

For those of you that haven't had the opportunity to meet Amanda Micka, let me take the time to bring her to you. Amanda Micka is a current resident of Mississippi, but a World Record holder in the Bench Press and additionally, National Level Bodybuilding Competitor. I met Amanda several years ago as her voice rose above the crowd's at the support of her husband's successful equipped bench press attempt at an APF powerlifting competition. I learned at that time she was chasing a 300 lb bench press in the women's 148 class. That day she was so close but not attainable due to dieting for a bodybuilding competition. Since that day, I hoped the best for her and looked forward to hearing that she reached her goal. Years later, I entrusted her talented husband with my dieting goals and came to find out that her bench press goal was reached! Amanda now holds the APA Female World Record with her 300 lb bench press in the 148 class along with APA Women's 148 American Record for her 215 lb Raw bench press, and as icing on the cake, holds the APA Strength Sport Record with a 110 lb Curl! She does sport some Big Guns (great for her bodybuilding career)! I truly admire Amanda Micka's journey and hope you enjoy the candid look into her, her powerlifting career, and know why she is such an inspiration to me and many women of the sport. Thanks Amanda.

Amber Suter: What got you interested in powerlifting? What got you hooked on powerlifting?

Amanda Micka: My husband, John Micka (then trainer) is who got me interested in lifting.

AS: When and what was your first competition like? And is there any advice you would give those who are a novice?

AM: I was actually conned into doing my first competition. John needed females to compete in a meet he was hosting and he hounded me until I gave in. I benched 85 lbs—it was the most I had ever lifted. At that moment, I was gut hooked. Advice I would give: Consistency is key. Eat right, train hard and the numbers will come.

AS: What are your accomplishments in powerlifting so far both raw and equipped?

AM: The one I am the most proud of is 300 lbs @ 148 equipped (in a borrowed Phenom shirt from Carol Ann Myers). I have been chasing that one for a long time. I did a bench for reps—75 lbs. for 71 reps. My triceps were blown af-

INTERVIEW

AMANDA MICKA

The Power Within the Woman
interviewed by Amber Suter LMT, NMT, AAS



Amanda is a National Level Bodybuilding Competitor and Powerlifter

ter that. I have curled 110 and the best bench I have done raw in the gym is 230 lbs.

AS: When you achieved Elite status with your 300 lb bench at 148, did your goals change? If so, how?

AM: No. It was a nice accomplishment but my goal has always been to get stronger and I am as driven and focused as ever.

AS: Have you had any challenges along the way, such as physical, illness, injury, etc.? How did that drive you to rebound from it?

AM: I was diagnosed with cancer in 1998 and had to have a hysterectomy. That is the whole reason why I started lifting weights to begin with. I was losing bone density and my doctor told me I need to start doing weight bearing exercises. That's when I started training with John. As far as injuries—just the usual problems I guess all lifters have—tendinitis, achy joints, etc. I am a firm believer in icing!

AS: How has powerlifting affected female powerlifters in your experience, positively or negatively?

AM: Honestly, I have never had a negative experience in the powerlifting circle. Everyone has always been very encouraging and supportive. However, the general public is not as accustomed to seeing a lot of muscle on a woman and I have experienced some negative comments.

AS: What do you feel is important in being a role model for other female powerlifters?

AM: I certainly don't consider myself as a role model. Encouraging women that may be reluctant to try powerlifting—I try to fan the flame of enthusiasm. Trying to make women aware of the benefits of powerlifting—it certainly provides a great base for any type of athletics not to mention body composition changes and increased self confidence and self esteem. You can be feminine and lift weights.

AS: Have you competed in figure competitions? If so, how was that experience?

AM: No. I am considered a bit too muscular to compete in figure.

AS: Describe your bodybuilding career and how it affects your powerlifting.

AM: There is no reason you have to choose between the two. I think training for both benefits the other. I certainly believe that powerlifting put the muscle on me which has allowed to me to compete and do as well as I have in

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bodybuilding.

AS: Do you have any upcoming bodybuilding shows or powerlifting meets you are training for?

AM: I plan on doing the Jr. USA's again in Charleston, NC, in the spring of 2009. I will also be competing in powerlifting this year as well.

AS: How was your diet leading up to the bodybuilding shows compared to leading up to a powerlifting meet?

AM: Obviously, diet is not as strict for powerlifting. I usually have to lose around 10–12 lbs. for bodybuilding which is not bad at all. My husband can certainly vouch, I am a much happier powerlifter than bodybuilder. I am not very delightful to be around while dieting for a bodybuilding show. I am a firm believer in getting in all my protein everyday. I try to aim for 1 to 2 grams of protein per pound of body weight.

AS: Have you ever thought about doing a strongwoman competition? If yes or no, why?

AM: Yes, I would love to try a strongwoman. It would certainly be a challenge. I am a little intimidated by some of the events though, but I would at least try it once.

AS: Have you ever considered the Highland Games?

AM: Yes. I just watched my husband and several of our friends compete in their first Highland

Games which was held in Biloxi, Mississippi and I loved it. I talked to the promoter about allowing females to compete in it next year. It looks like so much fun.

AS: If trained for either one of those, how was that experience?

AM: I have played around while my husband and several of the guys at the gym trained for both the Strongman and the Highland Games. I have practiced flipping the tire, farmers walk, truck push, etc. I haven't tried the stones yet but I have to admit I am a little intimidated by them. We just got several implements for the Highland Games and we are going to start practicing some for the games. I am excited to try that.

AS: How has powerlifting changed for women over the years, positively or negatively?

AM: I think people have come to recognize that female powerlifters come in all shapes and sizes. A woman can powerlift and still keep her femininity.

AS: How has your training evolved over the past few years?

AM: I basically train like a bodybuilder but add some specialized exercises to increase my bench press. I do a lot of lockout work, use bands and chains as well as kettle bells. I intend to add more speed work in future training.

AS: Who are a few of the powerlifters you look up to, both male and female and why?

AM: I would have to say my husband, John Micka. He is such an



Amanda Micka has broken the 300 pound bench press barrier.

inspiration to me. He is a great lifter and has taught me everything I know. He has always believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself. Joe Ladnier—he helped me find my groove in my bench shirt; Jeff Douglas—I have a lot of respect for Jeff. He is an awesome lifter and has always been very encouraging and supportive. When I first started lifting, he always treated me like a good lifter even when I wasn't.

Carol Ann Myers—she is an amazing powerlifter and an inspiration to all females—both lifters and non-lifters.

AS: What are your views on training alone versus training with a powerlifting crew?

AM: I am very fortunate. We have an amazing group of powerlifters both male and female ranging from 114 to super heavy. I could not do it without them. We are like a family.

AS: Where have you trained to perfect your technique?

AM: I have trained with Joe Ladnier. He helped me tremendously with my form and finding my groove in my shirt. Bobby Myers—he is certainly a master of the bench shirt. He has helped me tune mine in.

AS: What kind of gear do you use?

AM: I lifted in Titan for years, but recently switched to a Phenom. I wear Metal wrist wraps.

AS: How important is speed training in strength sports to you?

AM: Force = Mass x Acceleration

AS: Do you have sponsors in any of your sports?

AM: I am now sponsored by BMF Sports out of Chicago, IL. I have never had a gear sponsor but would love too; bench shirts can get expensive!

AS: Now that you are an Elite Female Powerlifter and Accomplished Bodybuilding competitor, where do you go from here? How does your

family play a role in your future in strength sports?

AM: I'm just going to continue to train hard. My goal every year is to make progress in both my strength and in my physique.

AS: Any special people you would like to thank?

AM: Amber, thank you so much for asking me to do this interview. I can't tell you how much this meant to me. In addition, there are several people I would like to

thank. First, I want to thank my husband, John. He saw in me what I could not see in myself. Because of him, I am now a stronger more confident person in all aspects of my life. He has been my coach and my cheerleader. Thanks to Jody at No Holds Barred for opening the most amazing powerlifting gym in Mississippi. To the NHB Powerlifting Team—you guys are the best. Thanks to powerlifting, John and I were fortunate enough to become friends with two of the most passionate powerlifters—Bobby & Carol Ann Myers. Thank you for your friendship. Rich and Tiffany Wharton—I love you guys. Thank you both for all the support and encouragement over the years and for Tiffany's amazing photography skills. Big thanks to Jeff Douglas and Joe Ladnier for all your help with proper form, gear, etc. over the years. I would like to thank Carl Francis for handing down decades of powerlifting knowledge. And finally, BMF Sports for sponsoring my powerlifting and bodybuilding career.

AS: If you could leave one piece of powerlifting legacy behind for female athletes to stand the test of time, what would that be, whether it's advice, a quote, or something inspiring to keep the flame burning in us all?

AM: Be consistent. Put in the time and hard work and good things will come.



Amanda with her husband, John, at a Highland Games Event