

JUNE 2015

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**Grandmother of  
7 benches 501  
single ply!**

**SQUAT DEPTH:  
two views**

**muscle mass  
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**RICHARD  
HAWTHORNE  
DEADLIFTS 600 X 4  
AT 130#**

**WHAT IS HIS SECRET?**



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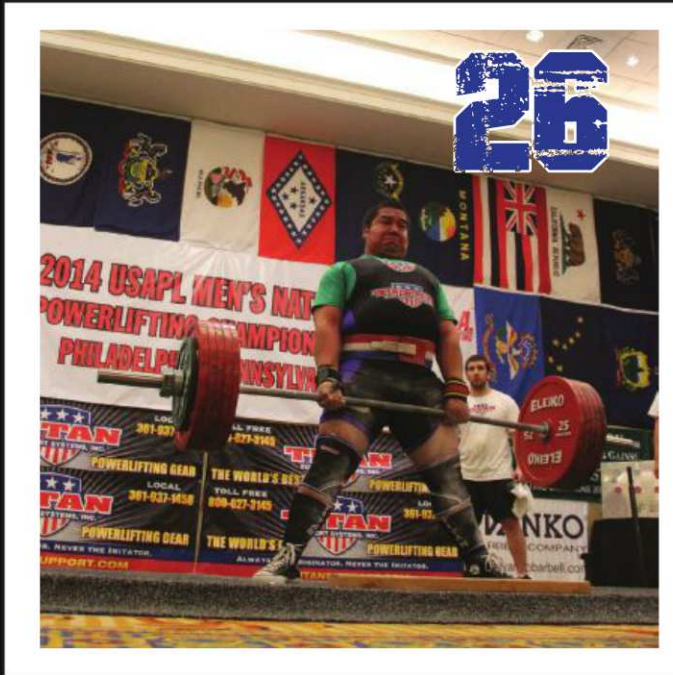
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COVER STORY

# WELCOME

## ON THE COVER

Dennis Cieri, not your traditional world class bench presser.



## POWERLIFTER TODAY

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# From The Editor

Dennis Cieri graces the cover this issue. Not the typical looking world class bench presser, but he is! Go to [www.powerliftingwatch.com](http://www.powerliftingwatch.com), "Powerlifting Lifter Rankings" "Best of the Best", 198 raw, and there he is with 535, long arms and all. So what's his secret? Well, you'll have to read the interview but it has a lot to do with hard work and nutrition.



Speaking of bench pressing, while you're on PL Watch, go to 198, single ply, female. Karen Campbell, also interviewed, has the #1 spot and just got a 501, single ply, tested in both bench and deadlift at 51 years old! Oddly enough, hard work seems to be a factor with her too!

Who gets best lifter in bench in most meets? The SHW's, usually. Tom Cencich has come up with a new coefficient that levels the playing field.

Most of us have watched ants picking up huge things and wished we had that superhuman strength. Richard "The Ant" Hawthorne lives up to his name, managing to pull 600 x 4 raw at the Arnold "Cage" event recently. Oh wait, the guy is 5'3" and weighs 130! How does he do that? Richard is a very motivated and analytical guy and has some great advice in his interview for all of us.

Another innovative and analytical guy, Super D, aka Donnie Thompson, discusses some unique things that he has come up with to fix himself and others in order to keep lifting. I need to have his X-wife work on me!

Old guys rule! But so do young guys! Read about Howard Myers

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(70 and hitting PR's and records) and Michael Rodriguez (19 years old, 242 single ply and 860 squat). Michael got his start in TX High School Powerlifting Association, and Kevin Pitman tells us about that unique Texas entity.

Chris Papillion and Jason Mannenkoff talk about squatting to depth and how it's integral to the history of the sport, and should not be allowed to "adapt" or "change" for the sake of ego or gear.

And now for the bad news. This will be the last print issue of Powerlifter Today. Many of you have supported the magazine with your subscriptions but after a year it still isn't nearly enough to keep going. When Mike Lambert of PLUSA shut down, I didn't believe him when he said, "The future of print magazines is bleak". In my incurable optimism, I thought that there must still be thousands and thousands of powerlifters who would subscribe to a print magazine. I was wrong because a major societal trend now is that readers want all information for free and they want it in smaller "bites". This isn't everyone, of course, but it's true for the vast majority of people. I'm almost 60 years old but I can still change and adapt if something isn't working. (Powerlifting has taught me that). Yes, it's very unfortunate but despite this being a "calling" or "passion", it is still a business and this business model is not working, nor will it ever work. Trends change and we must all adapt. Therefore, we're converting our same great content to what the market demands; content that is both online and free.

The new online format will be available soon at [www.powerliftertoday.com](http://www.powerliftertoday.com). It will have the same great interviews and articles, but the content will be posted as it's completed, rather than "The July Issue", etc. You'll have to check back on a regular basis (several times a week?) to stay current. My apologies to the "old guys" who don't even own a computer, but maybe this is your prompt to get one, haha.

As far as refunds are concerned for our loyal subscribers, we will refund the balance of your subscription. If you did not order back issues, we may fulfill the balance of your sub with those, but you will be made whole. Give us several months to do this, and please be patient. Again, I thank every subscriber for the support and loyalty – it means more than you know!

**Jim Curley,**  
**Editor In Chief**



BY SHAWN BELLON SHAWN@RAWPOWERLIFTER.COM

# PEACE OF MEET

A powerlifting meet gets anyone involved excited whether they are lifting, coaching, assisting or just spectating (and maybe all of the above). Even as a veteran lifter, I was always nervous at an event to compete. Even if I did all of my homework and was pretty sure I would win my class, I still had butterflies.

A good dose of healthy anxiety is normal, but I want to offer you some tips and ideas which, regardless of your experience level, will equip you with some “peace of meet” the next time you are preparing for the platform.

## SQUAT

The squat is our first lift of the day. I normally am so anxious to get that first lift in and be on the board. Your opener is crucial for the success of everything else that follows; no opener and you are

done for the day. Bomb outs happen, but should never happen in experience and as a raw lifter.

Make or break your lift; train to depth. It behooves us all to know depth while at the same time, not going for the deepest squat award which doesn't exist. If you squat high in training you will squat high in a meet. It is really that simple and YES, judges can be a pain in the butt, we all know this, but regardless of the federation, depth is the crease of the hip below the top of the knee. Look, you can try to gamble and cut your squats high and then blame the judge. My recommendation in training is to video your squats and face away from the mirror. Two things happen; first, you get comfortable with people ‘in your face’ when you are facing the crowd that might be in the gym. Second, you manage to get that familiar feeling of what correct depth is in training while



not relying on a mirror.

As the deepest squat is not a recognized category, neither is walking back the farthest. Get comfortable with squatting close to the rack while being at a safe distance. Taking too many steps is a waste of energy and is going to leave you open to serious mental drain and possible injury.

Once you have walked out the weight for the squat what happens? What happens once you squat down? Do the referees tell you to go back up? Know what the federation rules are for walking out, setting up and racking your weight and then practice. Watch what is going on around you at the meet and have a friend cue you with reminders of rack commands. In the USPA, I have watched many good squats get red-lighted because the lifter just started to rack the weight after the lift but not after the command was given. People that miss these commands are nervous, new or both. My college communications professor always stated, "Repetition makes you remember. Repetition makes you remember. Repetition makes you remember."

Also, I have noted that in meets people get antsy and nervous so they tend to stand a lot and move about. While some can deal with this, more times than not you can end up getting tight in the back and dehydrated from the anxiety. Do yourself a favor and sit and sip water or Gatorade somewhere comfortable. Heck, watch Netflix if it helps you to relax. You need to focus but at some point working your adrenal glands into an anxious frenzy is going to wear you down fast. And think about this: a tired back will give way to excessive leaning which pulls the hips up and you are suddenly not even remotely close to the depth you have to achieve.

Weigh-ins tend to be when you can get your rack heights set up. Please consider the settings in your training gear: shoes, suit, belt and lots of weight on the bar. You want just enough height to save energy while being able to safely unload and load the bar to the rack.

### **BENCH PRESS**

Some federations do not let you have a hand off person of your own so be prepared to coordinate with the spotters if you need them. I coach lifting partners and strangers the same way, "You ask when I am ready. Then you count 1-2-3-Up. We lift off on up." I do this every time. It is easy. Coordinate with spotters in warm ups and let the spotter know as well, which will keep you ready and avoiding issues like not being able to

have your own personal spotter while being assigned to one of the loaders. What is a pause? It is control on the chest. It isn't about an amount of time, although sadly some judges think a Mississippi count is in order. Also, the bar needs to be lowered in a controlled fashion; doing this in training will make it easy in a meet. Controlled, tight, no movement. You do this and you will get a quicker press command, especially in a series of meets as you demonstrate the type of lifter you are.

Many a lift is missed because after the bar is pressed, the lifter quickly racks the weight without the command to do so. Again, PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE. You practice this in all of your training sessions and your instincts will take over on the platform. Repetition makes you remember!

### **DEADLIFT**

The deadlift is so straight forward, but lifters often miss a few simple things that could improve their performance. First, I see many lifters pacing around and then once they do get to the bar they take forever to just pick the weight up. Do you remember in class when teachers would encourage you to give the first answer that pops into your head because it is usually correct? The approach to the bar is no different. Just go and lift the weight! Stalling can lead to disbelief especially when the weights get really heavy, just "Grip and Go".

So you approach the bar and go! Awesome! Only in time for the bar to cling to your pasty legs and then get caught on your singlet around the thighs. Use the baby powder and pull the suit up to avoid catching anything. Doing those two things can differentiate between your completed lift or your stalled attempt. As a tip, in training you can use water in a spray bottle which is easier to clean up, especially in commercial gyms.

### **ADDITIONAL THINGS TO CONSIDER**

Finally, I recommend doubling up; take backup equipment for your lifting gear just to be safe especially if you have traveled far. Don't forget your caffeine tablets, shaker cups, Pedialyte/ Gatorade and Imodium. I tend to eat light but consistently to help digest my food because I tend to be pretty nervous anyway. Dry fruit or trail mix is a great fix.

Well that is it from me. I am sure you have some tips as well so feel free to drop me a line and share them. The bottom line is you want your very best experience at your meet, it's what you have spent endless hours preparing for. You want "Peace of Meet." **PLT**



INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

# RICHARD

**Ants lift many more times their bodyweight than seems possible. Richard Hawthorne has been doing this for years and is now prepping to go after Lamar Gant's 132 bodyweight deadlift of 683, performed some time in the 1980's.**

**He also just competed at the Arnold in the Cage. Raw, weighing 130, he deadlifted 600 for 4 reps and worked back down to 415 for 15 reps.**

**Amazing!**

**Richard, what's your age, height and weight?**  
I'm 31, I'm 5'3.5" and I weigh 133.

**How long have you been powerlifting and when did you think you might be able to beat Gant's record?**

I started powerlifting in 2000 and I heard of Gant my second year of lifting. My first National meet I pulled 501 weighing 123.

**You're a gym owner. Tell me what you're doing with that.**

I'm in the process of building a much larger gym than I've got now. It will have a large area for mobility drills and general fitness, focusing on building a better athlete. I used to train at Joe Ladnier's Power Pit out of high school. Katrina hit in 2006 and my daughter was born two weeks later. I went from job to job, mostly contract labor. Everything I've done, such as managing people and money has prepared me to open and run a gym. We should open in about a month in D'Iberville, MS. It's a small town in the middle of larger cities so it's a great marketing area.

**You're known primarily for your amazing deadlift. Do you also squat and bench?**

My best deadlift was in an old single ply Marathon deadlift suit, and I pulled 639. I actually like squatting more than deadlifting and my best squat, raw but with knee wraps, is 562. My best bench raw is 308. My goal in the deadlift is 684, to beat Gant. My goal is to be the strongest person in the world at 132. At CAPO Nationals in Australia in 2013, I totaled 1470 raw weighing 130. I want to total 1500 at 132, raw with wraps.

# "THE ANT"

**I kind of understand why your deadlift is so good, but you shouldn't be able to bench with those long arms.**

My arms appear to be long but they really aren't because they're completely relaxed when I pull. Most people don't even know I can bench and squat too. I've always been drug free. People think they need something "extra" to get where they want to be, but I've always felt like I'm the underdog. That always pushed me to work harder and I put myself in positions of lifting impossible weights so that I can prevail.

### **So you've had to engineer the lift and your mind to keep breaking records without PED's.**

Right after high school I competed in the WPO. I don't care if I compete against guys who use. It doesn't matter, I'll go against anyone.

### **You have a large social media following.**

I talk about core strength, the deadlift is a push and not a pull, and I don't believe in explosion in a lift. These are controversial and so a lot of people follow me on the internet.

### **Please elaborate on "I don't believe in explosion".**

The best example I can think of is if I was in a strongman truck pull event, in a harness trying to get the truck moving, I'm not going to run fast to try and get that truck moving. In order to get it moving, I've got to take the slack out of the harness, apply force to the ground through my feet and it will start to move. The same principle applies to the deadlift, squat and bench. When you try to get weight moving using speed, you'll find that your body is "loose". When you're lifting heavy weight you never want to be loose anywhere. That's why you see pec tears, torn biceps and quads. I've been lifting for fifteen years at the top of my weight class and I have never been injured! You want to always be moving smoothly, like a machine, slow and constant, always feeling the weight. When you explode, there's a millisecond when you're loose and that's where the injuries occur. When you go to explode with a weight in the deadlift it comes off the floor, but it then settles in your hands and your body has to rebalance, just for a split second and then you have to fight through that. What you want is to create pressure and you can't do that when you're focusing on speed. When you stabilize after explosion, you have to create pressure and you're not nearly as tight if you had started out that way. What

you want is to create that pressure on the ground. People wonder how I can finish a heavy pull but applying pressure carries the lift through because everything is working like it should. I haven't trained lockouts in over nine years but once the weight gets to my shins, the pressure I've created carries me through to the finish.

### **How do you train that and develop that pressure?**

My foundation is reps, starting any cycle with 10 sets of 10 reps. It's brutal, but that's my foundation, staying tight, perfecting form, but each rep builds my core and reinforces applying pressure.

### **What was your last meet and how did you train for it?**

The last big one was the CAPO in 2013. I did a 12 week cycle. I started 10x10, doing 135 for 2 sets of 10, then 225 for 2 sets of 10, then 315 for 2 sets of 10, then 455 for a set of 10, then 500 for a set of 10.

### **Let's take an average lifter with a 500 pound deadlift. What would be the program for them?**

#### **Eight week cycle?**

Week 1 - 135 x 10 x 2, 205 x 10 x 2, 225 x 10 x 2, 250 x 10 x 2, 275 x 10 x 1.

Week 2 - 4 sets of 8, depending on feel but if good 275 x 8, 310 x 8, 325 x 8, 345 x 8. Always video each set and see how you're feeling on the video.

Week 3 - 4 sets of 8, go up 5-10 pounds from previous week on each set.

Week 4 - 3 x 6, 375 x 6, 400 x 6, then 415 x 6.

Week 5 - 3 x 3, 400 x 3, 415 x 3, 430 x 3.

Week 6 - go back to 3 x 6, 5 or 10 pounds over previous 3 x 6 in Week 4. 385 x 6, 405 x 6, 425 x 6.

Week 7 - 3 x 3, 415 x 3, 425 x 3, 445 x 3.

Week 8 - openers. Thorough warm up, opener should be 450-460 x 1. Rest a week and at the meet final pull should be 515-520. This is the same for squat and bench. The only assistance work I do for deadlift is stiff leg deadlift off a 6" block.

### **Do you do online training?**

No, I'll critique videos but no programming. I'm almost done with my book, so I'll be giving seminars across the country and I might do a little coaching.

### **What do you attribute your huge lifts relative to bodyweight to?**

Core strength and technicals. It's almost a spiritual thing when I lift. I don't get hyped up or amped on the outside, but on the inside I'm almost meditating.

The first step for 99% of people would be to knock out the ego.

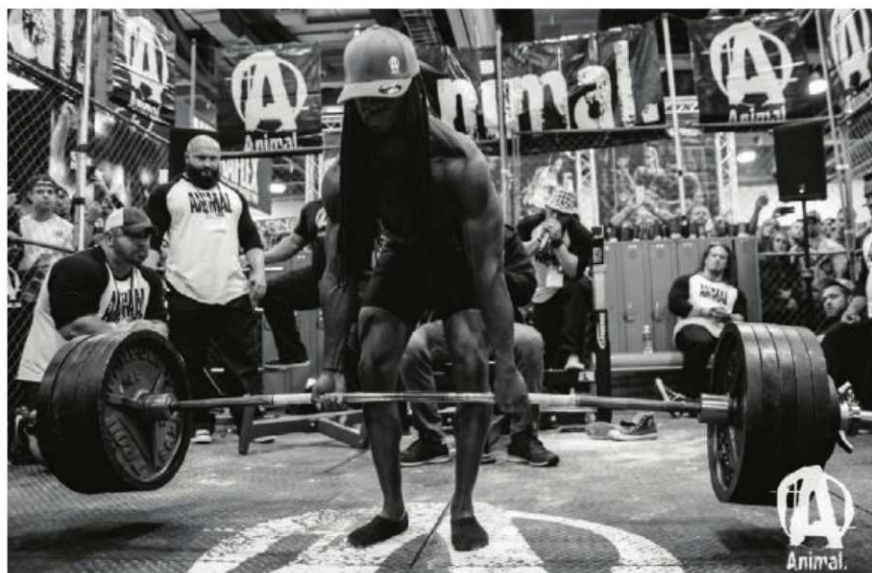
You should just do what you need to do to get better. Don't worry about what anyone else thinks of you. It's reps vs. explosive max

attempts. Everybody hits a plateau, so over time your core must get stronger. I train to control weight, not lift weight; by that I mean if I can control 500 halfway up and hold it, I can lift a lot more. If I'm doing reps correctly with good form my core is getting much stronger. I'm building compressive strength and when I lift a heavy weight, it won't break me. I can maintain that form at the end and use all my energy pushing through the ground without worrying about being out of position, or whatever. I'm as efficient as I can be throughout the entire lift.

### **What triggered your thought that "the deadlift is a push, not a pull"?**

# HAWTHORNE

I was struggling with my deadlift a few years ago. Everyone hits a plateau and most people can't influence 500 just with their body. I had to be at a meet to get past my plateaus and I was always scared. When I'm on the platform though, my body knows what to do and I don't have to think about that. What I couldn't even think about doing in the gym, I could do on the platform at a meet. I started to notice that I was pushing straight down into the ground, and I realized that if the bar was positioned mid foot, all I had to do was stand straight up and up it came! When you stand up you don't hinge at all. The upper body, from your pelvis to the top of your head is one piece, one part. It's sole objective is to protect and maintain the central nervous system



(CNS). That means that when pulling, the "piece" that is the top of the head to the pelvis needs to be as tight as possible. The hips and the knees do the function of standing up. There's a lot more to this, but I don't want to give away everything that's in my upcoming book! When you watch any video of anyone deadlifting, you'll notice that when you see them doing a hinge, they're losing leg drive. The reason they're losing drive is that the body is saying it's time for the back to "pull" the weight, which is wrong, because your upper body is supposed to maintain the weight while you push through the ground. This is the same principle, whether conventional or sumo. I used to do rack lockouts from a low pin setting. It would take seconds for the bar to get moving but once it did, it flew up because the body was working the way it's supposed to instead of hinging up.

**Suppose that because of leverages it's difficult to get in that ideal position where you just stand up?**

It will be difficult, because the brain has imprinted the way you've been doing it for years and that's what you default to, whether you realize it or not. You have to create a different pattern. You have to start from scratch but most won't do it. We are all made the same and designed to do the same things, regardless of proportions. Lifting is all geometry, all triangles that add up to 180 degrees, which is a straight line. Your angles will be slightly different than mine but they still have to add up so you can move that bar in a straight line. How you apply it is find the center of gravity and line up the bar. Your scapula has to be directly over the bar, which means your head is in front of the bar and the bar is positioned in the middle of your foot. No matter who you are, if all those things are lined up and your feet are flat on the floor you are where you need to be. Something else to think about is if you watch someone pulling heavy, when the scapula is over the

bar and the bar is mid foot, that is the ideal position. The bar actually pulls you into that position, so why not start in that position to begin with?

**What are your personal cues you tell yourself before beginning the lift?**

I don't say anything. I let my shoulders and arms hang, even though my back and core are tight. The weight actually pulls my shoulders down and my core takes care of the stability. The core is actually made up of the cervical flexors in the neck, the diaphragm, the transverse abdominus which is a layer of muscle that wraps around the midsection, the pelvic floor and the multifidus. When you tighten the core everything tightens up. A good example is when you sneeze, everything gets tight. When you sneeze or cough, all your core muscles tighten to protect the CNS. I'll say it again, the upper body is just to maintain the weight lifted, not to actually pull anything up.

**Maybe we should snort a little black pepper instead of ammonia before a pull, so everything in the core tightens up!**

Exactly! One more question I ask is there anything you can do that you think is a pull that isn't really a push?

**How about pull ups?**

No, you're actually pushing off the top of the handle to achieve a pull!

**And all this and more will be in your new book?**

Yes, it should be available in a few months. I'm opening my new gym and as any gym owner will tell you, it's very difficult to train in your own gym. I used to train with Tony Caprari and I really miss that guy. We pushed each other and we motivated each other, so I'm not as motivated as I once was. I have always put myself in the underdog and my being small makes people wonder why I'm even working out. It actually motivates me

and I think, "If he can do it, so can I". That was my first motivation. For instance, when I was lifting with Joe Ladnier when I was about 20 years old, most of the guys that trained with us were over 200 pounds. This is when multi ply and WPO were big, they were all squatting in the 700's. A week before Katrina hit, I squatted 722 in the gym and did a 700 double. This was all multi ply and I was stronger then too. As a warm up, I would squat 600 just in briefs and wraps. I fed off that energy and because they were all bigger than me, I would say "if they can do it, so can I". I've always been like that. Once people realized what I could do, it then became a fear. There was more pressure and it turned into expectation, which turned into fear and motivation. I always needed training partners who were way stronger than me to force me to do better. I haven't had that in years and now it's just expectations that drive me.

**Prior to Katrina you were multi ply and now you lift raw. What caused that?**

You really need a crew to lift in multi ply and I didn't have that. I was out of powerlifting for a few years after Katrina so when I got back into it, raw was just easier to do. I totaled 1316, which was just about 180 pounds off my best geared total so I was stoked on raw. I never did like bench shirts.

**Do you think the raw trend will continue?**

Raw lifting will be the big thing and powerlifting is

about to change for the good and grow. Fitness is growing and powerlifting hasn't even begun to take off. Right now, powerlifting has a stigma with the face of it being a big fat guy throwing chalk around. When they see me lifting the weight that I do, I think a lot of people will think that they can lift heavy too. Building core strength is important for everyone, and that's the basis for all my lifts. We're all just humans and we can all improve and get better. All levers and machines are based on the human body, and machines operate smoothly and not ballistically if it's going to last. We should operate that way too.

**You obviously have a lot of genetics going your way. What else is there?**

Obviously genetics is huge but there's more to it than that. Take Little League football. The true genetic specimens take it for granted and often quit early. The kids behind them that aren't genetically gifted have to work harder and they keep doing it. They pass the genetic guys in high school, and by the time they get to college, most of the gifted ones have quit, so it's the guys that have always worked harder that end up playing football.

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

My mother and father, Tony Caprari, Louie Langinez, Allan Massie, Kenny Davis and Craig Douglas. **PLT**

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AMHERST POWERLIFTING CLUB

# 500 AT 51



## KAREN CAMPBELL

This woman benches more than most dudes and does it single ply and tested! Karen has powerlifting-watch.com's "Best of the Best" 181 and 198 female single ply bench records and is hoping to widen the margin in April.

**Karen, what is your age, height and weight and what's your occupation?**

I'm 51, 5'4" and weigh 190. I'm a rural letter carrier substitute for the US Post Office in Winterport, Maine.

**You just got a 500 bench in a new Katana single ply. (YouTube video – April 22 500 is the title). What is your next meet where you're going to try it out?**

It will be a WABDL meet in Wisconsin Dells, WI on April 11<sup>th</sup>. I'm going to open with 501. I'm also deadlifting and will open with 450 and hopefully go over 500.

**How long have you been**

INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

**powerlifting and how did you get involved in it?**

I've been powerlifting since 2003 and competed in my first meet in 2004. My trainer, Al Stork, closed a gym he had and moved up the road. He kept sending me gift certificates so I wouldn't quit. He asked if my two kids, then 13 and 15, and I would like to try powerlifting. We started powerlifting and both my kids have dropped out, but I loved it and kept going. I was 40 when I started. I was a gymnast in high school and have always enjoyed being active. When I started lifting I weighed over 220 and it helped me manage my weight.

**Did gymnastics give you those delts?**

I think there's a lot of genetics, but I've always worked hard. My first meet I entered I got a 225 in a loose Titan shirt.

**You have a tremendous arch and a very short stroke in the bench.**

You've got to have perfect form to make it all work, even with that. My back is rarely sore, but I do a lot of foam roll work.

**You also have a great deadlift. What's your best pull to date?**

My best meet pull is 502 and best gym pull is 530. That was in 198's. I pull conventional because sumo feels awkward. I've got strong legs so the quad drive helps me.

**How many are in your crew?**

We have about 18 members. Most aren't ready to put in the work but if they stay, we welcome them. Stork Powerlifting is a small club. It was open to the public for a short while, but people complained about no windows or mirrors, so rather than putting up with all the whining, Al turned it private and it's just our crew. We have our powerlifters who know why they're there, and we just really enjoy them.

**Does Al lift any more or is he**

**primarily a coach?**

He tore his tricep and had it reattached. He can't make it do what he thinks it should, so he's mostly the coach.

**What's the template or routine that you and the team follow?**

We train 4-5 days a week. Monday is usually speed bench, heavy shoulders and biceps. Tuesday is leg day and deadlift work. We'll do hack squats, stiff leg deadlift, leg press and maybe dumbbell walking lunges. Those will kill you! Thursday is back and biceps, and Friday is heavy bench and light triceps. It's basic linear periodization with no heavy attempts 2-3 weeks out but we do a lot of assistance work up to the meet. We're mostly old school but we work really hard. Even on every assistance movement, we'll start with an easy weight and keep adding weight until we fail attempting one rep. That's on everything – lat pulls, skullcrushers,

pushdowns; every assistance exercise. We don't just do 3 x 8's or something like that. Every movement we go to a one rep max failure. It's very difficult. We're all drug free lifters, so whey protein and creatine is our "recovery".

**You've been at this eleven years. Any sign of slowing down?**

There's no reason at all to stop! I love this sport and the crew is like family. I live in Maine and when we get big snow storms and I can't get to the gym, I really don't like it. I look forward to each day of training!

**You mentioned that your kids started off liking powerlifting but don't do it anymore. That leads to the question, "Why isn't powerlifting growing?"**

My kids just had other interests. As far as the sport goes, I'm not sure what it is.

**Ever thought about moving from snowy Maine?**

Well, I live in the house that I grew up in, so that would be tough, but if the right circumstance came along I'd consider it. It's hard to get to most any meet from Maine!

**You mostly lift in WABDL. Would you ever consider a full powerlifting meet in another fed?**

We were going to do a full power meet in a non-tested fed. but I'm drug free and I WANT to be tested every meet that I enter. They wouldn't test me, so I just stick with WABDL.

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

Titan Support systems, Vibram for my deadlift shoes, Al Stork for being the best coach ever. Seth Reed, Caleb Nute, David Palmer, Frank Lowe, Lauren Lugden and Billy Grant. My mom and my sisters Leslie and Vicky. **PLT**





# JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

PUTTING THE HISTORY OF POWERLIFTING IN THE HANDS OF UNQUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS

By Jason Manenkoff





**T**here are currently over 20 active powerlifting organizations in the United States. Despite a variance in rules that may exist when comparing each organization, Powerliftingwatch.com takes a holistic approach in reviewing meet results submitted from each organization allowing them to compile a database of performances. This database is the backend for the Powerlifting Watch Rankings as well as the All-Time World Records and American Records. These lists are a way for lifters to

see how they stack up against lifters from other organizations. Although this is an interesting and “fun” way to look at things, it is also very controversial.

Currently, everything is available through the Internet. Since owning a cellphone has become a necessity and virtually all cell phones nowadays have video cameras, the process of sharing media online has become quite easy. A lifter goes to a meet, executes their lift (as it gets recorded by one of their friends cellphones) and before the meet even concludes the video of their “World Record” attempt is on social media followed by Powerlifting Watch.

Other lifters, powerlifting fans, and judges from varying organizations comment on these videos. Some videos are of poor quality and may be filmed from deceiving angles. More often than not the videos show blatant rule infractions. Lifters are often attacked for this. The lifters job is to execute the lift. But whom should the blame actually fall upon? All the lifter did was execute the movement. The judge’s responsibility is to enforce the rules according to the federation’s rulebook. This begs the question, “Who should we blame for an erroneous lift: the lifters or the judges?” I think the more important question is, “How does someone become a judge?”

In a quest to answer that question I contacted presidents and executive committee members from a number of different organizations, current and former judges and read through a number of different rulebooks. Ultimately I found no consistency or commonality with respect to the process of credentialing powerlifting referees. In some organizations it’s quite simple. All you need to do is go on their website and take a 11-150 question exam from the comfort of your own home. Score anywhere from 80%-90% (depending on what the organization requires for a passing grade), send in a small fee for “processing” and you’re good to go for up to three years. Sadly, this was the case for a number of the powerlifting organizations currently active in the USA. One organization in particular even found a way to expedite this process and in doing so had their advertisement read like an infomercial on late night TV. This is how it read...

“The online referee exam is now available to those who wish to become certified referees. Study guide/ Rulebook is also available. The exam instantly grades you as soon as you complete it and a minimum score of 90% must be achieved. Exam is approximately 150 questions. You need to register online and get a user-

name and password assigned. Once you do that just log in and use the keyword referee to gain entrance to start taking the exam (enrollment key is strength). No other federation offers this service. No longer will lifters have to wait until exams are manually graded. Good luck to those taking the exam”.

The criterion that must be met in some other organizations is not so simple. One example would be the USAPL.

Although the USAPL State Referee exam is an open book, 50-question (T/F, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and listing) exam some questions have as many as 10-12 answers. This exam takes 90-120 minutes to complete. A 90% grade is required then you can sit for your practical whereby you must sit next to an official and offer your perspective on 100 lifts (40 SQ, 30 BP, 30DL). Again a 90% is required to pass. (Gary).

You need to be a USAPL State Referee for a minimum of two years, refereed at a minimum of six meets, and function as a chief referee before you can sit for the USAPL National Referee test which is closed book. (Steinman)

The USPA process is similar to the USAPL.

In the USPA you are required to take an open book written test consisting of 100 true/false questions requiring a passing score of 90%. Once passed, you will need to sit for a practical test with a National or International Referee that will observe and grade your calls. The judge grading you will make the official call but ask you for your call before he or she flips their switch. They will then circle on a practical test A for agree or D for Disagree on any judging. You will need to achieve 90% on your practical as well.

To move from a State level to National level judge you need to have judged 8 meets and 32 flights over a 2-year period. To move from National to International you need to have judged for 4 years as a National referee and judged 75 flights in that time. (Denison)

A handful of other organizations claim to require a practical exam in addition to their written exam. Apparently there is a lot of gray area and the website's description is quite vague making one wonder if they follow their own process. After having discussions with a number of people who have judged in a variety of these organizations the consensus was that they only had to take a written exam. Some didn't even have to

take an exam and were “grandfathered in “ based on their judging experience in other organizations along with their competitive experience.

The next question that must be asked is, “how do organizations monitor the performance of their judges?”

One president in particular had this to say about the way things are handled in his organization...

“In the event of a bad call being made or series of bad calls (after the fact) our Technical Committee Chairman is contacted and from him an email goes out to the judge who may have made the questionable call. If there happens to be a inconsistency or bad calls being made at a particular event our referee Chairman would have a meeting with all those judges to cover the issues.” (Denison, USPA/IPL)

Dr. Marilia Coutinho had this to add, “Of all the organizations I have been involved with, the one that has the most objective approach is the International Powerlifting League (IPL) : I believe the term “strictness” is not accurate. What Alan Aerts (Technical Committee Chairman) always emphasizes is the need for consistency. The objective of the IPL is that the lifter feels he is judged exactly by the same criteria anywhere he is lifting under our sanction. At every meet, the referees have a meeting with further instructions from Alan. We are all under permanent supervision from the more experienced referees. That's how I believe consistency is built.”

Joe Smolinsky who is the APF State Chair of Michigan and has also judged in the RPS and USPA described how he handles things. “I always have a pre-meet huddle with the referees, then try to pull everyone together after each lift (e.g. SQ/BP/DL) to discuss lessons learned and minor issues if they occur”.

Other major sports like track and field, soccer, baseball, football, and basketball require more than a short test to become a referee.

In United States Track and Field (USATF) there is a 5 level path that referees must follow after taking a written test and series of designated courses. The first level starts with “Apprentice” and each level takes on more responsibility. Upgrade requirements include additional testing, training courses, and letters of recommendation along with a minimum number of officiated meets. Recertification requirements also exist.

According to the United States Soccer Federation in order to be eligible to be a certified assistant referee you must be a Grade 12 referee. It's a 7.5 hour course and you must have played at least three years of adult, college or competitive youth soccer or officiated at least three years as a Recreational Referee Grade 9 to be eligible for this certification.

The Grade 9 Recreational Referee clinic is a one-day, 8-hour class that certifies you to ref recreational games with players under age 14 and to be an assistant referee for any games with players under age 14. For games of any higher level, you must be a Grade 8 referee.

The Grade 8 Entry Level Referee clinic consists of six 3-hour sessions usually spread out over a period of three weeks. Grade 8 referees can referee any matches, but usually will work youth games (under 19).

Is it coincidental that the organizations requiring only a short open book test plus processing fee are the ones where lifts get questioned the most? Are these the same organizations that have no formal system set up

which monitor the performance of their judges? Is a 30-150 question true/false (yes/no) fill in the blank open book test enough to give an individual the power to have a direct impact on the entire history of the sport of powerlifting? You be the judge.

Jason Manenkoff is the owner of Iron Arena Powerlifting & Performance in Hoboken NJ. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Kinesiology from the State University of New York, Cortland Campus in 2005. He attained certification as a Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) by the National Strength and Conditioning Association and is a Level II Track and Field Coach certified by the USATF in the Sprint and Jump events and is also a former Track & Field athlete (sprints and long jumps). In powerlifting he has competed in various organizations including USAPL, IPA, RPS, APA, USPA and the Raw Unity Meet. His best lifts currently include a 512 lb. squat (in knee sleeves), 418 lb. bench press and 562 lb. deadlift in the 165 lb. weight class. **PLT**

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# TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL POWERLIFTING ASSOCIATION

## Meet Results

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**By Kevin Pitman**  
**THSPA President**

**T**he Texas High School Powerlifting Association State Meet occurred on Saturday, March 28, 2015, at the Taylor County Expo Center in Abilene, Texas. The meet was conducted on 10 competition platforms. The Texas High School Powerlifting Association started competing in 1982. The Association is made up of 6 geographic regions, with three divisions in each region based on school size. Division 1 is made up of 5A and 6A schools, Division 2 is made up of 4A schools, and Division 3 is made up of 1A, 2A, and 3A schools. This year, the Association's 33<sup>rd</sup> state meet was a record breaking event for several reasons. The Association had a record number of participating schools throughout the season with 711 of the 1525 High schools across the state competing. There were 502 lifters that qualified to compete at the state meet. Qualification occurs if a lifter finishes in the top two of his weight class at his regional meet, or if he accomplishes an automatic qualifying total at his regional meet. Those totals, as well as all meet results can be found on the



Association's webpage [www.thspa.us](http://www.thspa.us).

In 1990, Mark Henry, from Silsbee High School, set the all-time record for total with 2000 pounds. That record stood until 2007, when a 2005 pound total was posted by Jordan Barrett of Columbia High School. In 2014 that record was broken twice with a 2035 posted by Rudy Flores of Laredo United South High School and a 2080 set by Michael Rodriguez of Kingsville King High School. This year, Rudy Flores set the all-time Squat record with a squat of 900 pounds. Rudy also set the all-time total record with a total of 2175 pounds. The all-time Bench Press record was set in 2013 by Matt Poursaltani of Pilot Point High School with a lift of 700 pounds. The all-time deadlift record was set in 2014 by Mitchell Fountain of Conroe The Woodlands High School with a lift of 735 pounds.

There are 132 possible records at the

state meet (4 per weight class, 11 weight classes, 3 divisions). A state record can only be set at the state meet. Twenty-six records were either tied or broken at the 2015 state meet.

This year's meet and list of new records was as big as it has ever been. The sport of powerlifting in Texas high schools has and is continuing to grow every year. As popular as the sport seems to be, there is no real data that indicates whether or not athletes continue to lift after high school. This author's best guess would be less than 10% of athletes continue after high school. However, more and more colleges are competing in powerlifting as a club sport, or as an inter-conference sport. (A quick internet search yielded 47 colleges that have organized powerlifting teams). It is our hope that our sport will continue to grow, and that more athletes will continue to pursue their strength goals after their high school competition days are completed.

## **Division 1 Records from the 2015 THSPA State Meet:**

165	SQ	Jarod Hill	Everman HS	640
	BP	Angel Perez	Red Oak HS	405
	DL	Jarod Hill	Everman HS	655
	TOTAL	Jarod Hill	Everman HS	1635
181	BP	AJ Rose	Hallsville HS	420
	TOTAL	Raynard Taylor	Comal Canyon HS	1680
220	SQ	Marco Banda	Laredo Nixon HS	715
242	SQ	Caesar Soto	San Antonio East Central HS	740
275	SQ	Gabriel Rodriguez	Edcouch-Elsa HS	815
	DL	Kody Russey	Burleson HS	690
SHW	SQ	Rudy Flores	Laredo United South HS	900
	BP	Rudy Flores	Laredo United South HS	600
	TOTAL	Rudy Flores	Laredo United South HS	2175

## **Division 2 Records from the 2015 THSPA State Meet:**

148	TOTAL	Andrew Alvidrez	Seminole HS	1510
165	DL	Deon Mitchell	Wichita Falls Hirschi HS	600
	TOTAL	Deon Mitchell	Wichita Falls Hirschi HS	1485
275	SQ	Bobby Gonzales	Raymondville HS	855
	TOTAL	Bobby Gonzales	Raymondville HS	2010
SHW	SQ	Joseph Pena	San Antonio Holy Cross HS	845
	DL	Patrick Hudson	Silsbee HS	715

## **Division 3 Records from the 2015 THSPA State Meet:**

114	DL	Jesus Rios	Palacios HS	465
	TOTAL	Jesus Rios	Palacios HS	1065
123	DL	Cody Villa	Crawford HS	480
181	TOTAL	Carlos Charles	Bishop HS	1620
275	SQ	Ryan Mitchell	Teague HS	815
SHW	BP	Trey Villareal	Diana New Diana HS	530

**PLT**

## NEW PRODUCT INTRODUCTION

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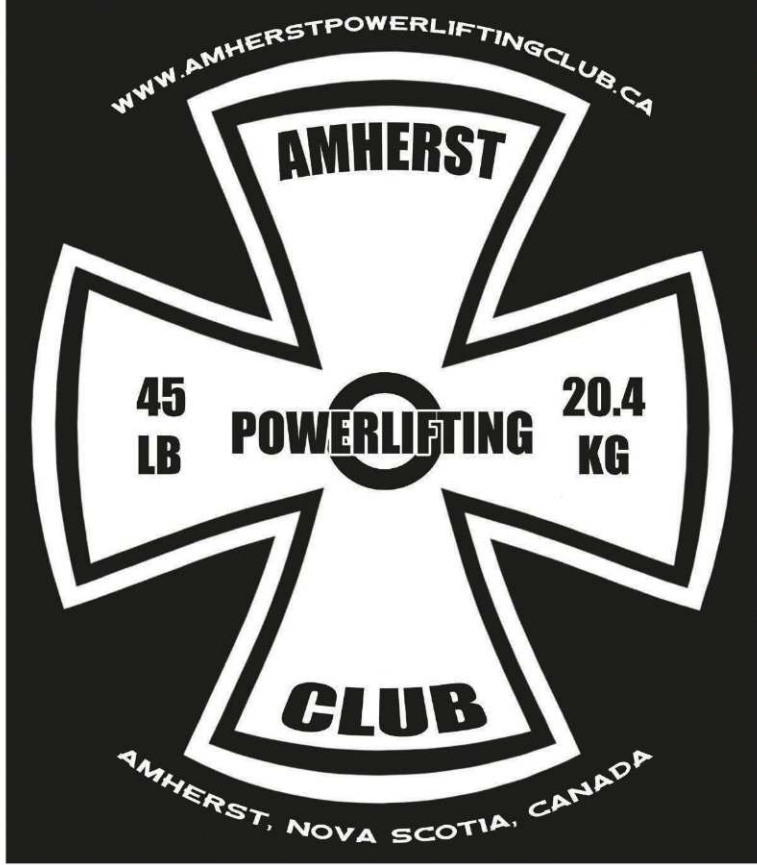
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**Ian Bell** — Love my bench blokz! When I was in school and didn't have a lot of help, it allowed me to work heavy in my shirt with only one spotter. Couldn't have hit 501 at Men's Nationals without them!!!



BY NATHAN ROBERTSON

# GYM OF THE MONTH

**A**mherst Powerlifting club was started out of necessity. We were kicked out of every local gym in town, some twice, and there was nowhere else to go, so in August 2011 a small group rented an industrial basement and began to train. APC currently has over twenty-five members, mostly in the Amherst area, but we have a number of lifters that travel to train at the facility.

Everyone at APC eventually competes (part of our mandate), and we compete under the flag of the CPF, Canadian Powerlifting Federation (WPC affiliate) and the IPA. APC President Nathan Robertson has recently become chairman for IPA CANADA which will host their first IPA event in Canada in 2015. Together, APC members hold over fifty national powerlifting records and four world records.



APC hosts three to four big powerlifting events each year, which are so popular they fill up ten weeks out. Such names as Dave Hoff, Shawna Mendelson and Brandon Lilly have attended these events in 2014 and Ed Coan and Caitlyn Trout are slated to be at events in 2015. We put on the biggest and best events we can, we believe in "lifters for lifters" and give away a ton of prizes at all of our events. We are diehard Westsiders and live by the conjugate method. Anyone who thinks conjugate doesn't work for raw lifters can't be doing it right. We have tremendous success with both raw and equipped lifters at APC. It also helps that Nathan's coach is none other than Dave Hoff. Nathan in turn coaches the other members of APC, himself being a certified Metal Milita Trainer.

Our gym is modeled after Westside of course. We are in possession of the only two monolifts in Atlantic Canada and we bench on Metal Milita benches or specially fabricated APC benches designed and assembled by Nathan. Other equipment includes GHR, reverse hyper, Rogue RML-490 rack, belt

squat, ham/quad machine, inverse curl machine, plus your regular gym machines. We also have a full stock of bars, texas power and bulldog for competition, and a number of specialty bars, including 14" cambered bar, safety squat bar, fat bar, swiss bar, bamboo bar, tsunami bar, buffalo bar. etc. We use a lot of kettlebells for accessories, as well as chain and bands for accommodating resistance.

We train as a team, so that means training together on the main exercises, in order from lightest to heaviest, just like in competition.

Mobility and prehab is also a big part of APC. We have learned a lot from Donnie Thompson and use his methods and X-wife invention on a daily basis to keep us healthy and mobile.

APC is not just a gym, we refer to it as a "TEAM TRAINING FACILITY" and we train with a team mentality. ~PRIDE - STRENGTH - UNITY~

TURN THE PAGE TO MEET THE TEAM  
OF AMHERST POWERLIFTING CLUB



**MARC CARDINAL**  
 Occupation: federal  
 peace officer  
 Yrs Powerlifting: 1.5  
 yrs  
 Wt Class – 275lb  
 amateur  
 Age - 31  
 Raw Comp Lifts:  
 Squat – 540lb /  
 Bench – 386lb / DL  
 529lb / 1455lb total  
 Multiple WPC  
 National Record  
 Holder



**NICHOLAS CHAPMAN**  
 Team Captain  
 Occupation – Automotive  
 Detailer  
 Yrs Powerlifting – 3 yrs  
 Wt Class – 181-198lb  
 Amateur  
 Age – 20  
 Raw Comp Lifts – Squat –  
 419lb / Bench – 276lb / DL  
 – 540lb  
 WPC National Record  
 Holder



**IAN CORMIER**  
 Occupation - La-  
 borer  
 Yrs Lifting: 3.5 yrs  
 Wt Class – 220lb  
 amateur raw  
 Age - 30  
 Raw Comp Lifts:  
 Squat – 451lb /  
 Bench – 300lb /  
 DL – 474lb

# MEM

**MATT WATSON**  
 Occupation-  
 Supervisor  
 Yrs powerlifting - 2.5  
 yrs  
 Wt Class - 242 lb  
 amateur  
 Age - 34  
 Raw comp lifts - squat  
 - 460 lb / Bench - 350  
 lb / DL - 523.5 lb

**JEFF ZAMBELLO**  
 Occupation - Financial  
 Controller  
 Yrs Powerlifting – 9 yrs  
 Wt Class – 220lb amateur  
 Age – 50  
 Raw Comp Lifts – Squat  
 485lb / Bench – 281lb / DL  
 – 457lb / 1124lb Total  
 Multiple WPC World and  
 National Records





**NATHAN ROBERTSON**

APC President / IPA  
CANADA CHAIRMAN  
Occupation - Mechanic/  
machinist/Tool& Die Maker  
Yrs Powerlifting - 20 yrs  
Wt Class – 275lb Amateur  
Equipped  
age- 38  
Equipped Comp Lifts: Squat  
– 893lb / Bench - 672.5lb /  
DL - 600.5 / 2149.5lb Total  
Multiple IPA World records &  
WPC National Records



**TRAYCI METZGER**

APC vice president &  
Team Captain  
Yrs Powerlifting - 1 yrs  
Wt Class – 165lb  
Amateur  
Age - 35  
Raw Gym Lifts – Squat  
– 176lb / Bench -  
100lb / DL – 232lb



**HEATHER NICHOLS**

Occupation - Cashier  
Yrs Powerlifting: 1.5  
yrs  
Wt Class – 165lb  
amateur raw  
Age - 21  
Raw comp Lifts:  
Bench – 88lb / DL  
– 220.5 / 303lb PP  
total  
Multiple WPC  
National Record  
Holder

**CHAD BALL**

Occupation - Teacher  
Yrs Powerlifting: 4yrs  
Wt class - 275lb  
amateur  
Age - 41  
Raw comp Lifts: Squat  
– 457lb / Bench 314lb  
/ DL 585lb / 1356lb  
total

# BERS

**JUSTIN GILROY**

Occupation - Construction  
Yrs Powerlifting - 1  
Wt Class : 242lb amateur  
Age - 25  
Raw Gym Lifts: Squat 315lb  
– Bench 280lb – DL 420lb



# MICHAEL RODRIGUEZ YOUNG BEAST



I met Michael and his dad at the THSPA State meet in Abilene, TX in March, 2015. Ten platforms and 600 boys lifting; it was structured chaos! The girls' meet was the weekend before and had 900 lifters! They do everything bigger in Texas, including the chicken fried steak I had with Ken Anderson and Mike Womack at Mary's Cafe in Strawn, TX. That thing was huge and delicious. Mary's is world famous for those enormous chicken fried. Of course I out ate those amateurs but that's another story. Most of us have never seen a THSPA powerlifting meet, and Texans kind of take it for granted, but if every state had powerlifting as a high school sport, there would be 40,000 sanctioned, competitive lifters in this country instead of the 15,000 or so that exist now. Some kid named Rudy Flores, SHW, squatted 900 from almost a dead stop pause. Every year the lifts go up there (see Kevin Pitman's report in this issue). Michael Rodriguez is one of the best yet.

**Let's start with your age, height and weight.**

I'm 18, 5'8" and weigh 235. I'm a freshman at Texas A & M University in Kingsville, TX.

**You powerlifted in the sport all through high school. How did you get interested in it? How did you start?**

I was failing my algebra class in my freshman year. My algebra teacher was the powerlifting coach

and he said if I went out for powerlifting, he'd help me study and give me extra credit.

**He obviously saw potential there.**

I hit a 430 squat, a 360 bench and a 470 deadlift at the first THSPA (TX High School Powerlifting Association) meet that I entered.

**THSPA is single ply. Did you lift in gear or go raw?**

I went raw. They allow it but don't

have a category for it.

**When you got into gear, was it old, loose, hand-me-down gear?**

Yeah, most of it is about fifteen years old! In my sophomore year when I figured out how much I loved this sport, my dad got me a squat suit and a bench shirt.

**That must have been expensive, unless you weighed the same all through school.**



Yeah, my weight changed. Freshman year was 220, sophomore year I weighed 230, and junior and senior year I weighed about 255, but I'd cut down to 242 for meets.

**What were your best lifts in a meet in high school?**

I have the all time best THSPA squat record at 242 with 860, my best bench was 575 and my best deadlift was 665. My dead lift was raw; the others were geared.

**Have you entered any meets since you got out of high school?**

I did a national and raw meet with USAPL, and the world meet was IPF.

**What were your best lifts?**

At Men's Nationals I squatted 821, benched 568 and pulled 651.

**So you liked powerlifting from the start and still compete. What percentage of your teammates have continued?**

Not many, unfortunately. In my opinion, it's because once they leave school they're without a team. Most high school guys can't make it happen without that team.

It's an individual sport, but they go through school as a team and they're lost when they graduate.

**What are you studying in college, and what do you see for your future?**

I'm studying kinesiology and I'd like to be the strength and conditioning coach at the college level. Powerlifting wise, after I'm out of college I think I'm done with gear. Raw is easy at a meet and I think it's more of a true test of strength.

**That seems to be the trend. Have you been in any raw meets?**

My last one I squatted 700 with no wraps. I benched 435 and pulled 644. I have a good crew, and they're mostly single ply so if I need help, they're there. My problem is peaking properly for a meet. I kind of do a bodybuilding routine until six weeks out and that seems to put me at my right peak for the meet.

**In your opinion, considering your age and experience, what is the future of powerlifting?**

I think raw is where it's going at this point. I'll still hopefully do Men's Nationals once a year, which is a geared meet, just to stay in touch with it, but I definitely prefer raw training and meets.

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

I want to thank my mom and dad for always supporting me in everything. Titan Support Systems for all their help. Also Doug Kent and Mason Westbrook for helping me get started in high school. One Stop Muscle Shop in Kingsville, TX sponsored me when no one else would. **PLT**





# POWERLIFTER DONNIE THOMPSON

## INNOVATOR & ENTREPRENEUR

Interview by: Jim Curley

Donnie has been around a long time, and has his own views which are often contrary to much of powerlifting's accepted wisdom. He's come up with a new product and some new therapy techniques.

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"I keep an open mind to anything that will help me improve. I started that when I played football as a center. If it didn't help me, I dropped it, no hard feelings. Kind of like a first date. You either hit it off or you don't, and if you don't, no hard feelings. As a physical therapist, I'm always thinking about what will work. How does something work and how can it be improved? I talk with surgeons, docs and anyone who might know more than me. I have a gym and lots of people to experiment on, but I run my ideas past other PT's and doctors to make sure I'm not going to mess anything up. You don't want to hurt anyone and you don't want to make outrageous claims that aren't true."

### **You're not powerlifting anymore?**

I train, but I don't have any template or training protocol. I just train but in my own way. I'm into injury prevention and the best way to heal a bad shoulder or pec tear is not to get a bad shoulder or pec tear in the first place. It takes knowledge and that's why I've come up with some of the inventions I've come up with for purely selfish reasons. For instance, back in 1998 or so, I thought a fat bar would help the grip and improve the lifts so I had one made. Forty five pound olympic bars just aren't the best for powerlifting. Powerlifting came out of olympic lifting but it was more foundational than olympic lifting, and yet no one ever changed the bar that was used! Some federations still use the olympic bar, but most at least use a deadlift bar and a heavier

and longer squat bar. My point is, why would I want to use an olympic bar when better bars suited to each lift exist?

### **Do you still compete in powerlifting?**

I quit competing three and a half years ago, but I still train myself and train others. I've got a powerlifting gym and I train almost every day and still pretty heavy. I don't sandbag!

### **You're now becoming known for innovative therapy techniques that seem to be having great results with powerlifters.**

I lead the research on the ankle, lower back and shoulders. It's preventive and proactive. I'm calling it Performance Therapy. After I totaled 3,000 some three years ago I started gearing up to do clinics and teach what I've learned. The ankle is the most overloaded joint in the body and this is what usually leads to knee and lower back problems, so we start with that. If you don't have proper flexion in the ankle it will lead to problems. Shoulder issues are often related to constant squatting with a straight bar. Steve Goggins told me in 2003 to start rotating bars (cambered bar, safety squat bar, buffalo bar), any bar but a straight bar. You've got to give the shoulders a rest, so squat with different bars and two weeks before the meet, switch to the straight bar just to get used to it. Some people disagree but I have no love lost for stupid powerlifters.

### **I've seen pictures and videos of that therapy device you came up with called the "X-wife". It's just a round piece of steel. Tell me about the X-wife.**

It's a piece of cold rolled steel, 24" long and 5" in diameter and weighs 135 pounds. I've had that for about twenty years, just laying around in the gym, so we broke it out in August. I was training a first round draft pick who had a hernia. In any surgery, the muscle becomes almost adhesive and clumps together. They bind up in a group, and they fire in a clump and that's how you get tears and injuries. If you spend just a small amount of time diffusing

that tissue that's stuck together in the area that you're going to train, you won't go through a lot of these problems. I had painted "X-wife" on this 135 pound rod that we used for wheelbarrow work and I told the lineman to lay on his back and started rolling the steel on his abdomen. He said, "this is amazing", so I tried it on my self and it felt great. Pretty soon we were using it on hamstrings, calves, achilles tendons and that's how I came up with body tempering. Now we have different sizes of diffusion rods and we named them "X-wife", "cheater", and "redheaded step child". That turns peoples heads! People think it's kind of fun to use the "cheater" rather than just a heavy hunk of steel.

### **Can you apply this "dysfunctional family" of diffusion rods anywhere on the body that's in pain?**

Mostly, but you can't apply it to bony points like the elbow and kneecap. You have to watch those, but you can roll them on the bottoms of the feet, the achilles tendon, calves, hamstrings,





glutes, the periformis, the lower back, upper back, upper scapula; there's basically nothing we can't do with these.

### **So the goal of this diffusion is to break up scar tissue?**

The scar tissue is a side effect. The main purpose is to release fascia, which allows muscle to release. This allows the veins and nerves to open and push the toxins out. The fascia runs from the bottoms of the feet to the top of the head. There's not any place that's not connected, so when you get that kneaded out, like dough with a rolling pin, and knead the muscle underneath and get the veins and nerve pathways flowing, everything works again. It's so simple. We don't go a single day without doing it in here at the gym. If you're laying on the ground with a heavy "X-wife" on you, you're a conductor of that gravitational pull so force is going through your body. You're either going to break or you're going to get stronger holding it up.

### **Do you sell these rods?**

No. We have three companies interested in selling them, but they're concerned about calling them X-wife, Cheater, and Redheaded Stepchild, so I haven't authorized the go ahead. I like the names of the rods!

### **I see you've come up with a new type of dumbbell.**

I basically got powerlifters turned onto kettlebells back in 2004. I'm a big believer in them, because they got my body stronger, in addition to doing the classic lifts. I was training with them in 2006 and I went home and went to bed. I woke up from a dream and I dreamed I had shoved the kettlebell handle down into the center of the bell. I thought, "Wow!", so I quickly sketched an idea of what was in the dream. Over the next four years I went to three different companies and they all thought it would be too expensive to tool up and produce them. Richard Sorin of Sorinex was training at the Compound one day and kept staring at the prototypes I had. He started playing with them, saw the value and has found a manufacturer. They should be available in a few months.

### **So what's the difference between these and regular dumbbells?**

Your hand is dead center mass. If you take a sphere, the distance from any point to the center is the same, so your hand is the vortex of all those points. Now you've got better control. What we've noticed is that the shearing force that usually goes through the joints seem to bypass the

joint and go into the muscle more. The shearing forces are more muscle bound rather than joint bound. They're much easier to use and even if we use them like kettlebells for swings, the shoulders get engorged with blood, whereas that usually doesn't happen with kettlebells. They're much easier to use – the bell goes where the fist does without any drag or twisting in the hand. The drawback right now is they're only available in two sizes, 35# and 70#. We're coming up with more sizes, but these work even better than I envisioned that they would.

### **What do you call these, and how do they compare in a workout (anecdotally of course) with standard dumbbells of the same weight?**

They're called Center Mass Bells (CMB's). CMB's feel slightly heavier than the same weight in dumbbells, but they go straight up and down, and you can bring them closer to your body with more range of motion. The standard 70# hex head dumbbell is 14.5 inches long, and the 70# CMB is 9 inches long.

### **Are you going to market these?**

They're called the Thompson Center Mass Bell by Sorinex, so we'll both be marketing them. There will be a fitness one, 13-15 pounds, a 25, a 55, a 70, an 85 and a 105. I don't really care if powerlifters like them or not because they're for better training overall in all strength sports. The thing with powerlifters is that they fight change. Whatever the gym that they train in has for equipment, that's what they train with and like. I never got stuck doing the same old stuff. I made bars that were longer and thicker.

### **You don't compete anymore but**



**you still train heavy? How do you generally make a living?**

The Compound is 3,000 square feet and I train people here. I have my main product, the Thompson Fat Pad, that's sold through Rogue, and they're about to pick up my Thompson Fat Bar. I've got the CMB's coming out and I do one Body Tempering clinic a month where I travel, and every six weeks I do a clinic at the Compound. The Fat Bar was designed with help in 2006 from an orthopedic surgeon. It's 14.5 inches wide and 4 inches thick. It will bolt to any bench press frame, or you can drill your own holes. It allows scapular movement and better positioning during the bench press. You know why raw benches are going up? The bench pad is getting bigger! If you have better positioning, you can lift more weight. A 10 or 11 inch pad doesn't cut it for a lifter 275 or heavier. We measured hundreds of retracted scapulas from deltoid to deltoid, and they were almost all 14-15 inches. The standard width for most federations is 9-12 inches which just isn't wide enough. I know most everything wrong with powerlifting and how to fix it, but nobody wants to listen and I don't care if they listen. The main problem with powerlifting is there's no leadership. It's ruled- from the bottom up.

**Give me an example of that.**

With social media, everyone is the best in their own little category. In the old days of USPF, the only federation in existence at that time, there were standards and rules and everyone just went with that. I've got a football

helmet that I wore in arena league in 1989. I offer to let football players that train here use it in practice, and they all decline. I say, "come on, you're cheating with that 2015 helmet, go the "classic" way"! Why don't they want to use my old helmet? Because it sucks and it's not nearly as good as the new ones! Things get better over time and progress. Take raw for example. They're not going to use that "cheater gear" and yet their drug use is through the roof. They don't talk about that. It's not hard to not fear a 1,000 pound raw squat when you're taking 5,000 mgs of testosterone a week. The federations give in to the lifter so they can get more money, but it will never change. **PLT**



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# THE BENCH SPECIALIST

## WHO IS *DENNIS CIERI*

INTERVIEW BY JIM CURLEY

I remember seeing the Titan ad in PLUSA years ago with Dennis Cieri wearing a Katana single ply shirt and benching around 650 at 198. I was recently at an NAPF meet in February and saw him bench 514 raw, same bodyweight. I was amazed that a guy that light, with really long "deadlifter" arms could be so good at benching. He's a very successful and nice guy, and his bench success is something you'll want to read about.



**Dennis, you've been undefeated for 28 years straight in raw benchpress in your weight class. How old are you, what's your height and weight, and what's your best recent bench in a meet?**

I'm 46 years old, I weigh 205, I'm 5'9", and my best raw bench in a meet in the last year was 523.

**You're not a full power guy, but a bench specialist. Do you ever train squat or deadlift?**

I occasionally train them, but not to the extent I would if I was competing in them. When I was younger I was very busy, and I realized that I could barely generate enough time for the bench, much less all three lifts while balancing the rest of my life. I really enjoyed the bench, I was good at it, it kept me healthy, but it also didn't jeopardize my back or knees. Now at 46, when I do squat or deadlift it's like I'm a spring chicken!

**Married? Kids?**

I'm not married but I have two young sons.

**What do you do for a living?**

I do several things, but first and foremost I'm a real estate developer in northern New Jersey. I develop and own shopping centers and luxury apartment buildings. I also own four

gyms called Fitness Factory with almost 20,000 members. Three of the four have lots of powerlifting equipment. I'm also president and CEO of SSP Nutrition, but how I got into that is how I got into lifting.

**I was heading that way. How did you start lifting and when?**

I was 14 years old and idolized Arnold Schwarzenegger. I had all his books and read all the magazines at the time. I just had an insatiable appetite to learn everything I could about weightlifting and getting big and strong. The bodybuilding lifestyle appealed to me, but I didn't know that powerlifting even existed. I was eating correctly, getting plenty of rest, working out twice a day; I was doing everything I thought that could give me big muscle gains. I was focused on health and well being, so even though steroids were around at the time, I had no interest in them. My health was above all, even more than muscular gain. When I was almost 16 and weighing 155, a buddy of mine and I were training in his basement. He put 300 pounds on the bar as a challenge, and I got it! I was shocked! That's when I knew I had a talent, or gift, for the bench press.

**What do you attribute to that?**

I have long arms and a thinner body, not at all what the typical good bencher looks like, so I don't think it's genetics at all. I attribute it mostly to the fanatical drive and desire to get better. When I say my workouts were intense, I mean I went beyond failure, not just on the bench, but every exercise I did. It became part of my DNA if you will, to push harder than I thought was possible, every single workout. I know my body knows more about weights than it doesn't, because I started training so hard when I was so young. I've had life long growth in my ligaments and tendons that enables me to



still bench big today. I sort of laid a “super foundation” from an early age. In those days there were no real training templates or routines, so we would just keep going and going because we didn’t know any better. It was similar to the Rocky movies, just go beyond failure where you couldn’t even raise your hand after you were done. All of the Rocky movies were very inspirational.

the football team. I felt a sense of satisfaction in that, but I never went out for sports. I studied, trained and worked at whatever jobs I could get all through high school. When I was a freshman in college, age 18, I saw a poster for the ADFPA New Jersey Bench Press competition. I went up there with my dad, and not only won, but set a record at 181. I realized that there was an avenue that I had been looking for,

**“ I TRY TO TRAIN SMART, ALWAYS SHOCKING THE BODY. SOMETIMES IT’S HIGH REPS TO FAILURE, SOMETIMES IT’S SINGLES ONCE A WEEK. ”**

**So you kept going through high school?**

Yes, my strength gains gave me a lot of confidence, enough to stay away from drugs through school. I was the strongest kid by far out of a class of 440, not only in my class, but the whole school including

and the next 50 bench press meets I entered, I won! Some guy from New Hampshire finally beat me, so I trained even harder and the next meet we were in, I beat him. I had great times competing regionally and I finally got to a national meet in 1998. My nemesis was Joe

McAuliffe and he and I would go back and forth winning. These were shirted meets and initially, the shirt would just give you a boost, but they got better and better and it was no longer the strongest guy that won, but the one who could master the shirt the best. This frustrated me because the shirt and my body don’t go well together, unfortunately.

**Why is that?**

I think because of my longer arms and long stroke. The shirts are more designed for lifters who have a much shorter stroke. As soon as raw lifting emerged and records began being kept, I went back to that because I was always much better at raw lifting.

**What year was that?**

Probably about five years ago I hung the shirt up for good and just focused on raw lifting.

**What was your best shirted bench in a meet?**

It was 653 at 198. I started traveling to Nationals, not just local NJ meets, in 1998. I was really busy with law school (Seton Hall) but I enjoyed competing so much I made time for it.

**Did you ever practice law, or do you now?**

No, I went to law school at night while developing real estate during the day, and that was much more successful than I could have done as an attorney. The moment I graduated law school, I took the New Jersey and New York bar exams, passed them and immediately retired.

**So when did SSP become an idea and why?**

Going back about fifteen years, I had the world record and had accomplished what I could in the sport. I thought that my training couldn’t get better (I was wrong),

but I thought my nutrition could improve. I got with a nutritionist that worked in one of my clubs and he was wondering how I could be so strong eating like I did. He determined that I was undereating, not drinking enough water and other things, so he wrote me a diet program. I followed it to the letter and I started becoming stronger and looking better. That's when I knew that nutrition mattered, especially sports nutrition. I immersed myself in studying nutrition, read every book I could find and found out how important it was before a workout, but especially after a workout. Nutrient timing is the key. It was more than just eating. I read a book called Nutrient Timing by John Ivy that really inspired me. I had been making my own pre and post workout drinks to feed the muscles both during and after breaking them down in the gym to make sure that my body had the right nutrition during the workout. I needed to deliver the right nutrients to the muscles after I had created all the damage of muscle breakdown. You need to repair the muscle in that short period of time called "The Anabolic Window", about twenty minutes after you set the last bar down; otherwise the opportunity to rebuild is gone forever. The cells are not as receptive to nutrition uptake after that window. If you don't feed the muscle with the right stuff, you actually leave the gym in a worse state than when you walked in.

**Because the muscle is torn down and is screaming for nutrition and repair, right?**

Right! You have increased inflammation that's not being addressed, which increases your likelihood of injury. If you have an existing injury, you're exacerbating it because free radicals are flowing throughout your body with nothing to keep them in check. If the cells

aren't repaired, aging happens much faster. People think they're getting healthy going to the gym, but they're not. If you had a race car, you'd never enter a race without it being tuned up to the max. Similarly, after the race, you'd never just let it sit there. You'd fix everything that broke during the race and get it in perfect condition for it's next race. It's common sense, but why an athlete would take a pre-workout formula that isn't nutrition based is baffling. More importantly, why someone wouldn't take a post-workout nutrition based formula to repair the damage is foolish. Twenty years ago you could plead ignorance on this, as I did, but there are so many studies today that to ignore it is just crazy.

**So going to the all-you-can-eat buffet near the gym after a workout maybe isn't the best idea?**

You have twenty minutes to get that post-workout nutrition in you after you finish your last set, because the sooner you get it, the more receptive your cells are to receive it. The buffet idea I'll leave up to you to decide if that's the optimal route! Sure, nutrition is based on food, but when it comes to workout nutrition, you can't get the nutrients you need from food alone. Not only because food doesn't have enough of it but it can't deliver it fast enough to do any good. For example, our post-workout drink has chelated chromium which mimics an insulin spike without consuming a lot of sugar. The insulin spike opens up testosterone receptor cells which allows for maximum absorption of hydrolyzed whey protein, which is the fastest absorbing protein there is. It doesn't get any better than that. You can't prepare a plate of food that works as well.

**That's all in the Post formula?**

Yes, and that's just a fraction of what's in it. Similarly, in the Pre-workout we have 8 grams of branched chain amino acids (BCAA's) and 70% pure glycerol, which increases blood flow. You can walk up and down the aisles of Whole Foods but you'll never find the ingredients that we have in our drinks that will give you the equivalent amount of nutrition. We focus on nutrition, not stimulants. There's so much garbage out there. Any supplement outlet will recommend the pre-workout drink with the most stimulants to a teenage kid, or anyone for that matter. Yeah, they'll work a few times but is that really what they want? Stimulants just hitting the central nervous system, but next workout they'll need a higher dose to get the same effect. Your CNS starts to dull which cannot be good for the long term. I urge people to stay away from those types of products because they're stimulant based, not nutrition based. It goes back to the reason I started working out in the first place. I want to be healthier. If I'm doing something that's contradictory to my health, it goes against everything I believe in. If you're using a stimulant based

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Best shirted bench at 198 was 653#

Best raw bench at 198 was 535#

Came up with SSP products for personal use before making it a company



that. This company is based on my passion and research, not me needing to make a living from it. I feel that if I make the best product out there and be true to my customers, it will grow on its own but it's not the focus of the company.

**So back to your lifting. I saw you get a 514 in Aurora, CO back in February. Not bad for traveling in the winter and all that.**

I'm proudest of my 535, done four years ago in a drug tested meet. It's still "Best of the Best", raw, 198 on [www.powerliftingwatch.com](http://www.powerliftingwatch.com). I've been drug tested probably 150 times, including polygraph, voice analysis, along with standard urine testing, in and out of meet. I stand ready to be tested anytime, anywhere.

**What's your basic training routine?**

I try to train smart, always shocking the body. Sometimes it's high reps to failure, sometimes it's singles once a week. The important thing is structure and goals so you can measure your progress, or lack thereof. You have to be able to improvise, adapting to how you feel. You have to push it hard most every workout and not leave much in the gym. I take deload weeks, but I don't plan them. I let my body tell me when I need it. I usually leave the gym with a great workout, but often not with the one I walked in with. That ties in with not worrying about it, which is how life is. You get from A to B, but usually not how you planned it to be.

**Do you usually work to failure, regardless of the routine?**

Usually I do. There are exceptions of course. Pretty much no matter how you're training, if you're working really hard but not overtraining, you'll make progress. I like the 12 week cycle, starting with 10-12 reps in the beginning, 6-8 reps in the middle and 2-4 reps toward the end. I just don't have a "secret sauce"

workout formula, you're burning muscle, not fat because you have no nutrition in your body. With ours, you feel good and you know you're burning fat, not muscle. That's in the best interest of powerlifters who are looking to make strength gains. Just because a pre-workout uses stimulants and you feel good doesn't mean it's healthy.

**So the Pre formula has some caffeine, about the same as a cup of coffee, but other than that, it has no stimulants?**

It has a little taurine, just enough to give you a "bump", but it's not based on stimulants. I know of people that have taken stim based pre-workouts and have had to go to the hospital, or not been able to get to sleep for days. It's an unregulated market and there's a lot of bad stuff out there. Some of these manufacturers are just out for the quick buck rather than their customer's long term health.

**Your label says that there are no ingredients that are on the WADA banned list.**

That's right. I made this product mostly for myself, because I compete in the USAPL and IPF and have been tested I can't count how many

times. It had to be free of any banned substances and not put me in jeopardy of failing a drug test. There's nothing more effective than great nutrition and so far WADA hasn't banned great nutrition, lol.

**Is it available in retail outlets?**

No. The distributors want a huge discount and that means I would have to make it cheap and use cheap ingredients. I will not sacrifice the integrity of the ingredients so I can sell it to a retailer who will mark it up 100%. It's not worth it. I put the money into the product, not the packaging or advertising. I can tell you for a fact that I spend at least three times more money on the product than most of my competitors. If someone has a \$10,000,000 advertising budget, you should realize that they're spending their money on advertising rather than product. It's common sense.

**So it's likely the product will never be available in stores because you'd have to sacrifice quality?**

I like to know who my customer is and the day I use a third party distributor, I lose that contact and feedback from the customer, so no, I'm not interested in growing like

# TRAIN SMART

template. It's not what you do, it's how you do it. It's the intensity that counts.

**You're a "bench specialist". What are your three favorite assistance exercises?**

Triceps, triceps, and triceps! Pushdowns, weighted dips, close grip bench, skullcrushers – they're all great, just mix it up and do a lot of it. My long arms have caused lockout misses, which is a triceps problem so I focus on triceps. I like heavy, deep DB presses. I've never had shoulder problems. If I'm getting inflamed, it's mostly due to nutrition or lack of rest. If they're starting to get sore, I'll back off or change my grip. I tuck the elbows in on the way down and flare them on the way up and touch low on the chest to alleviate and minimize shoulder tension. I also do lots of shoulders and back. Working hard is the most essential thing. I like bands, chains and anything that will change the lift somewhat. You get better at bench pressing by bench pressing though, and hard work.

**Your best shirted bench was 653 at 198. Do you think you have a shot at a 600 raw bench in the next few years?**

Whoa! Let's start with beating my 535!

**You want to exceed your best at 50 years of age. Do you have any plans of "retiring" from the sport?**

No, I'm healthy and I still love lifting and competing.

**Can you think of anything else I forgot to ask?**

I think a couple of questions could be asked. What are the ingredients

of my success in the sport? Why is it? It's not easy to define. A lot of people think there's some magical training program that will make them the best. There's a lot of ignorance in this sport regarding nutrition. I believe that nutrition is every bit as important as training. I think there are four elements to smart training. One is strategic training. Second would be eating the right foods at the right time; the "Anabolic Window" that we talked about earlier. Third would be rest. Know when to walk away and let the injuries heal. You don't grow in the gym; you grow when you rest. A good night's sleep is really important. The fourth element is a little more mysterious and harder to define, but



it's learning how to manage your stress level. I haven't completely mastered it, but if you worry about everything, whether big or small, it will affect your recovery and your performance on the platform. It will negatively impact every aspect of your life. I've found that not worrying about much, letting things resolve themselves, not making a mountain out of a molehill have gone a long way in my life. It's helped me to put things in perspective and being able to focus on what's important and not to focus on things that I can't change. If I worry about the weather, I'm a moron! It's not mentioned much

among athletes, but I truly believe that my ability to deal with failures, as well as victories has provided me with a platform to grow and prosper as an athlete.

**When did you start implementing that strategy?**

I was always one of those guys that took on a lot of things, even as a kid and teenager. In college, I'd be working two or three jobs, going to school full time, powerlifting, but I never really worried about much. If I worried about any one thing, I wouldn't be able to do all that I did. I've probably lived five lifetimes in the one I've

done so far! I worked full time in Manhattan and went to law school at night. I was in a relationship and trained powerlifting – it was overwhelming. For most people, just going to law school is a full time gig. So because I didn't sweat the small stuff, (which is a great little book, by the way), I was able to get everything done, become efficient, and understand how not to worry. You do what you can and let the chips fall where they may.

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

My training partners, who give up a lot to help me, and Rich Kruszely in particular. My friends, my family – it's a long list. Fitness Factory, who paid my first entry fee in my first meet. I was so grateful that when the gym came up for sale, I bought it. I gave him more than it was worth! It had 140 members when I bought it, and today it has more than 3,000 members.

SSP products can be ordered at [www.SSPnutrition.com](http://www.SSPnutrition.com), and Dennis can be reached at [denniscieri@sspnutrition.com](mailto:denniscieri@sspnutrition.com). **PLT**





# SELECTING A TRAINING FACILITY

## (FINDING A REAL GYM)

By Darren Monohan

**T**he world of gyms has evolved to the world of fitness facilities seen today, with child care, juice bars, pizza parties and goofy shirt or sock day. Really? What the heck does any of that have to do with getting stronger, both mentally and physically? The answer is “nothing,” but it does have a lot to do with making money for the owners or franchise. This is what it takes nowadays to get people in the door of a fitness facility; it’s no longer about physical fitness.

Keeping the doors open of a real strength training gym is very difficult. Even well known gyms from the past have fallen prey to the new world of the fitness facility in order to make money and stay open. Yes, there are more and more so called garage type gyms opening up lately but they are hard to find and will they be able to remain open? If you want to succeed in your training you need to hunt out, support and train at these gyms. If you can’t find any, try and find an old hard core gym that has turned into a franchise fitness facility. Chances are they will still have some of the old real strength equipment and barbells.

My parents would tell me “You are who you hang around.” Dave Ramsey (a famous financial advisor), says if you want to be a millionaire, than you must hang around millionaires and do what millionaires do.

You do hear of some well known lifters training alone in a basement somewhere and then coming to the meets and breaking records. Some people might be able to do that but most need some other type of help and motivation. If you want to get stronger in powerlifting, then go hang around and train with other powerlifters. Find guys stronger than you, they will know where a good gym is.

You must find the right gym to improve and succeed in your training. When going into a new gym (or



fitness facility) ask some questions. Ask where they keep the squat bars. Ask where you are allowed to do deadlifts. If the 20 year old inexperienced fitness facility manager looks at you confused about the squat bar question or tells you deadlifts are bad for your back then you need to run as far away from the place as possible. You might be able to get by for awhile at one of these places but your progress is going to be hampered by the equipment and atmosphere of the place. Look around when you are in there; are people sitting on machines, looking at themselves in the mirror? If so, that’s who you will become, because that is who you are hanging around with.

I have personally seen people go into a real gym and set 5lb to 40lb PR’s in the first day just from using the right equipment and the atmosphere of the place. PR’s the first day and we haven’t even gotten into correcting their imperfect form yet. You want to improve? Find the right gym for the type of training you want to succeed in. I have driven over 45 miles one way to get to the right gym. Some people drive two hours one way on the weekends to train at our gym. Why? Because they see the value and improvements they make by training at the right gym. Try it, I guarantee your training will improve.

Until next time.

Big D

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# THE INJURED, OLD GUY

## BENCH ROUTINE

BY THE POWERDOC, MARK VANALSTYNE, DC, PT, CSCS

**T**he current trend in powerlifting is to go raw or at least train raw most of the time. This might be fine for the younger and/or injury free lifter, but for the powerlifting veterans with 15 or more years of heavy lifting under their belt, this type of training might not be possible. I recently re-injured my right shoulder for what seems like the twentieth time. Even dumbbell work with 55 pound dumbbells hurt my shoulder. With The Battle of Titans looming just months away I needed to come up with a way to train while letting the shoulder heal.

I discovered that benching in a shirt or using a slingshot style support minimized or eliminated my shoulder pains. I decided to use the shirt every week and not do any raw benching. In place of raw floor pressing I found that using a swiss or football bar made the shoulder pain minimal due to the neutral grip.

The bench routine outlined below is the one I used for the 2015 Battle of the Titans pro multi ply powerlifting meet. It involved using a bench shirt every week. The tighter meet bench shirt, a medium shirt (about 2 years old) and a much looser bench shirt (4-5 years old) are used alternatively every week. All bench shirts should be the same type for consistency of groove. The tighter bench shirt is used for singles and doubles and the

medium and loose bench shirt is used during repetition weeks. The slingshot bench aid is used for assistance benching to protect the shoulders.

Regarding equipment and technique, I prefer the Inzer Super Phenom due to its excellent stretch properties, but I have had success with this routine using a stiffer material shirt such as the Inzer Rage X. Arch as much as possible while still keeping the abdominals at least 5-10 percent braced. This will protect the lower spine. Work on stretching your hip flexors regularly; they can be a limiting factor in your arch. For flat footed benchers, work on stretching your calf musculature too. If you lift in an organization that lets you lift on your toes, do so. This will allow you to push your heel toward the ground which helps you arch up toward the bar on the descent. This will decrease the distance the bar has to travel and will help keep your body tight like a spring.

1/2 or 5/8 inch chains are used on certain weeks to add weight to the bar for shirted and slingshot benching. Try to have no more than a few links touching the floor at lockout position. Board pressing (one board is 1 1/2 inches) is done in your bench shirt. I prefer to use only one or two boards.

**This is the routine that I used for the March 2015 meet in Columbus, Ohio. The goal is at least a 530 pound meet bench.**

**Week 1:** Tighter meet shirted bench 1/2 board (3/4 inch): 515 x 1 set x 1 rep, 535x1x1; Slingshot 325x3x5 (to chest); Swiss bar 175x3x10

**Week 2:** Loose shirt 2 board 385 plus 65lbs chain x 5 sets x 4-5 reps; Swiss bar 175x3x10

**Week 3:** Tighter meet shirt 2 board: 495 x 1 set x 1 rep, 575x1x1; Slingshot 315 plus 40lbs chain x4x3-4 (to chest); Swiss bar 175x3x8-10 reps

**Week 4:** Loose shirt 1 board: 385 plus 60lbs chain 4 sets of 4-5 reps; Slingshot bench 385 plus 60 lbs chain 3 sets of 5 reps (to chest); Swiss bar 175x3x8-10

**Week 5:** Rest week (no chest work except Bamboo bar and TRX for rehab purposes)

**Week 6:** Tight meet shirt 1/2 board (3/4 inch): 495 plus 60lbs chain x 2 sets x 1 rep; Slingshot bench 295 plus 60lbs chain x3x4-5 (to chest); Swiss bar 185x3x8

**Week 7:** Medium shirt 1 board 465x3x3; Swiss bar 185x3x8

**Week 8:** Tight meet shirt 1/2 board 505x1x1

**Week 9:** Rest

**Week 10:** Meet 1<sup>st</sup> 495lbs, 2<sup>nd</sup> 525lbs, 3<sup>rd</sup> 535-540lbs

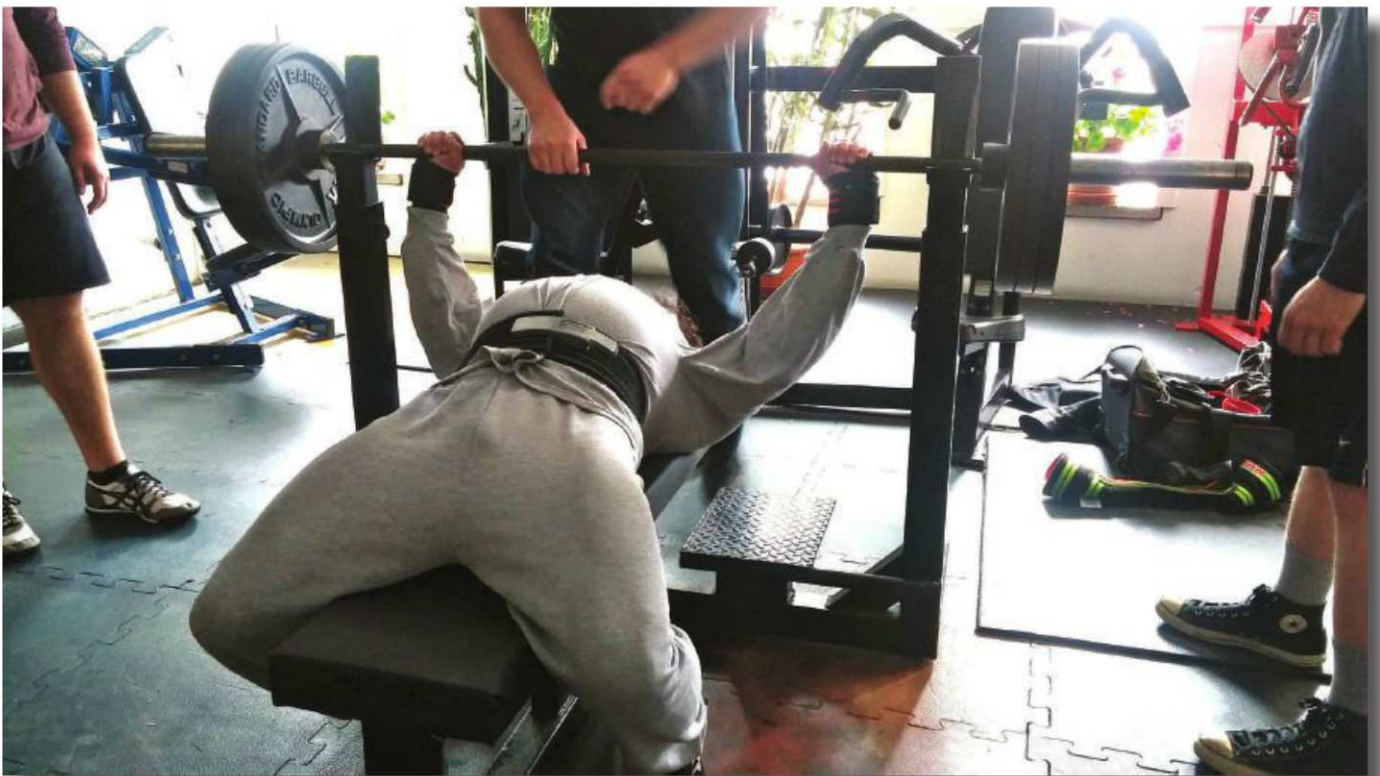
Assistance work is upper back work. Shrugs, DB rows, and cable rows are done 2 times a week. Around 8 sets of 10-12 reps is the goal. Rotator cuff work should be done 4-5 times a week. This is very important to prevent injury and increase maximum benching performance. Check on line for the Buchberger 12 rotator cuff routine if you need exercise ideas.

In closing, I would like to thank all my lifting partners at the new Hercules Gym, without them none of this would be possible. A special thank you goes to my long time sponsor Inzer Advance Designs for their support. Due to numerous injuries, I could not lift the weights I do without the perfectly fitted equipment they provide.

Good luck.

Mark VanAlstyne, DC, PT, CSCS

**PLT**



# THE CENCICH COEFFICIENT

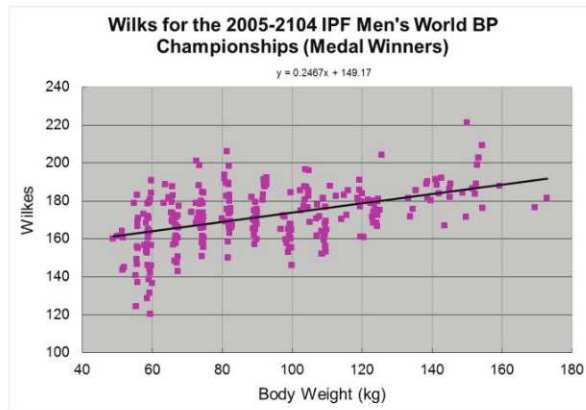
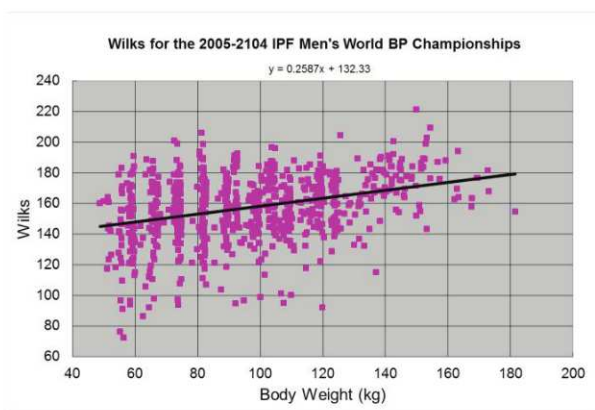
## A BENCH PRESS CONTEST FORMULA

By Tom Cencich and Claudia Nagata

We have noticed at bench press contests that heavier lifters often have higher coefficients and seem to frequently win the 'best lifter' awards. We lift primarily in the IPF where the Wilks formula is used to determine the best lifter. This formula was developed by Robert Wilkes in 1997 for use in powerlifting contests and has been used successfully for a long time. The Wilkes formula is used by all IPF affiliates (for example, the USAPL in the USA), as well as many other federations.

The last 10 years of the IPF World Bench Press Championships (men's division) was used as it was readily available on the internet. At first we took a look at the "Champion of Champions (COC)", or the top three lifters of the competition based on Wilks coefficient. There were 30 of these over this time period, and 16 of the 30 top lifters were from the SHW (super heavy weight) class. If the formula were "fair", there would be approximately 3 lifters represented from each weight class. However, the SHW's represented over 50% of the total COC winners, over 5 times the expected amount. Due to this favoring heavier lifters, we decided a formula derived just for bench press contests would be useful.

In these competitions, there were a total of 840 lifters in these 10 contests with good attempts (no bomb-outs or other disqualifications). Since there were several lifters that were significantly less than world class lifters, we also looked at only the medal winners, or top 3 places in each weight class. The plots below show the Wilks results for each lifter for both cases.



There is a slope of approximately 0.25 Wilks points per kg bodyweight in both plots, and a fair formula would have an approximately flat response. Keep in mind that the Wilks formula was derived for powerlifting and not for bench press contests so this shouldn't be too surprising.

A new formula was derived using this same data. This redistributed the COC's so that there were only 4 winners from the SHW division and an approximately equal distribution amongst all the weight classes. The new formula is:

$$\text{BP Points} = 100 \times \text{Best BP/C}, \text{ Where } C = .000028196 * \text{BWT}^3 - .020911 * \text{BWT}^2 + 5.0133 * \text{BWT} - 37.1$$

The Best BP and bodyweight (BWT) are entered in either pounds or kg, as long as the same units are used for both. A score of 100 is the average medal winner at these 10 IPF World BP Championships, which gives the lifter an indication of where he stands compared to some of the best benchers in the world. This formula was also applied to the Masters 1 (age 40-49) of these same IPF Championships. The Wilks results showed even a larger slope (32 points/kg bodyweight) than before. There were only 3 COC winners that weighed less than 82 kg. When the new formula was applied, this increased to 5 COC winners for these lighter weight classes. Even though the new formula did not level these results, it did significantly improve the distribution.

In conclusion, the Wilks formula isn't a good indicator of relative strength between the weight classes for men's bench press contests. This new formula does a much better job of leveling the playing field for the various weight classes.

\*Claudia Nagata is a competitive powerlifter and IPF referee.

As Editor, I'm calling this the Cencich Coefficient. Tom Cencich is a Principle Engineer at Lockheed Martin and has worked there for 32 years. At age 55, he recently benched 455 single-ply at 183#. - Jim Curley

PLT



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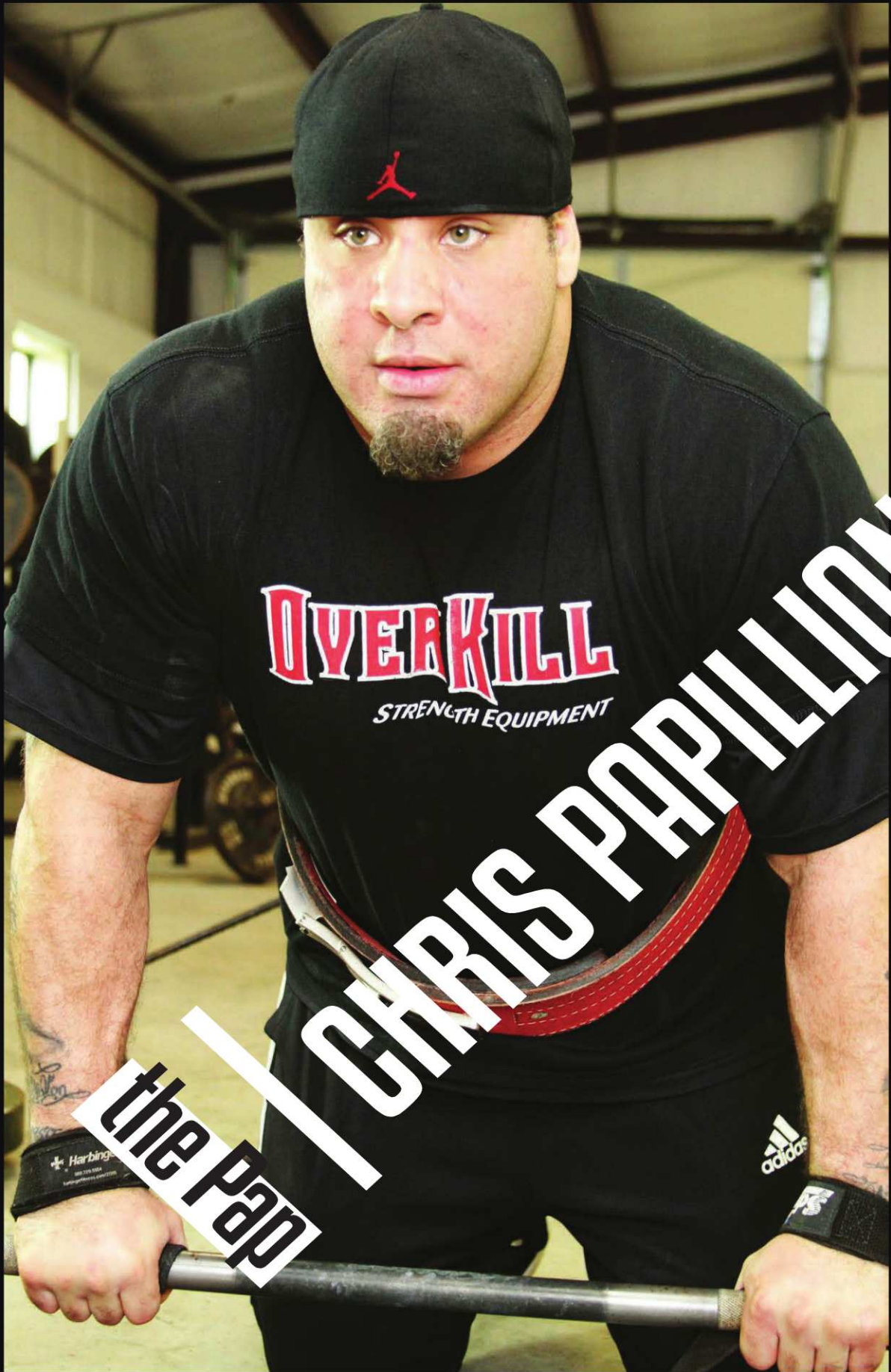
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Many are aware of Chris on Facebook for his calling out of high squats at (mostly) multi ply meets by posting videos of those high squats. He has challenged several lifters who claim world records that on video have clearly squatted 4-6" above the classic standard, which is the top of the hip crease passing below the top of the knee. He often challenges these lifters to go against him in single ply gear in federations that are known for consistent squat depth judging. You can debate which is better – raw, single ply, multi ply, even monolift vs. walked out, but the lift itself should never be in question. There needs to be consistency across all federations as far as standard depth is concerned; otherwise, there is no standard at all and in a few years a half squat will be a "world record". Most lifters agree with this, so an interview with the "lone wolf" attempting to restore powerlifting consistency was in order.



Interview by Jim Curley

# UPHOLDING THE STANDARD

## of powerlifting history

### **How old are you and what's your height and weight?**

I'm 35 years old, 5'8" and weigh 252. I own a personal training gym called Texas Elite in Victoria, TX.

### **You're a pugnacious guy that has gone through a lot of personal stuff but you take a vocal stance on why high squats in meets shouldn't be allowed and you're willing to take the heat for it.**

The problem I have with all these "high squat" federations and lifters is history. I grew up in this sport and got introduced to it when I was in a Boy's Home away from my family. I got in a lot of trouble when I was young. I started doing push ups and pull ups and one of the officers in the home gave me a Muscle And Fitness magazine. I read about Dorian Yates who had also been in a Boy's Home, so he became the first guy I

looked up to in weight lifting. When I was 14 I moved back in with my family and started playing sports in school. A guy named Jim Ashworth introduced me to powerlifting.

### **You were 14 years old?**

I've been powerlifting for 21 years straight, including the five years that I was in prison for getting in a fist fight.

### **When was the prison stint?**

That was from 2003-2008. I got out and won USPF Nationals in 2009. The history of the sport – Joe Bradley, Coan, Hatfield are the reasons I take powerlifting history to heart. I'll even challenge guys to go against me and place a bet, and I've only lost once. Everyone says I'm crazy, but everyone shakes my hand after the meet is over. Even when I lose, we're friends. It's just

competition. I went against Juha Sumeroja at the Olympia in 2014 and paid most of his way to come from Finland. He's a multi ply guy, huge numbers at 242, but when I watched him warm up he couldn't hit depth in single ply. I opened lower and he bombed. Most multi ply guys can't hit depth in single ply. They just can't get down that last four inches that is required so they bomb. I've got the third largest total, 2238, walked out in single ply gear. Goggins has a 2303 and Ed Coan has a 2463.

### **You lift single ply. Why don't you try multi ply and see what you can do?**

I've used single ply since I was a little boy. That's all they had back then. I haven't changed, because it's always been single ply. I get disrespected because I do things

correctly.

**You've taken it upon yourself to be the advocate for deep, walked out squats and locked out benchpresses. Why?**

Some people say that powerlifting is a sport. When I was young and away from my parents, this was my life, my outlet. When I was in jail and had nothing, this kept me alive by giving me a vision, a goal to keep after. This is something I've always done through the trials and tribulations of life. It gave me something to dream about and hold onto. You don't have much to live for in total confinement and this was my dream, to get better. That's why I'm passionate about it. It kept me alive. When I see people cheating for the sake of their egos, it just pisses me off to the point where I feel I have to say something. Somebody has to say these things and call people out; otherwise, our history books of powerlifting will just be washed away.

**A lot of people don't like you because of your one man crusade against high squats and non locked out benches.**

Well, everyone wants to be liked, but I can't change who I am. I can't change the way I think. Everyone likes PR's in a meet, but to me, powerlifting is like a war. Whenever I call someone out and challenge them in a meet, that's competition. It's like a fight – real strategy is involved and that's the adrenalin rush of real competition. I call out someone who squats high in multi ply gear in loose feds, we meet in the middle at a fed with strict judging, and man, that's what it's about! I like facing someone that's as good or better than me, calculating each lift, really going head to head. Even if you're not a top level lifter, you

compete against your buddies in the gym without actually calling each other out. We all do it.

I always talk about the negative side of the sport, but there are so many lifters I really respect – Kade Weber, Greg Panora, Dan Green, Chris Duffin, Jay Nera, Jason Mannenkoff, Garrett Griffin, BJ Whitehead; I can name a thousand more.

**You were in "the news" a while back regarding a steroid bust that you ultimately beat.**

A friend was staying with me after getting kicked out of his house. I

**WHENEVER I CALL SOMEONE OUT AND CHALLENGE THEM IN A MEET, THAT'S COMPETITION.**

had been in a car wreck and broke my arm. I did a meet shortly after my accident and my house had been robbed. My friend moved in and said he could keep an eye on the place while I was gone. That friend had a history of dealing drugs and a police informant was told to buy drugs from my friend. They picked up three other people that hadn't been shaken down by the police, so they might have had drugs already on them. The informant gave one of those guys the money to buy, and the judge determined that the drug deal was between those guys and had nothing to do with me. A legal technicality, but we beat the case. I'd just gone through all of that, but I faced Juha at the Olympia and still won. If someone can learn from my mistakes, that's good.

**In your crusade to return powerlifting to it's historic roots,**

**have you ever tried multi ply?**

I've got video of me squatting 1015 in multi ply and a monolift, and 955 in MP walked out. I squat high in training because I try to avoid injury if I don't have great spotters, but in a meet I do what I need to do. I don't comprehend failure; I just go for it with no fear.

**Is your ultimate goal to standardize the lift across all federations?**

I've talked to Karwoski, Coan and Goggins and when they say I'm doing the right thing, even though lots of people hate me for what I'm doing, it's worth it. Taking the grief makes me smile if I'm doing the right thing. If the right people get on this bandwagon and stand up for this, where we have a records committee and a chairman over that committee, where we can replay video like they do in the NFL and disallow obviously high squats and bad benches, then yes, things can change. Even with the thirty or forty feds out there, we go off powerliftingwatch and their records. It's really up to powerliftingwatch.com because they're the ipso facto record book these days. If Plwatch doesn't acknowledge these high squats then those feds can run their meets and make money doing that, but they're basically blackballed from the sport for altering the history books of the sport. If you're a lifter doing trash squats in trash feds, it's not the judges fault – it's your fault for even lifting there! We all know what's going to happen at certain fed's meets – high squats! So as a professional, it's your fault if you lift there. You have to take responsibility for your own actions. I lift in the USPF and the USPA because I know I'm not going to get gifts there.

**A lot of lifters like to blame the**



**judges instead of personally acknowledging that they squat high.**

Some lifters have hit huge totals but where do they go from there? Instead of a true all time record, the squat was obviously way high and their “all time best” is now a joke because of their lack of integrity. Everyone tells my gear sponsor to drop me because I’m a loudmouth, but that’s how I feel and I’m allowed to feel that way. This is my sport and it’s what I chase every day and it irks me that they have no respect for the rules of it. Do I change who I am and just sit back and watch the sport get destroyed for a few egos? Or do I state my opinion and take the grief that comes along with it? If you cheat and put yourself on a pedestal as one of the greatest of all time, I have no respect for you and I’ll challenge you to a meet in a strict fed. I hold myself to a standard all the time and if you haven’t squatted deep in six years, then your ego will get in the way and you’ll bomb. That last 2-6 inches to hit depth is tough. Dave Passanella, deceased, walked out 1047 in the 90’s in barely more than a singlet. It was an inch high, impressive as hell, but they didn’t give it to him because it was high! That’s what true judging is – following the rules all the time. Back before video and the internet we had to take their word that the lift was good. Now we can see the credibility of each lift on Facebook or YouTube, and that causes controversy and that’s the changing of the times.

**Speaking of the times, I’ve got an article in here about Texas High School powerlifting as a huge, acknowledged sport. Is that the future of powerlifting, getting these kids to stay with it?**

When I was a senior in high school I lifted at 198. The guys that were in the top five at that meet aren’t

in it anymore. I’m not sure where powerlifting is going.

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

Steve Denison, Ed Coan, Steve Goggins and Fred Hatfield, Lamar Gant and people who did things the

right way that set the standard for the sport. I appreciate the legends of powerlifting who I admire today. Also Rudy Rosales of Overkill for great gear. **PLT**



# TIME FOR MUSCLE

## OF MASS PROPORTION

By Anthony Ricciuto



**Q:** Hey Anthony how are you bro? I have been a long time fan of your work. I read just about everything you wrote in PL USA and I loved your columns. They always seemed easy to read and you would break down all that scientific jargon into something all us powerlifting meatheads could understand. When PL USA went under I was sad to see you were no longer writing anywhere in relation to Powerlifting. When I got my last issue of Powerlifter Today I was so happy to see your column. It was like the old days were back and your article brought a smile to my face. Now hopefully I stroked your ego enough that you will answer my question and maybe even put it into the magazine. That would be amazing! Anyways I am a 132 pound lifter and have been since I started. I really want to pack on some more muscle mass because I am 5'10 in height so as you can see I look like a stick man. I figured if I can get up another 20 pounds then I could really do more damage on my squat because I know it will improve my leverages. Now my appetite isn't the best so I was wondering if you can help me with my problem. I know as you mentioned in your columns before that you can always drink more calories than you can eat.

Now don't get me wrong I have tried tons of different weight gain powders and honestly I hate them. I always seem to get a stomach ache and even diarrhea. I would end up losing more weight than I would gain. What I found weird is the fact that I

don't have this problem when I drink a whey protein shake. Maybe you could answer that also? I know about ten years back you did give us an article on protein shake recipes and I tried many of them and they were fantastic. The problem is you only included one Mass Gainer shake recipe and the rest were normal caloric range for everyone else. Can you give me some of your favorite Mass style recipes for all us skinny guys to take advantage of? As you can see I'm a real hardgainer and this is just what I need to help me get my skinny ass in the 148's. Please help me.

Your bro,  
John "Big Man" Peters

**A:** Hi John how are you? Its fantastic to hear from you. Yes I do remember you from a long time back as you emailed me a few times. Okay, no worries my friend I am here to help you pack on some size in no time at all. You can gain weight eating all junk and fast food but we all know that you will not put on quality muscle that way nor will it be functional weight either. I am going to lay out several of my favorite weight gainer recipes for shakes and while they will have a source of protein powder they will not contain any weight gain powder in them. Yes, you were right, I did do an article on protein shake recipes and did include one weight gainer recipe. Well for all of you who missed that recipe the first time around I will include it once again. It is known as the Frankenstein Mass Mix.

# SUPPLEMENT INDUSTRY SHENANIGANS

Now you are not the only one that has problems with many weight gain formulas that are currently on the market. I am going to be honest with you as I know the industry like no one else. Many of these formulas use the cheapest known ingredients to man. Yes, you heard that right. There are a few good ones that do use high quality ingredients but those are few and far between. Instead you will see XXX brand weight gainer and you see it sells for \$70 for 15 pounds. Now you are thinking wow, what a steal. There are five pound protein tubs that cost that much. The reality is that they first start off using the cheapest grade whey concentrate that is loaded with lactose. This is one reason why your stomach runs into issues because the high lactose content will bloat you and hinder digestion. Next you have to look at the carb source. Some will use cheap fillers like different forms of sugars which is not needed. Or they will include a very low quality version of waxy maize which when combined with a low quality 60% whey concentrate is a recipe for disaster. These two mixed together will have you reenacting the Turbo Lax scene from Dumb and Dumber in no time at all. This is why certain brands are notorious for causing stomach upset in the majority of people that use them. I hope I answered your question on why you seem to get a dose of Delhi Belly every time you mix up a mass shake. Okay, I am going to give you some really good recipes that I love and I am sure you will too. Let's take a look!

## CHOCOLATE BANANA MASS MAKER

### Ingredients:

2 scoops of chocolate whey protein powder  
16 ounces of 3% milk  
2 Tablespoons of Jello Chocolate Pudding Powder  
4 ice cubes  
2 banana

## COCONUT BLUEBERRY MADNESS

### Ingredients:

2 scoops of vanilla whey protein powder  
12 ounces 3% milk  
4 ounces of Coconut Milk  
6 ice cubes  
1 cup of blueberries

## ORANGE JULIUS POWER PUMP

### Ingredients:

1 cup of Freshly Squeezed Orange Juice  
2 bananas  
1 cup of 3% milk  
2 scoops of vanilla whey protein powder  
4 ounces of Heavy Whipping Cream

## CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER BOMB

### Ingredients:

12 oz. of 3% milk

1 scoop of vanilla whey protein powder

4 ice cubes

4 ounces of heavy whipping cream

2 tablespoons of natural peanut butter

1 scoop of chocolate Micellar Casein protein powder

## FRANKENSTEIN MASS MIX

### Ingredients:

16 oz of whole milk

2 scoops vanilla whey protein

2 bananas

8 pasteurized egg whites

2 tbsp. of natural peanut butter

10 grams of glutamine powder

10 grams of creatine

2 tbsp. of honey

2 scoops low fat ice cream

4 ice cubes

## CHOCOLATE OREO MASS ATTACK

### Ingredients:

2 Scoops of Chocolate Whey Protein

3 Graham Crackers

3 Oreo Cookies

16 oz of 3% milk

1 scoop of low fat chocolate ice cream

1 scoop of low fat vanilla ice cream

## GREEK CASHEW BLAST OFF

### Ingredients:

2 Scoops of Vanilla Whey Protein

1 cup of vanilla Greek yogurt

1/2 cup of cashews

12oz of 3% milk

4 ounces of Heavy Whipping Cream

## TROPICAL POWER PUNCH

### Ingredients:

8 oz. of 3% milk

2 scoops of vanilla whey protein powder

1 frozen banana

1 cup of vanilla Greek yogurt

4 ounces of Coconut Milk

1 cup of strawberries



## GOOD MORNING MASS MONSTER

→ **Ingredients:**

8 oz. 3% milk

4 ice cubes

4 ounces of heavy  
whipping cream

8 oz. of Dark Roast  
Coffee

2 scoops of vanilla  
whey protein powder



## PINEAPPLE MANGO MASS BUILDER

→ **Ingredients:**

4 ice cubes

12 oz of 3% milk

2 scoops vanilla whey  
protein powder

1 cup pineapple chunks

1 cup of Vanilla Greek  
Yogurt

1 cup of sliced Mango

## CONCLUSION

So here you have it John, some of my all time favorite Mass Shake recipes that are sure to please. If you noticed the large majority of ingredients that I included were from healthy sources. But since I know how powerlifters are I did throw in a few treats in there as well because I know how stubborn they can be when trying anything that looks “Too Healthy”. What I would do to get started is to try and get in your three solid food meals per day and try to get in two more mass shakes from above. This will definitely help you go up a weight class and the nice thing is that it will be solid weight not some jelly belly fast food drive through weight that makes you look sloppy. So until next month train hard, eat clean, and try these bad boy mass shakes because I am sure you will like the results. That is a guarantee!

## **Y**ou're almost 70 years old. What do you do for a living?

I'm a mortgage broker and have had the company for thirty five years. We've scaled down from a large company to my business partner, my wife and myself. We're almost busier than we want to be but it's hard to turn away business, even when it interferes with training!

## **When did you start powerlifting and how did you get into it?**

I've been training and competing since I was 50 years old. I was training at World Gym in Lake Forest, CA. I was a typical gym rat, doing my cardio, and I'd see guys in "The Pit" putting on this weird gear. They'd yell and scream, do one rep and sit down for twenty minutes and it piqued my interest. I saw a guy named Tony Hardridge, 275, that has hit a 960 squat in single ply. I hired him to teach me how to squat, my goal being 315 at fifty years old. I started training with him on Mondays at 6 pm and there was this kid, Eddie Koo, who at the time was 17 years old. He'd train with us but wouldn't say much, and three months later he asked me, "How would you like me to teach you how to squat?". I was never getting below parallel and that was twenty years ago. Monday is squat night, Tuesday is bench, and Thursday is deadlift. I did my first meet at age 52 in a USAPL meet and didn't really come into my own until I turned 62. Eddie taught me how to deadlift and that's why I've been over 600 many times. I did USAPL and USPF meets and when Steve Denison started USPA in 2009, most of us went with him.

## **What are Eddie's bodyweight and best lifts?**

At 198, I think 611 squat, 411 bench

and 606 deadlift. At 220 single ply he got a 711 squat, 501 bench and 723 deadlift.

## **Young guys often don't have ligament or tendon strength when they start powerlifting and as they achieve muscle maturity, they get better if they stay with it.**

I'm a testament to that. I couldn't handle the wraps when I first started and it took three or four years for the ligaments to adapt and get stronger. I gave up trying to stay at 220, so I'm comfortable at 198. Even when I weighed 209, I'd weigh in, eat up a storm and on meet day I'd weigh less. My blood levels and general health are much

# SEVENTY &

better. I'm a good golfer, and extra "bloat" bodyweight affects my golf game too!

## **So you're 70 this year. What are your best recent lifts in a meet?**

I've competed at 198 and 220 and lifted in USPA, USPF, APF and USAPL. In the 60-64 age bracket I pulled 600 at 198. In 220 single ply, 65-69 age bracket I've hit 485 squat, 363 bench and 629 deadlift. I've also pulled 607 raw at 220, age 65-69. I've got a good total nationwide on powerliftingwatch.

## **Are you conventional or sumo in the deadlift?**

I'm absolutely conventional. I believe that sumo is cheating, that it gives shorter guys an edge and I'll get a lot of flack for saying it! Deadlifting came from olympic lifting but in my mind conventional is the only true deadlift. I have

nothing against anyone that pulls sumo, but that's my opinion.

## **How do you train? Do you follow a template or is it mostly linear progression?**

I overtrained for years with Eddie Koo. What we, and the masters lifters I train with, do is a maximum 10 week cycle. We all really have to watch the CNS and getting overtrained and burned out. I need eight weeks. For squats, we do 2-3 weeks of box squats, 2-3 weeks of chains, a couple weeks of close stance squats and then begin the eight week cycle. Fives for a few weeks, then triples and doubles. Slow and sure, and less volume with

more intensity at the end allows us to recuperate. It's pretty much the same for bench. I've had three shoulder surgeries in the last five years along with two knee surgeries.

## **What did that involve?**

I've had pretty much everything replaced or repaired. I hardly have any shoulders left. I'm back benching, but I'll never shirt bench again because if I get another shoulder injury I'm done powerlifting. I used to be a close grip squatter, but I can't get my shoulder under the bar so I have to hold on wide grip. My deadlift training is slightly different. I'll do 5-8 reps with minimal rest, pulling as quickly as possible. Six weeks out I'll start reducing reps and my last training day is 11-14 days out from the meet. I tell the young guys who train with us that they have to learn how to compete on



# STRONG Howard Myers

California. We have 16 guys who train with us ranging in age from 19-74.

## What's your opinion regarding growth or decline in powerlifting?

I think powerlifting is static and will probably remain that way. We get young guys who want to lift big weights, but two or three months into it, they're scared. Lifting big weights is scary and they look for any excuse to quit after a short time in it. I'm

absolutely convinced that anyone who gets under 400-500 pounds and walks it out and wonders if they can come up with it, well, it just intimidates most people and they quit. The deadlift bar taunts you, benchpress is intimidating, and powerlifting is all technique. I think the sport has evolved, but I'd like to see the number of feds reduced. I think the sport is still in a small growth spurt. On the west coast the sport is definitely growing, mainly raw lifting. I doubt if powerlifting will ever be a mainstream sport. What is a world record holder in powerlifting? I like [powerliftingwatch.com](http://powerliftingwatch.com) for rankings, because it's regardless of federation.

## Who would you like to thank or mention?

Definitely Eddie Koo, who got me in the sport and continues to be my mentor, George Pessell, Dave Contreras, Tom Miller, Brian Meek, Tony Hardridge, all the guys at Metroflex in Lake Forest, my wife Cindy and Steve Denison and USPA. **PLT**

Absolutely not! I've got a great crew that watches over me and holds me back from doing unwise

things. I'm looking forward to competing in the 70-74 age group. I was at a USPA meet a few years ago, warming up for the deadlift and these three guys about my age commented that they had come to see me deadlift. I asked why they weren't competing. They didn't want to compete against me because they felt that they couldn't win and that is CRAP! We're not 20 years old; we compete for the joy of it, but if they couldn't take first place, they weren't going to compete! So what! I have golfer friends who ask how to get in shape. I'm healthier today than I was twenty five years ago because of powerlifting. People in our age brackets are different, kind of like Type A personalities. We are definitely different from most people. My training partners are all in their 50's to 70's and now we've got a bunch of young lifters in the crew. We might have one of the largest powerlifting groups in

the platform. Gym numbers mean nothing. I found out that the rest that I took before the meet made the weights light on meet day. Young guys have a hard time grasping that, but if they don't learn it they'll be done with powerlifting by age thirty.

## Have you seen that happen often?

I think it's overtraining, bad diet and ego. You have to go slow.

## So you're done with geared lifting?

I go raw now.

## No deadlift suit for deadlift only meets?

I might reconsider that but breathing is so hard in a suit. I take all my air at the top, grab the bar and go.

## Do you have any plans to retire from your career or powerlifting, despite multiple surgeries?



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