

Interview conducted via representative of British Drug Free Power-lifting Association

Patricia Reeves

Can you tell us a little about yourself

It is well known in the media that I have terminal osteosarcoma (bone-cancer) and have battled this for many years. I am a practitioner of nutritional and functional medicine and have applied naturopathic techniques to enable me to live, practice, function, win marathons and triathlons and now power-lift for well over two decades. I currently work with patients suffering all manner of ill-health, both acute and chronic and use food, and its properties - not drugs - to stimulate and enhance the body's innate healing system. I am based in the West Midlands and work with UK and World-wide clientele. I am a health lecturer, writer, researcher, on-line nutritional course provider and now a published author! – My inspirational book 'A Living Miracle' is now in many hospices, libraries, specialist book outlets and available from my website. www.foodalive.org.

Explain a little about drug-free power-lifting.

Obviously, this is self-determinate - one lifts without aids which are deemed strength enhancing (steroids). It expounds what one is capable of without extraneous assistance.

What are your best lifts?

The sad bit is that before the cancer took hold I could squat 87.5 – 90 plus in training! (World BWLA event 1994), benched 55kg and dead-lifted 130 kg at 42 kg b/w - now a shadow of my former self – and SO much older! - life and lifting are a lot tougher after I endured multiple organ problems - known side-effects of surviving this type of cancer. A serious accident late 2005 broke a lot of my bones, double dislocated left shoulder, produced a clavicle and lung tumour and generally weakened me enormously. I have totally resolved this now and am currently 'cancer-free'. However, breaking my back in Jan 09, having seven-hour surgery March 17th, 2010 for a completely smashed left shoulder has obviously taken its toll! Sadly I now face further surgery for similar right shoulder problems – not an injury, seemingly just an overload problem as right side has obviously been doing 'double duty' for several months following March, 10's extensive surgery. Intent on producing more 'age-related' titles during 2011 and beyond!

What titles do you hold or have held?

I have held many BWLA titles since 1994, World event: Fifteen years consecutive British Masters' Champion with BWLA also. Currently, since I decided to join BDFPA in January. 2005, I am, happily, acknowledged with weight/age related lifts in British, Euro and World events and have been singularly affiliated to BDFPA since mid-09.

What records do you hold or have held?

See above. BWLA World age record in 1994 and European win in 1995. BDFPA, West Midland, British, European and World Champion age-records since 2005.

What is your training regime?

I train for short periods on a daily basis, with just the occasional day off, if I'm teaching away from home. Presently acknowledging up-coming surgery – my training is at an absolute minimum to ensure results during 2011.

How long have you been power-lifting?

Switched from marathon training to bodybuilding and thence to power-lifting in 1989

How important are training partners to you?

Never had any – consistently train alone in my home gym!

What made you become a power-lifter

Bodybuilding coach suggested this could be a good decision! I still think he was right!

What is your favourite assistance exercise?

Unfortunately all exercises are exceedingly painful nowadays, hence have to restrict to just three lifts plus physiotherapy exercises targeted at rotator cuff.

What is the biggest mistake that beginners make?

Likely 'walking before they can run' - it takes time, patience and dedication to improve oneself long- term.

What is your advice for beginners?

Adopt a routine which provides a solid strength foundation and evaluate what you achieve consistently. Having a great coach helps a lot!

What are some of your most memorable power-lifting experiences?

Achieving highest echelons at BWLA Worlds and European events and retaining my consistent British Master's title. Thereafter pulling 100kg dead-lift in 2005 for BDFPA (before September 05's serious accident) when prognosis was sadly just a few week's survival and definitely achieving consistent records with BDFPA, despite dealing with cancer and multiple surgeries on March 17th, 2010.

What is the craziest thing you ever seen in power-lifting?

I've seen people take enormous risks in training - but not so much in competitions. 'Crazy things' do not often provide optimal results!

What are your future goals?

I have already achieved what I set out to do when I joined in 2005 – now I'm hungry to set more records in my new 'old' age at M6! At present, until other 'old, skinny lifters' appear on the platform, I am competing against myself – still a great challenge! Being the oldest lifter in Europe is quite a title!

I am looking forward to my additional role as General Secretary for BDFPA – from January 9th, 2011.

What do you think is the most important factor when it comes to upping your lifts?

Upping my lifts as it appertains to me personally seems relatively impossible, given my situation! - Just hanging on to what I can perform is enormously tough! For others a consistent training method and application of effective mental strategy are the minimal requirements. I am trying my hardest to improve!

Do you think power-lifting should become an Olympic sport?

This would be good to establish our sport, but there are obviously downsides also.

How do you see the future of power-lifting?

BDFPA members HAVE to train/compete drug-free and not be associated with un-tested/drug-allowed Federations. This ensures our present drug-free status. This is definitely our future!

What does your diet consist of?

It's mostly one of detoxification: Being vegan for forty six years and virtually raw for the last twenty - not your average 'power-lifting diet' accepted for sure - but it keeps me ahead of the cancer situation and in 'fine-fettle'! So that's lots of sprouted beans/grains/nuts/seeds – masses of essential fatty acids and a ton of green foods!

What makes the difference between an average lifter and a champion?

The ability to conceive, believe and achieve. A total mind focus and supreme dedication to that belief.

What training style do you think works best?

Whatever works for the trainee! One has to apply sufficient overload and subsequent individual recovery periods to effect consistent results.

Do you think bodybuilding exercises should be in a power-lifters' routine?

Coming from a background of bodybuilding, I am slightly biased in this regard! I have personally achieved good results without performing such exercises (mainly as they are too painful now to execute). Off-season I would obviously endorse these as a

method of increasing strength, endurance and increased hypertrophy without hesitation.

What are your favourite supplements?

None used in the accepted sense, though my health challenges require a higher mineral load – I produce my own supplements for patients and definitely avail myself of my concentrated food-source supplements.

What has power-lifting taught you?

Fear no-one and respect everyone. Always treat others as you would expect to be treated yourself. Listen to varying points of view – as you will probably learn a lot! The difference between ultimate out-come, lies within a person's determination: Thorough preparation makes its own luck: Never stop learning: When you think you know it all is the time to pack it all in. Ultimately, lead by example!

What does power-lifting mean to you?

In a strange sort of way, the dogged determination to consistently achieve success in this sport also helps greatly with my ultimate though potentially intractable task of down-regulating my genetic cancer status! Every day that I awake, breathe and lift is a fantastic bonus for me! Being presently 'cancer-free' means I still have to be consistently 'on-guard' for however many years remain to me!

Still looking forward to the future with a great passion – both in lifting – and now in admin!

Pat.