

KATHERINE CLARK

as told to *Powerlifting USA* by Ben Tatar of *Critical Bench*

Katherine, what powerlifting federation do you compete in? What are your best lifts?
I compete in the USAPL as a 56 kilogram (123 pound) lifter. My best meet lifts are a 167.5 kilogram/363 pound squat (Inzer Fusion suit and Inzer knee wraps), 92.5 kilogram/204 pound bench (Inzer Rage-X shirt and Inzer wrist wraps), 162.5 kilogram/358 pound deadlift (Inzer Fusion suit) and a 417.5 kilogram (920 pound) total. My best raw performance was at the Raw Unity Meet where I put up a 264 pound squat, 143 pound bench and a 352 pound deadlift.

Great numbers! When and how did you get started in powerlifting?

Back in 1997, when I was 17, I was lifting for fun at a gym in Florida. A couple of guys told me about a meet that Kieran Kidder was putting on, so I just showed up. No singlet, no wrist wraps, completely ill-prepared. I ended up winning bench-only. After that, I blew out my ACL and didn't compete again until 2006, and was a bench-only lifter until December, 2007.

Why did you choose to compete where you compete?

When I first wanted to enter a competition I typed "powerlifting meets" into Google. The USAPL's Northwest website (www.nwusapl.com) came up. I entered a meet and in no time was able to meet such powerlifting superstars as Pricilla Ribic and Leonetta Richardson. After getting their autographs I was hooked!

You looked up to them and now people are looking up to you. So, Kat, tell us, what are your top five powerlifting tips for other females?

1. Don't worry, you won't get huge.
2. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't do it!
3. Listen to your coach.
4. Set realistic goals—and don't give up until you achieve them.
5. Don't over-train! Sometimes a little rest is the best.

Very true. How does your family feel about your powerlifting success?

They love it!! My Dad, RC, now competes in bench-only and when I watch videos with my mom, Sandy, she is the toughest internet judge out there!!! No one makes depth in her eyes!

It must be nice to have a family who is so supportive. Tell the Powerlifting USA readers some random facts about yourself.

I went to Washington State University on a track and field scholarship. I have a barbell tattoo on my lower back. I graduated from high school and got my associate degree in the same year. I have been in a defensive pistol shooting



Katherine at the 2010 Arnold Classic



Katherine Clark – 363 lb. squat

league since I was 21.

Very interesting. What adversities have you had to overcome in powerlifting to become the lifter you are today?

Eight days before the inaugural USAPL Raw Nationals in 2008 I found out I had a tumor in my spine that was actually eating away at the bone. It was hard to move on from that, especially with squats, because I was always worrying that my spine would just collapse. It hasn't yet, and I think lifting heavy has actually kept the tumor from getting a lot bigger. At least that's what I keep telling myself. It's still there...

Wow. That tells us that you're even more amazing and not only a strong lifter, but also a strong person. What's next? What would you like to do in the future?

I would like to get a new PR total at IPF Worlds this year.

Before attempting a personal powerlifting best, what is going through your mind? Ammonia. Lots and lots of ammonia.

Kat, give us your powerlifting routine.

I do what Kevin tells me to do. And generally, I have to be held back a bit. I have a special



Katherine Clark loves to compete

spot on the railing outside of Gold's Gym in Mukilteo, WA, where I throw-up on max-effort days. My nickname is "chunks." I can't believe I just told you that!

What motivates Kat to be the best?

My family, my team, my coach, and the fact that I will never, ever give up.

It's great that you have such a great support system. So, far in your powerlifting journey what has been your most hardcore, craziest moment and experience that has changed you the most?

Favorite: seriously, every single time I'm on the platform is my favorite. There's something about every competition I can take away as a learning or growing experience. My biggest accomplishment was winning the USAPL Open Women's National Championships in the 56 kilogram class this year.

Most hardcore: it's a toss-up between my deadlift that took 11 seconds from start to finish at the Raw Unity Meet or after my third attempt in the deadlift at this year's Women's Nationals in Cleveland—not making it off stage before I started throwing up in my chalk bag. I left it all on the platform, literally.

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Experience that changed me the most: meeting my coach Kevin Stewart. I haven't been the same since!

An 11 second deadlift? Very cool! Who in the sport do you look up to?

I actually look up to anyone that lifts and competes. Powerlifting is a tough sport, and it takes a really hardcore individual to stick with it. Honestly, anyone who knows me has seen the t-shirts I get from meets—I have all the competitors sign it. I really love and look up to everyone.

What are the biggest mistakes you see other less accomplished powerlifters make in their quest for strength?

I don't like judging people like that, what works for me may not work for someone else, and vice-versa.

You are going to have a lot of friends based on your outlook. What is the best and worst advice you were ever told?

They are both actually from my teammate, Mike Todd. Best: "Try harder." Worst: "Don't worry, the weight will go down by itself, you just have to worry about the up."

Well, it seems like the try harder has been sticking with you. How do you want to be



Katherine Clark was the champ at the USAPL Women's Nationals in Ohio

remembered?

As someone who never, ever gave up... and someone who gave back as much as she could.

Well, Kat, keep doing great things. It has been great interviewing you for *PL USA* today. In closing, who would you want to thank?

My coach, Kevin Stewart; my teammates; Team

Phoenix in Muklteeo, Washington; my parents, whom have always supported my goals; my friends that show up and cheer for everyone; EVERY powerlifter I've met, for being inspirations; my sponsors: Sunshine Corners Nutrition & Deli, Willies Tri-pro; and of course Critical Bench and *Powerlifting USA* magazine—thank you so much. ☪