





HENRY THOMASON HAS THE BIGGEST SINGLE-PLY SQUAT IN THE WORLD FOR SQUATTING 1,058 POUNDS. Nobody has squatted more—past or present. Henry also plans on setting other records in the future. Let's meet this powerlifting great!

Henry, tell readers about yourself.

My name is Henry Thomason. I am a 32 year-old elite/pro, single- and double-ply powerlifter currently living in Sherman, Texas. I work as a night shift material lead at Stanley Black & Decker, Kwikset Plant.

How did you get started in powerlifting?

I started weight training in high school for football. My senior year I started the school's first powerlifting team. I ended up winning both the state and national title. I had a short college football career at Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas. I then transferred to Grayson College to be closer to my family. The following year I began competing in powerlifting at the collegiate level and won several junior, teenage and collegiate national championships from 1999–2001. I also made several national teams. I left the sport from 2002–2006 and returned to competition 2007. I had to take some time off from the sport to focus on work and school. Then in the summer of 2006, my co-workers encouraged me to start lifting again. I haven't looked back since.

What federation do you compete in and what are your best lifts?

I compete with NASA, USAPL, APF, SPF, IPA, and USPA, but the majority of my lifting has been in single-ply gear with NASA.

Best Lift at 275/308/SHW:

- Raw: 765 SQ (NASA) - 405 BP (USPA) - 661 DL (NASA) - 1,760 Total (NASA)
- Single-ply: 1,058 SQ (USPA) - 750 BP (SPF) - 700 DL (NASA) - 2,403 Total (USPA)
- Double-ply: 1,207 SQ (APF) - 755 BP (SPF) - 716 DL (APF) - 2,650 Total (SPF)

**Editor's note: Henry's single-ply squat is the best in the world today*

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HENRY THOMASON

interviewed by Ben Tatar of CriticalBench.com
photos courtesy Thomason/CriticalBench.com

When it comes to SQ/BP/DL, how did you train as a beginner? How did you train for a bigger squat as an intermediate to get past that barrier? And now how are you training the SQ/BP/DL as an elite powerlifter?

As beginner I bought everyone's book, training video and magazine on the market. I traveled to as many powerlifting and strongman events as I could get to. I started asking more experienced lifters questions about training and how to be successful. The biggest thing was to develop good technique. Shelby Jones (NASA), a top super heavy lifter, did a great job of pointing out things to work on at every meet. I learned new things to work on for the next one and how to track my process.

As an intermediate, I started to look for a powerlifting gym. My biggest problem was not having regular training partners and spotters. A friend suggested Bad Attitude Gym, which is a hardcore powerlifting gym in Dallas, Texas, which produces top level lifters every year. They taught me how to put together a strength program and how to wear single and double gear correctly. It was also a great team environment. I also got tons of advice about meet planning and fine tuning my lifts on meet day from Rich Peters (NASA).

As an elite lifter, I started to video my lifts and started posting a training log. I now have a library of information about my lifts making it easier to troubleshoot issues and become more efficient in my training. I try to keep an open mind about training and new ways to get stronger. Sean Donegan and Phil Wylie (Bad Attitude Gym) have been a very positive influence. They help training by keeping my ego in check. These guys are always teaching technique, training planning, rest, and meet day strategy.

Tell us about your diet and what are your favorite supplements?

I try to take in more calories on heavy training days, anywhere from 4,000–5,000 calories and less on off training days, around 1,500–2,000 calories. As for supplements, I take a daily multi- vitamin or training pack. During training sessions I started taking protein shakes a couple weeks out from a meet to help with recovery. Pre-workout I use normal energy drinks.

So far in your powerlifting journey, list us a favorite moment, crazy moment, funny moment, and a moment that changed you?

- **Favorite moment:** winning the men's 2001 USAPL College Nationals in Lafayette, Louisiana. Also, squatting 1,058 at the LA Fit Expo in February of 2011, breaking the single-ply all-time record.
- **Crazy moment:** my first APF Senior Nationals in West Palm Beach in June 2009. Everyone in my flight was opening with 1,000 plus squats. Only three lifters made their attempts. Everybody else bombed out.
- **Funniest moment:** it wasn't funny at the time, but looking back... knocking my front teeth out after squatting my first 1,100 lb. squat in training. I tripped over the front of the monolift and landed face first into a bench press.





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▪ **Changing moment:** lifting on the USAPL Team at the 2001 IPF Junior Worlds in Sofia, Bulgaria, September 2001 during the 9/11 crisis. That's where I realized that powerlifting was bigger than just one person.

What was the best and worst advice you ever received?

Worst advice? Nothing comes to mind. Best advice? Stay out of the politics of powerlifting and focus on lifting.

What are your future goals?

▪ **Short term goals:** to be the first person to squat 1,102 (single-ply) and 1,300 (double-ply) pounds.

▪ **Long term goals:** to break 2,600 (single-ply) and 2,800 (double-ply) pounds total and also make an IPF World Team.

Those are big goals, to be the first person to ever squat 1,102 single-ply and 1,300 pounds double-ply! You are well on your way. What do you enjoy doing away from powerlifting?

Most of the time I am working 60 hours a week, so I try to spend time with my family and friends.

It's amazing that you can be a champion in powerlifting as well as work that much. That takes heart! How does your training change during the different seasons of the year?

That's a little tricky because of all the meets that I compete in. I average around 15 meets per year and in different federations with different equipment standards. I generally follow a West-side style of training, but I'm always focusing on form and technique.

What gym do you train at?

Currently, I train at a couple of gyms because of my work schedule. During the week I train at the local health club in Sherman, TX, for light days. Then drive one hour to Sean Donegan at Bad Attitude Gym in Dallas, TX, for my heavy days on the weekend. If I miss a bench training session I will train with Mike Womack at Kingdom Power Gym in McKinney, TX. But my



home gym is with Bad Attitude.

Who in powerlifting inspires you?

There have been several people that inspired me in the sport, but two individuals come to mind. Sean Donegan: he's showed me how lessons can be learned on the platform and how they can be applied to a person's life outside of powerlifting. Lee Eliff: he always gives back to high school lifters.

How do you see the future of powerlifting?

We need unification with the different federations. Take out the "money and ego" aspect of lifter versus organization and to focus on developing the sport from youth lifters up to the

elite level. If we don't, the sport will stay regional and we won't see the best lifters compete against one another.

How are you going to remember your powerlifting journey?

With no regrets and having reached all my goals.

How do you want to be remembered?

How about the greatest squatter of all-time!!! No, seriously, I want to be remembered as a person who gave back to the sport and, hopefully, inspired people to lift.

What is your message to the PL world?

Focus on technique, and have fun with your lifting.

Do you have a creed or motto that you live by?

"Say it on the platform." – Mark Swank

Well, you have really left a mark on the powerlifting world. Congratulations on your world record, and we can't wait to see what you have in store for us next! In closing, who would you like to thank?

My family and friends, Sean Donegan, Rich Peters, Lee Eliff, Shelby Jones, Ken Anderson, Phil Wylie, Mark Swank, Adam Korenke, Scott Prosek, Jim and Amanda DuVall, Alan Borden, Adam Nunnallee, Pete Alaniz, Derek Brixius, Mike Womack, Bad Attitude Gym, Titan Support Systems Team, and NASA Powerlifting. «