

HELP WANTED

In the summer of 2005 I placed an ad on our Web site for lifters that wanted to excel at powerlifting. We had just had a serious blow dealt to us at Westside, losing four great lifters to injury and illness. When you lose lifters who have totaled more than 2200, 2300, 2400, and 2500, it's hard to shake off. It was even harder to lose four good friends and training partners. We had to fill the void.

I like to think it's Westside versus the world. There's Huge Iron's Justin Garalf, Jim Grandick, Nick Hatch, and their coach, Rich Hussey, to worry about. The Finns are getting stronger all the time, led by Anu Turtiainen. If that's not enough to worry about, now the Ukrainians are coming to the WPO. Yevheniy Yarymbash has already broken the total record at 275 with an unreal 2635. Then there's Oleksandr Kutcher at 165. His 870 squat, 540 bench, and 793 deadlift are not from another country, but another planet. By the way, Kutcher and the rest of the Ukrainians presented me with the Ukrainian symbol of power. This is one of the most prized possessions I have ever received. Thank you very much, Mr. Kutcher. Why am I rambling on about our losses and the great lifters coming from everywhere? Because we are looking for a few good lifters who want to become great. But first I'll talk about the four that decided to come to Westside.

Matt Wenning, from Ball State University, had been visiting Westside for 7 years. After receiving his Master's degree, he moved to Columbus to train here. One year ago, his total was 2175 at 275, at the IPA Nationals in November 2005. In November at the WPO, he totaled 2402. His squat went from 900 to 1005. His 600 bench press increased to 680. and after pulling a meager 600. he smoked 755 in New York to hit that 2402. How did he do it? His squat form was not that good. He was always going down, then back, instead of going back, then down. Lots of sled work, glute/ham raises, and the Reverse Hyper machine helped fix this problem. We thought his bench press was slow, so we reduced his speed work from 245 plus bands to 205 plus bands. The result was an 80-pound PR with room for improvement. The real problem was his deadlift. He had done a 700 deadlift in 2004, but by deadlifting too much, he aggravated his back to the point that he could not deadlift in the Detroit APF Senior Nationals and made only 600 at the IPA Nationals in York in 2005. Training sumo style with bands off the floor, regular and ultra wide, saved his lower back and built up the muscle groups that he lacked: hips and glutes. The result was a 155-pound jump at the WPO semifinals in New York in 2006, while still at 275. Matt has learned a lot about his training and his teammates' training to further their advancement as well. Matt has now settled in Columbus, buying a house, while maintaining a thriving personal training business.

The next to join up was Phil Harrington. Phil had already broken the world record in the squat several times. After moving to Columbus and training at Westside, he broke not only his squat record again but also his deadlift, with an easy 670 at 181. Like Matt. Phil's squat form was a bit off. He did wide box squats, and keeping his chest up and pushing the glutes out to the rear first changed his form for the better. For Phil's deadlift, form work was first employed. He concentrated on pushing his knees out to the sides, pulling back the bar, and not rushing or jerking it. For strength work, glute/ham raises, the Reverse Hyper machine, sled pulling, and box jumps were used. For the bench, we had a lot of work to do. First, Phil was reverse-grip benching because of a shoulder injury. After most of the

work where it is needed: on the arms. This reduced the stress on his shoulders, and now his bench press is moving again. His goal is to break the total record at 181 and then move up to 198. With Arnold Coleman at Westside, Phil is always looking over his shoulder.

Laura Phelps has joined Westside to team up with Amy Weisberger. First, Laura squatted 725, benched 405, and deadlifted 510 to total 1640 at 164 body weight, which equals 10 times body weight. She later benched 465 at 176 body weight, an all-time bench record. For squatting, she does a lot of band work off a foam box. This helped turn potential into reality. She has perfect squat form. Laura looks like she was born to squat. George Halbert has worked extensively with Laura's bench, and the results speak for themselves. Learning to release her muscles on the eccentric phase has paid off. She found that a strong upper back is essential if you want to use strong triceps while benching. Her deadlift has gone up quickly due to selecting the right exercises. The Reverse Hyper machine, glute/ham raises, and ultra wide sumo pulls have been beneficial. The sky's the limit with support from Shane, her boyfriend, and all of Westside behind her.

Greg Panora came to Westside after waiting 10 years. He knew he wanted to train at Westside when he was 15 years old. He did alright on his own, totaling 2255 in the 242's. His best lifts were a 920 squat, a 600 bench, and a 770 deadlift. Not bad, but after moving to Columbus and working with some of our top lifters, he made a 2369 at the Las Vegas APF Nationals in 2006. This was after less than 8 weeks of training. At a meet in Fremont, Ohio, he squatted 1000, benched 680, and deadlifted 800. That's a world record total of 2485 at 288 body weight. He drove to the meet in the middle of the night and weighed in at 9:00 a.m. and was squatting at 11:00 a.m. At the WPO semifinals in New York in November, he squatted 1003, was red-lighted with 1025, benched a strong 688, and pulled 749. He missed 799 at the knees. The Arnold Classic is next for Greg. Greg's bench has come a long way. His form was good, but his arms needed work. He did a lot of triceps extensions of all kinds. Kettle bell extensions have really increased his lockout. He does full-range band press and dumbbell presses at all angles. Working lats and upper back with Chuck Vogelpohl has paid dividends. Greg had never used a Reverse Hyper machine or done band pulls, and just like Laura, wide sumo deadlifts are developing his lockout. We really worked on Greg's squat form. It had cost him a 1025 squat at the WPO semis, which cost him another world record total. This makes his squat form a priority.

We are lucky to have four new lifters like these to fill the void. Now that you have read what these four have done, are you up to the task? We are always looking to fortify Westside. It's fun but not easy. If you want to reach the top, Westside could be your gateway to glory. We are looking especially for lightweights. It's hard to find anyone under 148 in the U.S. With Westside having 19 700+ benchers, nine doing over 1000 in the squat and two over 1100, and 13 800+ deadlifters, large weights for a smaller person would seem light. We have plenty of heavyweights to push anyone to their limit. There can be no excuses. The U.S. has to pick it up fast to survive in world powerlifting. Other sports are falling behind: baseball, basketball, and boxing. Don't let powerlifting do the same.