

## Fred: A Boldt of Lightning

By: Louie Simmons

Fred Boldt moved from Buffalo, NY, in October 2001 to Columbus to train at Westside Barbell. His bench press was 400 in the 165 pound class and had been stuck there for a year. After training at Westside for 10 months, Fred pushed his official bench up to 495.

Fred trains intelligently. We found his weakest areas and corrected them. First, his form needed work. He would push the bar over his face and miss the lock-out. This was due to a weakness in the triceps and lats. We also noticed that his upper back was weak. Fred had always trained using the progressive overload method. He was fairly strong, but somewhat slow, lacking explosive power. We switched him from a light/heave system to a much more effective system of a dynamic method day followed by a max effort day 72 hours later. This brought his speed up very fast, which is extremely important. Remember that force equals mass times velocity divided by time.

Before Fred trained at Westside he was doing triples with 315, then working up to a heavy single. Now his training weight is 185 with two sets of chains, which add 40 pounds at lock-out. This reduces bar deceleration. After 3 weeks, he switches to mini Jump-stretch bands, which add 85 pounds at the top and 40 pounds at the bottom. The bands also add to the eccentric phase, resulting in a greater stretch reflex. This is accomplished through a gathering of energy in the muscle and connective tissue. This is an extreme workout indeed. Fred performs 9 sets of 3 reps with a maximal eccentric overspeed phase and quick recovery phase with maximum acceleration to completion.

Instead of doing a so-called heavy day, Fred does a maximal effort day using the conjugate method. Fred used to max out each week, going heavier and heavier until he failed, not aware that training with weights above 90% of a 1-rp max for 3 weeks in a row will result in a lack of progress. Now, Fred will switch a core exercise each week and max out with 100+%. This can be done by switching to a new exercise each week. These exercises may include floor press with bands or chains, board press, and overhead band press. Both dynamic and max effort workouts are concluded with first triceps, then lats, upper back and side and rear delts.

Fred used certain key exercises on max effort day. First he used board presses with bands. This exercise raised his bench to 450 (in a meet). Then it stalled out. At the time, Fred could out-board-press me. I knew this shouldn't be because I made a 575 at the same meet.

We had him do straight bar extensions to the throat. A 45 pound bar for 5 reps was hard for him. This was the first key to progress. When he could do 95 pounds for 5 reps, his bench was 480. Now what else could help?

Nest was push-ups. That's right, simple push ups. I would place a bar in the bottom of a power rack and elevate his feet on a 13-inch box. Raising the foot simulates an incline press and forces blood into the upper body. When the feet are on the floor, push-ups work like a decline. More weight or reps can be performed with the feet on the floor. Fred will try for a rep record with bodyweight only or with a 45 or 100-pound plate on his upper back, with one edge of the plate at the base of his neck. He also has personal records with a 150-pound person and a 200-pound person sitting on his back.

Fred's new system of training raised his bench press to an official 459, thus making Westside's record board, which is not that easy.

When push-ups stopped producing results, Fred moved on to dumbbell extensions, two different types. The first is done with the palms facing each other, and the arms are held straight at the beginning of the movement. Then by bending at the elbow, the dumbbells are lowered until one end of the dumbbell touches the delt. Then it is rolled backward until a full stretch is felt in the triceps near the elbows. To start back up the elbows are pulled slightly forward and extended to completion. The second method is to lay the two dumbbells vertically on the chest with the elbows out to the sides as far as possible. This removes the lats from the movement and places most of the work on the part of the triceps that attaches to the elbow. This builds the extension of the elbow and, of course, this is a lot of you lock-out.

At Westside, we frequently hear how good Bill Crawford and his guys are at using their bench shirts. After all, he didn't just break Kenny Patterson's 275 record, he destroyed it with his latest 760 pounds. One of his tricks is to do board press while wearing his contest shirt. First Andre Henry tried it, on max effort day, and made a 635 off two boards and ten made a 620 regular bench. I was told that Tony Hutson made a 635 on two boards in the gym and then benched 660 at a meet, a 55 pound PR. So Fred tried it. After working up to 495 on two boards, he blasted up 520 with a lot to spare.

There is a lot of information out there. Don't be a fool and look the other way. Guys like Bill Crawford are willing to give back to their fellow lifters, and after all, he is a world record holder. If you are a nobody or a has-been, don't complain about the modern equipment, but rather learn to use it correctly. Hell, if your psychologist tells you using a bench shirt is cheating, save that \$200 an hour and I will buy you a bench shirt, you know, one of those items that is allowed according to the rules.

Fred is just learning to find what will raise his bench and what will not. No time is wasted. What's next for Fred? Time will tell. It is important that he stay injury-free and prepare himself for stardom in the middle weights. At Westside we start a lifter in a direction to sooner or later reach the top. And we think Fred will Boldt to the top.