

INTERVIEW

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

Simply put, Curtis Leslie is one of the strongest men in the world, or any where else for that matter. How does a 820 pound squat, a 600 pound bench, and a 760 deadlift sound? More importantly, though, Leslie is one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. He's a strange mix - big and powerful as a Brahma bull, yet gentle and loving as a small child. Without question, Leslie epitomizes what every athlete should strive to be. Not surprisingly, when people talk about Leslie, they use words like awesome, modest, incredible, and caring. In order to interview the gentle giant of powerlifting, World Class Enterprises traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to meet with Curtis Leslie.

WC: It's been said that the great athletes are drivers, obsessive even, yet your behavior seems anything but obsessive. Is there an internal drive in Curtis Leslie that is not overt or are you the antithesis of most world class athletes?

Leslie: This is a catch 22 question and answer situation. In order for an athlete to become a champ he must have that internal drive and determination to be the best. But the other side to that question is that an athlete must learn to live his life to its fullest. An athlete must learn to relax and enjoy the simple things that life has to offer. He can't go around being arrogant and aggressive to everyone he meets. Athletes must learn when to be great champions and when to be humble and relaxed.

WC: It's been said that you play the game above your shoulders - that the secret to your great strength is your mind not your body. Could you elaborate on that point?... What's your secret?

Leslie: There is no secret to being a champion! Just remember to train hard, but train smart. Many athletes don't believe or know that 60% of their strength carries from within (mentally). Athletes should always exercise their mind just as they would exercise their body. When they start to believe and learn to visualize success, they will start to achieve. This applies in powerlifting or everyday life.

WC: Roger Estep once said that the hardest thing is not getting to the top, but staying there. Have you found that to be the case?

Leslie: That's true. It's difficult

CURTIS LESLIE

The Gentle Giant of Powerlifting

by Judd Biasiotto Ph.D., World Class Enterprises



Curtis Leslie squatting at the 1992 APF Sr. National Championships

to remain on top with all the great and talented lifters performing today, but a true champ always tries to improve himself whether he wins or loses. Once a champion is satisfied with his performance, it's hard for him to quit before he gets hurt or embarrassed.

WC: What's your best total, and how much further do you think you can go?

Leslie: My best total so far has been 2206 lbs. How much further can I go? There are no limitations on Curtis Leslie. When I get my weight up to that ideal weight, "look out power world."

WC: A number of lifters have re-

cently totaled over 2200 at the 242 and are obviously a threat to your title. Who do you see as a serious challenger to your title?

Leslie: It's true, there are other lifters that have totals over 2200 at 242 lbs. Here in the U.S. we have great lifters, lifters that are capable of defeating a world champ any day of the week. It's just depends on who's having a good day and who's not. I'm not out to beat any one particular person. I just want to do my best and earn the respect of great lifters.

WC: The poundages have increased so dramatically in the last half decade - to what do you attribute such

a radical jump - equipment, training, drugs?

Leslie: I don't think it's drug usage. The same drugs are around today that were around yesterday. I think the big increase in poundage can be answered by new training research; new and updated equipment; such as wraps, groove brief suit, etc.

WC: At one time, Larry Pacifico was untouchable. Then it was Bridges and now it's Coan. Make a prediction for us - who do you foresee as the next "Great One?"

Leslie: I can see it being Dan Austin, if he ever decides to beef up to the 181 lb. class. He'd possibly squat over 800 lbs. and deadlift over 800 lbs.

WC: With all the factionalism in powerlifting (the USPF, ADFPA, APF, IPF, Lifetime Drug Free), how do you see the future of the sport?

Leslie: Dying. The general public is already having trouble understanding the sport of powerlifting. Now, with all the new federations, their world and national champs, the public seems totally confused - including myself.

WC: I heard you just made your movie debut in "Atlanta Knights." Are you going to follow Arnold Schwarzenegger's lead and leave the Iron game for movieland?

Leslie: What you heard is true! I did make my movie debut in a movie called "Atlanta Knights." I played a killer/bodyguard. Will I leave the Iron Game for Hollywood? I don't know. I have a second movie part coming this year, so I'm waiting to see if Arnold calls. If he doesn't, "I'll be back."

WC: Do you have any advice to give to novice powerlifters?

Leslie: Train hard, but train smart, and always listen to your body.

WC: Is there anything else that you would like to say before we wrap things up?

Leslie: I would like to thank my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Leslie, for all their support; my brother Tony; sisters, Regina and Gail; and my training partners, Richie Ludy and Ron Howell for their support also. Remember to reach for the stars, but settle for the moon. Train hard, but train smart.

For seminars and guest appearances, Curtis can be reached at: 2446 Glendale Drive, Decatur, GA, 30032, (404)284-6331.