giving all the support a lifter could dream of, and delivering a product and service to be proud to represent. Elite Fitness Systems and Metal Gear for the best squat and deadlift suits in the world, and all the knowledge any lifter could ask for to improve their lifts. Thanks Jim Wendler for all the time on the phone giving me new ideas and support. Thanks Dave Tate and Louie Simmons for revolutionizing strength training in the United States. Thanks to Karin for producing an awesome bench shirt. Thanks to Independence Lumber Co. in Independence, Va. and

HomeTown Furniture in Jefferson, NC for supporting me financially for my traveling expenses. Thanks to Kristi and Chris Mason for being there from the beginning. Thanks to Andrew Shatley, Heather and Mol and the whole crew at Appalachian Fitness Center in Boone, NC for having my back. Thanks to my buddy Sarah Miller for believing in me. Thanks to Joni Farmer for being the best sister in the world, and little Gia for being the best niece. Thanks to my training partners for hanging in there and Kevin and all the others in Asheville for having my back always. Finally, my childhood best friend Kevin Jones for being my friend even when I can be a jerk. I am sure that I am forgetting someone, but I love you all.

Keith Payne: Any final comments?

Travis Mash: Thanks for the interview! I hope that I can be a part of advancing powerlifting into the future. I can be reached at travismonstermash@yahoo.com, and very shortly travismonstermash.com will be available with lots of information on my views on strength training. If you get a chance, check out one of the Iron Boy Powerlifting Meets in North Carolina. They Rock!

© Copyright 2004 Keith Payne

Strong Stronger Strongest

New! 2004 book by Dale Harder. Bios on over 100 strong men from all areas - weightlifting, powerlifting, strongman, grip, wrestling, Basque, highland games, shot put, arm wrestling. - Sigmarsson Kazmaier, Chuck Ahrens, Alexeev, Anderson, Pisarenko, Taranenko, RezaZadeh, Brad Gillingham, Frank, Rychlak, Mikesell, Bolton, Brian Siders, A pollon, Goerner, Saxton, Marx, Andre the Giant, Paul Wight, Karelin, Brian Oldfield, Randy Barnes, Mac Batchelor, John Brzenk, David Horne, Steve Gardener, Richard Sorin, Dave Brown, Clay Edgin... All-time lists (50 deep) on all Olympic lifts, power lifts, and weight over bar. Separate lists for IPF lifts & other power lifts. Super-heavyweight results for every world championship in weightlifting, powerlifting, World's Strongest Man, Arnold Strongman, Strongbow, Defi 10 & Ultimate Challenge contests. Chronology of strength events from 1699 to 2004.

Over 100 photos/drawings. 320 huge 8.5" x 11" pages.

Order from:

Education Plus
18584 Carlwyn Dr.
Castro Valley, CA
94546, Box N.
Only \$29.95 + \$4 S&H
or \$11 Priority mail.
Calif. please add
\$2.70 sales tax.
(Canada \$11 S&H)

