

FROM SOCCER PLAYER TO PRO-BODYBUILDER

JAY ISENHART

BY: JAY ISENHART, NANBF 2009 HEARTLAND CLASSIC
AND NATURAL NEBRASKA OVERALL WINNER

Yes, I'm guilty! I'm a soccer player. Here in Nebraska, every kid dreams of growing up to play football at the University of Nebraska; and I ended up playing "futbol" instead. But, I do have an excuse. I grew up a "military brat" and started playing soccer while in Germany at age 4. When we moved back to the states I kept playing - all the way through high school. I was even lucky enough to receive a college scholarship at Bellevue University.

Now, when people hear that I attended college on an athletic scholarship, they assume it was for football. They're shocked to find out I was a nimble footed soccer player instead. But the discipline and stamina I developed through soccer has served me well in my body building endeavors, and... I like to think that I can still play a heck of a soccer game!

My original major in college was Computer Information Systems. When I wasn't studying or at soccer practice I was spending more and more time in the gym. The more I worked out, the more I liked it. I also was beginning to realize that I was much more interested in the human body and how it works than I was in how to program a computer. After some serious soul searching I changed my major to Kinesiology. And I loved it! I soaked up all the information I could as fast as I could. I learned the human body and what makes it tick, inside and out. I learned how to optimally break down muscle with workouts and then repair it with proper nutrition and rest. I didn't just learn the information, I applied it to my workouts and results came quickly.



JAY ISENHART AT A GLANCE

Age: 25

Occupation or Education: Fitness Consultant, Better Bodies Fitness and Weight Loss

Family: Fiancé, Erin

Birthplace: Colorado Springs, CO

Current Residence: Omaha, NE

Years training (total): 10

Height: 5'8"

Off Season Weight: 210

Contest Weight: 190

Favorite Bodybuilding Meal: Steak and sweet potatoes

Favorite supplements: UMP for its versatility and taste; Lean Out and 7-Keto for their fat burning ability.

What would you recommend to someone who has never used Beverly supplements before? You cannot go wrong with Beverly, their supplements are world class. The results speak for themselves. Start with UMP.

In your CD player: Anything but country

Most Inspiring Book: Biography of Larry Bird

Hobby or interests outside bodybuilding: Golf, tennis, and spending time with my family

Words to live by: "Outline your life in pencil not pen." - Unknown

After graduation, I entered my first body building contest, Mr. Nebraska. I didn't do that great, but was told I had good size and shape, I just needed to improve my conditioning. I knew how to build muscle and recover properly, but I still had a lot to learn about diet and nutrition for competitive bodybuilding.

My bodybuilding career really took off when I took a job at Better Bodies in Omaha, NE. Under the tutelage of Todd Mills, the general manager and a great natural bodybuilder himself, I learned the proper way to diet and the correct supplements to use. Todd introduced me to Beverly International, a reputable company who puts great effort into insuring that their product is of the highest quality. They really care about natural bodybuilding and the people who use their line. In fact, Beverly is a lifesaver for the natural athlete who wants to build muscle while he loses fat.

Under Todd's guidance I won the overall at the Bluffs Classic (Council Bluffs, IA) and got an invite to attend the USA Super Pro Qualifier at University Park, IL.

LEARNING A LESSON THE HARD WAY - BUT WITH A HAPPY OUTCOME

Up to that point I always tried to stay within 20lbs of my contest weight of 185lbs. But, now that I was going after my pro card, I decided to take a full year off to bulk up and gain mass. I ate and ate and ballooned up to a gigantic 242lbs on my 5'8" frame. I looked more like a refrigerator than a bodybuilder and I felt miserable. I spent a year putting it on, now I had to lose it. I started dieting 22 weeks before the pro qualifier and still ended up having to diet harder and do more cardio than I ever had in the past. I ended up losing nearly 60lbs before I was contest ready.

I did win my WNBFF pro card at the USA in University Park. I was happy, but I knew I could have been better had it not been for my bulking experiment. Although it turned out to be one the hardest lessons I've ever learned, it did teach me a lot about being a natural bodybuilder. Bulking up (putting on excess fat in a quest to get bigger) does not work!!

After my bulking experiment I decided to do one more show before going pro. My goal was to achieve the best condition of my life before entering the pro ranks. I picked the NANBF Heartland Classic and Natural Nebraska. It was my home town show and probably the last chance for all of my friends and family to see me compete. Luckily for me I learned from my past mistakes and didn't put on a lot of weight after the USA's. I continued to do cardio at least three times a week and really watched my diet. I didn't let my body fat get much higher than 10% this time and I knew that it wouldn't take too long to get in good shape. At ten weeks out it was time to get the food log back out and stock up on my favorite Beverly International supplements.

CONTEST DIET

I started serious dieting for the Heartland Classic / Nebraska at ten weeks out. I incorporated a diet cycle of two days very low carbs, then a higher carb diet on the third day to keep my metabolism running at a high rate. This worked perfectly for me, the fat was melting off and I could see good improvements every couple of days.

Every Sunday my fiancé, Erin, and I would cook up ten pounds of chicken in an assembly line. We'd defrost five breasts at a time in the microwave, trim them with kitchen scissors, cut them into cubes, and finally cook them in a big frying pan. Next, we would weigh out 8 oz portions and put them in Tupperware containers with 1.5 cups of broccoli or asparagus. I really can't stress enough how important food preparation is. When done correctly it makes getting ready for a show so much easier and more enjoyable.

My typical diet looked like this:

Low carb days 1&2:

- **Meal # 1:** 8-10 egg whites, 1.5 cups spinach, ½ grapefruit
- **Meal # 2:** 8 oz chicken breast, 1.5 cups green vegetables
- **Meal # 3 (pre workout):** 2 scoops UMP mixed in water
- **Meal # 4 (post workout):** 3 scoops UMP mixed in water
- **Meal # 5:** 8 oz chicken breast, 1.5 cups green vegetables
- **Meal # 6:** 8-10 egg whites, 1.5 cups green vegetables (can be made into an omelet)

Higher carb day 3:

- **Meal # 1:** 8-10 egg whites, ½ cup oatmeal, ½ grapefruit
- **Meal # 2:** 8 oz chicken breast, 1.5 cups green vegetables
- **Meal # 3 (pre workout):** 2 scoops UMP, ½ cup oatmeal
- **Meal # 4 (post workout):** 3 scoops UMP
- **Meal # 5:** 8 oz chicken breast, ½ cup oatmeal
- **Meal # 6:** 8-10 egg whites, 1.5 cups green vegetables

As you can see I eat the same things over and over every day.

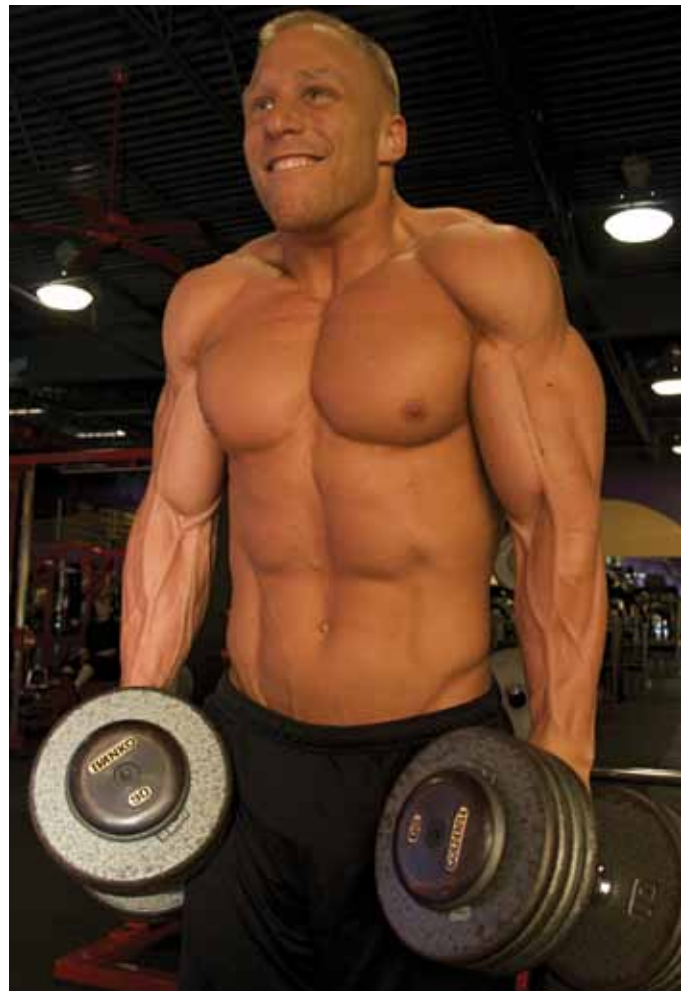
Beverly supplements are a lifesaver for the natural athlete who wants to build muscle while he loses fat.

SUPPLEMENTS

Beverly supplements played a huge role in achieving my best ever condition. I've tried every type of supplement in the past and have often been disappointed by little or no results. It wasn't until Todd turned me on to Beverly that my physique was taken to a whole new level.

My supplement schedule:

- **Lean Out:** 2 in the morning before cardio; 2 with each meal after that
- **7-Keto:** 3 in the morning before cardio; 3 before my afternoon weight training
- **Ultra-4:** 4 in the morning with Lean Out and 7-Keto, 2 after my weight training, 2 with my last meal
- **UMP:** 2 scoops before weight training, 3 scoops after my workout
- **Creatine Select, Glutamine Select:** I mix these in a shaker with ice water and sip while I train.



TRAINING AND CARDIO

Nothing special here, I train the same way during my contest prep as I do during the off season, heavy and with a lot of reps. The only thing that changed was doing cardio every morning, seven days a week. I usually used a combination of 20 minutes on an incline trainer walking at 4 mph with 30% incline, followed by 20 minutes of speed intervals on a stair stepper. I did the same cardio routine right up until the last week before the show.

I used the same training split as I do off season with weekends off except for cardio.

- **Monday: Chest/Biceps**
- **Tuesday: Back/Triceps**
- **Wednesday: Quads/Calves/Abs**
- **Thursday: Shoulders/Traps**
- **Friday: Hamstrings/Back/Abs**
- **Saturday and Sunday: 40 minutes of cardio before breakfast**

My favorite body part has always been legs. I like to see how far I can push my body and nothing gives me that sick feeling like a good leg workout. Here is a typical Wednesday Quads and Calves workout.

- **Squat: I start with 3 progressive warm up sets of 15 reps each. Next, I use as heavy weight as possible for five sets of 15 reps each. I have used up to 405 at times for 15's. Then, I reduce the weight to 225 and go to failure. My goal for this set is 50 reps! Now you see what I meant when I said I like to train heavy with high repetitions.**
- **Seated Calf Raise super set with Machine Donkey Calf raise: 4 x 20 on each machine back to back**
- **Leg Press: 5 x 20 alternating foot position**
- **Front Squat: 4 x 20**

PRESENTATION TIPS

Practice, practice, practice. The only way you are going to be able to present your physique at its best through a whole round of quarter turns and mandatories is to practice each pose until it is second nature. I practiced my quarter turns and mandatory poses for thirty minutes every night during the final four weeks of my contest prep. Erin called out the poses and helped me tweak each one to best show my physique. We practiced until I could hit each one perfectly, every time, without looking in the mirror. She also helped me put together my routine and made me practice until I could do it with my eyes closed.

I applied my first coat of Pro-Tan Thursday before the show. I did as much as I could by myself and then Erin would come in, and touch it up as well as get the hard to reach places. I used a blow dryer after each application to dry the dye. I think that this really helps darken the color. I applied one coat Thursday night, two coats Friday, and a final coat Saturday morning before the pre judging.

THE FINAL WEEK

I knew I was going to compete in the best shape of my life; now, it was just waiting until Saturday. My last leg workout was on Wednesday, ten days out. This allowed my legs to fully recover and the cuts got deeper and deeper. I trained my upper body on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday leading up to the show. I went for a 20 minute walk with Erin on Thursday and Friday evening to de-stress and clear my head. I had put in a lot of work and soon I would find out if it had paid off.

I didn't weigh myself or take my body fat during the last six weeks leading up to the show. I knew I was on track so I didn't want anything affecting my mental state. If I had to guess I would say I was somewhere right around 190 pounds with 4% body fat. I cut my water intake Friday night and hardened up nicely by Saturday morning.

When the day of the show finally arrived I was as ready as I was ever going to be. I showed up with no expectations of winning, I had just wanted to beat my previous best conditioning and that I had already accomplished. When the pre judging was over I finally started to relax. All the posing practice definitely had paid off; I made it through without any shaking and stayed tight the entire time.

At the end of the night I won the overall for both the Heartland Classic and the Natural Nebraska. The best part was yet to come; I even won the Best Poser Award, something that I had never won before!!

Overall it was a great experience. I can't thank my family and friends enough for all of their support. Next, we'll find out how I do on the pro stage. ■