

The Dynamic Duo

By: Louie Simmons

It's not often, if ever, that a club loses a world record by one of their lifters to another club member. Well that has happened more than once at Westside. George Halbert owned the 242 world record bench at 688 pounds, which he did on March 6, 1999, until Kenny Patterson reduced his bodyweight to 240 and made 690 on August 8, 1999.

How do these two men train? What percent do they use, which special exercises do they do, and what do they do on max effort day?

Lets start with speed, or the dynamic method. This is done on Sunday, and Kenny and George train together. Far from meet time, they perform 10 sets of triples with short rest periods, about 45 seconds. Most of the grips are close, the index finger touching the smooth for half the sets and not wider than the little finger touching the power ring.

The percentage used on speed day is never more than 60% of a shirtless bench P.R. It is roughly 50-55% of their contest best.

After the bench sets they do triceps. The triceps are the most important muscles for bench pressing. Kenny and George do a lot of two-arm dumbbell extensions. They both have done 125's for 10 reps. J.M. presses are also heavily used, sometimes working up to over 500 for 3-5 reps. As a guide, J. M. Blakley did 3 reps with 530 in a workout at Westside just prior to doing a 690 bench. To do a J.M. press, lower the bar in a straight line above the throat. Stop 3-5 inches above the body, hold, and press straight up. The delt are taken out of the lift, leaving only the triceps to do the work.

When the old reliable exercises stopped working, George came up with a great triceps exercise: a 5-board press with 150 pounds of band tension. The bar is pushed forward to keep all the stress on the triceps and to minimize delt activity. Understand that George and Kenny do many other exercises for the triceps, but these are three very good ones.

George and Kenny agree that lats are the next important muscle group. They both do a variety of lat work: one- and two-arm dumbbell rows, chest-supported rows, barbell rows with different grips, and pull-downs with a variety of attachments. Sled pulling also supplements the lat work.

For the delts, heavy front raises are occasionally done, but most delt conditioning is done with high reps of front, side, and bent-over raises. Sometimes all three raises are done consecutively, 20 reps in each direction without a rest, for a total of 60 reps. Dave Williams of Liberty University shared

this exercise with Westside. After hearing that Bill Gillespie had done 60 reps with a pair of 45 pound plates, George and Kenny also performed a 60 rep set with 45's.

Some forearm work is done on this day and then they're done, in less than 60 minutes. It is a great advantage that they are able to train together and root each other on to be even greater.

On the second day, max effort day, Kenny and George do not train together. Let's look at George's special core exercises. Although he does countless pressing movements, here are some of his favorites. George does board presses off 2, 3, or 4 boards, working to a max single or triple, sometimes with bands. He also does the 5-board press with bands for the triceps and floor presses with chains, sometimes up to 200 pounds, again working up to a max single or triple. (If George is trying to gain weight, he does triples. If he is maintaining his weight, he will do singles to a new max.) Steep inclines with a close grip help build the triceps and the anterior delts.

George changes the resistance by adding weight, chains, or bands. This has made him one of the few to hold two all-time world records.

Kenny's work on max effort day is somewhat different from George's. During the last 6 weeks before a meet, he will include 2-and 3-board presses. He does these for a single, always for a max. He also does floor press with only bar weight but sometimes with chains if the meet is more than 6 weeks away. Two weeks before a meet he benches in the lightened method using Flex bands connected to the top of the power rack. The bar is suspended from the bands, which reduces the bar weight by 155 pounds. This method works much like a bench shirt. The last workout is 4 days before the meet. Kenny does a rack lockout with a bar position that allows him to lockout his best bench press fairly easily.

Both Kenny and George use countless exercises for the bench. On each max effort day, they do one core lift and 3 or 4 special exercises for the bench. Both the speed day and the max effort day take no more than 1 hour. They also do special exercises for the bench on two other days a week.

George and Kenny have both held two world records at one time or another and now are trading the 242 record back and forth. It doesn't hurt that 21 lifters at Westside have done a 550 or more bench, so the pressure is always on. We believe these two will both bench 700+ at 242.

If you would like to bench like George and Kenny, do what they do: before a meet work on bar speed and push up the special exercises.