

DONNIE "SUPER D" THOMPSON

Doing it His Own Way

BY MARK BELL

Editor's note: This interview was conducted prior to Jonas Rantanen breaking the All-Time squat World Record.

"Never blame yourself when you miss an attempt! It is always a gear issue, technical error or injury. Never ever say it was because you weren't strong enough." ~ Super D

Donnie "Super D" Thompson had to be sat down in room by a team of men to get him to talk. He never squeals, but we get this mountain of a man to spit up the goods and spill his guts. Actually, this is how it really went down: I said, "Break 3,000 and you'll get the cover of Power." He smiled like a giant sumo wrestler and his fat head swallowed his face and eyes. Many probably counted Super D out when he started chirping about a 3,000-lb. total, but the 46-year-old loves a challenge and he came through in a big way.

MARK BELL: Are you fat or big-boned?

SUPER D: I am an integration of fat and big bones, so I am the best of both worlds. It also pays to have a mom with great genetics. She is so strong, it's crazy. She's 70 with huge boobs and a work ethic that has long been forgotten by current society.

BELL: A 1,265-lb. squat and 950 bench? A 2,215 subtotal ... what the heck? Followed by a 785 pull for a 3,000 total? Let's just get right to it. What started this quest for 3,000? I mean, before you, no one even did 2,900. So what the hell made you think you can do 3,000?

SUPER D: In 2003 at the Arnold we were showing up for the WPO Finals. Back then, Big Garry Frank would come in late and start doing warm-ups with 500 lbs. on the bar. It was quite a spectacle for us mere mortals. We would all stop what we were doing and say, "Garry is here. Look how huge he is!" The biggest total back then was a well-earned 2,640 lbs. And yes, it was his. So in walks this giant of a man and says in his cool, deep whisper, "I guess we are all here today for that magic number?" So I replied, because no one else would, "What number is that?" He said, with a straight look on his face, "3,000!" I was in shock. The mere thought of a total like that and hearing it spoken for the first time was incredible. At that moment I decided to be the one to get 3,000.

BELL: Many feel your world record total rests on your giant squat. Subsequently, some are saying that your squat was high. How do you respond to your critics?

SUPER D: There are three judges that govern the platform in a powerlifting meet. Lifters do not have the luxury to do the lift and judge themselves. Let Super D fill the critics in: I do not go on Internet sites and read anything the ladies of powerlifting bicker about. This past meet cost me \$901.98 in expenses. I got no trophy, no money, no certificate of achievement. Not even a free meet t-shirt. When I got home, there was no newspaper coverage, no TV news coverage. In all honesty, no one cares! So where do the critics come in again? If it wasn't for Power and PLUSA, lifters would have nothing to commemo-

rate their hard work and efforts.

None of the critics know what it is like to squat more than 1,250 lbs, so I will graciously fill them in. I have squatted more than 1,250 lbs. in five consecutive meets in the past year and a half. I am also the only one to do this and walk away from it healthy. The first two meets, I was successful in hitting the squats only to have them turned down by the judges. At one meet, they were so marveled by and in dismay of my 1,260 that they all red-lighted me! When my friend asked the



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head judge why the red light she said, "Oh, it was blatantly high." At another meet I got 1,273 up, only to fall back with it at the very top. Point is, I have come up with everything. When I am squatting that much weight, there is so much pressure built up that you can lose your bearing on reality. So I have to rely on instinct and when I can't get down any further, I do a dip. It always gets me a couple more inches. Plus, when you are six feet tall and weigh in at 385 lbs., it is hard to judge me when I look like a refrigerator bending. I mean big SHWs are hard to judge. If you take a look around the powerlifting world today, the SHW division has become extinct. The judges have a difficult time finding hip placement. It took me four meets to get my world record squat passed. My 1,265 was not quite as low as my 1,260 in April, but my point is every geared squat looks different. Again, that has to do with the amount of pressure all the gear and heavy weight on your body. When it is questionable, it should always go to the lifter. Period. For every five they take from you, you may get one called in your favor. Take it and run. At the end of the day, my response to the critics is simply this: Kiss my big, white ass.

BELL: When you came out to Super Training you showed us some unconventional training. Tell us about that.

SUPER D: I showed everyone there the work ethic it takes to break records in any weight class. It is not a walk in the park and, these days, it is not work for work's sake.

Mark Bartley used to criticize me for doing too much training. He said I performed clown tricks for nothing (Kettlebells and extra workouts). He was a great 275 lifter and was forced out with injuries. I walked away after my last meet. Admittedly a little fat, but healthy nonetheless.

I showed the guys and girls at Super Training that they need to do assistance work. When your buddies leave, you are getting started. Do your Kettlebell work, do your band recovery work and joint mobility. Why be average? I keep speed work and max effort work just that: heavy. I train six days a week and try to stay moving everyday. The SHWs of the old days used to train two to three times a week. That was not wise. How in the hell will you get through a 10-hour meet like that? If you ask my fellow competitors AJ Roberts and David Hoff, they will vouch that I was not spent and tired at the end of a meet. I left knowing I could have done more and I leave my training sessions knowing I gave it all I had.

BELL: Break down the workout in detail so people can see exactly what Super D is doing to become the biggest freak of all time.

SUPER D: Sunday — speed day/upper body. About 12 to 15 sets bench with 1 minute between each set. Robert "Big Wilk" Wilkerson has me doing heavy triceps work after. He recommended that I board press or floor press to low pins with close grip after speed work. I do sets of five to eight, depending how I feel. Then he has me doing

overhead presses with a bar or fat bar. I like them set from a pin at neck level. Keep it simple and basic.

Monday — lower body mobility/arms. I finish my arm work and do my lower body mobility work. I also perform the one arm bar with the Kettlebells and speed-throw the medicine ball for time.

Tuesday — max-effort squats/lower body. I do five exercises: squats of some kind, pulls of some kind, KB swings, glute hams and abs.

Wednesday — recovery day. Light sled work or band work. I do about one hour of joint mobility and band work with the Jumpstretch bands purchased from Dick Hartzell and no one else.

Thursday — max-effort/upper body. Benching is on the docket. Some form of benching takes place and yes, out comes the Sling Shot. If we are in meet training we use shirts on this day. Heavy upper back, heavy arm curls and abs.

Friday — upper body recovery. This is a great day to do KB swings for upper body. Swing snatch press, bottoms up presses and rows of some kind. If I want to change it up, then I do upper-body sled work, four rounds of 200 ft. or more. Then four different movements with the strap.

Saturday — lower body speed day. This is where I squat into chains, no boxes. Come to a complete stop in the bottom of the chains, then punch it up. KB snatches using two at once. Then I do speed deadlifts. Usually sets of 5 X 3. Then some dead snatches and static



band pulls for my hams.

This is a typical week for me. If I miss a day, I do not worry about it.

BELL: How often did you pull 785 or more in the gym to get ready for the 785 raw pull in the meet that sealed the 3,000?

SUPER D: I never pulled anything heavy since the York meet in 2008. I did 515 lbs. for five sets of three reps for speed. After my max effort squat workouts, I'd run a fat bar deadlift meet (double overhand only) with whoever wanted to join in the misery. I'd challenge myself and try to do reps with weights my lifting partners would fail with. I got into the 400-lb. range. My back gets a ton of work from the huge squats and all the Kettlebell work, which is why I don't need to deadlift heavy until game day. I also followed Andy Bolton's advice and it worked great. He wanted me to do five reps but I just physically would not take the risk. Two years ago exactly, I herniated L-4 to L-5 disc anteriorly. This happened while I was sleeping. I went to bed one of the strongest squatters on the planet and woke up a cripple. My dominant leg, the right one, was partially paralyzed. I had drop foot and the neurosurgeon wanted to admit me for surgery that night. I turned the surgery down. The lower back rehab I learned from the great Dick Hartzell and a PT friend of mine helped me a lot. It took three weeks for me to be able to stand straight again and I immediately went to work on fixing myself. I was not going out like that. I chose to stay light and practice my execution of the deadlift. It paid off. By the way, the neurosurgeon said I would never deadlift again. He was wrong.

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BELL: Okay, what about the bench and squat? Did you bench 950 full range in training and did you squat 1,265 in training?

SUPER D: Ryan Kennelly helped me with this. He had me go up to 1,000 lbs. off of three boards for this. I did 950 lbs. off of a two board routinely leading up to it. Ryan said I needed to feel the weight and get used to the pressure. It was so fun doing this on Thursday after Tuesday's heavy 1,200-plus squats. I think it is more like get used to the pressure and pain. But Ryan is the authority, so I didn't have to second-guess him. I just listened.

BELL: Tell us about the mindset of Donnie Thompson as a lifter.

SUPER D: My mindset as a lifter is simple: I will do whatever it takes. I will sacrifice everything for powerlifting. I couldn't care less about jobs, money, paying bills and relationships. They all come second. If all my comrades I lift with walk out on me during a training cycle, which is all year long, I keep going. Whether I am a dickhead or not doesn't matter. All that matters is the total. I thank them for the time we had and wish them well. This happened to me four times in 10 years. The Breeze said if I had over 75 lifters quit on me, that at some point I have to realize that Donnie Thompson is an a**hole! The common denominator is me! I have had to redirect my mission as of three years ago when my daughter Bridget was born. She takes priority, but it is different. It is like she is on my mission with me. Her needs were like sleeping and eating to me.

They were fixed and top priority. Her mom watched her Monday through Friday and I have her on the weekends, so it wasn't like I was father of the year. My schedule to train was fine. She hangs out in the garage with me, plays with chalk crayons and watches Scooby Doo on her small TV. Many lifters reading this have probably experienced the same thing with their kids.

One of the biggest mind control achievements is the fact I train flat. No emotion. I don't care what kind of music is playing and if kids or teenagers are running around. It is never perfect on the platform. However, I do get that emotional rush at meets. I haven't overused it.

BELL: The Compound seemed like a hell of a place. Tell us what the Compound was and what it meant to Super D.

SUPER D: It was utopia, a powerlifter and Strongman paradise. It was a 2,200-square-foot warehouse with 1,000 square feet as my studio apartment and 1,200 square feet as the gym. The bathroom had a pink toilet and was very small with a curtain as a door. This discouraged lifters to come to my place to take a crap. Buddy the bulldog would attack everyone there. He would lie close and make you step on him. He would then have an excuse to bite you. He also had hemorrhoids. So when he took a huge shit, there would be nasty stuff oozing from his butthole. If you didn't pay attention, he would come over and sit on your foot. We called this "getting smored." Great stuff. Crackheads and homeless people would walk by every five minutes. Buddy was our muscle; he would go berserk and scare them off. We had more than 75 lifters filter in and out in 10 years. Columbia, S.C., does not have a loyal powerlifting crowd except for me, so most of the good ones drove from out of town. Marc Bartley was very good at showing up when we trained together. He was there four days a week and never missed. Plus, we didn't really like each other so we didn't talk much.

Gold's Gym is big in our area, so most of the guys who should be training with us were chasing snapper there. Funny how time changes things. Gold's used to be the mecca of lifting. Now it is the place we make fun of. When anybody whines, complains or continuously misses attempts in training, we will point and say, "Gold's is that way. Go train with the pussies!"

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“I bought the Sling Shot at the LA fitness show, and took it to the gym the first night to bench. Wow! What a difference. I normally bench 315 lbs. for 4 reps, but with the Sling Shot I did 315 lbs. for 9 reps, then got a wild hair and did 405 lbs. for 2 reps. A weight that I have never even attempted before! Thanks for making this awesome device!” - Bert L.”

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DONNIE THOMPSON

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I had three rules I would tell lifters when they came to the Compound to train. Since I paid the bills, all the equipment was mine and I had the biggest total I had the right of passage for this.

The Compound Rules of Training:

1. I don't care about your f*cking job!
2. I don't care about your f*cking school!
3. And I don't care about your f*cking girlfriend!

Just be here and train when we do!

BELL: To say we had a blast and learned a lot from each other when you came out to Super Training is like saying your 3,000 is no big deal. We both shared and stole a lot from each other. After much brainstorming and litigation, we came up with a plan for "Super Training South." Tell the readers about the Super Training world expansion plan, and what ST South will be.

SUPER D: My training partner, TJ Watkins, and I are going to open up Super Training South. He was an All-American football player for Clemson. Since you have worked hard to make a system of success for a powerlifting gym, we will just extend your mindset. Our first one will be in Greenville, S.C. We will follow the West Coast ST gym to the T! When it gets big enough, we will open another. We hope to get to the point where we have Super Training meets that are "West Coast vs. East Coast." Federations have long forgotten the powerlifter. So we think small steps should be taken to reclaim the sport back and let feds fight for our representation. Lifters are in dark federation closets lifting in powerlifting bondage. As for my lifters and me, we will powerlift free and in the open! We won't bash any other fed or call anyone out. We are going to promote training hard and lifting big on the platform. We do not care what the weak critics have to say.

BELL: Give us three tips to get big ... I mean HUUUGE!

SUPER D: 1. Eat like a Viking God. I mean start with Wendy's triples with cheese and go from there. I ate two huge meals a day and a couple shakes. This slowed down my metabolism and allowed me to gain weight.

2. You have to have the huge mindset. Paul Childress and I have it down. When we eat supper, we sit there and talk. After a few hours we eat again. Everyone else is nervous and gets up and runs around like they are

missing out on something. We just sit there and consume calories like the Gods of Huge! In our minds we say, "Hey, its okay to be big." The women are in awe of our size and elevated egos. If they don't know it, I simply tell them they are. It is just that easy. I mean seriously, if you are a beautiful woman, you can't help but want to be enraptured up by the big, strong, good-looking men most of us SHWs are. How could any self-respecting hot girl be attracted to a man that when she hugs him, her hands touch?

3. Just get huge! I had the rich and famous Stan Efferding construct my meal plan when I reached my 3,000 total. Now Stan is helping me with my diet to be lean. Even when Super D diets down to around 275 lbs., he will still be a big man. Like the great Steve Goggins used to say, "It ain't braggin if you can back it up!" If you want to be huge, you have to think like you are huge, act like you are huge and be HUGE! Foghorn Leghorn got his ass kicked all the time by who? Yes, the little chicken hawk. It is all about perception.

BELL: Break it down for us in its simplest form and give us three tips to get stronger.

SUPER D: 1. DETERMINATION. First you have to decide that getting strong is really what you want to do. Most of us were different from other kids early in life. If you are the kid constantly lifting things up over your head just because it was there, you might be a candidate for strength. Once you realize that getting strong is your calling, you go after it.

2. HAVE A PLAN. You have to have a plan and stick to it. I remember hearing that from my arrogant friend (ex-friend if he doesn't take me out for a steak soon and keeps telling me my squats are high), Ed Coan. Buy his DVD and see! Your plan is to do whatever it takes to get strong. First plan of action is to get with guys stronger than you and train with them. Read all the books you can on strength and power. You will be able to weed out what is good and bad through experience.

3. DETERMINATION. Do not let anything get in your way. Do whatever it takes to be strong and by all means, leave your values at home. Do not make lifting and training into a lesson of morals and values. If you are against drugs or squat suits and bench shirts in power sports and do not want to use them, great. I support you, but training with the guys that "load up" will only help you get stronger when you try to keep up with them.

Use each other for your own total.

When you go to work, do you ignore the boss who is cheating on his dearly beloved? But yet if you think a lifter is taking steroids, you shun him like he is in a leper colony. He is a cheater and you have no respect for him because drugs are wrong? You are the hypocrite. If you do not judge everyone in your life by your own values, why are you singling out lifters? Really, why is the lifter guilty of doing drugs just because he or she is developed from hard work and dedication? Lifters wear their success. So if you are big and strong, you automatically take "performance enhancement drugs"? That is how the neophyte can identify with himself and make excuses for his shortcomings. When you become the next Jesus here on this earth, then as the Son of God you may judge everyone to your standards and values. Until then, you are mortal like the rest of us so keep your judgments and values to yourself.

However, if your plan to get strong simply relies on more drugs, you are a fool! Nothing replaces a stringent work ethic, dedication, exploiting all the training philosophies and nutrition. In my opinion, most men shouldn't even contemplate performance enhancing drugs until they are in their 30s.

Always use everything to your advantage. Nothing is an excuse to be weaker.

BELL: I know you love football and war. So if all powerlifters together made up "Thompson Clan" and they were preparing for battle, what would their "William Wallace war speech" sound like?

SUPER D: "Men, the strong have been sapped by the whimpering propaganda of the weak. Men, strong men, have been denied their destiny. Today, that is about to change. Today will determine the rest of our lives and our children's lives! We have trained day and night for this one time. We have toiled and broke ourselves preparing for the task ahead. Many were called, but few have been chosen. You are what remains. Your enemy numbers are great and you are few. So today, on this day, you will give everything you have to be delivered upon your enemy. Almighty God loves a conqueror. And, after battle, he will look upon that mountain of dead enemies and fallen comrades and smile! Because on that mountain of death, terror will have reigned and you will place your flag of victory. Now go and please your GOD!" **PM**