

# INTERVIEW

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

## IPF WORLD CHAMP BRIAN SIDERS

as interviewed for POWERLIFTING USA by Dr. Larry Miller

Dr. Larry Miller recently spoke with Brian Siders about a variety of powerlifting topics. The following are excerpts from the interview:

**Larry Miller:** Brian, let's start out with some background information on your age, occupation, and family.

**Brian Siders:** My name is Brian Siders and I am 26 years old. I am a Correctional Psychologist at a maximum security prison. My wife's name is Amy and we do not have any kids.

**Larry Miller:** Since your major is Psychology, do you believe that powerlifters are lacking in training the psychological aspect of lifting?

**Brian Siders:** I think the best powerlifters have found a way on their own to develop the best techniques for them to perform psychologically. I think that the novice lifters probably need some help. Many novice lifters tend to have a more negative attitude and lack the self confidence that the elite lifters have. Over time, most elite lifters develop their own psychological techniques.

**Larry Miller:** How did you get into the sport and how long have you been competing?

**Brian Siders:** I did a bench meet in High School in 1995 and I started to play football so I lifted weights for football. I played football in college for one year. My second season I started to concentrate on powerlifting. I started competing regularly in 1998 in 3 lift meets.

**Larry Miller:** Did you have any mentors when you started training?

**Brian Siders:** When I was 17 years old a friend introduced me to a gym where I still train today. There I met John Messinger and Vince White. They showed me just about everything I know in the sport.

**Larry Miller:** What are your views on drug testing and the equipment issue and the number of organizations?

**Brian Siders:** It would be nice if the organizations could condense themselves. I understand that people want a choice if they want use

special equipment or drugs. I guess that they should be allowed to do so. That allows for separation from people who don't want to do those things. I think USAPL does a great job, especially with their out of meet drug testing which is crucial to prove that people are drug

free. I think the IPF needs to work on that. I don't think all the countries are as strict about it as we

are. I have done a WPC meet. I think a lifter should try different things to see what makes them happy.

**Larry Miller:** How has the experience of being on the World Team been for you?

**Brian Siders:** The first experience was an eye opener - as in - taking a class in World Travel 101. It taught me that it isn't easy traveling halfway across the world and doing your best. I was much happier the second time around in Denmark compared to Slovakia. It has a lot to do with the psychological aspect. I think a lot of people get intimidated going to their first world meet and often times they show a lack of confidence.

**Larry Miller:** Do you see more camaraderie on the world team than your typical meet?

**Brian Siders:** Yes, but I have seen a great deal of camaraderie at every meet I have ever gone to. At Nationals, all the superheavyweights know each other. I have

always had a good experience at meets, meeting new people.

**Larry Miller:** Have you developed any special friendships over the years?

**Brian Siders:** At the World's, Sherman Ledford and Wade Hooper are always the first people to help me out. It is good to have someone with as much experience as Wade has. Everyone else that travels to the world meets are very helpful as well. Even though powerlifting is an individual sport, big totals can not exist without the people behind the scenes.

**Larry Miller:** What is your training regimen like? How many days a week do you train?

**Brian Siders:** I have probably tried about every training program there is. Now I am using a combination of what I have learned and what I have added myself. I currently am training 6 days a week. I do use a lot of assistance exercises and I use the "Jump Stretch" bands and chains. I find ways to use them on everything. There are sometimes when I may not do the actual lifts for a while and just do bands and chains. I do box squats, regular squats, chain squats, band squats. I



Brian Siders at the Mountaineer Cup with his longtime supporter Sherman Ledford.

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incorporate some speed work in my training. I don't go heavy, percentage-wise, like a lot of lifters do. When I get about 4 weeks out I start hitting weights over 90%, but other than that I train pretty light most of the year. It just depends on what my goals are for each training cycle.

**Larry Miller:** Now that you have won the Worlds, where do you go from there?

**Brian Siders:** I would like to work on my deadlift. I don't have a very good deadlift, but have been able to pull 800 at a few meets. There are meets where I might take a lighter bench to save something for my deadlift. Sometimes my arch will knot up my back. I just do what I need to in order to get the highest total. I don't really worry about the individual lifts. My other goal is to do what I can to help the sport grow. I want to help get more media attention and help promote big meets like Bench America. I saw a few fans there who probably never lifted a weight in their life. It was nice to see people like that buying a program and checking out the venue. Powerlifting is not that much fun from a spectator standpoint. Of course, I don't understand how

golf and bowling are spectator sports. Maybe, over time, powerlifting will be able to reach more people.

**Larry Miller:** Do you think that bringing money into the sport will make a difference?

**Brian Siders:** It will definitely unify the best lifters. A number of lifters at BA came from multi-ply shirt federations, and there have been a number of single ply lifters who have been successful in the WPO. I think the money definitely helps unify the sport. The Mountaineer Cup is a good example, where double ply lifters compete in single ply gear.

**Larry Miller:** As far as equipment goes, what do you use?

**Brian Siders:** I use Inzer gear and they are nice enough to sponsor me now. I used their gear before they sponsored me because it has always seemed to work best for me.

**Larry Miller:** What kind of advice do you have for the novice lifters who are just starting out?

**Brian Siders:** Don't worry about the weight as much as the technique. A lot of novice lifters want to max out and they often get hurt or burned out before they get started. They tend to be impatient and not take the time to learn the right technique. Sometimes, trial and error is the

best approach, instead of being a lifter who has had everything handed to them.

**Larry Miller:** Who are some of your favorite lifters both past and present?

**Brian Siders:** The first powerlifter I ever read about was Ed Coan. When I was a sophomore in high school I bought a Muscle & Fitness magazine and Ed Coan was interviewed. At the time I liked bodybuilding, but after reading the article I thought, I want to powerlift. Some of my favorite lifters are Wade Hooper, Steve Goggins and, internationally, I have been impressed with the Ukrainian lifters, their technique and their precision. Papazov is young like I am and his total is almost as high as mine, but he is in the 275 lb. class. The lighter international lifters are tremendously impressive, pound for pound. Some of them look like they have never lifted a weight, but they put up some impressive numbers. I guess they utilize their equipment better than we do.

**Larry Miller:** What kind of assistance exercises do you like to do for the three lifts?

**Brian Siders:** For the bench I like board presses, inclines, and shoulder presses. For the squat, box squats with bands or chains

and close stance squats and for the deadlifts I do good mornings, stiff legged deadlifts, and sumo deadlifts off of five inch blocks, which has really helped my hip flexibility.

**Larry Miller:** Have you done some flexibility stretches with the bands?

**Brian Siders:** I have done some stretches, but not a lot. That is probably something I could add to my training. I used to have pec problems, but using the cambered bar helped resolve that. For my bench workout, I will do about 4 sets with the cambered bar with moderate weight. I have success with a high volume program, which most people can't do. It took a lot more volume to get from 1900 to 2000. It seems like to break each barrier, I had to add a day or increase my volume.

**Larry Miller:** Brian, do you have any parting thoughts?

**Brian Siders:** I'd like to thank Inzer, Quest Nutrition, PsiMed/PsyCare - whom I work for, Charleston Physical Therapy, and MHP. I'd also like to thank my wife Amy for all her support. I'd like to thank John Messinger and Vince White and my current workout partners John Pauley, Wyatt Derr, Phil Pfister, and Chuck Mooney for their endless hours of support and dedication, and, of course, my family.