

INTERVIEW

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

ED COAN as interviewed by Marty Gallagher



Ed Coan reveals, in his second of a two part interview, his reservations about record lifts done outside the USPF/IPF/ADFFA; the only organizations he feels are legitimate. Ed pulls no punches in discussing the slow or recent "world records" set around the country in circumstances he views as suspect at best. Eddie is also sure to stir up tons of controversy on the subject of lifting equipment as he describes the double bench shirt, multi-squat suits, Monolift and loose judging. No one can speak with the authority of Coan and without further ado we present you this no-holds-barred interview.

PL USA: Are you going to do a 2500 pound total before you quit?
COAN: If I want to.

PL USA: Well, what in the hell is that supposed to mean?
COAN: I'll pick a meet sometime and do it. Legitimately... Not with double bench shirts and wearing two squat suits and using judges that pass bogus lifts.

PL USA: I guess you have some reservations about some of the big lifts we've been hearing about lately?
COAN: Yeah, you could say that. I mean, look at the recent "World Championships of Pennsylvania". Here's a meet where you could basically do whatever you wanted.

There were guys who had prevented me from going to 198 in the squat, looking like they weighed 220, weighing in at 181 and squatting 845. Excuse my expression, but that's bullshit.

These guys will never do these lifts again! I challenge any of these people to do these lifts under real contest conditions with strict judging and equipment checks. I'll put up money for them to do these lifts under legitimate conditions! How about making these guys bench without double bench shirts or squat without four squat suits... Stuff like that burns me up. These guys will never go into a legitimate meet - ADFFA or USPF - and duplicate these lifts!

PL USA: Most lifters are probably unaware of the existence of a double bench shirt. I was at a benching for cash meet recently and a bunch of guys walked out when the USPF meet judges wouldn't allow the double shirts. I guess that sums up how effective they really are. I wonder how many of the 700 pound bench presses have been made using them?

COAN: No, I think it changes the squat as a lift. The ability to take a weight off the rack, walk it out and set it up has always been part of the lift. If we tamper with the components of the lift - eliminating parts of the lift that we don't like - we are making a mistake. Already I don't think you can compare lifts made on the Mono-

lift to squats of the past. It is a different lift. I'm opposed to the groove briefs that are like Monolift; what about guys who suit with no straps, guys wearing two and three squat suits, the Monolift and piss-poor judging - you've got to question a whole lot of lifts you read about.

PL USA: You don't like the Monolift?
COAN: No, I think it changes the double and triple bench shirts and guys who wear three and four squat suits and Monolifts and start passing shit lifts. If we don't start exercising some quality control and show some integrity we will become a joke in the eyes of the sports community.

PL USA: What would you have to lift to hit 2500?

COAN: If I squat 1003, I'd be in shape to total 2500. Add a 585 bench and a 915 - 920 deadlift and you have a 2500 total. And that's if I'm at 220; if I'm at 242 you could jump the squat and bench up some.

PL USA: Would you go up to a 242 bodyweight?
COAN: Sure, to get the legitimate record on the books.

PL USA: What's the response been on your squat training video?
COAN: Very, very good. We basically have enough film footage in the can to release a bench and deadlift video. We'd need a little bit of instructional shooting, but we could get it together very quickly. Hopefully, by the end of this year or the beginning of next year, we'll have a completed product ready for distribution.

PL USA: Are you a genetic freak?
COAN: No, I just train smart. I've got long arms which help on the deadlift, but hurt me on the bench press. There are a lot of guys who have more going for them genetically than me. How come they don't do the big weights? It's the system. I can make anybody strong. You have to train smart. There will be limitations dependent on a person's physique and background, but anybody can get better!

PL USA: Is it that you're that good or is everybody else lagging?
COAN: No one else is lagging!
PL USA: Yeah they are.

COAN: No! How can you say that?
PL USA: Well, for one thing, you have a guy weighing 270 who out-totals all the 242's, 275's and super-heavyweights; either they are lagging or the 220'er is some sort of freak. And we just established that you're not a freak so everybody else must be lagging.

COAN: No way!
PL USA: Yes way! Everybody we talk to dismisses your accomplishments in a very off-hand fashion. "Oh Coan, he's a freak of nature!" and in doing so they dismiss your training as not being relevant.

COAN: Well, that may be; I mean, they may say that but it doesn't make it true. Besides, it didn't start with me - look at Kaz and look at Bridges. Everyone said the same things about them "Oh, he's a freak! His system won't work for me!" Believe in and follow them religiously. Most guys

think that they're in a cafeteria where they can pick and choose what they like and discard the parts they don't like or agree with, but by doing that, they screw up the system. A lot of it is mental. I look at a 1000 pound squat at 220 pound bodyweight and it doesn't scare me. Most good lifters get hung at 800 going, "Oh my God, that's a lot of weight!" The mind of the lifter can limit his growth potential as surely as his body, maybe more so. If you just approach your training methodically, not getting scared by the weights, just methodically knocking those barriers down as they come up, then, pretty soon, your mental limits are no longer a factor.

PL USA: Let's talk about the specifics of your mental approach anything to pass on?
COAN: I'm a big believer in visualization immediately prior to a lift. I won't just see myself doing the lift, I will literally feel the weight. I don't bother with visualization on the warmups; I kind of save that for the heavier weights of the training session. I really get focused on the big attempts. Here's a key point: The weight is irrelevant - whether it's 700, 800, 900, 1000 - it's how the weight feels. 700 can feel heavy and 900 can feel light. It's all dependent on how the lifter makes the weight feel. When I get under the bar in the squat, as I wiggle into position, mentally, I'm a step or two ahead. I know how the bar should feel at every point of the process. I don't know how guys can just run up to the bar, jump under it and take it out. You have to take your time. Combine the mental with the physical, obtain the perfect position and then, and only then, begin the lift. Once I've taken the bar out of the rack and am awaiting the down signal, I make a decision as to whether to descend slow and tight or use a quick descent and bounce out of the hole.

PL USA: You have two different descent methods depending on the feel of the weight?
COAN: Yeah! This is a split second decision based on how tight or loose the weight feels. If you feel loose, you cannot take that weight down slow and expect to make it. You want to be upright. If, however, you feel loose and cannot obtain the preferred tight feeling, you've got to think speed and take it down and get the hell up fast. Go down, get your head up, get your chest up and out and really tight. Control is the key.

PL USA: Do you have this in any of your other lifts? I mean style A if the weight feels a certain way, style B if it feels funny?
COAN: You can do the same in the bench; take the deadlift, there is no descent so it's not appropriate. In the deadlift you want to consciously tighten every muscle before lifting.

PL USA: Let's talk nutrition; how big a factor does it play in your success?
COAN: A big part. You have to have energy for your training. You have to have specific nutrients to recover quickly and completely. All this comes from your diet.

PL USA: What do you eat in a typical day?
COAN: I eat five times a day. Breakfast before the gym. Lunch after the gym. Dinner and two more meals after that. I don't really count carbs, fat and protein. I do try to stay

balanced in my food selection and eat some extra protein in the evening. I'm not a big eater. I like chicken and I'm not a big red meat eater. As I mentioned, I put on a few pounds as the contest closes in.

PL USA: Supplements?
COAN: I take protein powder, multi-vitamin packs, inosine, minerals, smilax, Welder amino acids after I work out. I try to eat good as I can, but I will cheat occasionally.

PL USA: What's cheating and what's occasionally? A piece of pie occasionally?
COAN: A hot fudge sundae...
PL USA: What, once a week?
COAN: Hey, it could be once a day - you never know. I don't seek that stuff out but I will have a desert if the occasion presents itself. I've got a fast metabolism. I'm not gonna worry about it that much. (gestures at a smiling 300 pound John Painter who is observing the interview) Looks like he's happy!

Coan says eat deserts and not worry about it (laughs)! I religiously take a protein shake at night. I mix it with milk. Welder has come out with a new all egg protein which I use. Good stuff.

PL USA: Who's the greatest powerlifter you've ever seen?
COAN: The first guy to inspire me was watching Kaz on TV.

PL USA: Let me bring up some names for your response. Bill Kazmaier.
COAN: At the height of his powerlifting career, the most physically impressive man I've ever seen. Kaz can whip himself into shape quickly.

PL USA: Gene Bell.
COAN: A lot like me. Stubborn as hell; will never let a weight beat him.

PL USA: Doug Furnas.
COAN: The smartest Powerlifter - he taught me how to train smart, how to stretch and how to lift smart in a meet. Never did what he did what he had to. If he had stuck around he would have done a lot more. Most people don't know that Doug was allergic to chalk. Still he deadlifted 826 with very limited training on the lift.

PL USA: Larry Pacifico.
COAN: I haven't talked to Larry in a long time. One of the founding fathers of powerlifting. I studied the routines of guys like Pacifico to learn their mistakes and avoid them in my own training. Hopefully, the young guys coming up will do the same with my training.

PL USA: Joe Ladhner.
COAN: Haven't seen him or talked to him in a long time. A strong lifter. He could have been a lot better. He got hurt and that set him back.

PL USA: Lamar Cant.
COAN: A great lifter. I don't know whether he's done or not. I'm sure he can lift whatever the era when there was one organization, you were held in more esteem. After all, there was only one world champion per weight class since there was only one organization. Everything was paid for as far as national and world championship travel and hotel expenses went. Lamar has what, 16 world

(Ed Coan interview continued on page 74)

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