

INTERVIEW

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

Paul "Tiny" Meeker as interviewed for PL USA by Tom McCullough



TM: Tiny, could you give the readers a little background about your life?

PM: Yeah, I was born May 28, 1971, in Houston, Texas. Since then I have lived most of my life in Humble, Texas. I graduated from Humble High School in 1989. I also did a couple of years in college, but didn't go any further than that. While in high school I played some football and basketball. I was an All-District defensive tackle. Currently I work as a bouncer and body guard and I am five foot nine inches, weigh 282 pounds, have a 55 inch chest and 22 inch biceps.

TM: With measurements like this most of us can see that you aren't exactly tiny. How did you ever get the nickname of "Tiny"?

PM: One of the first places I ever worked for had two guys working there named Paul. One

was tall, skinny guy. Every time someone yelled Paul, we both turned around. So as a joke, everyone started calling me "Tiny." The name just kind of stuck with me. As you can see, every year I keep getting tiner (ha ha ha).

TM: How long have you been weight training?

PM: That is kind of a hard question, because even as a kid I lifted weights. When I went into the sixth grade I had the opportunity to actually work out with George Foreman at the Humble High School weight room. I didn't actually started powerlifting until my sophomore year in high school. When I was 15 years old I actually weighed 240 pounds. I had a 315 pound bench press. During my sophomore year, I made All-District powerlifting champion and in my Junior year I made All-Region powerlifting champion. Unfortunately during my senior year, they kicked the powerlifting program out, so I wasn't able to continue my competition. I probably would have been the Texas State champ if this had not happened.

PM: Of course, Bob Garza would be at the top of the lift. He is the one who taught me the basics and

used to the shirt, it can even hurt your lift. If you learn how to use it correctly, it can help you dramatically. If you just put it on at a meet and never train in it, you may find that you have the same bench or only just slightly more than you had without the shirt.

TM: Do you train in the same bench press shirt that you use at a contest?

PM: I like to train in an old shirt and I get closer to a contest and lift heavier weight, I use a tighter one. At a contest you really want to get as tight of a shirt as you can, but you also need to work with that shirt before the contest to get use to the feel.

TM: What are your preferences in bench press shirt?

PM: I personally like the single ply polyester, only because they are very easy to get on and off. If you prefer to wear the double ply shirts you have to be real careful to have to pull both the inside and the outside of the shirt down. Right now I am wearing the Iner denim with a Velcro back. It is so easy to put on and in between your lifts you can unstrap it. I feel like this particular shirt gives me much better support and spring. For me, I have found that the poly shirts work best coming off the chest and the denim shirts work great off the chest too, but they also work more in the triceps during the lockout. Once again, if you don't train to use the shirt during your training, it isn't going to work as well for you.

TM: Do you have any special techniques or secrets in using gear you are doing a lot of cardio exercise, you are just not going to gain weight. You will just need too many calories.

PM: Now if I hold you this every-one else would be using it (ha ha ha). No actually, my best advice, like I said is to train in your gear and learn how to make it work for you.

TM: Tell us a little bit about your diet. What do you eat?

PM: Except during contest time, I actually eat horribly. Because of my work, I usually eat a lot of fast food. When I get ready for a contest I try to start eating better. I am a steak and potatoes kind of guy. I eat a lot of protein and lots of carbs. For calories, I don't watch that too much, but I do try to drink plenty of water.

TM: What supplements do you use?

PM: I'm really not a supplement person. I've tried creatine, but it didn't really do too much for me. I always take my vitamin C to keep from getting sick as much and also use protein shakes on occasion, especially when I'm trying to gain weight. That's basi-

cally all I ever do as far as supplements go.

TM: Do you have any tips you could share on making weight in those heavier weight classes?

PM: I lift in the 308s and 275s, so I always need to gain weight. I have found that I have to eat a lot more, but I also try to eat more frequently. I try to eat up to 5 times per day. If you are training to gain weight you must also eat any cardio exercise you are doing. If you are doing a lot of cardio exercise, you are just not going to gain weight. You will just need too many calories.

TM: What has the sport of powerlifting has done for your life?

PM: My life is certainly getting a lot better because of it. It may even get better if I land some big sponsors. Overall powerlifting makes me a happy person. I am a very competitive person. When you get out of school, there isn't really a lot you can do. With powerlifting, the sky's the limit. You can be any age and be in this sport.

TM: How do you see the sport of powerlifting in the future?

PM: If you had asked me this last year, I would have said that I was worried, but now I am starting to see a lot of exciting things happening. I personally would like to see more meets, one national champion and one set of world records. There are some federations, as I understand it, that are working hard to make this come



Tiny Meeker trying 629 at the WABDL Worlds, which would have been a new world record at 308 lbs.

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TM: Do you actually believe powerlifting can make it to the Olympics in the near future?

PM: They got snoubowarding and beach volleyball in the Olympics, so I can't see why powerlifting reasons I hear for why they don't do it are pretty bogus. I think that we will make it into the Olympics sooner or later.

TM: Would you like to see this sport unified or do you enjoy having a choice of federations to lift in?

PM: I not too sure I would like to see just one federation, but I think we may be able to cut down on the number of federations we have just a little. Lately it has gotten kind of ridiculous with so many national and world champions. I think I would love to see one set of records and one national and world champion.

TM: Do you have any advice for lifters just starting out in powerlifting?

PM: Don't worry so much about winning, your time will come. You have got to be patient. Keep training hard and good things will happen.

TM: Are there any final comments you would like to make or people you would like to thank?

PM: Yes, I would like to thank Bob Garza for bringing me back into this sport, my training partner John Stewart and Sheldon Weingust. I would also like to thank you and Mike Lambert of