

2018 Classic World Powerlifting Championships preview

Kieran Gray



A short interview with Kieran Gray ahead of the upcoming 6th World Men's Classic Championships

So how long have you been lifting?

Powerlifting specifically, just coming up on 3 years. I started in August 2015.

Your total has shot up in those three years; can you talk me through some of your starting numbers?

So my first comp was in November 2015 – I squatted 180kg, I benched 132.5kg, and I deadlifted 240kg, which was a 552.5 total. Then my next one was 580kg the following January, and then 642.5kg that July. I think I bombed out of that British Junior Championships in 2016, and then following on from that I hit 713kg, 755kg, and 777.5kg, and that's where we're at now.

You've moved through a few different weight classes in that time, have you found the right one now or do you think you'll change in the future?

I don't think I'd want to be any heavier than I am right now. Also, Luke Richardson is in the 120+ category so there's no point going there. Yeah I think I'm in a good spot. If anything, in the future I might end up going down, but that's sort of long term, maybe when I'm in the Seniors. At the moment the 120s is where it's at.

What have been the biggest factors for your increased total over this time?

I just do a lot of volume really, just working hard training four days a week. They're normally about three hour sessions so it's a lot of work, but that paired with eating a lot, you're pretty much guaranteed to increase your total a little bit.

Where do you normally train at the minute?

I train between two gyms because I study at University in Leeds. So I train at The Edge in Leeds and the LR Strength Shed in Riccall. The Edge is okay but there are no calibrated plates so it's a bit difficult to get a feel for where you're going to be on comp day. But in The Shed there is everything that you would ever need as a powerlifter. There are thousands of kilos of calibrated plates and all the competition bars are great as well, so that's the place to be really.

I've seen that you train with some of the other top YNE lifters, what's it like lifting in that community?

Yeah it's great, couldn't be any better really. I think that training with people like that helps you to be really focused and to keep progressing. I think that one of the big things that helps me progress is just seeing Luke do stuff that's stupid. And I'm like, well if Luke can do it then so can I. So it does push you quite a lot.

And now you've made it to Worlds! Do you have any expectations for Canada?

So the main goal really is to get a bench medal, silver is the aim because there's one guy who benches about 230kg+. That's the goal. It's my first international meet so I'm not sure how I'm going to react so I'll just enjoy myself and hit some PBs. Hopefully bring back a medal.

And how are you feeling going into your first international competition?

I'm not really nervous for it because I know that I've trained hard, it's just another day squatting benching and deadlifting. It's stuff that I've done before. But I'm looking forward to it. I'm competing with other great lifters, like the best lifters in the world, so yeah it will be fun.

Is there anybody that you're looking forward to meeting?

Well the people that I'm competing against really, Jackson Spencer especially. I think he's on for around 900kg+ as a 120kg Junior, which is just ridiculous, so it would be nice to meet him. Yeah I'm sure that there will be loads of nice people to meet. Especially at the banquet after Worlds when everybody is relaxing and getting drunk.

Do you have any post-Canada goals in mind?

Yeah so I've only got two more comps this year, the British Juniors in October and the Europeans in December. So at the Juniors I'd like to take Mark Macqueen's Junior British total record. It's currently 847.5kg and I'd like to put that at 850kg. And then in December I would like to get a 500 wilks, I think that it would be 867.5kg at 117kg bodyweight. That would be nice because I think that I would be one of the first ten lifters in the UK to do it, which would be a pretty big milestone.

What has been your favourite lifting memory so far?

I think when I broke the British Bench record in November last year, that was a pretty big moment because it was something that I was looking forward to for quite a while. A great training block and peak lead up to that point so it was nice to get it right on the day. And other than that, probably breaking the YNEPF Deadlift record in 2016 because that was the first record that I ever broke. It was quite a big moment even though that was just the YNE record in the 93kg class.

So which is your favourite lift?

My favourite lift has got to be Bench, it's the only one that really clicks for me. Whenever I bench I always know what I'm doing. My technique is fine so it just always feels good, and I never skip my assistance work. It just keeps getting better.

Do you have a powerlifting hero?

It's probably going to be Mark Macqueen actually. I think Mark's work ethic is second to none; he's probably the most driven guy that I know about in powerlifting. And he did exactly what he said he was going to do last year – he won the European Junior Championships, he won the World Junior Championships, and he won the Commonwealth Junior Championships. So yeah Mark Macqueen is a big inspiration. It was good competing against him; it was nice to beat him on Bench... even though he beat me on the other two.

And finally what do you like to do outside of lifting?

I study Computer Science which takes up a lot of time, other than that I really don't do that much else. It's just eating, sleeping, and lifting, and watching Netflix haha. Standard stuff.

Kieran will be lifting in the Junior 120kg Men's class on 12th June at 19:00 (UK time).

