

PART TWO MY JOURNEY

Larry's string of Worlds stops at 9 after jumping 2 1/5 k's on his second attempt, negating a third.

Dan Wohleber pulls the first 900 pound deadlift.

Dave Waddington squats the first 1000 pound squat.

Mike McDonald does 512 pound bench press at 181 bwt. Remember no Shirts!

While I am recovering from my back injuries, I found every book on training methodologies from the old Eastern Bloc I could. I was determined to outlast my rivals. There were many bright stars but the brightest stars seem to burn out fast.

I found my new methods were working well. I decided to lift at 242 bwt just to get my 4th USPF Elite total. After that I found a meet in Toledo and decided to try for my fifth elite total at 275 bwt. The problem was that I could only weigh 234. Ten miles outside of Toledo I started drinking Gatorades. Chuck Vogelpohl kept handing me can after can, but still when I stepped on the scale I was 238. The official said you're good, but I said I'm lifting 275 and so I stayed and drank Gatorades until I went over the 242 limit and officially made 275 class. I made my fifth elite exactly where I made my First elite.

I squatted 800 pounds and benched 520, and did a 650 deadlift just to total that Fifth Elite. By the way all done with IPF or USPF judges.

I was now wearing a bench shirt. They weren't much, a bit better than nothing. Shirts came about in 1984 or early 1985. I have lifted in every era of powerlifting. Things change and so must lifters.

I am one of a few to bench a top 10 bench 480, in 1980 without a shirt and 6th, 575 at 220 bwt in 2002 with a shirt at 54 yrs of age.

Everyone would ask me about Anthony Clark's benches, were they good? I always said yes. Now Gene Rychalk Jr. is the center of controversy. I saw Gene from the head judges chair do a perfect 1005 bench. Letter perfect. I'm sure if you throw some serious cash at Gene, he would shut the mouths of those who criticize him. My hat is off to Gene just like Jim Williams, Mike McDonald, Ted Arcidi, Ken Lane, and all the other great lifters thru out the decades.

Don't take powerlifting backwards; it could end up like US weightlifting whose road it travels is a dead end street. There are pretenders but they know who they are. You must respect each other. I recall in 1970, I was weighing in and George Crawford and Jerry Bell, the 1st 700 pound deadlifter at 165 bwt were escorting a little kid at meet, I ask who's this? Jerry replied "this kid will be famous someday"; his

name was Bob Wahl, 661 squat at 148 bwt in 1983. To this day I respect every lifter young or old that is brave enough to step on the platform.

My old friend Paul Sutphin, Mark Dimiduk, Jay Rosciglione, and many others of like Steve Wilson, John Black of Black's Health World of Cleveland were all doing remarkable things.

I lifted at the 1987 YMCA Nationals with 2033 at a light 242 and 4th place. Steve Goggins was already a superstar, just like today. My good friend Matt Dimel had squatted 1010 at SHW and was totaling 2300. It was a great loss to Westside when Matt died. Gary Sanger was moving to LSU to teach, Bill Whitaker was going to Pennsylvania to start a vet clinic, Dr Tom Paulucci had some medical problems and had to retire. Doug Heath was going strong. Bob Coe who showed up at my door 25 years ago is still at Westside. My knee had been hurting for some time about 5 years to be exact. I was going to the APF Nationals and was taking a low hassock record when $\frac{3}{4}$ up, I snapped my left patella tendon in half. I had heard a few snap, but never thought I would hear my own. But it happened my kneecap was now on the inside of my leg. The emergency squad shows up in 10 minutes, they look at my leg and said we think you just dislocated your knee. I said no way jack. I am very allergic to anesthesia and so has a spinal block and I was awake during my surgery.

All went well, and 14 weeks later I go back with my friend Diane Black to have the wires removed. They gave me a shot to calm me for surgery. That shot put me to sleep and they proceeded to give me anesthesia. I stopped breathing for 4 minutes so they trached me and then inserted chest tubes when my lungs collapsed. I wake up 2 days later with holes in my chest and throat but no knee surgery! WOW that really helped! I didn't know Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine and Dr. Howard was working on me. Well they inserted a air thru my nose and finished the job. After seven days in intensive care to do a four hour procedure, I was home.

I was never going to compete again but Kenny Patterson said something to me that brought me out of retirement immediately. That was 1996 and powerlifting hadn't gotten out of hand yet. I lifted 7 times in 11 months, and became the first 50 plus year old to bench 550, and the first to bench 600. This was in a closed back shirt. I made a top ten bench again. I hear people say I am not built to bench, squat or deadlift. If I made top ten lifting all categories, then almost anybody can. Except for you lazy bastards who have got some excuse why you can't!

Powerlifting comes in eras. No gear, some gear, better gear, and what I refer to as gangster gear. Legal thru loopholes. Get used to it. It is here to stay. It makes relative newcomers superstars fast. Big squats, big benches and most of the time a poor deadlift! This shows the true strength of a person.

The U.S.P.F. was kicked out of the I.P.F. I told Peter Thorne, we should pull out of the I.P.F. instead of being pushed out. Remember folks there are drug tested meets but no drug free meets. Get it straight because that is the way it is. Brother Bennett had a good idea, but unfortunately there will always be those who bend the rules. This has been the way since the beginning of sports. You had the ADFPA and the U.S.P.F. Of course both seemed power hungry, so Ernie Frantz started the APF and the world body W.P.C. I had lifted AAU until the U.S.P.F. before the IPF started the bench was performed first, then squat, and deadlift. I believe it should still be that way, but we had to make concessions with England about believe it or not gear, 30 years ago.

This is my point, I never made the rules, but I have always followed them. When I dropped out of the USPF, they sent a questioner on what I would change. It was a little late for that, and I never filled it out. I always wondered how I killed myself to make elite totals, suffering injuries and thousands of hours in the gym, when a judge could simply studied a book, take a test, and become a I.P.F. judge in weeks and not be a class one lifter. Big men are hard to judge in the squat. You are penalized for not breaking parallel in the squat which is very tough to do with the super strong suits we can wear by the rules. But in the bench we are rewarded by one pound of 700 touching your chest doesn't make sense. But bench meets have become the thing. You see countless bench pressers on the cover of PLUSA. I thought its called POWERLIFTING USA not BENCH PRESSING USA. But it shows how popular bench pressing is. Even at Westside where we push the squat we have made only three all time world records, five over 1000, Matt Smith's 1074 the highest, and ten 800 deadlifters. We have made 22 all time world bench records and 15 over 700 and one at 825. That shows what I know.

Its 2000 and I'm doing pretty well, squat 860 at 242 with a 580 bench. I believe I was third at 920 squat and fourth in total with 2100 at 235 bwt. Now the W.P.O. is on the scene with some money. It's amazing how money can bring people together. Kieran Kidder has brought the best lifters together for the first time since Gus Rethwich's Hawaii Record Breaker meet, where unheard of weights were being lifted.

The W.P.O. format pits the greatest lifters in the top of each money division. The 165's are unbelievable with Ron Palmer who is fairly new to powerlifting winning most of the time, but the kingpin in the 165's is Tony Conyers with a 832 squat and a 1978 total. The guy must use mirrors. He's also one of the nicest guys you will ever meet. He's been at the top for years. My friend Angelo Berardinelli has also been at the top for years. He started at the famous Black's Health World. He's over 800 in the squat and 1900 in the total and still moving up. Angelo is a bulldog. A young lion is Nick Hatch at 148. I saw

him squat an unreal 788 at the ARNOLD CLASSIC at 19 years old. He is out of Big Iron Rick Hussey's gym.

The second group 181 thru 220. At the 181, our good friend Arnold Coleman broke Gene Bell's all time total record 2116. Maybe they will rename the meet to Arnold Coleman Classic. Phil Harrington was not at the W.P.O. but squats 900 at 181. Where will it end?

And yet a new star Mike Cartinian who is aiming at Jesse Kellum's 198 total record. Mike trains with Angelo Berardinelli and Kenny Patterson. Speaking of Jesse I think he's taking it easy back in the swamps of Louisiana training with some bad ass gators. I must say Jesse is not only one of the strongest men in many weight classes but very smart about training. I think Jesse and Chuck Vogelpohl are twin brothers from different mothers. At 220 Chuck Vogelpohl has owned the squat record at 1025 but has worn out his welcome at 220 and will compete at 242 in Atlanta Georgia. Travis Mash has rose to the top at 220 breaking Eddie Coan's total record, not once but twice. He too will be going to 242 at the Show of Strength in Atlanta.

The W.P.O. has a 48 hour weigh in, which I have had doctors say is no advantage, but it sounds bad. But the 242 and 275 world record holder Steve Goggins only weighed 264 when he squatted 1102 and totaled 2535. He weighed light at 242 and totaled 2481 with a world record squat of 1043. Steve trains in Atlanta with Phil Harrington the world record holder at 181 with an unreal 900 squat, and also John Groves a veteran lifter who has been around a long time. It's important to have a group of strong experienced lifters. Not to be left out of this group is Kara Bohigian. She is extremely strong and very knowledgeable about training.

Mark "Spud" Bartley who trains with Donny Thompson at Maximus Barbell in South Carolina is really on the rise. At he 2005 W.P.O. Super Open in Columbus Ohio he made a huge 2463 total and second place. It proves a point that the most important thing in a gym is your training partners. You can tell who's got balls and those who pretend to have a set. How? It takes guts to lift with the strongest men in the world. Kieran has assembled the strongest and summons them to one platform. A few years ago 2400 would win the SHW class. Then it was 2500. Now Matt Smith made 2601 and was third place. And let's not forget Gary Franks! He made the first 2500, 2600, 2700, and 2800. With Beau Moore, Andy Bolton and I hope the return of Brent Mikesell, one of the best SHW squatter around, but Moore and Bolton could claim it soon.

Beau and Tony Conyers bought a reverse hyper from us some time back, and have made unbelievable progress since. Matt Smith wants me to re-po it from Beau, not for nonpayment but because he's getting to be the strongest.

All these men are gentlemen and have nothing but good things to say about the competition. It's always been that way with the strongest lifters. The strongest men never bad mouth a beginner or those that are not strong. But nowadays there are many on the World Wide Web that are always being disrespectful to the strongest men and women in the world. Why? What have they done? Oh yeah, nothing! These people are constantly on the web when the men who they are criticizing are training, writing articles, doing seminars. They are also going to meets and cheering on their competition, or are backstage helping putting on bench shirts or spotting someone's warm ups.

No one in my humble opinion should belittle Andy Bolton's deadlift, Brett Mikesell's squat, Gene Rychak Jr's bench press, or Gary Frank's total lifts.

Are they prepared to train beside men like these for even a year and see what they go thru? Then and only then would someone appreciate the work and sacrifice these guys go thru. It has been my goal to share what I have been taught, and what I teach thru my videos and seminars, plus the work my friends Buddy Morris college and NFL strength coach, Tommy Myslinski college and NFL player and now coach, my friends and training partners Dave Tate, Jim Wendler, George Halbert, and now Chuck Vogelpohl are giving back to their sport by giving their time to help lifters and coaches alike to learn a similar system that works for everyone.

After moving to Columbus and training at Westside, Dave started E.F.S. and now not only my training partner and we compete every day in the gym. We are in competition in business with internet sales on my web site www.westside-barbell.com . now I can't forget Paul Childers who you see perform in my workout tapes. He has contributed much to Westside Barbell from his own experiences with the Westside system. Also my Finnish friend Sarkari Selkainaho also has helped elevate the system. I want to thank my training partners most of all but I can't thank everyone or mention their names, there are just too many. But you know who you are; my friends from Ukraine, Finland, Brazil, Japan, Ireland, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada and everywhere else. All NFL players, track athletes, MMA fighters, the late Dr. Mel Siff and all the old Soviet Union authors that brought my attention to an advance and sophisticated training system. Pavel, the kettle bell master, who has backed us for years and I back him and his team of instructors for the unrelenting teaching.

Powerlifters please band together, I respect all federations and their motives and the direction in

which they are heading. But we must travel together to achieve true success.

I would like to thank the three Westside Barbell team doctors who work relentlessly to keep us healthy; Dr. Dave Beversdorf, Dr. Bill Nucklos, and Dr. Eric Serrano.

With three more surgeries under my belt, powerlifting is about to pull me down, maybe for the last time but as a man wrote I won't go slowly into the night, but I will rage on into the dying of the light.

Louie Simmons