

BOOTH, Greg (con't)

BY ADY VOS Sports staff

Greg Booth got tired of being a 98-pound weakling.

So he did something about it.

For the past six years Booth, 21, has dedicated much of his time to bodybuilding.

He is no longer the Grade 11 Centennial Secondary School student who barely tipped the scales over 100 pounds.

Booth, 5'8", has almost doubled his weight in the past six years. During the off-season of bodybuilding competitions, Booth weighs in at about 210 pounds. However right now Booth is preparing for a competition so he is carrying a well-defined 180 pounds.

"I just didn't like being 110 pounds so I decided to do something about it," said Booth who will compete at the Eastern Ontario Bodybuilding championships at Kingston this weekend.

Booth originally started to lift some weights just to put on some pounds. It didn't take him long to discover that he wanted to do more than just put on some weight.

"A few months after I started lifting the weights I got into bodybuilding and I've been sticking with it for the past six years," he says.

Two weeks ago at a competition in Ottawa Booth won the heavy-weight and overall titles. He's hoping to repeat this weekend.

Bodybuilding isn't for everyone says Booth but he finds great pleasure in it.

"People always ask me why I do it. That I must be crazy to work out six nights a week for three hours. I think it's fun. I can't imagine anyone going out to the golf course every day and playing a round of golf for four hours. I guess everyone has to find their own niche."

The constant working with the weights is just a part of the bodybuilding process. There's a very regimented diet.

"When I'm training for a competition I can't eat just anything. You've got to diet hard," he says.

Breakfast every morning means six egg whites plus four bowls of oatmeal.

At 10 a.m. there's an apple and several rice cakes.

At noon Booth downs a whole can of tuna then follows that with a thermos of rice.

Another apple at 2 p.m. plus three bowls of pasta--plain.

Another apple after a three-hour training session plus some more rice cakes.

Home for supper and it's fish, chicken or steak with pasta (plain), rice and vegetables.

At 10 p.m. another bowl of wheat cereal.

Sounds good doesn't it?

"You acquire a taste for it. I don't even notice it (the blandness of it all). I like it," he says.

While the diet prior to a competition (usually 12 weeks of training prior to a competition) may seem limited, Booth says there are no limits in the so-called off-season.

"Pizza, burgers, fries. The off-season is great. I eat like crazy," he says.

That fast food intake however takes its toll.

While Booth bulks up to about 210 pounds in the off-season he finds there is a real problem with his clothes.

The clothes are fine at his high weight but when he's preparing for a competition his clothes are all slightly on the large side.

"They look terrible, they just hang off me," he says of his oversized clothes.

Booth says in a couple of years he hopes to weigh-in at 235 pounds and compete at 220 pounds.

When asked about steroids Booth said bodybuilding and the muscle-enhancing drugs will always be associated.

"Some bodybuilders use steroids but so do some football players, and weightlifters and track athletes. When big money is an issue a lot of people are probably taking steroids because they can help make the difference (between winning and losing)," says Booth. Right now Booth is competing for trophies.

"I really enjoy my time in the gym," said Booth who is the father of a nine-month old son.

"I find it fun and it helps relieve stress. I don't drink and I don't smoke."

Booth lives in Belleville but he trains at Gold's Gym in Cobourg.

Booth used to train at the Belleville Squash and Fitness club but when ownership changed there several of the bodybuilders decided to find a new 'home'.

This weekend at Kingston, Booth will compete against several other 180-pounders, including one of his best friends, Paul Leblanc of Trenton.

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Leblanc won the light heavy-weight and overall titles at a competition in Toronto two months ago.

"That will be interesting. We're good friends and we train together," says Booth.

Booth is hoping his 'new' training schedule gives him an edge.

For an earlier competition Booth trained five days a week with 10-12 repetitions on the various weights. The result was a fourth place finish.

"I changed to six days a week and 15-25 repetitions and it made a big difference," he says.

"Bodybuilding isn't for everyone but for me it's lot of fun," says Booth.