

# AUSTIN SELLERS

AUSTIN HAS THE ALL TIME  
BEST TEEN SINGLE PLY BENCH  
RECORD OF 705 AND RUNS AN  
OIL SERVICE COMPANY. ALL AT  
THE TENDER AGE OF

**20**  
YEARS OLD

# YOUNG GUN

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I (Jim) was in Dallas a while ago and met Austin Sellers who was in town for an Arnold bench qualifier. It was hard to believe that he had the all time teen bench record (705 in single ply) so of course I interviewed him! He's a great contrast to Bud Davis who pulled 684 at 68 years old, proving once again that you can do this sport your whole life and keep getting better at it.

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INTERVIEW BY **JIM CURLEY**

## **H**ow old are you and how long have you been lifting?

I'm 20 and I've been lifting for 4 years. I started lifting the second semester of my sophomore year. I weighed 260, all fat, and a friend of mine asked if I'd like to try powerlifting. (Ed. - powerlifting is HUGE in high school in TX). They welcomed me and made me feel like family, so I was hooked from the first workout.

## **What is your current height and weight?**

I'm 5'8" and 230. I usually lift 242.

## **So you played football in high school?**

I played tennis for three years, football for one year and powerlifting for two years. I was actually really good at tennis because no one could return my serve so I didn't have to run around very much!

## **High school powerlifting is all single ply. What were your best high school lifts in a meet?**

I got 600-460-570. I went to Hawley High which had a graduating class of 50 but we had a good team and I still live in Hawley, about 20 miles north of Abilene.

## **Where do you train in such a small town?**

I live with my grandparents and they "donated" half of a 1200 square foot outbuilding so that I could build my own gym. I spent my life savings of \$40k to build it. I knocked down walls, ran wiring, put in flooring which is 3/4" rubber mats. I've got a Dynabody monolift, a brand new Forza bench, and much of the rest of it is Rogue Fitness. My dumbbell rack goes from 5-125 pounds. If you count chains, I've got 4000 pounds of iron weight, 1000 pounds of rubber weight (olympic plates so I can drop them), Texas Strength squat, bench and deadlift bars, three more Rogue power bars, a reverse hyper, squat rack, boxes, single and double pillar pulldowns, leg curl and extension machines, shoulder press and three Texas Strength squat racks with snap in benches. I've got gear, belts, a deadlift platform, and a leg press machine. I've got some equipment that's in storage so I'm looking for a new building already!

## **Do you train people or is it a true home gym?**

I train people, mostly high school kids from surrounding schools who powerlift or play football. I'm thinking about moving it to Abilene so I have more room and time

to train people.

## **Is that your full time job?**

No, I work for the oilfield service roustabout company that my grandpa owns. It will be mine someday, but what I need to do is find people that I trust so that one would manage the gym, one would run the oilfield service company and I would manage the managers. I've got a few people in mind because with Shell moving in the area is getting ready to explode.

## **What exactly does a roustabout company (you) do?**

Once the well is drilled we do everything else. We set up all the gathering tanks, the pumpjack, the electricity, tank batteries, flow lines - everything. A crew of three can have a drilled well flowing and producing oil in 4-5 days. We're always busy. It's hard physical labor but I'm used to it.

## **How big is the oilfield service company?**

It's only two years old with nine employees but it's doing well. My grandfather started it so that I'd have

something to go into. He's 67 but he and my grandmother have raised me since I was six months old. Long story, but they've done a great job and for all intents and purposes they're my parents. I started the gym after the oil company was up and running just because I needed somewhere to train. I didn't start it as a business but it's kind of turned into one.

**Do you have any certifications?**

I'm certified through NSCA and CrossFit Level 1.

**Experience counts more than a sheet of paper. What are your best lifts in a meet recently?**

I hit an 860 single ply squat, a 705 bench single ply and a 630 raw deadlift, all in three separate meets. The squat was in APF, the bench was in WABDL and the deadlift was in a non sanctioned meet. I'm going to APF/WPC Worlds in November in their AAPF drug tested single ply division. I'm hoping for 840-720-650 for 2050-2150 total as a junior.

**What's that teenage bench record you have?**

In high school at 198 I benched 445 and I have the all time teenage

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single ply bench record at 705. I did that last year at a WABDL meet in Oklahoma before I turned 20.

**How did you go from 445 to 705 in two years?**

Two words – Mike Womack. I train with Mike and his crew in McKinney, TX at least twice a month on Saturday (now Sunday because of Mike's kid's sports activities). It's a four hour drive EACH WAY but it's worth it. I probably would've quit powerlifting and I sure wouldn't be where I am now without him. They call him the "bench daddy" and he is the "guru" of bench pressing.



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R PULLDOWNS, LEG CURL AND EXTENSION MACHINES, SHOULDER PRESS AND THREE TEXAS STRENGTH SQUAT RACKS WITH SNAP IN BENCHES.



I met Mike when I was a teenager because a bunch of other teenagers and myself entered a meet in Arlington a few years ago. Mike was there and I saw him bench after he had just made his 942 bench in single ply at WABDL Worlds. My bench at that time IN A SHIRT was 270. I arranged to train with Mike a while later and the first time I trained with him I got 420 to two boards. I was sold! He showed me the basics of how a shirt worked and when he saw my diligence and desire to bench more, he started altering my shirt and my bench took off. I've brought 820 to my chest and 945 to a two board in the gym but my best meet bench is only 705.

**Why do you think that is? Why can't you do it at a meet?**

I haven't had the weight in my hands enough. I've only had 800 plus on the bar three times and each time was two or three months apart. I need to handle 750 a lot more and then go to 800 and train with that weight consistently. My high school coach around here is a big help but there aren't very many big single ply lifters that can help. I've put out the word that I'll train people for free if they'll just help me with the gear so I hope I can get a crew together locally. I also have to get over the "open big to win big" mentality. Many times an easy opener just to stay in the meet will win because everyone else bombs so I'm trying to dial back my openers.

**What's the next month look like in preparation for WPC Worlds?**

I'm doing a lot of volume at 80-85% in gear. Maybe two or three weeks out I'll be doubling my projected second attempts, 3 sets of 2 reps twice a week in each lift. I always pull raw in both training and meets so that's easy to accommodate.

**Do you pull sumo or conventional?**

I pull equally each way. No matter what I've done they're both equal.

**What meets are you looking at in 2015?**

I'm going to pull back from powerlifting for a while and try strongman. I've bought some stones, yokes and other strongman equipment. I think powerlifting will always come first but strongman can help powerlifting. I can do almost everything Derek Poundstone has done even though I'm not an optimal strongman height. Last Wednesday I got the 430 pound stone to a 50" platform which is almost to my chin three times along with walking 75 yards with a 950 pound yoke. I haven't sprinted with it yet but I've got natural strength that seems to translate well to strongman.

**Do you look forward to the day where you can have a cushy manager type position and just train hard without all the physical labor during the day?**

I'm not sure if it would help or hinder me. Physical labor is good for a person and I know when I go on vacation I don't train. It's kind of like not training in your bench shirt. Your brain forgets the groove.

**Who would you like to thank or mention?**

First and foremost my "papa" and "meme" (Grandpa and Grandma). They're my real

family. I'd like to thank Clancy Manuel and Josh Helder, two of my best friends. Clancy is the one that got me into lifting in the first place and they're always there for me. Kevin Stoker and Cort Arthur were my two high school powerlifting coaches – they warmly welcomed me into the iron brotherhood family, and they're still great buddies and training partners. Henry Thomason for squat and deadlift help, Ken Anderson for great gear help and last but not least Mike Womack. If not for him and his crew I'd probably have quit. I thank him for everything he's done and I could never repay him. He's a family type of guy and he's always there for every one of his

iron family.

To Kayla, my mom and my sisters Trinity and Kailyn Cooley, the Helzer family and the Stoker family for all the support and help as well.

Family isn't blood or who's married into who. It's about who you love and care for most, who you would be there for at anytime anywhere for anything without even batting an eye and you know they would do the same for you. Each one of the people above are all very close to me and a huge key to my success. Without them, anything I do or have done wouldn't be possible. **PLT**

## STRENGTH *INSPIRATION*



"Just me, God, and gravity" - Mike Womack

"Life is like bench press, you'll get through it, you just gotta keep on pushin'" - Mike Womack

"Work hard, pray hard, live simple" - Austin Sellers

"For the kingdom of God it is not a matter of talk but of power."  
1 Corinthians 4:20

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."  
Philippians 4:13

