

Interview with 100% Raw's Paul Bossi

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Few men are as passionate and dedicated to the sport of [powerlifting](#) as 100% Raw's President Paul Bossi. Paul is the driving force behind 100% Raw's journey into federation prominence.

For more information on 100% Raw Powerlifting, please visit: www.rawpowerlifting.com

Muscle and Brawn. Paul, thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule to answer a few questions. Tell me about your background.

How did you get involved with 100% Raw powerlifting. And how were you involved with the sport of powerlifting before becoming President of 100% Raw?

Paul Bossi. I have been lifting since I was 12 years old. I wanted to be a professional football player so I lifted to help me in my quest which I fell short of. I started competing in meets in 1988 with the APA and WNPF from 1992-2000. I have won a World Championship each year since 1992 a current streak of 17 straight years in 6 different organizations.

I was the North Carolina State Chairman running meets for AAU in North Carolina in 1997 thru 2000 and was on the National board when the big spilt happened. I went with Spero Tshontikidis to help support him in forming his new federation 100% RAW in 1999. In 2003 Spero went back into the Military for active duty and asked me if I wanted to take over and run the federation. I accepted the offer and worked very hard to build it to where it is today.

I could have never brought the federation to where it is today if it were not for the great people who have supported me over the past 6 years. I feel you are only as good as the people who surround you and I have been surrounded by many great people. I would like to list them all but I would need a few pages, but to any of you who are reading this thank you for you support and God Bless.

Muscle and Brawn. In the 10 years you've been with 100% Raw, have the challenges of running a fed changed? And has the sport of powerlifting changed?

Paul Bossi. In the past 10 years in which I have been involved with 100% RAW Powerlifting Federation the sport has changed so much. Back in 1999 the word RAW did not mean anything because there were so many assisted/equipped lifters and so few (RAW) non-equipped lifters. There were no RAW only competitions and you would be lucky to see 2-3 adults lifting RAW. You would see teens and females lifting RAW only because teens did not know about the equipment and it was so uncomfortable for the women to use a shirt. Most organizations did not offer records for RAW lifters or special divisions for RAW lifters so everyone was grouped together. So if you wanted to be compete you needed to wear equipment just to try to be competitive.

Then in 1999 when 100% RAW was formed it gave lifters a choice. Our first meets had incredible support with more than 100 lifters in each of our meets. From 2000-2005 many of the federations in our country did not and would not offer RAW divisions or records for those lifters. In 2006 you started seeing almost every federation start adding RAW divisions and some added RAW records. These are the same people and federations who laughed at us just a few years earlier. They saw the trend changing and lifters wanting to lift RAW so they realized if they wanted to continue to keep the federations running they needed to change with the times or see the bus pass them by.

RAW lifters now at hitting numbers that equipped lifters could not get 10 years ago. If you look at the top 100 in PLUSA from 10 years ago and compare them to the results of the top RAW lifters of 2008-2009 you will see that many of these RAW lifters will be right up there with the assisted/equipped lifters of 10 years ago.

The biggest challenge in running a federation these days are that there are so many organizations in our country there is no validity in becoming a National Champion. Also due to the fact there are the 40 different federations in the USA, meets are smaller for everybody no one wants to travel because somebody is running a meet either sanctioned or not in their backyard. Lifters have choices which are good, but this is bad when it comes to credibility or a meet or title you may have won.

I do not care what others are doing, I am just focused on our federation and making it the best I can for our lifters. We run very organized events, use good equipment, give out the absolute best awards, keep our website updated and treat our lifters like family. This has been our recipe for success over the past decade.

Muscle and Brawn. Paul, I want to talk [about Prohormones](#). 10 years ago, prohormone use was in its infancy. Now, you can hardly go to a [bodybuilding](#) site and not see prohormone talk. But I don't see as much chatter about prohormones on powerlifting sites. Do you feel prohormone use is still prevalent among lifters in federations that drug test, and has there been any special challenges for you and 100% Raw when it comes to prohormones and drug testing?

Paul Bossi. We had to change our wording on our drug testing policies because of pro-hormones. We used to say if you can buy it at GNC it is legal, but then guys were testing positive for steroids. Now some are trying to use GNC as a scape goat and that is not fair. They would test positive and say they were taking a product from GNC so that had to be changed. At that time GNC sold pro-hormones but I do not want to say that they did anything wrong because I know first hand they have a group that tests their products and makes sure they are safe for competition. Our new wording is that you are responsible for what you put into your body. If you decide to take a product make sure you do your homework and sure it is safe to use and it does not come up positive. Lots of lifters today think there are drug free because they do not consider themselves on steroids because it is a pro-hormone. But if you look at the label and read it you will see that the ingredients in these products are indeed steroid. I remember reading a bottle of M1D which said it was metheltestosterone which is a steroid. When the lifter came up positive for this banned steroid they argued with me saying it was not a steroid. The lifters need to read the label and research the banned drugs if they want to lift in a drug free organization. I think many lifters today will take these products and lift in non-tested organizations.

We have caught more lifters in the past 2-3 years on steroids than we did in the previous 7 years combined. I think this is because the lifters are not aware that pro-hormones are not illegal and take them before getting good advice or doing any research. I feel the pro-hormone epidemic is becoming worse than ever and something needs to be done soon before someone gets killed never mind just failing a drug test.

These are basically legal steroids and we all know what the adverse effects are from steroid use. My advice to any lifter out there wanting to pro-hormones make sure you do your homework and research the product thoroughly before purchasing and using it.

Muscle and Brawn. Let's talk about unity. As a follower of powerlifting, it is easy for me to get confused trying to keep up with all the federations. I can't imagine how chaotic the sport must look to a casual fan. What are your thoughts about attempts to unify the sport, and do you realistically see this happening in the near future?

Paul Bossi. As far as Unity goes, good luck. There are too many chiefs and wannabe's in the lifting world. I like that there is variety so lifters have an option to lift RAW, ASSISTED, DRUG FREE OR NOT. But to have 50 so called organizations in our country is totally ridiculous. I will not say a bad word about any of them or try to make us sound better than other organizations either.

We do our thing and try to do our best at it. If lifters chose to lift with us great, if not oh well have fun and maybe some day you can lift with us. The more we try to Unite the more we grow apart. Last year at the WDFPF Worlds the guys from Europe were making fun of all the federations in the USA. I hope to see it all unite one day but I will not hold my breath.

Muscle and Brawn.What are your goals for 100% Raw over the coming years. And any advice for lifters looking at 100% Raw as a fed?

Paul Bossi. I want to continue to promote drug free RAW powerlifting and make 100% RAW into the premier drug free RAW federation in the world. I want to be able to give the lifters a place where they know the playing field is level. We welcome all drug free RAW lifters and I will continue to promote these types of meets.

My advice to the young up and coming lifters is to work hard and stay clean. Stay away from drugs as they will kill you in the long run and make life horrible for you. There are no short cuts in weight training you need to do it the old fashion way. You need to work hard and earn it.