

# TERRY LONG

**SPECIAL REPEAT ARTICLE FROM NOVEMBER 1983**

**By Dr. Greg Shepard**

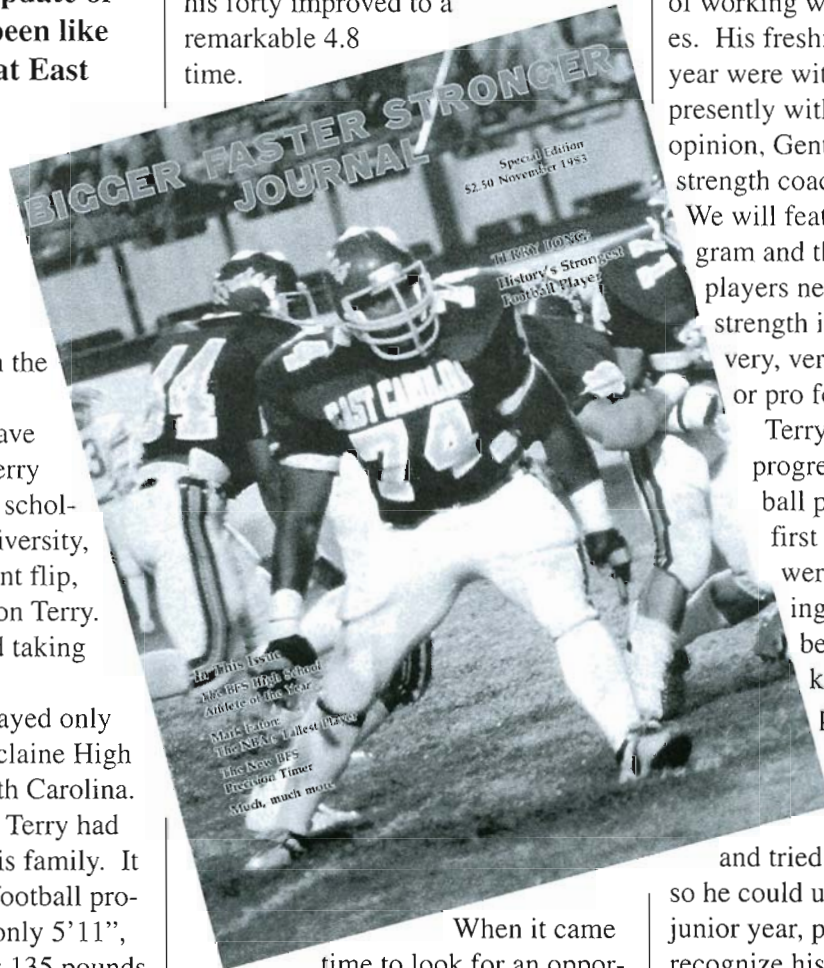
This article was published in November of 1983. Terry was featured on the cover as "History's Strongest Football Player." This is a re-print of the same article with an update of what Terry's life has been like since his college days at East Carolina.

What would you do if a 6 ft. 280 pound man came up to you and did a front flip? I mean jump up, do a front flip in the air and land square on his feet. I think I'd let him have anything he asked for! Terry Long asked for a football scholarship. East Carolina University, on the strength of that front flip, decided to take a chance on Terry. They have never regretted taking that chance.

You see, Terry played only 1/2 year of football at Euclaine High School in Columbia, South Carolina. That was his senior year. Terry had to work to help support his family. It was not a big loss to the football program because Terry was only 5'11", 160 pounds and benching 135 pounds was hard. His forty-yard dash was 4.95. Therefore, Terry thought it best to work instead of playing football.

After high school, he joined the service with the Special Forces. This turned out to be a real blessing,

as it gave Terry the much needed time to mature and to add size, strength and speed. During this two-year period with the Special Forces, Terry worked very hard on the weights. His squat improved to 500, his bench to 405 and his dead lift to 400. His body weight rose to 260 pounds and his forty improved to a remarkable 4.8 time.



When it came time to look for an opportunity to play football, Terry was strong enough, big enough and certainly fast enough. His two big drawbacks were his height, or lack of it, and no real playing experience. But there was something special about

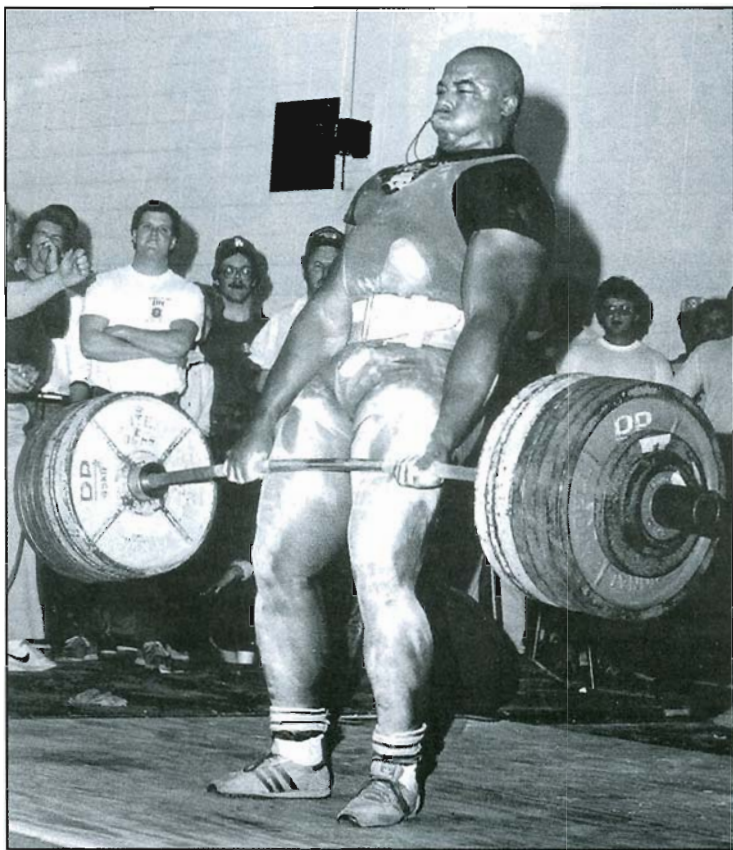
Terry. Yes, he could do a flip and could dunk a basketball, but he also had integrity and a willingness to work hard. Nebraska, Wyoming and East Carolina University offered scholarships, but East Carolina won out because it was "close to home".

Terry has had the opportunity of working with two strength coaches. His freshman and sophomore year were with Jeff Johnson and he is presently with Mike Gentry. In my opinion, Gentry is one of the great strength coaches in America today. We will feature his strength program and the success of his other players next issue. Their team strength is, without a doubt, in a very, very, elite class in college or pro football.

Terry has made steady progress as an athlete, a football player and as a lifter. His first two years of playing were really spent just learning the game. It must have been tough for Terry to get knocked on his behind by players who were much less physical than Terry. The important thing is that Terry got back up

and tried to learn his techniques so he could use his rare talent. By his junior year, people were starting to recognize his talents and his opponents were feeling those talents. Last year he was good enough to be selected as an honorable mention Associated Press All-America.

Then Mike Gentry made a very wise decision. Terry Long was



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He was only 39 pounds off the world record!**

going to lift in the North Carolina State A.A.U. Powerlifting Championships. It was wise because this would be a glorious way to verify Terry's incredible strength. A lot of stories are told about what different football players can do in the gym. The squat is probably the most deceiving. I've checked out so-called 700-pound squatters only to find they only dip down a little — a full foot above parallel. That negates everything. Terry needed verification. Terry probably did not fully realize the significance of putting it all on the line last March in A.A.U. competition.

First of all, it is very difficult to lift in a meet for the first time. There are a lot of little rules to understand that are much different than in training. Many lifters "bomb out" in their first meet. They start too high

in poundage, don't know all the rules, or don't lift correctly. Believe me, it's just very, very tough.

Terry started the powerlifting world buzzing right from the weigh-in. He weighed in at 300 pounds! Terry has very little body fat, so with that much body-weight at only 6-0 in height, you can well imagine even

Mr. T might be in awe of Terry Long.

The squat is the first lift and the most difficult to do in competition. Many times there are long waits in between attempts. You may warm-up too soon and then wait for one hour before lifting. Terry did extremely well as he did an 837-pound squat. Even though he has squatted 900 pounds in training, it was a great accomplishment to do 837 in his first meet. I know of no other football players who have ever topped that and know of only two track athletes who have done more. George Frenn, a hammer thrower, threw 853 pounds for a world record about 14 years ago; and the other is Jon Cole, a discus thrower. However, I'm not even sure if Cole did more while seriously competing in the discus. Certainly, Terry's 837 pound effort should go down in history.

Next was the bench press. Terry had done 560 in training but could manage only 501 in this meet.

Remember, in a meet a referee waits for a pause at the chest, then claps which signals the lifter can begin. No arching is permitted. So this is not surprising. Also, Terry has long arms which makes benching more difficult. Terry's bench, while outstanding, does not put him in the same elite class as the squat. There are probably fifty college athletes that can do that much or more. However, look out, here comes the dead lift.

Now Terry's long arms are an advantage. Combine that with those powerful hips and thighs and we have really got something. Terry Long pulled an amazing 865 pounds! Only 5 others have ever lifted more weight. He was only 39 pounds off the world record! Needless to say, no other football player has ever done more than that. Terry Long is History's Strongest Football Player - period. End of discussion.

Obviously, those wrapped up in the power lifting circles think Terry should forget football and lift in the World Championships. I have



**Terry has an All-American Career At East Carolina**

no doubt Terry could be the first in world history to break the 2500 pound total barrier. I also have no doubt Terry could make the U.S. Olympic Weightlifting Team. He hang cleans 441 pounds now! Our present heavyweights do not have Terry's raw brute strength or even more important, Terry's quickness.

However, my advice, for what it's worth, is that Terry should play football as long as he can. The pro scouts are aware of Terry's shortness but feel his long arms, speed and strength more than compensate. Then, after football, Terry can explore fulfilling his potential as a lifter. Lifters normally do not reach their peak strength until their mid-thirties anyway. I say, get financially strong with football first and then later prove your lifting strength.

Terry Long is married. His wife's name is Tythia. Terry also carries a 2.3 G.P.A. and is majoring in physical education and his minor in business. Mike Gentry states "Terry has a great attitude, we have to keep him from over-training. He is inspiring to others and helps push everyone to their limits. He is well-respected and many try to emulate him. He's really like a player-coach. Terry's real asset from his offensive guard position is his quickness, and he uses his power and strength effectively. His 34-inch vertical jump and his 10 ft. standing long jump also doesn't hurt his chances for the Outland Trophy (the lineman's

Heisman Trophy). We just hope people recognize Terry's ability against the likes of Florida, Missouri, North Carolina State and Florida State University. Terry Long has extremely rare genetics to be sure, but his great habits and desire are the real reason for his success."

Guard. He endured 8 knee, 4 elbow and one shoulder operation. Terry started all 8 years and one year he was an All-Division Guard. However, Terry's pro career was not all a bed of roses. Along the way, as with most people, trials of life pop up to test one's character. What Terry experienced hurt him deeply. We at

BFS were shocked when we heard the media accounts of Terry's situation. The following is his side of the story along with Terry's feature story that we printed in our 1983 Winter BFS Journal:

Steroid abuse by athletes was a constant topic in the 1980's culminating with the Ben Johnson fiasco in the Olympics. There was an alarming public outcry. The NFL seemed to come out with mixed messages. The Dallas Cowboys said they didn't care what Ben Johnson took and would be interested in him as a player. The NFL in 1987 began new rules and tested players for high testosterone levels. If a player had a

ratio higher than 6 to one, it was assumed he was on steroids. Terry Long was well over that ratio and as a result, he was suspended for 4 games.

Naturally, the media made Terry's suspension national news. This was very hard on Terry. He felt sick. What would they say back in North



### **TERRY LONG UPDATE**

After an All-American career at East Carolina, Terry played 8 years for the Pittsburgh Steelers as an Offensive

Carolina? What would his mother and friends have to endure? The next event was even more shocking.

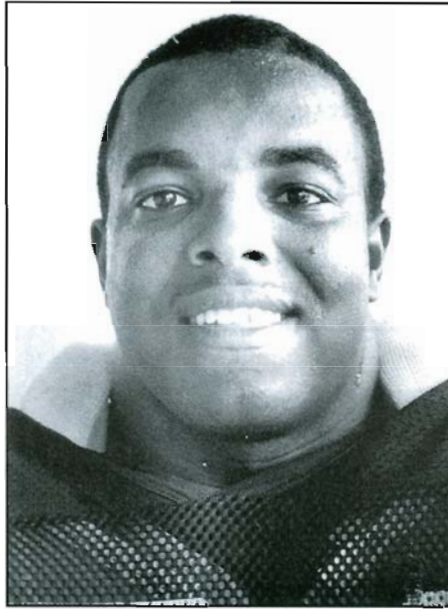
There was no doubt Terry was depressed - most people would be. Terry was from a small community with strong moral and religious values. Therefore, the experience for Terry was doubly gut wrenching. "I did some serious crying," Terry remembered. "I just kept thinking what my mom and the kids back home would think.

"My girl friend became concerned. She overreacted and called 911. She thought I was in the process of committing suicide. They came and took me to the hospital and found out that I had taken nothing and that physically I was alright. I was depressed but in no way did I ever attempt to take my life. The media blew it all out of proportion and wrote that I tried to commit suicide."

The media right or wrong always leaves its mark. We at BFS were dismayed because of what the media reported but we did not know the story from Terry's perspective.

Terry maintains that his testosterone levels have always been high. We have labeled Terry history's strongest football player and his natural strength was awesome. I mean anyone who can Dead Lift 865 pounds in his first meet in college has got to have above average levels of testosterone in his body. I was convinced after our 1983 interviews that Terry was not on steroids in college. That's why we were stunned with the media reports about his alleged steroid use. Why would the strongest pro player think that he had to take steroids?

Terry filed a lawsuit in 1993 against the NFL which is still pending. Terry stated that the NFL has never proven that he took steroids. There have been, according to Terry, 425 NFL players who have been test-



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ed with high testosterone ratios. All of those players received warnings first but Terry got no warning. He was suspended. Terry did say he took over-the-counter ergogenic aides like Yohimbe, Dibencozide and Hot Stuff but nothing illegal.

Yohimbe is not banned by any organization including our U.S. Olympic committee but it also has not been proven to enhance athletic performance. Yohimbe is used sometimes to overcome impotence. Dibencozide is nothing more than the active form of vitamin B-12 but about

5 years ago fraudulent claims were made about it and a scam ensued bilking people out of millions of dollars. Full page Dibencozide ads appeared in all the muscle mags including Muscle and Fitness. Hot Stuff is nothing special but is legal.

The Drug Control Center at the U.S. Olympic Headquarters in Colorado Springs cautions all athletes buying ergogenic aides at gyms or through muscle magazines. They maintain other ingredients could be in the pill or injection that are not listed. In other words, a person could unwittingly buy a pill with Dibencozide or Yohimbe and get those ingredients plus something else that could be illegal and you wouldn't even know it. The possibility exists that the above scenario could have happened to Terry but obviously that would now be impossible to prove.

Terry is currently working as a manager of a food distributing company. He weighs 265 pounds and even though he is 35 years old and has been out of the NFL for three years, he still works out 5X per week. Terry trains at his home and laughs, "I don't lift heavy anymore. There is no need."

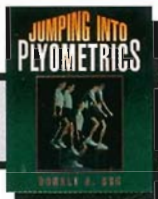
Terry reflected, "The world tends to throw you a curve sometimes. My situation has brought me closer to the Lord. I always tell kids not to give up on life and to make the most of your chances; that education is important along with your family and spiritual ideals."

What will Terry do until his NFL Pension kicks in at age 55? Well, he could stay in his present business or he has thought very seriously about coaching football or being a strength coach at either the college or high school level. If any of you coaches reading this article are interested in Terry, call our BFS offices and we'll put you in touch with Terry.....□

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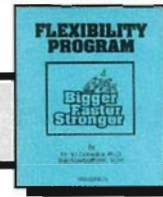


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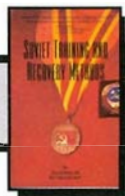


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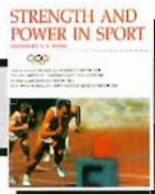


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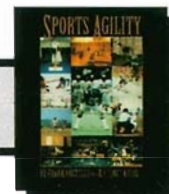


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