

INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

JOSH BRYANT - PL Phenom as interviewed for PL USA by Paul Leonard

Santa Barbara, California typifies the images that most people, who have never been to Southern California, envision. Beautiful hillside homes overlook sun-drenched beaches teeming with Barbie quality blondes, laid-back surfers, and scores of affluent young people who were obviously born with a silver spoon in their mouths. Looking around, one would hardly guess that this area is home to the strongest junior lifter in the United States today. Standing approximately 5'11" and weighing in at a burgeoning 300 pounds Josh Bryant is on a mission to become the strongest powerlifter in the United States. At the ripe old age of 20 Josh has best official lifts of a 782 lb. squat, 573 lb. bench, a 672 lb. deadlift and a 2027 lb. total. How many lifters out there can total 100 times their age?



The Bryants: One Powerful Family (left to right) Noah (17), Josh, and father Dan.

So how did Josh get so strong at such an early age? Genetics certainly played a role. If you have ever had the pleasure of meeting Josh's father Dan and brother Noah you will observe that both have a larger stature than Josh himself and both are accomplished athletes in their own right. Training or competing with Josh would allow you to see that he is extremely driven and will do whatever is necessary to excel at becoming stronger. When I trained with Josh at Yorba Linda Barbell, he would drive three hours to get to the gym for his squat workout on Saturday mornings. All the genetics in the world cannot make up for the desire which Josh displayed in making the effort to train with a serious group of lifters, incorporate sound training principles and, in turn, learn to self-coach himself to discover what works best for him.

the Yorba Barbell Crew and world famous lifters such as Ed Coan and Gary Frank and listened to advice offered to me, and then I determined what worked best for me.

PL: Any other factors that led to your vast improvements?

JB: I have certainly gained lots of functional weight and I hate to miss a meal. Taking in substantial amounts of calories fuels my hard workouts and allows me to rebuild myself stronger than ever. At my age most everything I eat turns into gains on the platform.

PL: Ok, enough about eating, this is making me hungry. Tell me about where you are currently at in your training?

JB: I believe in an off-season in which I work on a lot of high reps for the most part. I hate doing the reps, but they do make me stronger so I continue to work on them. Recently I hit 440 X 20 reps in the squat with no gear on at all, including a belt. I have done 495 for 5 reps in the stiff-leg deadlift and also recently completed 18 reps with 365 in the bench.

PL: What about in-season, closer to a meet?

JB: In season, I do a lot of volume and plenty of assistance, cutting out most assistance two weeks before a meet. I like to train with heavy overloads such as doing a workout in the squat with 1050 lbs. and a forced rep in the bench with 300 lbs. over my max. I love doing a forced rep in the bench



Benching on the Beach in Santa Barbara, Josh gets a hand off from his brother Noah (photographs provided courtesy of Paul Leonard)

As with many lifters Josh began lifting as an adjunct to playing football. In 2000 Josh began to focus 100% on powerlifting after having hit best official lifts of a 555 lb. squat, 445 lb. bench, and 580 lb. deadlift at a USAPL Toys for Tots meet where he weighed in at 255 and had played in a junior college football bowl game the weekend prior to the meet. By the following June, Josh hit a 677 lb. squat, a 501 lb. bench, a 644 deadlift for an 1824 lb. total at a bodyweight of 267 lbs. This performance garnered him first place, as well as the best lifter trophy, at the USAPL Teen-age Nationals.

A synopsis of Josh's competition history will disclose that he has lifted in the USPF, USAPL, APF, AAPF, WABDL, AAU, and he has now graduated to the WPO. Like the others before him from Yorba Barbell Josh goes where the action is, whether it is to train or compete - fully believing that a lifter should hit his personal records at national level contests against the best competition and stringent judging.

The following is an interview I conducted with Josh concerning how he went from an 1800 lb. total to over 2000 lbs. in a 14 month time period:

PL: To what do you attribute your meteoric rise in strength over the course of the following year Josh?

with 800 lbs. This is made easier by training with George Brink, an official 804 deadlifter.

PL: I knew you were a freak, Josh. George told me that you pushed up that 800 pounds a bit without too much of his help! Can you comment on that?

JB: I have done a 530 lb. bench raw as well as a close grip with 505 and a set of skull-crushers with 315 for 6. I like Louie Simmons triceps exercises.

PL: What about your deadlift? How soon until you become the 7th member of Yorba Linda Barbell to officially deadlift 700 pounds in a meet?

JB: My deadlift is going great, as I have learned that rack pulls and heavy shrugs really benefit me by overloading my weak points. I guarantee that I will be joining that 700 lb. club this year.

PL: Right on, and you will no doubt bench it the next year!! Anything you would like to add Josh?

JB: I would like to thank first and foremost my parents, Dan and Susie, as well as my brother Noah for being incredibly supportive of me. I would like to thank God for blessing me with genetics as well as allowing me to lift injury free. Thanks to Steve Hall for starting me out in powerlifting, everyone at Yorba Linda Barbell, and to John Inzer for making the best powerlifting gear on the planet. I would like to also thank Gold's Gym Ventura, California. In closing, I would like to add that I have accomplished everything while being lifetime drug-free.



Josh incorporates workouts with well over 1000 lbs. in his squat workouts at the Yorba Linda Barbell Club

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