

1003 lbs. AND COUNTING

MINDY ALEXANDER

by BROOK BOWEN

What do Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania and St. Louis Missouri have in common? Not much, being over 800 miles apart, until 1992 when the American Drug-Free Powerlifting Association (ADFPA) hosted the National High school Powerlifting championships in St. Louis, at the Stouffer Concourse Hotel.

An upcoming female powerlifter and track athlete Mindy Alexander, from Tunkhannock, PA, was invited to compete in the national competition, against the best High School athletes in the country.

By the time the meet ended, Mindy had set four new scholastic records, one North American Teenage record as well as winning the Outstanding Female lifter Award. Mindy entered in the unlimited division where she racked up some impressive numbers. She benched 215 pounds, had a 403 pound squat and a 385 pound dead lift, for a total of 1,003 pounds, all of which were high school records.

Mindy's bench press had set



Mindy Alexander is #1

the Teenage National record at 215 pounds. Making her, one of very few women who have broken the 1,000-pound mark. Powerlifting USA 1992 noted "The 1,003 gave her a ranking of third in the ADFPA OPEN not just High School and a ranking of sixth against all comers OPEN"

What makes Mindy's story even more impressive is the fact that she was born with Bi-Lateral

Dysplasia of the hip, and learned to walk with steel braces holding both of her hips at a 45 degree angle.

She also had a learning disability that affected both gross and fine motor control. Because of these handicaps Mindy started school at the Wyoming Valley Crippled Childrens' Center. There she underwent hours and hours of therapy to cure the birth defects.

Mindy's mother Nita Alexander said, "We were told to keep Mindy involved in athletics as a means to keep her strong and flexible."

Mindy gives a tremendous amount of credit to her first school, "I had some really special teachers." Not only did Mindy have the physical disabilities to overcome, but she had emotional ones as well.

Frank Valvano, an assistant superintendent in the Tunkhannock Area School District, and a coach for many years said, "Mindy's older sister Jenny had enough academic and athletic success, that most younger siblings would have attempted a 'different path'. Mindy however, worked through the mental and physical barriers and estab-



lished herself.” Today, Mindy is a National Champion.

Dedication and success in the field of athletics have not always been an easy road for Mindy. “Her marks, both in the weight room and in track are better than most average athletes. However, this is not a gifted athlete. The principles (Bigger Faster Stronger uses) will work for anyone willing to do the work, and to do it correctly.” stated Mindy’s father Ken Alexander.

Mindy has been in the weight room since eighth grade, but was never serious until she didn’t live up to her own expectations in track at the end of her freshman season. She began serious lifting in late October of her sophomore year. After being persuaded by her parents and coach, Mindy decided to enter a local high school squat-bench meet in early March, just four months after beginning to lift. Until then Mindy had only done a 260 pound squat and benched 150

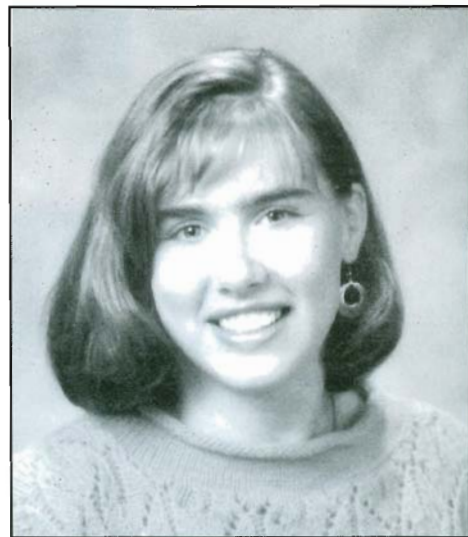
pounds in the weight room.

At the meet, she rose to the occasion and squatted 300 pounds, forty pounds more than her max and had a 165 bench press, a fifteen pound increase. Her coach, Corey Welch then looked for a Sanctioned meet, the USPF (United States Powerlifting), New Jersey High School meet let her in as a guest lifter. She squatted 320, had a bench of 180 and dead lifted 330, again increasing, this time 70 pounds more than her previous dead lift max of 260.

Suddenly Mindy got a lot of attention, but the boys at her own high school were intimidated and she backed off on the competitions. “I lift more weight than some of the guys in my school” continued Mindy, “that’s intimidating to some of them and I understand that.” Coach Welch said, “Mindy is always concerned about her looks and how she presents herself. She must have her hair and makeup looking nice.”

The lifting during the next winter went about the same. However, she became less impressed by the local 2-7 high school football lifters, and decided to enter the high school squat-bench meet in march. She increased a total of 25 pounds going 340 on the squat and bringing in a 185 bench. She continued to lift but unfortunately, track ended her Junior year on a sour note, in spite of her second straight district title in the discus.

Mindy went in to the state meet second seed in AAA, and seemed to lose her confidence while her sophomore sister, Christy medaled ahead of her.



Strong and Beautiful — Mindy

The decision then, was to take a month off to get back together. At the end of June, Mindy decided that if she was such a poor “big meet competitor” in track, that she would concentrate on the lifting and leave the throwing behind her.

Then it happened. Her Father Ken and Coach Welch entered her in the ADFPA North East Pennsylvania, bench contest in August where she pressed a solid 190 pounds, another personal record. In October she entered the ADFPA Central PA open, and racked up squat, bench, and dead lift totals of 360-200-330. The USPF NY State Championships let her in as a guest lifter in February, where she went 380-210-360 for 950 total. Only six weeks later at the ADFPA High School Nationals Mindy increased her total by 53 pounds, hitting the previously mentioned 403-214-385 for a record breaking 1,003 total pounds, in which she set four scholastic records, one national record and won the Outstanding Female Lifter award.

This huge confidence boost transferred straight onto the track.



After Nationals, Mindy Holding the Outstanding Female Lifter Award



She easily won her district title in the discus, with her sister second for the third time, however, the State meet started the same way. Mindy entered second seed, but soon the meet began coming apart. She found herself sixth with one throw left. Mindy pulled herself together and threw her best throw

pounds. In one workout we took her to 315 without her knowing it (remember Mindy never wanted to know how much was on the bar). She did this new max almost as a warmup lift, without racking the bar she turned, in all seriousness, and asked how many more reps we wanted!"



and went from sixth to second! Success under pressure seems to be Mindy's trade mark.

Mindy works out two to three hours a night, three days a week at Tunkhannocks's Margym Health Club. Guiding her are coach Welch and her father. "During workouts, Corey and Dad just keep adding weights. They don't tell me how much, so that I don't feel intimidated," said Mindy. Frank Valvano recalled one instance where, "before a particular local meet, Mindy's max squat was 295

Mindy has been known for her ability to relax as well, during a workout one time she even fell asleep on the bench between sets. While at lifting meets she would joke around. However, as Frank recalled, "there seemed to be a transformation that would occur when we finished her wraps and belt before a squat. We didn't believe she saw anyone or anything other than the bar. Her approach was like a charge. She got under the bar and would spend no time wondering or hoping. She would

do the lift and walk away."

Mindy is not only a record holding athlete she is as "normal" as they come, and is as pretty and feminine as you'll find. Coach Welch remembered a time when "one workout she could not get 325 pounds off the floor a (light lift for Mindy). The next attempt she pulled it off the floor like it was 200 pounds. She explained that once she got it off the floor, she was afraid to let it go because she might have broken a nail."

During her High School days Mindy worked part time at a Grotto's Pizza, as well as working hard in the class room. Her 3.5 GPA helped her get in Ohio Wesleyan University where she is currently attending as a freshman this year — where she is continuing to lift and break new personal and national records.

Bigger Faster Stronger congratulates Mindy on her achievement and wishes her the best as she continues to strive to be the best.▲

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