

POWER PROFILE

Casey at the Bench May the Real KING Live Forever! First of a 2 part series by Jeff Everson

It's 6:00 AM, but it's already starting to warm up in California's high desert. A big man, with powerful shoulders and arms, is up and about on his ranch property on the fringe of the Lucerne Valley. There's work to be done. After all, life doesn't open wait for a man who prefers to spend his winters hauled up inside somewhere or minds his summers sitting, sweat-soaked, sipping lemonade in front of a noisy fan. No sir, if you think that, life's sure to pass you by.

Pat Casey found out as much years ago. Born into the lower middle class in the bowls of southwest L.A., Pat hardly knew his dad; but his mom, now that was a different story altogether. Mrs. Casey was the stubborn kind, something right out of an old Irish working class tale, she was. Befittingly, she took to raising young Patrick right, straight and narrow, stressing those good Irish virtues of forthrightness, honesty, and love for purposeful labor. Oh, did young Pat love labor. For the last 45 years, he has kept his Irish eyes open and remembered those pearls of wisdom from his mother, who as was much to the former President.

Growing up in the type of turbulent neighborhood where Tina Turner's description of "rough" was certainly apropos. Pat found out that success was determined less by who you ran with and more by your long term vision. Our young, impressive Patrick turned out no different than dozens of others who overcompensate in the face of hoodlum mania. As long ago as age 12, Pat remembers the terrifying local toughs, the bullies who always seemed regularly beaten about by their fathers, if they had one at all. Yeah, the guys with chips on their shoulders larger than the solidified remains of the biggest, baddest cow in the stockyard. You know the ones, the James Dean types.

Somehow, our boy persevered and pulled through with his ego intact. In fact, at George Washington High School, Pat did all the things normal boys did, especially dreaming of being a pro football star. At 14, he would be Bronco Nagurski took to the weights, just like any other puny 135 pound freshman. At that juncture, the similarities ended, because while the other guys merely used the barbells, Casey became seduced and enthralled by the sound and smell of the cold steel, by the invigorating power the iron produced. As a thirsty mosquito stalking some one's sweat on a steamy evening, Pat took to the barbells, and when it came to the bench press...well, that was a special sort of attraction!

Yes, brothers and sisters, you can talk and talk all you want, but when it comes to heaving prodigious benches, there is but one king. One man stands alone as the greatest

that other famous California Irishman, Jerry Quarry). He was thinking of opening a second gym in Norwalk as visions of Jack LaLanne danced in his head. After another year had passed, he decided to give away the MUSCLE-ON rights (a move he later regretted), and move to Norwalk, setting himself up in training and business there.

Pat was now 25, and all this time his bench press had been cascading forward. Before he turned 20, he benched 500 (the first teen to do so legally). That took place in 1959 when he weighed all of 238 pounds. This still remains an almost impossible feat, especially for a man 73 inches tall and clean as Mr. Clean himself.

Since Pat's chest was his own bomb-shelter, he survived the Cuban missile crisis of October, 1962 with many a concern. He and good friend, Steve Marjanian, didn't have time to worry about some Russians in Cuba. They left that for the Kennedys. By 1964, in a training session with Marjanian, Pat had benched 600 pounds at a new bodyweight of 287 pounds. Marjanian traveled 60 miles each day just to spot Pat in the bench. True friendship!

Pat still owned Norwalk Gym, but was about to let go and join the Police force in Seal Beach, California. Besides, he now did the better part of his training at Bill West's infamous Westside Barbell Club, with guys like Peanuts, George Frenn, Len Ingro and other early old lift greats.

Even though Pat got the 600 by 1964, it took him nearly two more years to do the bigger officially. Shortly after getting into the gym, he suffered an excruciatingly painful injury to one of his pectoral muscles. It was a pain he still feels today. He was doing an old exercise favorite, parallel dips with weight added. In this case, he had 375 pounds strapped around his belly, which, with the addition of his 300 plus bodyweight, meant he was lifting nearly 700 pounds (the Eder influence, you see). Succumbing to some friendly gym taunts (why anyone would want to taunt Casey is beyond me) to go lower in his dips, Pat did. He still remembers the sickening sound of his flesh tearing as he did. The injury set him back 2 years.

Circa 1966, Leo Stern was a big promoter of bodybuilding and strength in the San Diego area. Seeing the phenomenal growth of Powerlifting between the years of 1964-1966, Stern decided to get into the act in a big way and promote a contest of the giants. Competition would be on an invitational basis, so it would include only the best and would cut across several weight classes.

The bombers flew in for the heavyweight class. The giant Texan, Terry Todd, had defeated Gene Robinson for the National Powerlifting title. He was undefeated and Stern saw fit to bring him to the West Coast to do battle with Pat. Casey was undefeated too, with the only problem being he had yet to prove himself against anyone, whereas

months that he could have hit a 630 pound bench, 640 910 and 700 pound deadlift for 2170, in 1967! That would be with a full 2-second pause on the bench and without knee wraps, a tight suit, or those famous super-supplements so popular on the local corner these days.

Pat had always been concerned with his health and by now his blood pressure was higher than Will Chamberlain's head. The day after his 620 bench, Pat started his diet. After all, Todd was easing out of the limelight. Gene Robinson had decided to use his PhD to make some money, and Pat wanted to be able to see his feet again. Furthermore, although Bob Weaver was touting some big totals, no one was around in Casey's bench league (although Stan Holland was claiming 380 in the gym). He began to see something else: steroids, and he didn't like it.

So, the big man did what any logical man would do. The day after his bench, he went to the local track by himself. He started quartering, but barely finished one quarter mile. One year later to the day, some 100 pounds lighter and with a waistline 15 inches slimmer, Pat ran a mile in 6 minutes, 17 seconds. His blood pressure was normal. Pat Casey would never bench heavy again!

NEXT MONTH: The Training of the Best Ever Bench: Why Casey is the Best Bench of All Time; Pat's Opinions on the Champs of Yesterday and of Today; Anecdotes that'll split your seams; His Thoughts on Drugs; Who Pat Votes for as the Strongest Man Who Ever Lived!



Counting the Historic Weight...Pat monitors the massive bench tally.

Todd had. Reputations were clearly on the line. The gym rats were at it again, taunting Pat that he would surely meet his match when the Texas Tomado came to town. Pat was training in a frenzy, but suffered a bad back strain only two weeks before the meet. He couldn't back down at this point, so for the last few official lifts total, 2075 pounds, whereas unofficially he went 2115 pounds. Pat had stayed with it for another six

George Frenn was on hand to squat 600 pounds with an ankle to knee leg cast on! Terry put up a 480 pound bench and Pat responded with a record 590 pounds (in those days, the bench press was done first). Pat was worried about the squat. He had done 725 pounds in the gym before he hurt his back, and he expected Todd to be good for close to 700 pounds, if not more. Todd proved true to his buildup and pounded up a big 680. Pat caught fire and blasted out an immense lift of 775 pounds, another record. With the contest no longer in doubt, Pat pulled a light 800 pound deadlift. Before the contest, he actually had designs on a 700 effort, but discretion was the better part of valor in the Sixties too.

Meanwhile, Todd figured he would show the upstart a thing or two anyway, and deadlifted an easy 740 pounds. He then made a quick calculation that showed he was only 65 pounds behind Pat. Realizing he couldn't get the 800 plus he needed with his short-fingered grip problems, he opted to try the load with straps. To let the crowd know the power was there, Terry pulled the big 804 pounds to his knees, but could not straighten out with the load. Casey had won! Pat, the gentleman he is, promised Todd a rematch at a later National Championship, but it never came off. Pat still regrets that he did not give Todd another shot at him.

Casey moved on. In a later meet in 1966, he lifted 580 pounds in the bench, but made an 805 pound

The 550 lb. Bench Press Club All Time Best Performances compiled by Herb Glossbrenner

Yr.-Lifter	Wt.	Lift
72-Williams, J	SH 675.0	SH 562.1
84-Arcidi, T	SH 666.9	SH 562.1
81-Kuzmaier, B	SH 661.4	SH 562.1
83-Sammiego, S	SH 658.0	SH 562.1
83-Merzani, L	SH 628.3	SH 562.1
87-Anderson, P	SH 620.0	SH 560.0
80-Bouvier, W	SH 616.3	SH 560.0
67-Casey, P	SH 616.3	SH 560.0
82-Hardman, T	SH 614.0	SH 556.6
84-Dicks, P	SH 612.2	SH 556.6
78-Young, D	SH 611.8	SH 555.0
75-Reinhardt, D	SH 606.3	SH 555.0
72-Kuc, J	SH 600.7	SH 555.0
79-Hagan, T	SH 600.0	SH 555.0
83-Moore, F	SH 600.0	SH 555.0
82-Maguder, J	SH 595.2	SH 555.0
73-Pacifico, L	SH 590.0	SH 551.1
77-Kenady, L	SH 590.0	SH 551.1
53-Hepburn, D	SH 580.0	SH 551.1
72-Cole, J	SH 580.0	SH 551.1
80-Waddington, D	SH 580.0	SH 551.1
81-Seno, B	SH 578.7	SH 550.0
58-Atrens, C	SH 575.0	SH 550.0
69-Coleman, W	SH 575.0	SH 550.0
82-Avuc, R	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
82-Wilson, S	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
83-Magee, J	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
83-Gamble, T	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
84-Baly, M	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
72-Hennessy, M	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
74-Hennessy, M	SH 573.2	SH 550.0
71-Cassidy, H	SH 570.0	SH 550.0
76-Fera, H	SH 570.0	SH 550.0
73-Perdue, T	SH 568.8	SH 550.0
82-Foley, D	SH 567.7	SH 550.0
84-Saarelainen, H	SH 567.7	SH 550.0
66-Sammartino, B	SH 565.0	SH 550.0

SH 606.3
74 performances by lifters of 7 nations: USA-65, Sweden-3, Canada-2, 1 each Britain, Finland, Italy, Tonga.