

By Chuck Korbar

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Don Reinhoudt – More Than Just Muscles

If you were putting together a picture of the strongest man in the world in your mind's eye, what would he look like?

He'd probably be about 6-3, weigh over 300 pounds and have muscles bulging all over. Right so far, but does the rest of the scenario fit?

Don Reinhoudt, 37, of Brocton, is the world's strongest man. He's the first person to ever win four World's Powerlifting Championships (1973-76) and won the CBS Sports World's contest in 1979.

But Don Reinhoudt is not just muscles. "At 250 pounds he could still dunk a basketball. If things had broken right, he might have played college basketball," recalls Chuck Johnston. Don's junior varsity football coach.

Would you go up for a rebound against the world's strongest man?

He weight trains in his own gym with National Football Leaguers like Craig Wolfey (Pittsburgh Steelers), Jim Burt (New York Giants) and Larry Pfohl (Green Bay Packers), but his "regular job" is driver education instructor at the Cassadaga Job Corps, where he also teaches a health education class.

During the glory years he was an accountant with his father's firm in Fredonia.

Would you argue your tax return with the world's strongest man?

But most notable is this soft spoken Goliath with a boyish grin is the warmth that exudes from him.

Carrying 1 1/2-year old Ben and 3 ½ Molly into a store during a recent shopping trip, it was noted Ben had just one shoe on.

"It's a lot easier to just pick him up and take him like this than look around for the other shoe," smiled Don.

Don Reinhoudt is in a semi-retired role as World's strongest man. He was injured in 1980 when he tried to defend his official pro title, and the series has not returned since.

So Don Reinhoudt, another page in 100 years in *EVENING OBSERVER* sports history, occasional exhibitions provide his only "competition."

Don was a hard-running fullback in football and strong rebounder in basketball at Fredonia Central.

“He finished football season at 215 pounds and by the end of basketball he was 225,” recalls Johnston. Roger Moore (the late Fredonia basketball coach) didn’t know he was lifting weights all that time.”

At Parsons College in Iowa, Don played freshman football and varsity track. After marrying Cindy Wyatt, a nationally-acclaimed women’s discus thrower, he put more concentration into powerlifting.

Reinhoudt captured four world superheavyweight powerlift championships from 1973-76 setting several world records in the process. He then turned professional.

He was runnerup in the CBS competition in 1978, winning the nationally televised series the next year.

Don tried to defend in 1980 but tore his left hamstring in the log left and his right bicep in the 56-poiund hammer throw.

“I was warned by the CBS trainer to withdraw or there would be permanent injuries,” he recalls.

He had hopes of returning to competition but the competition has been cancelled. Still he trains.

“I’ll probably weight train until the day I die,” he admits. And with no way to prove otherwise, for this area he remains, the world’s strongest man.