

INTERVIEW

MIKE FERRANTELLI interviewed by Greg Jurkowski

Greg: Mike has 4 National titles and 4 World titles in his 20 years of powerlifting. Please list your PRs.

Mike: I've done an 837.5 squat, 573 bench press, and 670 deadlift.

Greg: What have you done to stay at an elite level in powerlifting for over 18 years?

Mike: I compete only once a year. In my off season, when I'm not getting ready for a contest, I do a lot of volume training. I feel the volume training with lighter weights helps save my ligaments and joints from any damage.

Greg: So, you do one main strength cycle a year and then your off season training becomes extremely important, right?

Mike: Yes, very important. I believe that's where your next contest is won, is through your volume training.

Greg: Your brother is into Chiropractic, isn't he?

Mike: Yes, my brother, who owns Advanced Chiropractic Associates, is my Chiropractor and I take him to all my competitions.

Greg: You continue to compete with a herniated disk in your neck?

Mike: Yes, but under his care it has improved and allowed me to lift pain free.

Greg: Tell me about yourself personally.

Mike: I'm 38 years old. I've worked with the county sheriff's office for over 20 years. I'm married to my wife, Julie, and we have a daughter Alexis, who is 2 1/2.

Greg: Where were you born and raised?

Mike: I was born in Long Island, New York. We moved to New Port Richie Florida when I was two years old. I've lived here ever since.

Greg: Your wife Julie trains too.

Mike: My wife Julie just made national qualifying for the figure championship for Miss Figure.

Greg: I heard you're going back to school.

Mike: I'm getting my criminology degree.

Greg: Tell me about your father.

Mike: My father is a retired police officer. He started bodybuilding in the early Eighties, and he is the one who motivated me to work out. He told me that working out would change my life, and it has. He was the main reason why I started.

Greg: I've seen him at a few contests. He's a great supporter and impressive himself too.

Mike: He also competes in powerlifting. At one point, he totaled 1725 as a master lifter in the 242 pound class.

Greg: What sports in your younger days led you to powerlifting?

Mike: I played football and baseball. In football I was way too small to compete, so I started exercising. Then I no

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Mike Ferrantelli at the USAPL Nationals. (S. Hartwig)

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longer wanted to play football, I just wanted to exercise with weights.

Greg: How much did you weigh in your first contest?

Mike: I was 174 pounds, competing in the 181 pound class.

Greg: How much did you bench in that contest?

Mike: 345 pounds.

Greg: I heard you were on TV before. Can you elaborate on that?

Mike: In 1997 I was attempting to surpass the World Record I had in the bench. Maybe you've seen it - it was featured on *Real TV*. I was benching 570 and got to the top and my arm didn't lock out. My wrist came forward slightly, and the bar slid out of my hands and hit me in the chest.

Greg: Did you sustain any injuries?

Mike: It tore cartilage on the right side. I show the video when I do my strength seminars regarding proper techniques of spotting and paying attention. I thank God for supportive equipment. I really believe that wearing that bench shirt the way that I do helped bear the brunt of the potential injury when the weight hit me.

Greg: Where do you train?

Mike: I'm sponsored by World Gym of Palm Harbor, in Florida.

Greg: I heard your style of lifting earned you the name "Gear Master."

Mike: That came about when I really tried to master the art of equipment. I'm sponsored by Inzer Advanced Designs. With John's help, I really learned how to tweak any equipment he makes to get 110% out of it.

Greg: John Inzer has done a lot for this sport, and is quite a lifter himself. It's amazing what he's done through the years.

Mike: Yes, he ranks among the best.

Greg: Do you have any training tips that you'd like to share?

Mike: Always lift in a bio-mechanically correct way. Lift in a way that uses your body's leverage. Always train volume. Don't train heavy all the time. Don't wear your body out. I believe that volume training, multiple repetitions, is what stimulates muscle growth and strength. What you do in the off season is fine tuned during your cycle preparing for your contest.

Greg: Any supplements that you like?

Mike: Gear Man Supplements. The protein powder is outstanding.

Greg: Do you have any advice to the new powerlifter?

Mike: Leave your ego at the door. When you go to the gym, remember, Rome wasn't built in a day. Build your foundation, and your lifts will come from there.

Greg: I've heard you do some work in the local high schools.

Mike: I do motivational strength seminars for the high schools and middle schools in our county. I teach them the right way to get strong, lift properly, and avoid injuries. I was appointed to the Governor's task force on obesity, where we're trying to develop a healthy lifestyle for the state of Florida.

Greg: Does your job and career work well with your powerlifting?

Mike: Absolutely. In the Sheriff's office, it's helped when I've had to chase down a bad guy. I haven't lost one yet.

Greg: You have set 41 National and World records in five different federations. Are they all in the 220 weight class?

Mike: They're in the 198 pound class and the 220 weight pound class.

Greg: Anyone you'd like to thank?

Mike: I'd like to thank my wife and daughter for their support; my Dad, Joe Ferrantelli for getting me involved in exercise, my last coach Ken Harriman for teaching me how to powerlift; my sponsor, Inzer Advanced Designs, for the great equipment, and my brother of Advanced Chiropractic Associates. And of course, the place that I train, World Gym of Palm Harbor.