



IRONCLAD

by Joe Roark

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Regarding Guinness

The second word of the *Guinness Book of World Records*, is “book,” not “Bible,” though some have presumed infallibility from *Guinness*. But in the 1999 version of the book, for instance, several mistakes appear regarding bodybuilding history.

After correctly ascribing eight Mr. Olympia wins to Lee Haney from 1984 to 1991, we are told that Dorian Yates won five Mr. O titles from 1992 to 1997. That time span was won by Yates, but it encompasses six years, not five. We are then told that Yates’ consecutive streak is the longer. When did six begin surpassing eight? A similar situation is given with the Ms. Olympia. *Guinness* correctly notes that Cory Everson won a record six times from 1984 to 1989, but then maintains that Lenda Murray broke the longest streak record with five wins from 1990-1994. Actually Lenda won also in 1995, so her six wins match Cory’s. We are also informed that Ben Weider began the IFBB in the 1960s when actually it began in 1946. So, for those of you who think that *Guinness* is goofless . . . Think again.

How Old is *Health & Strength*?

In November 1997 Robert Kennedy presented us with his new magazine: *Oxygen*. No question about when it began. But let’s surge ahead one hundred years, and assume that no copies of that first issue exist. The only copies available at that time are those from volume two, and the powers that be at *Oxygen* are insisting that the first issue was published November 1987, ten years earlier than fact.

Is this what happened with *Health & Strength*, the venerable ‘Old Mag’ of British muscledom? The earliest issue in my collection is March 1900 Vol. 2:1; by March 1903 it was Vol. 6:3, and by March 1906, Vol. 12:3. *H&S* reported in the August 2, 1941 issue on page 24 that enemy action (WWII) had destroyed almost all their stock. This makes the trace on the Old Mag’s age more difficult. The paper shortage in Britain during the war, which prohibited the printing of extra copies and required a recycling of the issues already printed, made copies for collectors and researchers difficult to acquire, therefore to study.

The August 28, 1947 issue, page 665, declares *H&S* is in its 55th year of publication! Assuming this means continuous years, a birth year of 1892 can be calculated. But this date follows the clear statement in the June 5, 1947 issue, page 401, saying plainly that *H&S* began in 1899. By June 11, 1953 page 5, the continuous publishing is asserted to be “for over 55 years” [1898?], and a decade later, January 10, 1963, page 4, 65 years [1898?] is claimed.

Anyone having seen, or owning a copy of the first issue of the Old Mag is welcome to help solve this Old Mystery which would be a breath of fresh oxygen.

Anderson’s Backlift

On page 40 of the September 1996 issue of *The Iron Master*, Osmo Kiiha attributes to Joe Roark a statement Roark never made regarding Paul Anderson’s June 12, 1957 backlift claim of 6,270 pounds. Osmo wrote: “Joe Roark, IFBB historian, states that there is no printed mention of Anderson doing the lift

in the magazines of that time period.”

Roark’s response: “Assuming Osmo means no printed mention in the magazines of that time period of Anderson actually doing the lift, the evidence to the contrary offered by Kiiha changes nothing.” Referring to *Iron Man* magazine, but not quoting it, Osmo wrote: “this lift was mentioned in a magazine of that time period.” The *Iron Man* reference, Vol. 18:4 (Dec 1958/Jan 1959) as Osmo mentions, refers to the backlift claim of 6,200 pounds, not 6,270 pounds. Also not mentioned by Osmo is the wording of that reference: “We hear that Paul has made a 6200 lb. backlift for a new world record.” Notice: this lift was not seen, not documented, but was “heard” about. By the way, *Iron Man* also gets Paul’s age wrong. Osmo adds that this [early mention] proves nothing except “that the lift was already history in the 1950’s.” No, the lift was already rumor, as indeed it remained for another year and a half when in the August 1960 issue of *Iron Man* Peary Rader wrote on page 60: “It is rumored that Paul Anderson has recently succeeded with a backlift of 6,000 lbs.”

Recently? Is June 1957 “recent” to August 1960? And, please note, not 6,270, not 6,200, but 6,000 pounds. How many attempts did Paul make on June 12, 1957, and if not on that date, then on what date, and why report lesser poundages as a new record?

Perhaps the 6,270 pound lift was mentioned in the magazines or elsewhere sometime closer to the June 1957 date. Roark never stated that no such reference exists, only that he has been unable to locate any. Readers are always invited to share such information.

As an aside: for those who think they know about this famous backlift, consider these questions:

1. Paul stated that he performed this lift to get his name in the *Guinness Book of Records*, so what year was the 6,270 pound lift first listed in that book? Were other poundages listed? If so, in which year(s) of publication?
2. Regarding the famed old manganese safe used as the base weight for the backlift: what brand of safe is it; what are the dimensions, what size is its cavity (that is, how much hollow space could Paul “fill in”)? The answers to these questions will amaze you.
3. What was the manufacturer’s listed weight for this safe, without its base (stand)?
4. If the final record attempt was made on June 12, 1957, why does the reported poundage change through the years? Do some homework. And then, if appropriate, criticize those who have already done theirs.