

Unleash Instant ANIMALISTIC STRENGTH!



IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, EVERYTHING CHANGES. You enter the gym as a mortal, but by the time you grip the cold, hard steel, you're a raging, iron-hungry animal ready to unleash record-shattering hell on anything in front of you. You are now in the psychoactive realm of mANO Vapor®. Unlike weak, time-released pre-workout products, this powerful, zero wait-time formula hits you so fast and so hard, you'll want nothing more than to lift. **HEAVY.** Loaded with over 60 cutting-edge ingredients designed to quickly summon the animalistic strength and searing intensity you need to destroy your heaviest lifts, mANO Vapor will unlock levels of power and strength you didn't even know you possessed. Get on mANO Vapor and show the world what a **BIG LIFT** really looks like.

AMERICA'S BEST SELLING PRE-WORKOUT FORMULA!



- **Zero Wait-Time Formula** Instantly Unlocks Raging Power and Strength
- **Psychoactive Matrix** Ignites Explosive Lifting Intensity and Extreme Mental Focus
- **Scientifically Formulated** with Anabolic Compounds for **Massive Gains in Muscle**

AVAILABLE AT

Read the label before use. © 2009. For more information, visit Vapor.Experience.com.

Critical Bench: Hey, thanks for doing this interview, Mike. Please introduce yourself.

Mike Tuchscherer: No problem. It's my pleasure. I'm Mike Tuchscherer. I'm 23 years old. I compete in the 275 pound class. I am in the Air Force—currently stationed in Minot, North Dakota. My wife's name is Ayana and she has been a fantastic supporter of mine.

CB: How long have you been involved with powerlifting?

MT: I have been competing since 2001. I started off with high school meets that were part of our football off-season. Once I got to the Air Force Academy, things really took off. They had a powerlifting team that I was able to get involved with and really develop myself as a lifter and coach.

CB: Tell us about your childhood. Did you always train like a powerlifter?

MT: I grew up in Indiana. I had a pretty normal childhood. I started lifting weights when I was in the 7th grade. Once I got into high school, I was lifting for football. Even so, I trained like a powerlifter because I really enjoyed pursuing strength. As a junior, I started competing in powerlifting and really enjoyed it.

CB: Who did you look up to when you were coming up as a powerlifter?

MT: Oh, all the old favorites, I guess. I think my first PL USA had Ed Coan on the cover, which was cool. I really admire Captain Kirk for his squatting ability. I had to get his video when it came out. There are a ton of guys I have looked up to.

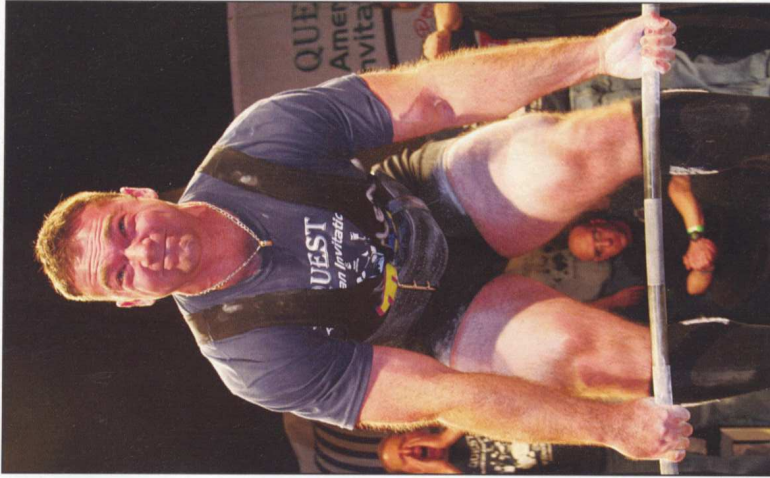
CB: What would you say to a novice lifter or to a lifter who's just starting out in powerlifting?

MT: Learn everything you can. There's an anti-intellectual attitude among many powerlifters and it's wrong. The "just pick up heavy stuff" mentality will fall by the wayside as people who put thought into their training seize the spoils on the podium.

Some guys already do apply their mind to their training, but it's not as common as one would expect. You have to be able to read, absorb, and apply information. If you can't do that, your next choice should be to find someone who can do so and get their help. Even if you have to hire someone to write your training, it's that important if you want to reach the highest levels of powerlifting. It's already this way with many

INTERVIEW

MIKE TUCHSCHERER interviewed by Curt Dennis Jr. of Critical Bench



Mike Tuchscherer has amazing pulling power (Scot DePaRafis photo)

other sports. You've never heard of Joe Blow Track Athlete doing his "modified Charlie Francis workout" and making it to the Olympics, so why do people expect to do that and achieve high results in powerlifting? Some have been able to get away with it so far, but I feel that is mostly due to the condition of competition in Powerlifting today. I think that will change over the coming years.

One way or another, you have to become a student of the sport and study it.

CB: Tell everyone here the difference between someone who wants to look "pretty" and someone who out there, start using your brains! does what we do? Explain the difference between a workout and a training session.

MT: If you train for looks, your training has to reflect that. If you train for performance, your training has to reflect that as well. If you want to do both, that's fine, but you won't be quite as good at either. You'll be a jack-of-all-trades, but also a master of none. There are just not enough resources for all abilities to be maximized. I'm not going to rip on the guys who train for looks, because that's their choice. I'm no better than they are. But, at the same time, don't be the guy to complain that you can't get your Deadlift to improve (or whatever other goal) when you never train specifically for it.

The difference between a workout and a training session—who cares? When you go to the gym, have a plan and know what your objective is. That goes for anybody—even if you aren't competitive in anything. Go to the gym and have a plan with a specific direction to the future and you'll get where you're going. It breaks my heart to see people go to the gym year after year to "get in shape" and they never get anywhere because they are doing the same thing every week. There has to be a driven expectation of results.

As far as the attitude difference between a workout and a training session—a lot of people will say that if you're "training" then you need to be angry in the gym and rude to everyone around you. That's bull. You represent your sport, no matter where you lift. When I lifted at a commercial gym, I represented Powerlifting to the other gym goers. Now that I lift in my garage, I represent Powerlifting to my neighbors. I'm not saying, "don't be focused." You have to be focused. All I'm saying is, don't be a jerk. When I was training at a commercial gym, I can't tell you how many people said, "Hey, what are the chains for?" And every time, I'd explain it to them. It only took me 20 seconds at most and I'd be willing to bet they walked away saying, "Wow, that's a cool idea," rather than, "Wow, Powerlifters are jerks."

CB: You've already mentioned some great tips. What else would you tell a powerlifter if they are trying to get to the next level in the sport? Do you believe that powerlifters have a lifestyle of their own?

(continued on page 94)

(continued from page 17)

ME: If someone is trying to get to the next level, they need to learn more, then apply that knowledge to their training. It's as simple as that. Learn from reputable sources, but the ability to discern what's reputable and what's not is another topic all its own.

Do powerlifters have a lifestyle of their own, I guess. We sure go to the gym a lot.

CB: How driven would people say you are about being a powerlifter? How does it affect you outside of the gym?

ME: I am driven to reach my potential. Powerlifting is what I do, but who I am goes far beyond that. There was a time when I would hang my whole identity on being a Powerlifter, but I guess I just grew out of that. Do I want to achieve in Powerlifting? Yes, very much. I am very driven to see my potential in this sport. Am I willing to do anything to get there? No, absolutely not. The "outside the gym" part of this question is a prime example.

Powerlifting does affect me outside the gym. It has to. I'm twice the size of normal people! And also, I am conscious of what I eat, my posture, and so on. Sometimes I go to be "inconvenienced" to have lift, but I try to live pretty normally and I'll move my training schedule around to make that happen if I can.

Why? Because there are other things in my life that I enjoy as well as powerlifting. At one time, Powerlifting affected my outside life to an extreme degree—to the point that if I had a bad workout, it ruined my day. Now, it might bother me a little, but if I can help it, I try not to get in a bad mood/bring everyone else down with me. Being upset/angry because of a bad workout isn't going to help you be a better lifter—actually, the increased stress will probably make things worse. Psychological-ly, it would be better to channel the negative feelings into positive ones that will help you re-focus on the future.

Additionally, being in a bad mood makes everyone around you uncomfortable, which brings down everyone's quality of life. I don't want my wife to feel like she has to walk on eggshells because I had a bad workout. That's lame. So, I choose to not let it affect me and move on.

CB: Great answer and great mindset. It's all about balance. Do you

have any training partners? How have they helped?

ME: I don't have training partners anymore. I used to have some good ones at the Air Force Academy, but I train by myself now. Not having partners—it's something to get used to, but once you do it, it's kind of cool. I like training alone now because it gives me some solitary time. It's also nice to be able to train when you want to and how you want to without worrying about "what's everyone else going to do."

CB: That's true. What are your workouts like? How are they setup? What training methodology do you follow?

ME: I have developed my own "training methodology." It's called the Reaction Training System (RTS) and you can find out more about it at <http://rts.activeboard.com>.

You hear a lot of lifters say, "you have to listen to your body" or "you have to learn to train yourself." Well, how the heck do you do that? It's a very hard concept to grasp if you've never done it before. In my opinion, that's why it takes some guys 10 years of training before they figure it out. Some just never get it. Once I began to learn how to "listen to my body" I looked for ways to teach this to others. That's when RTS was developed. It's a system of training that progressively teaches you to listen to your body. The result is you no longer are left doing "lifter X's squat program"—you're doing YOUR squat program.

The cool thing is that two people doing RTS can have workouts that look completely different from one another. It captures the nuances of your individuality, thus helping to eliminate guesswork (which eats training time, energy, and resources).

At the moment, my training looks similar to Shelko in that they are higher in frequency and almost never maximum effort. You can take a look at my training



Clean and Deep - Mike Tuchscherer's squat shows picture perfect technique

log by going through my website (<http://www.miketuchscherer.com>) or better for it. You end up with a much better understanding of the training process and a much better ability to control the variables of your own program. At that point, you should be able to program your own training and have a very good idea of what "works" for you.

Also, you should be beyond needing gimmicks to get excited about a program. You should realize that whether you want to do a low volume, high intensity program or a high volume, low intensity program, you know how to adapt it and make it work for you.

CB: What drives you as a lifter? **ME:** Gosh, all kinds of stuff. I think I want to reach my potential in this sport. I have a talent for lifting heavy weights, so I want to see how far I can make it go. I am also driven for God. He has started a good work in me and I know He will be faithful to complete it as long as I have faith in Him. The competition itself can be a driving factor as well. Knowing that I'll be coming up on some tough competition pushes me to work harder. It's always exciting to look forward to a meet where

ferent from what it used to be and (link above) if you want a more detailed description. As always, this is subject to evolution.

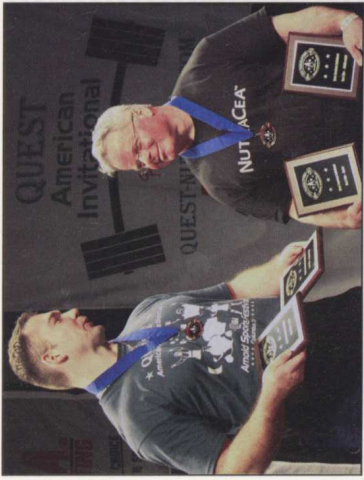
CB: We will certainly check that out, sounds like a solid plan. What would you suggest to someone on how to get stronger on all 3 lifts? **ME:** A problem I see with a lot of lifters is they don't practice the competition lift enough. There are some programming considerations to make when you do this, but to ignore the competitive lift is a big mistake. There's more to learning your gear than you'll be able to get in the last 4 weeks before the meet.

CB: Tell us more about your book that just came out. **ME:** As I mentioned earlier, it's called the Reaction Training Manual. It's written as an instruction manual to the training system. A lot of time, research, and thought went into this book. What I got out of it was a step-by-step guide to developing your own training program. It starts with a basic program that anyone can follow. Then you start making changes to it in a specific and calculated manner.

By the time you finish the manual, your training is quite different from what it used to be and you end up with a much better understanding of the training process and a much better ability to control the variables of your own program. At that point, you should be able to program your own training and have a very good idea of what "works" for you.

Also, you should be beyond needing gimmicks to get excited about a program. You should realize that whether you want to do a low volume, high intensity program or a high volume, low intensity program, you know how to adapt it and make it work for you.

CB: What drives you as a lifter? **ME:** Gosh, all kinds of stuff. I think I want to reach my potential in this sport. I have a talent for lifting heavy weights, so I want to see how far I can make it go. I am also driven for God. He has started a good work in me and I know He will be faithful to complete it as long as I have faith in Him. The competition itself can be a driving factor as well. Knowing that I'll be coming up on some tough competition pushes me to work harder. It's always exciting to look forward to a meet where



Two Great Mikes - Tuchscherer and Bridges (courtesy Critical Bench)

there will be solid competition. **CB:** Throughout your videos you're confident and amazing against the weight and the fact that you train solo is also amazing to see. Tell us about it. **ME:** It developed out of necessity. I had no training partners, and I wasn't going to get left behind, so I found a way to make things work. This goes back to the "expectation of improvement" that I was talking about. I saw I had no training partners, but instead of thinking, "Well, I need to scale back my training," or "Man, I won't be able to train how I want now," I thought, "What will I do to make this work despite my issues?"

Training alone—you get used to it much the same way you do to other styles of training. You have to be a little more concerned about safety (pins set at the right level, always benching in a power rack, etc). You have to be a little more creative (how will you do shirt work?). But in the end, I think I might actually like it better than having partners because of the freedom it affords me. But partners once in a while helps break up the monotony.

CB: Was your training any different prior to your last meet? **ME:** Well, it's always subtly different from meet to meet. Training for Men's Nationals hasn't been all that different from my training going into Worlds. I think training this time around, but slightly more intensity-based, but that's about it. There will be more changes in the next go around. At this point in time, it's more about evolving my training, not creating a revolution.

CB: Do you think using bench programming knowledge and reach

the limit of our own potential. I think it's like trying to be the best stock broker on Wall Street with the strategy "buy low, sell high." There's just more to it than that. And lest I sound like a hypocrite, I have studied quite a lot about programming training. I still don't know everything there is to know, but I'm always in the process of learning more and refining my processes.

The thing that makes me think Powerlifting training hasn't evolved is that it's still such a simplistic approach. Look around at how powerlifters program training. Most people think a template is a program. There's not much "staging" of training going on. Few people are even aware of how much volume they do, or what the various measures of volume even are. I'm not trying to be a jerk, so please hear me out. I'm also nowhere close to perfect on these things. I'm just trying to highlight that there is so much more that we, in general, can learn about training.

CB: Excellent points. If training hasn't evolved why do you think the standards have gone up? **ME:** This question is about my frame of reference. The reality of judging in the sport as a whole—it is what it is. My opinion about whether or not the standards are better or worse than they used to be is just a highlight of where I'm coming from as a lifter. If you know my background, my thoughts should be no surprise.

CB: What does your nutrition plan consist of? **ME:** I'm working slowly into a Metabolic Typing diet, but it's a

lengthy process for me. There's always so much to learn. I like it because it's the same approach I take with training and just applied to diet. Definitely a lot of cool stuff to learn!

CB: What changes are you going to have to make to go to the next level? **ME:** Time will tell. I notice little nuances in my training which I feel need to be corrected. I'm progressing in my programming to a more concrete style of planning, but this is a gradual process and it's only effective because I've taken the time to learn how my body responds to stimuli up to this point. On a more fundamental level, I need to continue to hone my technique and my skill with equipment. I want to actually be able to compete wearing a tight shirt! It's always a process of Train, Respond, Analyze, Critique, Repeat.

CB: Thanks for taking the time to do this interview and sharing your journey. We wish you the best of luck competing this year. Is there anyone you would like to mention in closing? **ME:** First I want to thank God for all the blessings He has given me (it's way more than I could ever hope to count). I also want to thank my wife for her continued love and support. I'd like to thank the rest of my family, as well. They've been great—traveling around to help me out on meets! I couldn't ask for more from them. I want to thank my sponsors, Quest Nutrition and Titan for their generosity and support. Thanks to all the supporters! I can't wait to see what the future will bring!



More Mikes - Tuchscherer shakes hands with U.S. Air Force's Schwanke