



Today we'll talk with the strongest kettlebell lifter of our planet, world-class athlete, the champion of Russia and the World - [Ivan Denisov](#) . Ivan is absolute record holder in all exercises in kettlebell lifting: 175 reps in jerk (World Championship, Moscow, 2005), snatch 110 (World Championship, Latvia, October 2003) and the most recent record that he brought from Finland just over a week ago - 116 reps in long cycle.

- Good morning, Ivan. We congratulate you with a new world record! Previous record was 7 reps less than your new result. What are your impressions of the results and of the championship in general?

- *Impressions are very diverse. It is a pity that we were not able to see and do pictures of Finish cities - we were short in time. And bus trips are not my favorite. However, the conditions of the competition were good for showing high results. The air temperature in the gym, the quality of kettlebells was most favorable for the performance. I am very pleased and happy with my result. I had a very good preparation for this competition. Strong training, good recovery before competition, cool fresh air at the gym, and comfortable form of kettlebells - all these factors contributed to the performance. I went out to the platform with one thought: "I must work." And I was able to do it. I realized that I'll beat the record after about 8 minutes of my set. And I was working very confidently in last minutes. I understood that I succeeded, when the kettlebells were on the platform.*

- This year you competed again after a two-year break. How was this time without competing? Was it hard to get back to a platform again?

- *A two-year break was only for big events. I have performed on lower level competitions. I have consistently participated in the city competitions of basketball, and various crosses. However, the march on the big stage has been somewhat forgotten. To increase interest and adrenaline I reduced my weight by 8 kg, and was classified for "up to 105 kg" category. I had a heavy workload in the past two years. I have worked out with barbell, ran, and skied. I became much stronger than two years ago.*

- Ivan, you're not only a great athlete you are a very good coach, too. Your students - [Ksenia Dedyukhina](#) , Denis Gafarov, Artem Gizzatullin - have raised to the higher pedestal competitions of different levels. Ilya Tashlanov moved to Chelyabinsk and now he has not only improved his result, but also become one of the leaders of the Russian national team. How do you manage to combine training and coaching activities, both at such a high level?

- *If I was just an athlete and a coach, then I would manage to do everything, and time would remain. But I'm also the chief of the Kettlebell Lifting Federation of Chelyabinsk and*

Chelyabinsk region. In fact, it's simple - I like it, and I possess it. I try train together with my students while coaching them. And I have very good students. I try to create favorable conditions for their trainings, and they in turn show all they are capable for.

- The next question I simply must ask. All beginners want to hear this. What is the secret of your success? What is the core of your trainings? And what above all have the kettlebell lifter do to achieve high results?

- The answer to this question is very simple. You just have to want it. The most important thing in training - consistency! The system includes continuity in training process, the close relationship of general and specialized training, and educated planning of sport trainings. I would not recommend young athletes, who got to like KBs, but still have loose body, constantly exercising with kettlebells. Boys and girls must gain large amounts of the general loads before they take the heavy kettlebells in hands. Why is it better to not take KBs at all? Simply because after a short time the temptation to lift heavier kettlebells to check your body for strength will overcome common sense, especially now when we have new rules for CMS - 32kg for men (boys) and 24kg for women (girls). The world practice of trainings shows that the young champions very rarely become champions in adult age. But do not compare GS with other sports. It is still at the development stage. We have really good results only in certain weight categories. The evidence of that is Johnny Benidze, who 20 years old, but already showing results that are higher than records in adult categories and even in heavier weight categories. There is not such examples in more developed sports. An athlete in kettlebell sport has to show the most outstanding results about age of 25 to 33. And it is easy to track among athletes, who are engaged in kettlebell lifting for a long time. Anton Anasenko showed his best result in the snatch - 266 reps in Finland - he is 31 year old. Sergey Merkulin set a record in long cycle (78 reps) in 2002, when he was 33. Sergey Mishin set a record in the biathlon (259 points) when he was 35, and the record in classic jerk (170 reps) when he was 38. I am 28 and I just showed my best result in long cycle (116 reps). And none of the sportsmen was the champion of Russia among boys! If Johnny Benidze will continue to train and compete, he will do about 150 reps in jerk and 105-107 reps in snatch by the age of 25. We have three girls MSCW in Russia and all of them are 20-22 years old. But who knows what results will be shown in 5 years if they continue to train. These are my recommendations for the young novice kettlebell lifters. Adult beginners usually have lack of flexibility and a lot of them don't pay enough attention to it. It is easier for young boys, because they have more free time and can concentrate on trainings. The basic principle of becoming a champion: Training plays the major role in day planning. The day schedule is planned for the best training efficiency. That is the only way to get the best performance.

- And the last question. What do you think about the state of kettlebell sport in Russia and in the world at the moment?

-In my opinion, the state of kettlebell lifting currently is poor. Our leaders have made the

development process too complicated. 11 countries were present at the World Championship in Finland and 21 countries participated at the World Championship in Italy. Dividing athletes on different federations does not make the sport to look better. But there are different Academies popularizing kettlebell sport around the world. It's great that the kettlebell sport conquers new countries, and that results of athletes, who train for a long time, grow up. I would love to see all the athletes at one competition and reveal a true champion.

In Russia level of competitions increased, but unfortunately decreased number of athletes. It is sad that competition among girls at the National Cup was held in three sets. As I see it, this is due to the lack of a centralized promotion and absence of kettlebell lifting in sport festivals.

Today, only National Rural Sport Festival includes kettlebell lifting. We don't have Military Sport Festival, Workers Sport Festival and others which we've used to have in the past.

"Russian youths" movement has weakened. Government officials need points and ranks and can develop only sports presented in major sport festivals. Only these sports get financial help, equipment and help in organizing sport camps and seminars. The development of our sport can begin only with inclusion of kettlebell lifting to Student Games and Youth Sport Festival. Only 30-35 administrative territories take part in National Cup of Kettlebell Lifting while there are 60-65 administrative territories performing in National Rural Sport Festival. Why all these people do not come to our championship? I guess, it is because no one needs it. We can see a very sad tendency of rejuvenation of kettlebell lifting. A lot of strong sportsmen quit kettlebell lifting by the age of 23-27. It is exactly the time, when the body completes the formation and gets ready for records. One of the main disadvantages in development of kettlebell sport is absence of real records. It is very hard to find the World records in the internet, and Russian records shown at national competitions are ridiculous. History of kettlebell sport is forgotten along with priceless experience of our predecessors. Record holders of Russia today have worse results than athletes under 20 in the end of 90s. This throws us back in development process. Differences in competitions rules (fixation time) in RKLFF([Russian Kettlebell lifting Federation](#)) and IUKL make

it even more confusing. In the result, we have the best result in snatch in the weight category 'under 63kg'. Anyone who sees the protocols will not understand why it is so. How a sportsman from the lightest weight category can lift the most of all athletes. That doesn't make sense.

- Thank you for the interesting conversation. We look forward to seeing more records in your performance.

Interviewed by Valentin Egorov