

# BENCH PRESSING

with

## DANNY MCDERMOTT

by Training Editor, RON FERNANDO

The Bench Press has long been the favorite of many weight trainers, whether they be aspiring superstars or weekend bodybuilders. In his book "Stay Hungry," author Charles Gaines described the Bench Press as being possibly one of the most "satisfying exercises to perform." The Bench Press has spawned a generation of tough, confident athletes in all walks of sports such as football, where such greats as Jon Kolb, Mike Webster and Wayne "The Wall" Coleman (aka "Superstar Billy Graham") pushed the Bench to dizzying heights. Often coaches will use the Bench Press as a basic yardstick of strength when recruiting at the professional and college level. Obviously, the Bench Press has the full endorsement of the world's best physiques such as Arnold Schwarzenegger (1966 European Pl. champ for you trivia freaks) and Dr. Franco Columbu, who for years held an UNOFFICIAL record at 165 lbs (475) which was just recently broken by James Rouse at the 1980 World Championships. Even the Hollywood set considers the Bench Press to be paramount in their "image development." Robert



Danny shows unbelievable vascularity when deadlifting

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Blake, Richard Gere, etc. bench press regularly and let's not forget Bo '10' Derek who credits the Bench for her sensational (ahem!) development. Of course, California has a lion's share of the top benchers from such legendary greats as the mighty Pat Casey (620), to present champions such as multi-class record holder, Mike MacDonald. However, as is my wont, I'd like to share with the readers of PL USA the "trade secrets" of one of the "laster rising newcomers" to the sport, Danny McDermott. I feel that he has some unique attributes towards training the bench and many lifters and bodybuilders alike will benefit from their application.

Danny started, quite naturally, as an energetic, slightly underweight (110 lbs), high school athlete. He was active in the usual sports such as football and track and field, but one day thought better about being on the receiving end of the usual petty B.S. that emanates from many high school coaches who, for lack of a better description, are laboring under the assumption that every drill field is a Marine Corps recruit area. Striking out to the tune of his own drummer, Danny started bodybuilding, and indeed, was very successful at the teenage level. His accomplishments include: Most Muscular Mr. Teenage L.A. (1971) plus high showings in the Mr. Teenage California, Teenage Central (California) and other local contests. However, Danny felt that politics was beginning to rear its ugly head in many of the contests he entered, where the favorite son would often win over their competitors. Disgusted once more, Danny simply trained hard for his own sake, and even added a little Kung-Fu to spice up his life. Incidentally, he was selected to go to Thailand to fight the wily Thais, but at the last minute the meet was cancelled due to the still volatile situation in Vietnam. In 1976 Danny entered his first power meet with a 1030 total (165). Not one to give up, Danny continued plugging away until last year at the National Championships in El Paso, Arkansas where he powered up 2 National meet records at 429.3/4 in the Bench to 451 (November 15th) and 500 lbs in the Squat (January 1st) with a year. Danny will be knocking on the door of the magic 500. Not bad for a 110 lb weakling!

The years spent bodybuilding gave Danny a healthy respect for repetitions and pre-meet conditioning. Powerlifting, like any other science has evolved certain axioms over the years of trial and error. One of them is NOT to overdo the all out singles. Danny employs this principle in all of his workouts.

### THE PROGRAM

Danny is a very long range planner. He feels that this is best for a cyclical sport such as powerlifting.

Pre Meet (12 weeks): Concentration on total angle conditioning.

HEAVY DAY - Bench Press, Lockouts, Heavy Dips, Heavy dumbbell inclines. The Benches are done with a wide grip, maximum arch and are performed on a low and go basis. On this portion of the cycle, Danny will go strictly by feel. A sample set would be: 135x10, 225x10, 275x6, 315x6, 330x6, 300x6, 275x10-12. Of course, the weight would go lighter depending on the way his body had recovered from the previous workout. Lockouts are done for 5 sets of 6 reps using between 100-120 lb dumbbells. The Lockouts are done from a dead stop in a power rack and are only done for one set of 6 reps with 400-500 lbs after sufficient warm up sets.

LIGHT DAY - Here, Danny performs the following program: Bench press, DB flat press, cable crossover. Again, he goes strictly by feel in this "pre-cycle-cycle", but he usually reaches a top weight of somewhere near 275-295 for 3 sets of 8 reps. The DB presses are done to get the individual muscle groups working and to aid his lockouts. Again, he uses 120 lbs for 5 sets of 6 reps. The cable crossovers are more of a finisher, and probably is the last vestige from his bodybuilding days.

His final day of the "pre-cycle-cycle" is his Close Grip day. He performs 5 sets of 6 reps in the Close Grip Bench (hands 6 inches apart) with between 275-300. Additionally, he does 3 sets of 6 reps in the Close Grip Press (hands 12 inches apart) with approximately 20 sets of bulgery curls (concentric) to the 80 sets of pedaling and pshover and it seems like nothing is including EZ curls. Preacher curls and DB's & Concentration Curls. Triceps are worked on a twice-weekly basis consisting of Decline E-Z Bar extensions (which, by the way, Danny feels spends more blood into the affected area, a theory concurred with by Paul Anderson in his 1972 series Building Big Arms in Muscular Development). Lying cable (rope) extensions and Triceps pressdowns. As can be readily ascertained, Danny does not consider this part of his cycle as a post-off period. Rather, it is the time to build QUALITY bulk and size, without any taxing singles. Twelve weeks before a contest, Danny carefully maps out his goals and deletes some of the exercises he used in the pre-cycle.

HEAVY DAY - Bench Press - Competition style

McDonald Bar Bench

Incline Barbell Press

LIGHT DAY - Bench press

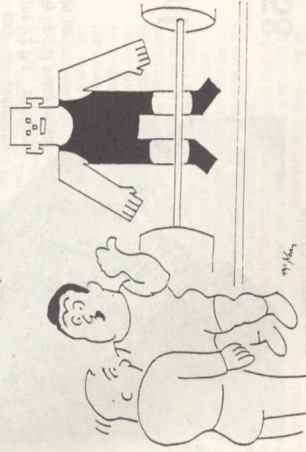
The close grips and the lockouts are thrown out after the 4th week as is the dumbbell work. The MacDonald Bar gives the necessary muscle stretch and the inclines aid in the lockout. At this point, Danny is mentally preparing himself for that crucial third attempt Bench. He wears elbow wraps (loose) almost the entire cycle except for the last couple of weeks when he is priming with the REALLY big numbers. Basically, he will try to increase somewhere in the vicinity of 20 lbs per week for the first 6 weeks, and thereafter 5-10 lb. jumps in weeks 7-12. He performs his single only on the last week before, doing heavy doubles (4-6x2 gym best) the whole way through. The results of this type of training are evident by just glancing at Danny, his pecs, lats, and shoulders literally explode through the seams of his dress shirts. Well, when you've got it, you've got it!

Danny McDermott is destined to be one of the nation's finest Bench pressers. He seems to have no fear of the heavy numbers which will eventually propel him to the top. You beginners can learn two very valuable lessons from Danny.

1. DO NOT BE AFRAID OF REPS.
2. WORK THE MUSCLE FROM ALL POSSIBLE ANGLES.



At the El Dorado Nationals, Danny broke WR holder Jim Rouse's meet mark



"I THINK PETE'S SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME TRAINING ON MACHINES."

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It is impossible to individually thank all of the persons who directly or indirectly aided in presenting the 1980 World Powerlifting Championships in Arlington, Texas. I would like to take this opportunity to very sincerely thank everyone involved for their efforts. Many, many persons were of help, without them, this Championship could not have been run.

I would especially like to thank all of those persons, both in this country and abroad, for the many kind thoughts and compliments that I have received regarding the Championships.

The Worlds were an extremely rewarding experience. Yet there are many mixed emotions as I look back upon this year of preparation and the actual weeks surrounding the meet. We saw a Championship that almost wasn't; watched as one of the greatest lifters ever to exist was not able to become a World Champion, as, as meet directors, had to maneuver and literally hide to avoid subpoenas. All of this due to the power-plays among administrators.

We are in disrespect by our fellow nations; they view powerlifting in the United States as weakened to the roots. I hope that this New Year brings about the needed changes in United States Powerlifting. Hopefully, the political infighting has been stilled and we will move forward to better our sport.

Thomas R. Keltner, President, Strength Systems, Inc.  
Co-Director, 1980 World Powerlifting Championships

### John Pettitt Speaks

I am sorry that this letter is so late in coming, but after the World meet it took a long time to see everything objectively. First, I want to point out that the success of the meet was due to Tom Keltner and no one else. He organized the meet area and obtained 99% of those people who set up and broke down the meet. He is the one who stuck out his neck with financial obligations incurred from his own pocket as well as that of his company. Needless to say there are always pressures, decisions, and problems with a meet, but no one expected everything that we encountered. The fight between the NPA and the USPF and the resulting pending injunctions was the icing on the cake. No one should ever have to face the decision of cutting off locks to hold a meet that others are trying to stop. I agree that politically our sport had been led astray, not only by the USPF and the NPA but also by the IPF. I am still surprised that the meet was even held considering the feelings of the other countries present. I was concerned with not only the financial obligations, but the fact that 135 lifters were waiting to compete when problems that this country should have solved long ago could have stopped them from lifting. As many meet directors, I have put on many meets and aided in the direction of many others, but this is the first meet I've seen where no one had any real control. The Technical Committee of the IPF could not agree among themselves how certain things should be corrected or whether they should be corrected. There are certain things that simply can not be done in 5 or 10 minutes: like rebuilding the entire platform-----which was not needed as seen from the lack of any damage from the dropped 981 lbs. on Sunday. The biggest problem came from having 19 different people tell you to change the same thing 19 different ways and then have someone tell you to do it his way or he will stop the meet. Therefore, Tom and I simply said "No."

I could go on and on, but this will give you an idea of our problems. As far as the judging, etc., there is no reason to ask lifters to be super strict if they continue to judge and meet as the old days and to me that the rules that really count (depth, etc.) are not ruled strict enough, and those rules that are picking the sport apart are getting ridiculous (e.g., name on belt). If the IPF Congress had simply looked over the interpretations and not tabbed that until next year, several gray areas could have been cleared up. Our sport has too many eggs, and too much politics---both in this country and in the IPF. There are several other committees I could make, but to sum it all up it was a good meet. We could have put on a better one and a more financially successful one if there had not been \$2100 in walked hotel bills and other items totaling quite a bit. Most of the lifters thought that the IPF was paying for the meet. The IPF pays for the expenses of the President and General Secretary and that is all. Lastly, there were many friends who called and asked to help, then never bothered to show up at all. This meet showed me who my friends are and who they aren't. My friends showed up or called and let us know that they couldn't; the others didn't bother. I expect this at a local meet, but never at a World meet. As I told Larry, I've seen the World's from one angle...I would like to see it from another, drug free if possible.

EDITOR'S NOTE...John Pettitt has served Texas powerlifting outstandingly well for over a decade, as well as performing National and International duties in an efficient and proper fashion. He has recently dissolved his interest in Strength Systems (now wholly owned by Tom Keltner) and severely restricted his meet direction commitments in order to devote more time to his new company Energy Seal Systems, a storm window and aluminum siding concern, his family, and his own lifting. John lifted in the Greater Texas Classic and for the first time in many years was able to think only about lifting...rather than his common concerns about finding people to help out at the meet, moving equipment here and there, selling t-shirts, etc. He's certainly paid his dues and deserves some enjoyment from the sport. We can all appreciate the reasons for John's new direction in the sport, but he is a tremendous asset and should not be forgotten as we try to solve some of the problems we find ourselves in...next time you see him, let him know how much you appreciate all the work he's done for powerlifting.