

# INSIDE POWERLIFTING

## CHAPTER 1: POWERLIFTS AND POWERLIFTERS

BY TERRY TODD

(Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1978), 1-7.

*Preface: Inside Powerlifting was not Terry's first book. His first was Fitness for Athletes, published in May 1978 by Contemporary Books, with co-author Dick Hoover. The editors at Contemporary asked Terry to re-write and complete Hoover's manuscript and his success in revamping and completing the book gave him the courage to propose a book on the relatively unknown sport of powerlifting for Contemporary's "Inside \_\_\_\_" (name your sport) series. His editor was not immediately sold on the idea, but Terry proved persuasive. The end result was not just the first book ever written on the sport, but a book that many believe truly launched powerlifting.*

*Terry wrote Inside Powerlifting in Nova Scotia where we lived on a 185-acre farm in Lunenburg County. He used ballpoint pens and yellow tablets to draft his chapters, and his "office" was both the yard outside our nineteenth-century farmhouse, and a room in our large barn previously reserved for chickens. The barn also housed our draft horses, pigs, rabbits, our own chickens, and, often, a large dog or two. Although the book is inscribed, "To Jan, who brought me back," I've always felt that it was the writing of Inside Powerlifting itself that moved Terry away from his academic interest in schools and education—and back to his first love—the pursuit of strength. The publication of Inside Powerlifting marked an intellectual shift in Terry's life. It allowed him to imagine a future filled with thinking about, talking about, and writing about strength. With apologies to Robert Frost, Terry "took the road less traveled by" after writing Inside Powerlifting, and that choice "has made all the difference." Because the book has been out of print for many years, I am releasing a new edition of Inside Powerlifting in 2021.*



As I sit here by my garden, watching my heavy horses graze the green grass, I feel a sense of real reluctance and sadness as I begin the end of this book on the sport of strength. This is so because I realize that when I am done my interests and commitments will lead me to other things and the concentration I have focused on powerlifting for the past few months will be diffused. I will not, of course, leave powerlifting or forget it, even if I wanted to or could, but I doubt that I will ever again return to it so completely. Never again will it possess me as it has lately and as it did even more so



**Terry wrote the opening lines and a lot of the rest of *Inside Powerlifting* while sitting under this tree on our farm in Barss Corner, Nova Scotia. Muffin and Nessie, our bullmastiff puppy, kept him company.**

during my years of competition.

I imagine that the well-spring of my reluctance and sadness is the fact that the unsparing passion which I brought to the sport when I first began it provided me with what I now can see were the happiest times of my life. From what I've seen through the years, this is true of many serious athletes. I remember Ronnie Ray, one of the founders of powerlifting in the 1960s and now a millionaire gym owner, turning to me last year at the Nationals and saying, "You know, I've made a lot of money, but in all my life my happiest times by far were those when I was in top shape, hump-

**TERRY TODD****inside power lifting**

Complete training programs for the sport of super-strength, including the strength-building techniques of some of the world's best powerlifters: Doug Young, Mike MacDonald, Vince Amello, Don Reinhoudt, Larry Pacifico, and Ron Collins

Terry's decision to feature the nine best lifters of the mid-1970s made celebrities of Larry Pacifico, Don Reinhoudt, Ron Collins, Vince Anello, Mike MacDonald, Marvin Phillips, big-armed Doug Young of Texas, and even me. The dramatic cover photo was taken by renowned photographer Douglas White at the 1976 World Powerlifting Championships. Doug's physique definitely helped book sales.

ing that iron."

People have often asked me how I was able to push myself with such relentlessness in a sport in which there was no monetary reward and very little publicity outside the lifting magazines, and the question always brings to mind the remark a track coach once made about long-distance running. "When you see them late in the evening, often in the rain," he said, "driving themselves to run just one more mile, you should never, never pity them, for they are the happiest of men." There is a sense in which this total dedication to a sport—the sort of total dedication manifested in the lives of the nine athletes in

this book—tends to blur the clarity and diminish the importance of everything else in a person's life.

Whether this is ultimately good or bad for the individual involved or for the society in which he or she lives is a fascinating question, but it is not the subject of this book. Instead, the true subject of this book is the lives of the nine people who have been good enough to share their knowledge and insight and background with me. Through their lives run the common threads of sacrifice and single-mindedness—the two universal traits of world-class athletes—binding them together in their dedication to what can only be called excellence.

During the months that I've talked to these people, corresponded with them, and gone over the details of their lives, I've felt myself being drawn again into that intense cocoon of absorbed commitment that I thought I'd left behind forever when I retired in 1967. For me, doing this book has been like a homecoming, a going back to simpler, less troubled times. And although my life is now lived so that I can afford no more than a visit, it was enough to have gone back this once, especially in such damn fine company.

From the outset, I decided not to write powerlifting's first book completely out of my own experiences because I wanted to provide not simply information which was *adequate*; I wanted to provide a breadth of material which would come as close as possible to defining what the sport offered and what it demanded. My aim was not necessarily

to write an instructional book, though this certainly is one, but to use the lives of the athletes themselves and the sport of powerlifting to distill the essence of all sport.

In order to do this I asked nine people I had come to know well through the years—nine people who are the aristocracy of powerlifting—to work with me to make this book something of which all powerlifters could be proud. To the degree that the book succeeds, most of the credit should go to these nine extraordinary people because they held nothing back. "Secret" routines, one-of-a-kind family album photographs, psychological tactics, personal dietary habits, contest strategy—everything





In this photo, Terry's interviewing Doug Young for NBC TV at the 1977 IPF World Championships in Perth, Australia. It was the first time powerlifting was covered by TV and Terry served as color commentator. Young became a hero that weekend, as he broke three ribs during the squats yet went on to win the 242-pound world title. His courageous lifting helped America cinch the team trophy and also made for dramatic TV. As for Terry, the fact that he was articulate, had a memorable voice, and possessed a deep knowledge of lifting, brought him many more opportunities to do TV work in the years ahead.

is here. And to the degree that the book fails, lay the blame on me for not being skillful enough to weave the wonderful material I was given into a pattern which would meet the needs of powerlifters everywhere, be they old or young, male or female, novice or veteran.

The fact that "officially" powerlifting is a relatively new sport and has no books of its own increased the

pressure I felt to see that nothing was held back. Olympic lifting and bodybuilding, the two other primary sports involving progressive resistance, both have had dozens of books devoted to their various aspects, but, as of mid-1977, powerlifting has had none. In a way this is strange, as powerlifting has already moved well beyond Olympic lifting in popularity throughout the English-speaking world during the past 15 years.

Perhaps one of the chief reasons for powerlifting's rapid gain in public acceptance is that, relative to Olympic lifting, little time has to be spent on technique, as the powerlifts are comparatively simple to perform, strength being their main requirement. The Olympic lifts, on the other hand, require a high degree of flexibility, balance, and coordination, all of which demand proper training for a beginner as well as constant practice. Another cause of powerlifting's popularity may stem from the complex nature of Olympic lifting, for while the physical intricacies of a record clean and jerk are beautiful to a connoisseur, the average person, unable to follow the action and *relate* to the lift, is often unimpressed. But the same person watching the primeval simplicity of a heavy deadlift is unfailingly captivated by the struggle of the lifter and the bending of the bar under the conflicting forces.

Unfortunately, one of the results of this popularity has been a rift between powerlifters and Olympic lifters, an alienation of one group from the other. It puts me in mind of the squabbles I used to hear years ago in Texas between two groups of Baptists, the Hard-Shells and the Footwashers. Back then, it always seemed to me that both groups would have been happier, not to mention a good deal closer to God's word, had they concentrated on their similarities rather than their differences. These days, I feel the same way about powerlifters and Olympic lifters.

I competed as an Olympic lifter way back in the days before there *were* any powerlift meets in the U. S. Within the past year I watched the Olympic Champions David Rigert and Vasily Alexeyev train and then break world records. I even went out to supper with them one night. As wonderful as they are to watch and as impressive as they are in person, I don't see how anyone can seriously try to make a logical case that Alexeyev and Rigert are somehow better men than powerlifting's Don Reinhoudt and Larry Pacifico. All *four* are good men—extraordinary men—and they are each the best in their weight class that their respective sports have ever produced.



The point is that Alexeyev, Reinhoudt, Rigert, and Pacifico are all *lifters*—each of them develops and maintains his strength by *lifting*. To argue that one form of lifting is better than another is absurd, and I suggest that both Olympic lifters and powerlifters admit this and stop making fools of themselves. You can, after all, *prefer* something without maintaining that your preference is intrinsically better than the preference of someone else. The French writer Francois de La Rochefoucauld put it this way back in the 17th century: “Happiness lies in our tastes, and not in things themselves; a man is happy in doing what he likes, not what others like.”

Those for whom happiness is doing or watching the powerlifts, all I can say is that they—we—have chosen a sport which is as basic and ancient as any in the world. Historians suspect that the earliest forms of competitive sport were footraces and tests of strength involving logs and boulders. Picture an early man bending over to get a good handhold on a big chunk of sandstone while his community stood around and urged him on. The muscles of the hands, forearms, back, hips, and legs that would’ve been used to haul the boulder free of the ground tens of thousands of years ago are the exact same muscles that Don Reinhoudt or Vince Anello would use today to pull their world-record deadlifts.

Although the three earliest historical records we have of contests of strength are some drawings done on the wall of a funerary chapel at Beni-Hassan in Egypt



**Terry and superheavyweight world champion Don Reinhoudt look happy on the eve of the 1976 IPF World Powerlifting Championships after demolishing the seafood buffet at the Hotel Yorktowne in York, Pennsylvania. Reinhoudt would win his fifth, and last, world title that weekend. In the contest he made lifts of 859 in the squat, 562 in the bench press, and 826 in the deadlift, after trying and missing 904. Terry did many of his interviews for *Inside Powerlifting* that weekend.**

some 4,500 years ago, some accounts dating back to 1896 B.C. from what are now known as the British Isles, and a wealth of information about the pre-Christian classical period in Greece and Rome, we can be certain that what we now call the deadlift is far older and has been done competitively in one form or another ever since mankind has been far enough advanced to take a breather from either hunting or being hunted. Quite likely one of the reasons for powerlifting’s rapid growth, as I said earlier, is its primitive, artless quality. People love it *because* it is uncomplicated, because it is *pure*.

There is a huge block of volcanic rock in what is now Italy which bears the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. inscription, “Eumastas the son of Critobulus lifted me from the ground.” There were no *tricks* involved in what Eumastas did and the pride he felt, which was great enough to cause him to carve that inscription, must have been very like the

pride I felt the day I broke Bob Peoples' 25-year-old world deadlift record. Tricks have no more place in stone lifting than they do in deadlifting, and if Eumastas was at all like me—and God knows he must have been—that fact was a large part of his pride.

Of course this is not to say that there are no shortcuts in powerlifting because, as this book makes clear, there are. One of these shortcuts, in fact, goes too far, according to some powerlifters. This too short shortcut is the use of anabolic steroids to increase strength and muscle mass. I was around when steroids—usually methandrostenolone (Dianabol)—began to be used, and I've watched their growth with real fascination. From a "secret" experiment on several members of the 1960 Olympic weightlifting team, the use of these male hormones has spread throughout the athletic world so fast and far that it was estimated by some observers that as many as 30 percent of the male and 20 percent of the female contestants in the Montreal Olympics had used anabolic steroids as part of their preparation for the

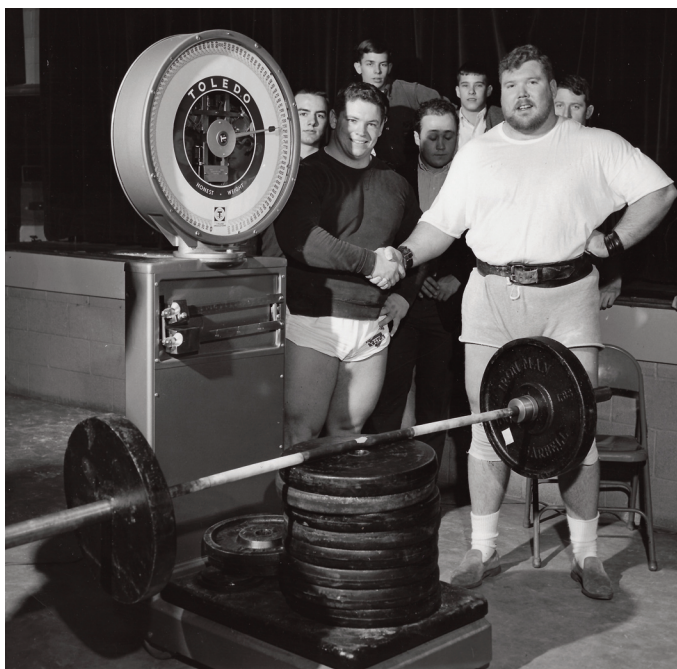
Games.

Without getting unnecessarily technical, I should explain that the word anabolic refers simply to the building of body tissues and that the word steroid refers to a fat-soluble organic compound. Several decades ago, researchers began to look for a way to separate the anabolic effects of the male sex hormone, testosterone, from its androgenic (masculine-characteristic producing) ones, such as voice deepening, increased hairiness, a stronger sex drive, etc., so that they could treat various types of physical problems without causing over-masculinization.

Their research led to the creation of anabolic steroids which could be administered either orally or by injection, and soon the big drug firms were producing them under such trade names as Dianabol, Winstrol, Durabolin, Deca-Durabolin, Anavar, Nilevar, etc. In the beginning they were used to treat such problems as severe burns (because of the tendency of the hormone to promote nitrogen retention), postoperative muscular atrophy, geriatric (aged) debilitation, and cases involving hormonal imbalance. But before long athletes began to realize that if these steroids could strengthen the weak, they might also strengthen the strong. So they jimmied the lock on Pandora's box, and we entered the era of pharmacology.

I use the word "we" advisedly, for I was among the first to take them. I took them quite simply because I believed that they would help my lifting, and there is no question in my mind that they did. Today, if I were to reenter competition, I would take them again. In all honesty I should add that I took them only after reading everything I could find on the subject at the Texas Medical Association Library, only after undergoing a complete physical examination (liver function test, etc.) by the best internist in town, and only as prescribed by my doctor. I wanted to win all right, and I wanted to win bad, but I wasn't stone crazy.

Beginning in the late 1960s and continuing through the 1970s, many articles have been written on the subject in scientific journals. Some of the articles report research which claims that steroids do *not* produce gains in size and/or strength; some of them report research that says they *do* produce such gains; and some of them report research which says they do *only* in the presence of other factors, such as rigorous exercise and a diet rich in protein. One conclusion which *can* be drawn from this conflicting research is that while steroids may or may not enhance muscular development and strength, they are definitely not a sort of sure-fire magic potion *guaranteed*



In February of 1965 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Terry made history by breaking Bob Peoples' all-time record in the deadlift with a 730-pound pull. He's shown here having the record officially weighed and certified, and is being congratulated by his main competitor in this era, Gene Roberson. In this contest, Terry also set a new world total record of 1870 pounds. He was the first man to total 1600 pounds in the three lifts, which he did in 1963; he was also first to total 1700, 1800, and 1900-pounds.



to make you strong. If they do help, the help they give is percentage-wise quite small. *However*, if we supposed for argument's sake five percent in strength, this seemingly small five percent translates to 25 pounds when you're in the 500 pound range. In other words, if you were able to deadlift 500, a five percent increase in your strength would allow you to deadlift 525. And as contests are often won or lost by only five pounds on the *total* of the three lifts, a five percent increase in strength begins to seem monumental. So goes the thinking of those of us who have taken them.

I realize that to have mentioned them at all in this book will cause some people to criticize me, but I felt that it would be dishonest to omit this aspect of powerlifting. I wanted this book to be a truthful one and I have done what I could to make it so, but no one should interpret my remarks about steroids as a recommendation for their use. They are not without their possible dangers, such as cholestatic jaundice, mild hypertension, liver toxicity, suppression of spermatogenesis, and the termination of linear growth as a result of closure of the epiphyses. Anyone contemplating their use should proceed cautiously, *if at all*, under the watchful eye of a physician, preferably a specialist in internal medicine.

As you read through this book, you'll notice that none of the exercise routines and diets of the champions mention any use of steroids. This was done because their use in amateur sport is illegal. I refrained from asking the powerlifters in this book whether or not they took steroids because I didn't want to put them in an awkward or compromised position. Except for Jan, who has never used them, I have no *direct* knowledge that *any* of the men use steroids, but I consider it likely that some of them have done so. However, had steroids never been introduced into heavy athletics, I haven't the slightest doubt that these same lifters would still be the strongest men of their weight in the world. They are, after all, the greatest cham-



**In *Inside Powerlifting*, Terry chose two men to profile related to squat training: Marvin Phillips and Ricky Crain; two men for the bench press: Mike McDonald and Doug Young; two men for the deadlift: Don Reinholdt and Vince Anello; and three people for the total: Ron Collins, above left, Larry Pacifico, above right, and me. Collins won seven world titles in the 165 and 181-pound weight classes. Pacifico won nine straight IPF world titles.**

pions in our sport, and they got where they are through a combination of genetic heritage, will, and good fortune. Pills and injections had very little, *if anything*, to do with it.

As for *other* shortcuts, the pages that follow are full of them. I doubt that ever again will so much personalized material on powerlifting be gathered together in one book. I say this because no longer does the United States dominate the sport as it did in the early days. I can imagine a future in which the world champions in the ten bodyweight classes will come from six or eight different countries. Last year—at the sixth world championships—four of the gold medalists were from the United States, four were from Great Britain, one was from Canada, and one was from Japan. And, for the first time, the United States lost the team championship, bowing to the lifting, coaching, and luck of the wonderful English squad. What this means is that it will be increasingly hard in the future for one person to

get to know the best people in the sport as I know the ones whose stories make up this book. Geography, language, and the secretiveness and politics which go hand in hand with the internationalization of any sport will combine to make it almost impossible.

I feel fortunate—undeservedly fortunate—to have been so much a part of the birth and growth of powerlifting and to have been in a position to write the sport's first book. I consider it, as they say, an honor and a privilege and I trust that those of you who read what I have written will feel that I have neither dishonored the sport nor abused the privilege.

I am the teacher of athletes,  
He that by me spreads a wider breast than  
my own proves the width of my own,  
He most honors my style who learns  
under it to destroy the teacher.

—Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*