2006 USAPL Men's National Championships
USAPL Women's US Open Powerlifting Championships
USAPL Men/Women's US Open Bench Press Championships

Miami, Florida
July 6-9, 2006

Meet Director: Robert Keller

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Article by: Robert Keller

Opening Remarks
The 2006 USAPL Men's National Powerlifting Championships, combined with the USAPL Women's U.S. Open Powerlifting Championship and USAPL U.S. Bench Press Open Championship was a great success! This was something a little different and creative than in previous years, but, nonetheless very well received by all of the lifters - which is most important. Again, as in years past, the quality of the lifting, by every account, in each of the three competitions was exceptional! Overall, 58 men, 16 women, and 16 bench pressers showed up to make it a most memorable event indeed. The championship also witnessed four new IPF World records set, which was very nice to see.

The venue for this year’s championships was the Hyatt Regency Hotel grand ballroom, located in downtown Miami, which has played host to the athletes for the 2005 NAPF North American Powerlifting Championships, the 2005 IPF Men's Open World Powerlifting Championships, the 2006 USAPL Collegiate National Championships, the 2006 IPF World Master's Bench Press Championships, and finally this year's Men's Nationals, the Women's US Open and US Open Bench Press Championships. The hotel features many amenities, and the hotel staff was well prepared for the championship and the requirements of our athletes.

Along with great lifting, there were many fun and enjoyable things to see and experience in Miami. Favorite local attractions include South Beach and Bayside Marketplace, which is only ten [10] minutes away by ground or water taxi from the Hyatt Hotel. Overall, Miami proves time and again, to be a wonderful and great destination spot to either come for a vacation or to compete in a USA Powerlifting championship!

Overall the setting and location provided a very nice setting for America's best lifters to showcase their talents -- Now, onto the contest highlights...
Contest Review - Friday, Session I [Women's US Open Championship]
The Women's US Open Championship was added to this year's format to showcase some of the talent of our ever growing and superb Women's program in the United States. Before presenting to you the highlights, I would like to say, now, without question, the USAPL directs thee best Women's powerlifting program in the world. Ok, now for some of the highlights of the lifting. Erin Dickey and Kendra Miller battled all the way to the deadlift, with Kendra taking the title. Believe it or not, Kendra JUST turned 14 years of age and set several new IPF World Sub-junior records. At this age, it will not be too long until she owns them all. If given time, she will blossom into one of the best junior and open lifters ever in this class. Featured lifter Priscilla Ribic again took center stage fresh off her mind-blowing IPF world record deadlift of 250kg/551lbs performed at the IPF/NAPF North American Powerlifting Championships, held in Dorado, Puerto Rico, during June. Needless to say, she did not disappoint here as well, and crushed a 546lb squat, to beat Russian lifter Marina Kudinova's former mark. Incidentally, Marina was found to be positive on a doping test at the Russian Nationals some months previous to this championship. Priscilla should be very proud to have set this mark drug-free -- Congratulations to Priscilla! Also, lining up from the Women's US National Team was Disa Hatfield who had a bit of a tough day, but her marks are remarkable nonetheless. Leonetta Richardson was impressive in her powerlifting debut, and will be a definite contender and force to be reckoned with in the future in this class or beyond. Kim Hooper made her way back onto the platform, with some impressive lifts, even despite some years away from the platform to pursue her personal and business career. Overall, my compliments to each of the ladies for a fantastic show of lifting!

Contest Review - Friday, Session II [52kg/114lb - 67.5kg/148lb Class]
In the 114lb/52kg class, unlike in previous years, Ervin Gainer had some competition this time around in the likes of Jeremiah Welch, the 2006 USAPL Collegiate National Champion out of Louisiana Tech University. At this championship, Ervin looked very sharp and after two year's of misfortune at the World Championships, looks to be on target to medal at this year's Worlds, or as they say "bust". Jeremiah looks, at this point, to be the lifter of the future for this class, once Ervin calls it quits. The 56kg/123lb class, Damarrio "Doc" Holloway continues to make his mark and went unopposed this year. Despite the absence of any competition, he performed quite well making some very impressive lifts, placing him as the man to beat as this year's IPF World Championships in Stavanger, Norway. In the 132lb/60kg class, Hennis Washington of Florida came to this year's nationals suffering from a tough back injury to squeeze out a win over Massachusetts attorney and new Chairman of the USAPL Drug-testing Committee Eric Kupperstein. Eric had the final pull resting in his hands, but was not able to real it all the way in for the win. Great competition between these two fine athletes, nonetheless. Overall, my compliments to each of the lifters!

In the 67.5kg/148lb, emerging powerlifting superstar Caleb Williams was absolutely phenomenal and produced some great marks of 694 in the squat, 473lbs in the bench press, and 584lbs in the deadlift. Caleb's jump to 622lbs on his third deadlift was locked to completion, but slipped to the
deck, just before the down call by the chief referee. I must remind the readers that Caleb is still a junior lifter [only 22] and lifts in a single-ply suit, under strict IPF judging, with no monolift, and most importantly has been drug-tested via IOC guidelines on numerous occasions. This clearly, without question, makes him now the best lifter in the USA at this bodyweight, regardless of federation affiliation. Interesting, Scisney, Whigham and Layman were mysteriously absent this year. However, even if they did show up, they would have had their hands full with teen phenomenon Malek Derstine, out of Pennsylvania, who pulled a 595lb deadlift, on his final pull, to nip Hawaii's Darren Matsumoto. Malek is another rising star that will be very competitive in this class or the one above in year's to come. Overall, there was some very exciting lifting to watch in these classes. Fantastic lifting by all!

Contest Review - Saturday, Session 1 [75kg/165lb & 82.5kg/181lb Classes]
The 75kg/165lb class, opened with ten [10] lifters, with one being a no show, all vying for the prestigious spot on the USA National Team. However, all hopes for anyone to possibly capture top honors, were, again, quickly squashed by Wade Hooper of Louisiana, when he hit an amazing new IPF world record in the squat with 342.5/755lbs. Wade dropped the world record tonnage literally to the floor and rose from the bottom with little to no effort. Wade backed his world record squat up with an IPF world record in the bench press with 242.5kg/534lbs. Wade finalized the day with a smooth final attempt in the deadlift with 601lbs, to give him a phenomenal total of 1890lbs, the most ever, by any American lifter in this weight category, and was just scant 7.5kg/15lbs off of the IPF world total mark as well. Wade looks to be in the driver seat this year at the world championship, where he will go for his third world open title, with nothing standing in his way to stop him. Eriek Nickson of Indiana was a bit off the mark, and bombed in the bench press with what I and some others thought was a good lift on his third attempt. However, after some discussion with the jury, another attempt was awarded to Eriek. But, his additional attempt was met with three reds for clearly no pause. Despite the discomfort of bombing, Eriek displayed great sportsmanship and took it in stride. He is one our finest members and will return next year, I am sure, to avenge this year's misfortune. Eriek continues to demonstrate the eagerness and passion of a future national champion. With some continued fine tuning and adjustments, he will move up the ladder to challenge for this title. Jamie Schupbach of Ohio, Mike Caglilo of Pennsylvania rolled into second and third place, respectively, with some solidly selected numbers. Pat Keenan from New Jersey locked in fourth with his opening deadlift and Texas medical student Huaiyu Tan nipped journeyman Kenny Davis on his final pull to secure 5th place. Philip Wells from North Carolina and local resident of Miami, Edil De Leon rounded out the class. Great lifting by everyone!

The 82.5kg/181lb class was looking to be another nail-biter again this year with the likes of retired Naval Officer David Ricks, and Dan Austin, the head strength and conditioning coach for the University of South Carolina Gamecocks. This class, even despite the absence of Mike Bridges and Steve McLawehlin, has delivered some great match-ups the past couple of years. Both Dave and Dan ended nearly equal in the squat; but, the bench presses told the story this year, and Dan was not able to get one passed. It was rumored that Dan was poised and ready to take a shot at the
legendary deadlift mark held by the Finnish deadlift sensation - Veli Kumpineni. Despite the missed attempts in the bench press by Dan Austin, Dave Ricks kept his assault up on all of his attempts to end with a super 8/9 day, and making him one of the contenders for this year’s world championship title in Stavanger. Todd Straub and Tony Reid battled all the way to the end for the runner-up spot. Todd knocked out all nine attempts with room to spare and Tony only missed two lifts overall to finish a solid third. John White nipped Jamie Stark on his second pull to take the fourth position -- Some great lifting all the way down the line. Super job men! Interestingly enough, it was rumored for some weeks that Rob Wagner was going to come back this year, but again, did not show. Rob has opened a new professional training center in New Jersey, which has kept him occupied the past few years, but with the Nationals being held in St. Louis next year, looks to be the time when he shall return to the platform. Super job by everyone!

**Contest Review - Saturday, Session II [90kg/198lb & 100kg/220lb Classes]**

This particular session proved to be one of the most memorable of the contest. In the 90kg/198lb class, 10+ times national champion, Ray Benemerito did not show, which left the door WIDE open for a new champion to be crowned - Who was up for the challenge? John Pena of Arizona, veteran lifter Greg Jones of Georgia and Trent Wade of Texas were the front runners and battled all the way to the end for the title. Greg Jones was your leader from the outset and never looked back. After his winning this year's title, Greg now has the prestigious bragging rights to say that he won both the Men's Open and Master's titles in the very same year, which is rarely and not often seen or done. The cross-country, over-the-road truck driver, at 46 years of age, appears not to be slowing down and will look to take on the world's best master lifters in Killeen this October, and then will venture for the first time onto the IPF Men's World Championships in Stavanger. This will definitely not be an easy task to perform, but nonetheless, Greg looks to be up for the challenge - Congratulations to Greg for a super year thus far! Moving into second place was the muscular fireplug and Air Force Sergeant, Trent Wade from Texas. Trent, nearly bombing in the squat, roared back in the bench press and deadlift to tie John Pena on his final pull and take second place by virtue of bodyweight. Fourth and fifth place were taken by Kevin McCloskey and Sean DiCataldo. Sean was very pleased with his finish even despite fracturing his right foot some five [5] months prior to the contest. Look for Sean to be in contention next year, once he has fully recovered and is in full health. Timonen, Hunt, Legard, Shelton and Whitcomb respectively, rounded the rest of the class out with some solid and impressive lifting. Gentlemen, my compliments to each of you!

The 100kg/220lb class proved to be an interesting battle between Jason Beck and Mike Mastrean. Always ready for a huge squat, Mike M took the early lead and exploded out in front with a mind-blowing squat of 375kg/826lbs to Jason's hard fought personal record of 362kg/799lbs. From the looks of it, Mike was on course for a great day. Further, if it were not for a missed second attempt, my belief is that he was primed and ready for a squat of 385kg/848lbs, which I am confident to say, he would have made easily. However, as in years past, Mike's old nemesis crept in -- the bench press -- which caused things to unravel and thus failed on all three attempts. Mike's first attempt was locked to completion; but, was
called for uneven extension. His next two were unable to be pushed to
lock out. Despite the setback, Mike will rebound and we look forward to
seeing him back at nationals next year! Jason Beck, on the other hand,
your last year’s silver medalist at the IPF World Championships in Miami,
 motored through another three [3] successful attempts in the bench press
ending with a 247.5kg/545lbs, making him 6 for 6 on the day. With Mike
out, and having a comfortable lead, Jason took two [2] VERY easy
attempts in the deadlift, allowing his third attempt to time out. Overall,
Jason’s total of 942.5kg/2077lbs was just 2.5kg/5lbs under his American
record mark. My prediction was that he had another 20kgs/44lbs
remaining in the tank for a third, if required and called upon to pull, but
Jason opted to wait for the big show in November to pull it out.
Descending into second place, off of Mike Mastrean’s bomb was veteran
national contender Mitch Edelstein from Minnesota. After a tough National
Master’s Championships in Killeen this past May, Mitch regrouped and
went a terrific 9 for 9. Great job Mitch! And, despite what anyone says -
you earned and deserve your second place finish at this year’s
championship. Congratulations for a job well done! Coming in third was
Jerome Williams, who looked like he cut from a slab of granite. He lifted
well and was nipped at the end in the deadlift by Mitch. When Jerome has
more time to train, he will be a lifter to recon with in this class. Finally,
2005 American Open champion Mike Moylen finally made the trip to
nationals that he has always dreamed about. Despite a tough day, he hung
gamely in there to finish in fourth place overall. Notably absent due to an
injury and professional obligations was Mr. Charr Gahagen. We look very
much forward to his return next year, as this class; once again, will erupt
into a battle royal. Also missing was the organization's legendary ironman
Shawn Cain, who has not missed a Senior National Championship in some
20 years. My sincerest congratulations to each of the lifters!

Contest Review - Saturday, Session III [US Open Bench Press
Championships]

Sixteen [16] lifters lined up for the evening bench press show. In short, this
event was a great deal of fun and the powerlifters enjoyed seeing some of
the best bench pressers in the USA attack some of the existing USAPL
America and IPF World records. The lone female entrant, Breanne
Carlsson set a new single lift teenage America record. Following Breanne
was Anton Kraft, who traveled all the way from Denmark to set the IPF
world record at 56kg/123lbs. His successful 180kg/396lbs on his second
attempt ranks him as one of the best ever in the class, and was very close
with the record poundage of 187.5kg/413lbs on his third. Anton plans to
come to the USAPL Bench Press Nationals II, in Charlotte, North
Carolina for another shot at the record. I believe there, he will make it, and
become the best bench presser ever at this bodyweight. Sailor Eric
Olmstead was nearly out after missing his first two attempts, but was able
to rally and make his final attempt with 140kg/308lbs to stay in the game.
School teacher Gary Rubin was not so lucky and missed all three. Mosbeh
Vantes from Egypt was impressive and made 180kg/396lbs on his third.
Florida scholastic wrestling champion Jason Baum tossed his hat in the ring
and lifted well, just nearly missing his final third attempt. Dennis "AKA
Heavy D" from NJ, and the new owner of the legendary Pro-Fitness,
locked out an IPF single-lift world record of 270kg/595lbs, in the 90kg
class, on his first attempt, but was met with three red lights. Subsequently,
Dennis passed his second to allow for more rest and nearly pressed the
weight out on a third. No doubt, he will make this weight VERY soon. More than likely in Charlotte or at the NAPF Championships this coming October in Costa Rica! Bill Shalkowski came to referee and used this meet as a tune up for BP Nationals. He was close on all three attempts with 232.5kg/512lbs, but no [Cuban] cigar. James Townsend, on the other hand, was right on target and pressed three solid presses to lockout, ending with a very impressive and personal record 227.5kg/501lbs. West Virginian lifter Doug Currence had a very nice day and made all three and looked good for more after his final attempt was completed. Doug now feels he is on track for bigger numbers at the nationals in September. Henry Girard was a little off and settled with his opener. The weights he missed, I have seen him make easily in the past. Nationals will be another story. The Florida Bench Press Express in the likes of Mike Ferrantelli, Julian Ulvang, Chris Calvano, and Jim Dundon all set new Florida State records. Mike set a new American single-lift record and is primed and ready for a shot to make both the Mens Open and Masters USA Bench Press Team and take a shot at the respective IPF world records in these classes as well. All in all, a great competition with some super attempts and lifts by everyone! I am very glad that we had this event.

Contest Review - Sunday, Session I [110kg/242lb Class]
The 110kg/242lb class, had some interesting twists and turns amongst the top seven starters. Perennial and multi-time national champion Tony Harris of Hawaii was on course to have a great day, but an old injury to his hip [the pop was heard all the way into the audience] reappeared on his second squat, and caused him to literally limp through the rest of his attempts -- Talk about a one tough umbral! With the door open, Nick Tylutki seized the day, after a near bomb in the bench press, to pull the winning deadlift to lockout. It was a terrific pressure packed pull and after setting the weight down was met with a huge hug by Tony Harris. Tony cheered Nick all the way to the end and even presented the gold medal to Nick on the winner dais - talk about the great brotherhood of sportsmanship. Some say this was the passing of the torch from old to young. However, do not count Tony out as I am sure he will be back next year to reclaim his national title. Nonetheless, this was a great example to our athletes to learn from, or for that matter, rediscover a spirit that makes this sport so great, even despite the age of the internet powerlifting forums. Super job Nick and Tony - We are very proud! Al Fritz also from Hawaii came in third behind his training partner with some very strong lifts. Big Al was followed by Naval Commander Jack Reape, who for an older guy can sure lift some serious weight! The ever consistent Steve Mann from Pennsylvania bombed for the first time in his career, and if he was able to get one bench press in, would have definitely made it interesting when it came time to deadlift. Super bench press technician, Tony Succarotte from Delaware, still recovering from a fracture to his right arm, which has limited his superb bench pressing ability, also, was not able to get one press on the books either. These two bombs allowed the old warhorse and USA Powerlifting Vice-president, Johnny Graham, at 54 years of age, to capture fifth place. It is was related to me that Johnny is now the oldest lifter to have ever competed at the Men's Open National Championship, and now goes into this year's World Master's Championship this coming October to win another world title -- We all wish you great success. Overall, my compliments to each of the athletes for a great session of lifting!
Contest Review - Saturday / Session II [125kg/275lb - 125+kg/SHW Classes]

In the 125kg/125lb class, Tony Cardella of Texas was unstoppable and lifted like a well oiled machine with precision, control and well-balanced lifting to win this class convincingly with an 8/9 day, only missing his second deadlift on a small error with his technique. Tony's 365kg/804lb deadlift on his final attempt was absolutely sensational and made it with room to spare. Look for 375kg/821lbs at this year's world powerlifting championships. From a coaching perspective, Tony is really starting to come into his own and will be a real force to reckon with on the international platform. His 1017.5kg/2243lb total is a personal record. And, at this point, all I can say is there are some lifters in some serious trouble this year in Norway. In second place was Greg Wagner from Minnesota, who returned after a three year layoff, to the national stage, and squatted and bench really big, ending with a super 8/9 performance. Look for Greg to contend for this title next year, when he gets that deadlift cranked up and going! Dr. Patrick Anderson and Scott Ward had a hard fought battle for third place. If Pat was able to get his third squat passed it would have been very close. Nonetheless, Pat was thrilled with his best ever personal record total and his highest placing ever at the Nationals. Scott continues to improve and look for him to total 950kg+ at next year's Nationals. Former Master's National Champion and Tennessee State Chairman, Deron Rogers made the trip to Miami to visit family and enjoyed taking part in the championship while he was in town. He is a great supporter and example of USA Powerlifting and the drug-free principles of lifting. Congratulations to all of the athletes in this class.

In the 125+kg/SHW class, Brian Siders again mesmerized and taunted the crowd this year with some very explosive power displayed on all of his attempts. To me, from my vantage point, his potential at just 27 years of age is limitless and the weights that he selected for all of his attempts, all looked relatively easy. However, despite this tremendous strength, he was barely able to get a squat on the board after being called for the depth on his first two attempts, but was able to regroup and make his final third attempt on a 2-1 call. After the completion of this lift, I could see the jury discussing Brian's third attempt squat. There was discussion of overturning the lift; however, the jury was not unanimous and the squat stood as decided by the platform referees. I am sure Brian will work this entirely out in time for Stavanger. Brian's opener in the bench press just flew off his chest to lockout; but was unable to lock out his final two attempts. When it came time to deadlift, Brian shook off his tough day in the squat and bench press and went to work. Needless to say, Brian mowed through three very easy deadlift attempts, ending with a phenomenal 385kg/859lbs! At this point, I believe he may have been good for as much as 10kgs/22lbs more = 870lbs. From a coaching perspective, Brian's technical expertise has really improved in this lift, and it will not be too long before he "owns" the IPF world record in the deadlift as well. Trust me, as the rate he is moving, it is not too far away. I would say that by next year Brian will own all three world records in each of the lifts, including the total. Stavanger will be very interesting to say the least! Coming in a solid second place, was ever improving Christian evangelist and former IPF Junior World Champion Randall "Big Roh" Harris posted a super 1045kg/2303 total this year, and remarkably, continues to pile on poundage to each of his three lifts in hot pursuit of Brian Siders. His total at this championship ranks him as one of the best super-heavy weights in the world, and the
future looks very bright for this young man, who directs anti-drug seminars in the communities and schools around the country. And, with the continued blessing of the Lord's strength he will be atop this class one day. Finishing in 3rd place, up from his 5th place finish from last year, was Jason Christus of Michigan. Jason made some great lifts and went 9/9, much to the delight of his many family members sitting in the crowd at the championship. In fourth place, Dennis "Niko" Hulslander of Pennsylvania had his final deadlift to lockout, to eclipse Christus for third, but fell off balance right before receiving the down call from the chief referee. In my opinion, when he lifts, he is the spirit and heart of USA Powerlifting. Out this year, but not forgotten, Brad Gillingham sat this one out, and will attend the World Masters Powerlifting Championship in Killeen. Look for some big lifts from Brad in Texas! We look forward to your return next year in St. Louis!

Drug-testing Resume
I will begin by commenting that this section is the preferred piece to report on for each contest article that I prepare. I shall begin by extending my compliments to George Bartotti, for once again for handling the doping control process for the athletes. Professional and very well done! As the championship director this year, I would like to report to everyone that we tested seventeen [17] lifters in all at this championship - 19% off the total participants, which is nearly double the required 10% of the lifters that are mandated to be tested. Moreover, of the collected specimens to be tested, five [5], or nearly 30% of the total samples, were sent on to the IOC accredited laboratory at UCLA in Los Angeles, California, and the other [12] tests, 70% were sent to Quest Laboratory in Las Vegas, Nevada. Overall, these numbers exceed the current WADA and IPF guidelines and standards of for doping control.

Referees, Officials and Staff
From my account, this year's competition witnessed one of the largest staffs ever assembled for a National Championship in the United States. The championship was a success due in large part to all of the following people I have listed below. They are as follows:

**REFEREES**

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I would like to point out for the third consecutive year in a row that all IPF Category II referees were seated on the platform, as well as three [3] international referees on the jury. I must comment that this year’s officiating was some of the best I have seen at any our national championships this year -- Consistent, professional and fair and well within the standard. Again, as in all other previous national championships, state and national level referees were posted in key positions, such as the equipment check, expeditor table, timekeeper, and as marshals in the area leading to the platform to keep it clear, as well as for drug-testing. I would like to again, remind our state and relatively new national level referees that if you wish to gain further experience with your officiating and direction of a championship of this nature, I would encourage you to volunteer for one of these positions at one of our future national or even world championships. It is well worth the experience and effort.

Noteworthy to point out, I would like to compliment Joe Marksteiner for his work in developing an exceptional scoring program, which far exceeds any system available on the market today. Our sincere compliments and thanks go out to Joe for all of his hard work and time in developing this program for the organization.

On a final note, I would like to personally commend and thank all of the volunteers who turned out for this year’s championship - great job ladies and gentlemen!

**Spotting and Loading Team - Garage Ink Powerlifting Team**
The spotting and loading was again brilliantly performed by the Garage Ink Powerlifting Team and was simply outstanding. They are, unquestionably, the best in the sport or for the matter the world and Dennis "Niko" Hulslander should be commended for directing the spotting and loading team from the sidelines, each day leading up to the final session when he mounted the platform to lift. The Garage Ink Spotting/Loading Team has
been invited by the Norwegian Federation, to take part in the World Championships this year in Stavanger. Our congratulations and special thanks for a job very well done!

Outstanding Lifter and Team Awards
The Quest Nutrition Team again won the open team category by scoring six [6] first place victories. Compliments again should be extended to Sherman Ledford and his staff for assembling another strong team. Second place, and narrowing the gap this year once more, was the ever steady Titan Supports Systems Powerlifting Team, lead by Pete Alinez. In third, was USA Powersport Powerlifting Team of Florida, with the Powerplant Powerlifting Team of Wisconsin finishing fourth, and finally the Garage Ink Powerlifting of Pennsylvania placing fifth. Congratulations to each of the team coaches - super job all around.

This year, I added the state championship team title and the results were quite interesting and VERY close. They are as follows:

Ohio - 44 points
Georgia - 43 points [by virtue of first place finishes]
Minnesota - 43 points
Texas - 41 points
Pennsylvania - 24 points

I enjoyed having this state team concept and would request that future championship promoters in the future continue this model.

Overall, two Champion of Champion awards were presented this year. Those two awarded were presented to Caleb Williams [114 - 181] and Brian Siders [198 - SHW]. Both are members of the Quest Nutrition Team. Notably, Brian Siders won the overall Champion of Champions award with the highest Wilks Score of the Championship for the third consecutive year in a row. The Women's U.S. Open Champion of Champions, to no one's surprise, was Priscilla Ribic, and Anton Kraft just edged Mike Ferrantelli for the overall best lifter in the U.S. Open Bench Press Championship.

Marketing/Media Coverage
Marketing wise, I would like to begin this section of the championship by first thanking Ms. Lea Hendrix for her exceptional work in preparing the championship webpage - www.ipfworlds.com/mensnationals

The championship website was one of the best if not the best ever produced [weightlifting or powerlifting] for a national level contest. Her talent is exceptional and a debt of gratitude is publicly extended for all of her time and effort - Thank you Lea! Secondly, I would like to thank Ms. Christy Newman for providing the pictures for this report. Her championship photography is outstanding and many thanks to her for taking the time to take the photos.

On another positive note, full blown media coverage for this event was in effect! The Miami Herald covered the event the week leading up to the start of the championship. Miami- Channel 7 - Fox Sports were on scene each day of the championship. In turn, they placed both interviews of the
lifters and lifting footage of the championship onto the news each night at 10:00! As a grand finale, on Sunday evening, while sitting in the bar, with as many as 40 of us around enjoying the fruits of our labor, we had the pleasure to watch the Sunday Sports Wrap, and to our surprise, were given at least 5 minutes of time, covering the entire contest. The focus was on the fact that the athlete compete drug-free! The championship webpage was our selling point, as it was laden with information, easily accessible for the media folks to get to.

Special thanks to Heather Wasek of the Miami Sports Commission for assisting with having media attend this championship! Overall, a great job turned in by the media and marketing team for this championship - Thanks!

**Championship Sponsors**

Special recognition and thanks go out to our sponsors for this championship. They include the Miami-Dade Sports Commission, Titan Support Systems, Inzer Advance Designs, Quest Nutrition, House of Pain, Ironville, Garage Ink, Ivanko Barbell Company, ER Equipment, APT Pro Wrist Straps, PLGearOnline.com, and Weightlifters Warehouse.

I would like to point out that the sponsors for this year's Nationals were of great assistance in making the championship a complete success. Moreover, without such generous and giving sponsors in our sport, championships of this magnitude would not be possible - So, our hats off to each one of them for their support. More importantly, when it comes time to purchase that new piece of gear, or supplements, think of those sponsors that have aided in the development and support of championships that you have attended. On this note, I would like to conclude that our relationship with powerlifting sponsors needs and can be much better than it is. -- Especially at the international level. Please, when you have the moment, take some time to write a personally written thank you note to each of the sponsors that have assisted you in being able to come to the National Championships this year. Enclose some photographs, results, t-shirts, etc. Needless to say, it will go a long way.

**Final and Parting Thoughts**

This was an exceptional championship filled with much excitement, super enthusiasm and exceptional lifting. Again, like last year, all of the athletes, staff and officials, displayed professionalism sportsmanship indicative of a National Governing Body [NGB] for the sport of Powerlifting in the United States. Additionally, each volunteer and participant should be proud of their respective role in the success of this championship. USA Powerlifting offers it's heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you that volunteered to work the contest.

I shall conclude here, and I look forward seeing everyone next year in St. Louis and the very best of luck with your training and lifting until then. Mr. Harold Gaines, Bob Campbell and Rick Fowler, I am sure in saying, will put on a superb event.

See you there!

**Robert H. Keller**

**Championship Director**