IRON MAN Magazine Website Exclusive Interview with Powerlifting Federation President, Paul Bossi. Read all about it and check out some video clips of Paul's 500+ pound raw and drug tested competition benches here:

http://www.ironmanmagazine.com/blogs/hardcorepowerlifting/

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As a strength sports journalist, I spend a lot of time on the bodybuilding message boards. I read the criticisms, questions and doubts that are expressed about the various powerlifting leagues. The majority of these comments and remarks are made from behind the security of a screen name and a non-identifying avatar. And the people who rush to defend or promote said organization often aren't who they publically claim to be either. Bottom line, most people are uncomfortable with standing behind their true thoughts and values for fear of public retribution and backlash.

So, knowing that every serious sporting pursuit has a serious press corps following it, I set up a discussion time with President Bossi in order to give a top exec in one of the larger powerlifting circles the chance to answer the critics and the curious. If you're tired of all the political double talk and rhetoric in the news these days, here's your chance to get some straight answers from a person who wants to be a real leader.

Find out how a federation comes up with its membership numbers claims. See the difference between drug testing and actively drug TESTING. Here from one of the early crusaders for bringing back classic (raw) powerlifting. And get the satisfaction of learning why Power Curling's as cool as your "inner teenage self" wants it to be.

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Straight Talk From a Powerlifting Federation President

Sean Katterle of HardcorePowerlifting.com Interviews 100% Raw Federation President, Paul Bossi

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Sean Katterle – Your organization's been around going on 12 years now and you've accumulated thousands of federation members on paper. Are all of those lifters currently active? Do all of them still hold up-to-date membership cards? And do the current card holders all compete at least once per year?

Paul Bossi – Sean we are up to 6100 plus members total for our federation. Not all members are current and active. It seems that most members have a powerlifting career of about 2-4 years and then you don't see them again. We have about 25 of our members that have been with us for 5 years or longer. We may have someone compete with us and not see them for a few years and then they are back. Many have other obligations like family, kids, work or recovering from injuries.

Sean Katterle – That rings true. I joined and lifted in your federation in the fall of 2009. Then I took all of 2010 off as I was partially recovering from the injury commonly know as "weakness". Now I'm back and ready to outlift all the women who *dare* face me in Sin City, ha!

Paul Bossi – Most of the current lifters compete in 3-6 meets a year. Most will compete with their state chairman and come to our national or world events as well. One particular person who I always mention is a Mr. Ira Brooks. He is a 66 year old master lifters who is # 422, meaning he has been around since year one. He is the longest active member next to myself for the federation. He supports the federation every year and competes in about 4-6 competitions a year and holds many state, national and world records with our organization.

Sean Katterle – From which states do you draw the most competitors? Which states are the most saturated with contestants and competitions? Are there any states where you don't have any lifters at all?

Paul Bossi – The states with the biggest following of lifters are from North Carolina, Virginia, Arizona, Nebraska and New York. The next level would be the New England states region, Maryland, Florida, Ohio, Illinois and Nevada. We just signed on new chairmen in the following states and should be seeing big things coming from them soon: Texas, California, Florida, New Jersey and Minnesota. We are always looking for new state chairmen and meet directors in all states. The states currently hosting the most events are North Carolina, New

York, Virginia, New England Region (Vermont) and Arizona. Each of those states runs about 5 or more meets a year. We have representation of lifters in 46 states.

Sean Katterle – An integral part of any international, amateur sports federation is having state or regional representatives. Are there states where you're needing to still recruit chairmen? What are the qualifications for interested applicants? If someone reading this feels that they're competent and qualified, who and how do they contact your business office?

Paul Bossi – This is so true Sean. Each year we are growing larger and larger and many new meet directors and chairmen come on board with our organization. Anyone interested can email me directly at rawlifting@aol.com or go to our website at www.rawpowerlifting.com, look for the picture of Uncle Sam and click on it. This will pull up a form to fill out and guidelines for becoming a chairmen or meet director. Interested parties are also welcome to call me at 252-339-5025 but keep in mind that I am on the east coast so please consider the time changes from around the country when calling.

Sean Katterle – There's quite a number of powerlifting federations who claim to be drug tested and/or "drug free" yet the net(s) they have in place to catch cheaters is flimsy at best. On your website it states that your federation tests a minimum of 10% of the total field at each competition. I'm assuming that that's the Top 10% by formula? Or do you simply leave it up to your officials to choose who gets tested at "random". The reason I ask is that I've been to events where sixty year old men and collegiate women are singled out for testing yet half of the open division winners are *not* checked for performance enhancing drugs. I don't think anyone's concerned with whether or not the office executive benching 120% bodyweight is using steroids. I think people want the record setters and open division champions to have to prove themselves to be clean. Do you agree?

Paul Bossi – Sean, this is a really good question and I am glad you asked it. You have hit the nail on the head and I will do my best to answer it thoroughly. First of all with our name being "100% RAW" many people think we are 100% drug tested and no that is not true. 100% RAW means that we do not allow assistance equipment like (bench shirts, squat suits and briefs, knee wraps, elbow sleeves, knee sleeves, etc.). All we allow are your basic safety equipment (belt and wrist wraps). Now on to the question at hand. In our rules we test a minimum of 10% of the lifters. At the Nationals and World events we test about 20% of the lifters. We have a rule that if anyone breaks an open World records they must be tested and the test must come back clean and negative. In some instances they come back diluted and they will not get credit for the record. If they come back positive the will receive a 2-3 year ban depending on the banned substance in their body. If it is a pure steroid it will be a 3 year ban, if it is an over the counter banned substance then a 2 year ban will be put in place. We test the top lifters in a meet and will do our best to share the testing information with our meet directors so we do not retest a lifter who was tested the previous month and lifted the same weight. We are always working on improving our testing procedures and policies as we use the WADA guidelines which are posted on our website.

I know first hand what you're saying about the master lifter that lifted light weights yet gets drug tested. What a waste. A few years back I had one of our officials perform drug testing at the worlds and tested a master lifter who benched 135lbs. Now that was a waste of a test and the fact that he was 70 something and competing if he was on steroids God Bless him. I can only hope to be 77 years old and to be lifting at that age nothing short of a miracle. Don't get me wrong I would not advise or approve for a 77 year old man to do that I am just using this example as to why we select the top lifters to be tested. Sometimes there are no really top lifts so then we will see if there is anyone who might have the look. If not then the top lifters using either the Schwartz or Wilkes formula or our pound for pound formula will be used to find the top lifters of that meet.

Sean Katterle – Continuing on the drug testing note, does your federation ever conduct out-of-meet drug testing? I've personally seen steroid using lifters pass urine analysis because they knew the test was coming up on meet day so they made the proper preparations to piss clean. Some of your world records are pretty fantastic, even for guys who ARE stacking PEDs. For examples, on the bench you've got James Love raw benching 418 @ 165, Dennis Cieri with his outstanding 529 @ 198 and, of course, Rock Lewis hitting 600 @ 242 (which makes him the 3rd strongest man IN HISTORY at that bodyweight on the bench whether drug tested or not!) Since your federation's published goal is to run an organization that "100% drug free" have you ever sent a representative over to one of these guys' gyms, unannounced and months out from contest time to ask them to fill a cup? Now I'm not knocking these guys at all. Rock Lewis is a former MHP Kings of the Bench champion and Dennis Cieri's sponsored by my company's main sponsor. They amaze me whether they lift drug tested or not! I'm just trying to get a clear picture of how hard The 100% RAW Federation's working to CATCH the people who seem suspicious, meaning super ripped, super swole, super humanly strong, ect.

Paul Bossi – Yes, we do out of meet drug testing. Just ask Beau Moore. In 2006 I went to the NERB competition in which he competed and, when he was done, I asked him to come with me and he did so without any problems and passed his test. Even though that was a non-tested, non-sanctioned event meet for RAW lifters. If he is going to be a member of our organization he will need to stay clean. It's our name he carries with him and when he lifts in our federation and breaks records, I do not want lifters to associate him with drug using. I do not have a problem if a man chooses to do that just please respect our federation and do not come here to compete. For the most part it has worked out well for us over the years. We have had our share of users who have been caught and they have been banned as well. I don't know what they are thinking as it is pretty easy to pick them out.

Now, lastly, those names you have mentioned. All three were tested and tested clean. Those guys have been tested multiple times and are great lifters. Personally, I think Dennis Cieri is the greatest, pound-for-pound, DRUG FREE, RAW benchpresser in the world. He is awesome and someone I respect to the fullest, even though he has been my nemesis since 1989. He and I have been battling since 1989 when we were both in the 181lb class, breaking each others' records using bench shirts and only doing 385lbs. I am so glad I am not in his class anymore and it is funny to see how far we have come through the old fashion method of hard work and dedication.

Sean Katterle – I'm a supporter of your organization and your promotions are where I often choose to compete. As part of my company's support, I post up contest announcements for your big events on some of the more popular bodybuilding and powerlifting message boards. And my announcing the Power Curl contest never fails to get a few laughs and smart ass remarks from readers. I think a lot of people are under the mis-impression that your power curl events are the same as, say, The Olympia Expo's Battle of the Biceps, which is really a bent arm, lower back swing, reps challenge. Or that your idea of a power curl is a cheat curl where it's more of a full body lift than a test of biceps strength. Please explain to the uninitiated what makes your power curl division a legit strength contest. What rules are in place to best assess who has the strongest biceps in the line-up? What rules and guidelines make it a STRICT curl as opposed to what we see wannabe bodybuilders do in the gym every day? What's a competitive amount of weight in the power curl for a 200 pound man in the prime of his athletic career?

Paul Bossi – Sean you have some great questions and this is another. In our federation our test of strength for the biceps is called The Strict Curl. It is not the curl, power curl or free standing curl. We call it the Strict Curl for the reason that it is very strict and virtually impossible to cheat without getting red lighted.

You will stand on a platform with your butt and shoulders up against the platform wall. There are 3 commands in this lift (curl, down and rack.) You will not get the curl command until your arms are hanging straight down their side without any bend to them. There is no back swinging involved and no using your thighs to get the momentum of the bar going. Either action will constitute a red light. If your buttocks or shoulders come off the platform wall at any point of the lift the lifter will be red lighted. Sounds easy? Then try it. If you come down too fast and your shoulders get pulled off the platform wall then that curl will not get passed.

A good lift for a man that weighs 200 pounds and is in great shape would be around 150lbs. The world record in our federation for the most weight being done at 198 is 170lbs, which was set by Jason Carson of Illinois in 2008. Jason was in the submaster (35-39) division when he performed this lift.

I know there are a few other organizations out there that have a curl division. Their rules are different from ours and their requirements are not as rigorous. In 2007, when we first introduced the Strict Curl, we did it free standing and many lifters were swinging to get the lift. I hated this and decided either we are going to make this a very Strict Curl or we are not going to offer it. There was too much subjectivity and discretion involved for the judges. I did not want the judges to have to make a subjective call because that is were you get all you negative publicity from and I do not want any part of that. I ran one meet myself free standing and immediately went to the strict curl. In 2008 we retired all of the records from 2007 and began the new Strict Curl records and only used those from 2007 that were done using this method of Strict Curl.

The big milestone is the 200lb barrier. We have had a few guys talk about breaking that 200lb barrier but the closest to date is John Franks of Pennsylvania who has the world record of 184lbs in the 242lb class. Who will be the one man to break the 200lb barrier in the Strict Curl, RAW and Drug Free?

Sean Katterle – From September 30th thru October 2nd, the 100% RAW Powerlifting Federation's going to be holding your Single Lift World Championships in Las Vegas at The Riviera Hotel, Ballroom and Casino. I'm planning on being there and I'll be competing in at least one, if not more, of the three events you're offering. My first question is, why don't you offer a single lift squat division? My guess is that the squat is a more popular contest lift than the power curl, no?

The second point I want to cover is the title itself. As you already know, there's over 20 powerlifting federations

in the USA alone. Almost all of them run national and world championships. While the 100% RAW Federation's ahead of most of these upstarts, whose "worlds" is more like a tri-states, your organization's worlds will still largely consist of American and Canadian lifters. My guess is that 95% of your total number of competitors will be from North America. What's the thinking behind an amateur federating holding a world title event? Is it simply a marketing move? Is it about positioning? So a smaller organization can't make themselves out to be more important than yours? I'm aware that practically every federation plays this name game. I'm just wanting to know your reasons for labeling this big show the way you have. Doesn't it seem more like an "international" or a "North American" more than a "worlds"?

Paul Bossi – Sean, not many lifters like the squat therefore we have not had a call for it to become a single lift event. I am not trying to recreate the wheel. I just went with what our founding powerlifting fathers set out for us and ran with it. If I had to guess why there are single lift records for the bench and deadlift but not the squat, my guess would be this: When competing in a full powerlifting meet, warming up on the squat and performing 3 push-to-failure lifts, your body's energy levels have been sapped some. Therefore your bench will be slightly less than if you were fresh. And the same goes for the deadlift but even more so because, not only did you squat but you benched as well. So now your body has lost enormous amounts of glycogen and ATP. So there is no doubt your deadlift will be less than that if you were fresh out of the gate.

In my opinion I think feel this is why the single lifts were put in place. You have guys who do not want to squat and just bench so naturally their benches should be better than a guy that does full power. Just look at the records for full powerlifting, 95% of the bench records for powerlifting are considerably less than that of single lift bench. and guys who only deadlift have much higher deadlifts than that is guys who do full powerlifting deadlifts. Now reason for no squat only records, I feel it might be because the squat is the 1st lift performed and no matter what, you are fresh and right out of the gate so the lifts would not be any different and there are no excuses a lifter can use. A guy can squat big and take 2 token lifts if he wants the record for a squat. I have never saw a lifter only squat and just want the squat record. I have been in this sport for 23 years and never saw this but this is just my open opinion.

About the Worlds being 95% North American lifters. That is currently the case, but each year we are growing more and more. Last year we had lifters from 5-6 countries, including a team from the Ukraine, in Las Vegas and at our big show in Virginia. Our international affiliations have been growing and I will be bringing a Team USA to the Ukraine on July 23-24 to compete for the European Asian Championships.

Sean Katterle – As stated, your federation's been around for over a decade now. For years the only two powerlifting magazines in the biz were at the mercy of the ad revenue from the super shirt and powerlifting suit mfgs. The gear companies were like the biggest and baddest lobby on the hill. They largely controlled the message and the message was that the shirt/suits were for "support" over numbers boosting, that the strongest lifters in the world were the top equipment lifters and that raw lifting was for beginners and for amateurs (they always labeled the unlimited gear division as "pro".) Hard working promoters like yourself were on the back burner while the equipment only federations were getting the lion's share of the press. I know this because I worked for one of those powerlifting magazines for years and the raw federations were hardly ever mentioned or acknowledged. From 1996 till 2006 I don't remember any raw benchers getting any covers except James Henderson and Scot Mendelson's 700+ pound raw benches. And those simply couldn't be ignored! In the winter of 2005 I'd seen enough and I was sick of the fake lifting and the obscene artificial boosts the equipment specialists were getting out of their rebound apparel. My company started up The Kings of the Bench and, a year later, The Clash of the Titans. To my knowledge, these were some of the very first raw powerlifting contests that paid out thousands of dollars in prize money. And, no surprise to you and me, I got viciously attacked on the internet message boards and from behind closed boardroom doors. Companies were paying to block us from being a part of tradeshow weekends. They were allegedly sponsoring C grade lifters with free equipment if they'd personally go after me online. And the techno tricksters broke out a whole laundry list of why they wouldn't lose the shirts and suits to lift raw against our line-up.

Now, almost every single one of these amateur federations offer not only a raw division, but many a raw nationals and a raw worlds! At first they tried to label the raw divisions "novice" but it soon became apparent that the vast majority of the top lifters were the ones who didn't want or need a super shirt or suit to hoist the weight up for them. Of course, most of these multi-ply equipment feds' raw divisions still allow for sloppy, ultra liberal interpretations of squat depth, bench pauses, bench lockouts and so on, but they're more than happy to take competitors' sign-up fees and to allow them to get on stage without the elastic rebound gear. So, my questions to you are:

How do you feel about the multi ply federations (SPF, IPA, APF, UPA, ect.) starting up raw divisions, allowing the lifters to get questionable lifts passed and to avoid the walkout in the squat (monolift) and then trying to make "all time" raw record claims?

What's your take on these same federations offering a drug tested raw division without really implementing any serious protocol for drug testing?

And furthermore, what's your reaction on the IPF finally coming around and starting up a raw division? There's no question they're the biggest, amateur, equipment lifting federation in the world. Do you think it was simply a matter of the raw lifter sign-up/membership revenues being a bigger cash cow than the shirt/suit mfg sponsorship checks? I think the only drug tested, equipment only, international federation left is the WABDL......think we'll see a raw division there soon too?

Paul Bossi – Very interesting view and thoughts on this matter. You failed to mention a few other organizations out there that fall in this same or similar boat (APA, WNPF, AAU, USAPL and USPF, just to mention a few more.) I am not saying it is right or wrong, but these organizations did not have RAW divisions in 2004-2005, Then, as time went on and the return of raw lifting to the forefront became more evident, they one by one started offering RAW divisions.

Yes, I think the trend of lifting is moving towards RAW lifting. I think the equipment days have seen their best years behind them. The gear reminds me of collecting baseball cards back in the early 1990's. The companies came out with so many sets that they put themselves out of business. There used to be 4-5 card shops in each town. Now you cannot find a shop anywhere and, if your lucky, you can buy a pack of cards at Walmart. Same thing here with the gear, it got to the point where the original justification for the gear (support) was lost. Guys don't buy the gear for support, they buy it for the added amount of weight it gives them. The problem is you are only as strong as your weakest link so if you can only bench press 375lbs, but you have this shirt on and your attempting 615lbs, then that's a problem waiting for a disaster to happen. Tendons and bones were not made for that kind of stress to be put on them and what was suppose to protect lifters ended up hurting lifters. As far as the federations that allow bogus lifts to pass, it is what it is. There is no need for me to comment on this because it's like trying to reason with a drunk; you get nowhere. Today, with internet video being commonplace and expected, lifters from all over the world and in every language bash the heck out of the lift and the federation when attempts get passed that shouldn't be. There are three judges for a reason and sometimes there might be some tough calls. But when all three officials give white lights on a bogus lift then that will do more harm than good for a federation. Personally I like when I see other organizations do this because it gives us more credability. As for the guys going for the highest ALL-TIME RAW total, I don't think our guys in 100% RAW have much of a chance to claim that title. When these claims are made they do not differentiate from DRUG FREE TESTED lifters and non-tested lifters. With that being said it is incredibly tough for our guys to claim those titles. If someone does, then God Bless him because that is one special human being and I can promise you he was tested by our officials.

For the feds that say they test, but test only the people that they know will pass, if that's how you want to run a business then good for you. The positive side of that is that some of those lifters who lost to the guy who was juiced up will get upset and eventually leave that organization and join ours because they want to compete on a fair, level, playing ground. So, personally I don't care if any organization ever tests any lifters. It will only help us out in the long run.

Regarding the IPF, I think they saw the writing on the wall with RAW lifting. They probably figure there is more money out there with RAW lifters memberships than what the equipment companies are giving them. Again, I think this will help us out in the long run. The IPF will act as a training ground for more RAW lifters and since only the #1 guy in each country and weight class can compete in the world championships with them. All these other lifters will want a piece of the pie and will want to claim a world title from another organization. They will have an opportunity with us to compete for a shot at claiming that title.

I am not going to say we are any better than any other powerlifting organization in the world. But, what I will say, is that when you come and compete with us you will be welcomed and you'll be treated with respect and dignity. What you can expect with us is that true drug testing will be performed, strict, fair and consistent judging will be upheld and a fun atmosphere will exist for lifters and for their family and friends. And we will always uphold the principles that 100% RAW Powerlifting Federation was built on; Honor, integrity and loyalty.

Sean Katterle – At your upcoming Single Lift Worlds will there be DJ'd music?

Paul Bossi – Yes we will have a DJ there for this competition. For the past 8 years we have been on the east coast and used Kelly Nolan of Lone WOLF PRODUCTIONS who has done an incredible job for the lifters. Each lift comes out to their own personal music which really pumps them up and psych's them out for their lift. I am currently looking for someone in Las Vegas so if you know of someone please let me know.

Sean Katterle – What companies, besides Hardcore Powerlifting (selling House Of Pain Ironwear) have signed up to run vendor booths? If a marketing exec is interested in running such a booth at your Riviera show, who and how do they contact your office?

Paul Bossi – We will have Jostens "The Championship Ring Company" there for the winners to purchase their newly designed 2011 ring. We offer a new style each year and also offer the previous years styles as well for all winners to purchase on the spot. Bodybuilding.com has been a huge supporter and sponsor each year with their manufacturing the event t-shirts. SSP Nutrition has just sponsored our American Challenge and is coming on board for the Worlds as well. And I am working on finding a few other companies to come in on this event. Anyone interested in a vendor's booth can email me directly at rawlifting@aol.com or go to our website at www.rawpowerlifting.com They are also welcome to call me at 252-339-5025 (during regular east coast business hours only please.)

Sean Katterle - I heard RxMuscle.com will be in attendance as a media sponsor?

Paul Bossi – Yes. RxMuscle.com will be in attendance and doing all of our media coverage for this event.

Sean Katterle – What kind of deals is The Riviera offering as part of their hotel support? Room rates? What's the deadline for getting that rate? Any other attractions or specials you'd like to announce for that weekend? And where do new lifters go to get an entry form for this championship?

Paul Bossi – The Riviera has a special price for our lifters to keep them all in one of the newly renovated towers for \$72/night. The deadline to order and reserve your room is September 8th and you can do so by calling 1-800-634-6753 and mentioning the 100% RAW Powerlifting Federation.

Any lifter who registers before August 1, 2011 will receive a free cross-over division entry and a t-shirt. You can get an entry form from our website www.rawpowerlifting.com or by emailing me at rawlifting@aol.com and I will send you a form as an email attachment. This competition will be open to the first 300 lifters and then registratrion will be closed. So get your information in ASAP as it is really starting to fill up.

Sean Katterle – Well Paul, this all sounds like a great Las Vegas sports weekend! I'll be making the drive down with a whole cargo van full of House of Pain apparel and I'm looking forward to testing myself on your prestigous platform again. And, on the Power Curl note, you've got me seeing that contested lift in a different light now. In my head I'm reliving my 80s era lifting sessions where bicep curling was the core lift of every teenagers' power training protocol. Besides, if I can save up enough money to finally buy that T-top Camaro, I'll want the gold, power curl championship medal to hang on my rearview mirror. Can you say "Chick magnet"? Thanks again for your time and for your straight forward and well thought out replies. I look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas in a few months.

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