

## **COOPER WAGE**

My powerlifting career began during my freshman year in high school. Growing up I had always been the bigger/stronger kid in my class and had a drive to become stronger. While training in the weight room for football, I met two behemoth individuals, Chris Alitz and Justin Bilskemper. They strongly encouraged me to consider a commitment to the powerlifting program at my high school in Holmen. I am in debt to them for exposing me to one of the greatest sports I have ever competed/participated in.

I qualified for the Wisconsin State Meet as a sophomore in the 100 kg weight class and finished 16<sup>th</sup> overall. It was only the beginning as during my junior year I was designated State Champion at the 110 kg weight class. Along with the state title, I set the Wisconsin State squat record at 281 kg. I also finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the National Meet in South Milwaukee the same year while setting a National squat record of 277.5 kg in the 110 kg weight class.

As a senior in 2005 I competed in the 125 kg weight class. I went on to set both the Wisconsin State squat record at 319.8 kg and bench record at 151.9 kg. During the High School National Meet in Killeen TX I finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and set the National squat record at 340.0 kg and National bench record at 207.5 kg.

While a freshman in college at the University of Wisconsin La Crosse, I was invited to attend the Sub-Junior World Powerlifting Championship in Fort Wayne IN. I competed in the 125 kg weight class and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the competition. With a 775.0 kg total, I set the World squat record at 327.5 kg and World bench record at 220.0 kg.

While I owe much to both Chris and Justin for introducing me to the sport, I owe the most appreciation to my many trainers including but not limited to Rick Shaaf, Kevin Knuepple, and Tim McFarland. I also could not have achieved all that I did without the support from my family and teammates during my years as a powerlifter.

I am currently coaching the La Crosse Central High School Powerlifting team with a good friend and fellow Holmen High School powerlifter, Ryan Bott. This will be the program's second year as a club sport. I hope to give back to the students as much as I am able as their coach/mentor. Going forward, I continue to train and compete in the USAPL and will hopefully set more records along the way.