

On the Road From Athens to Beijing

Beijing 2008



New Stars Expecting Olympic Gold

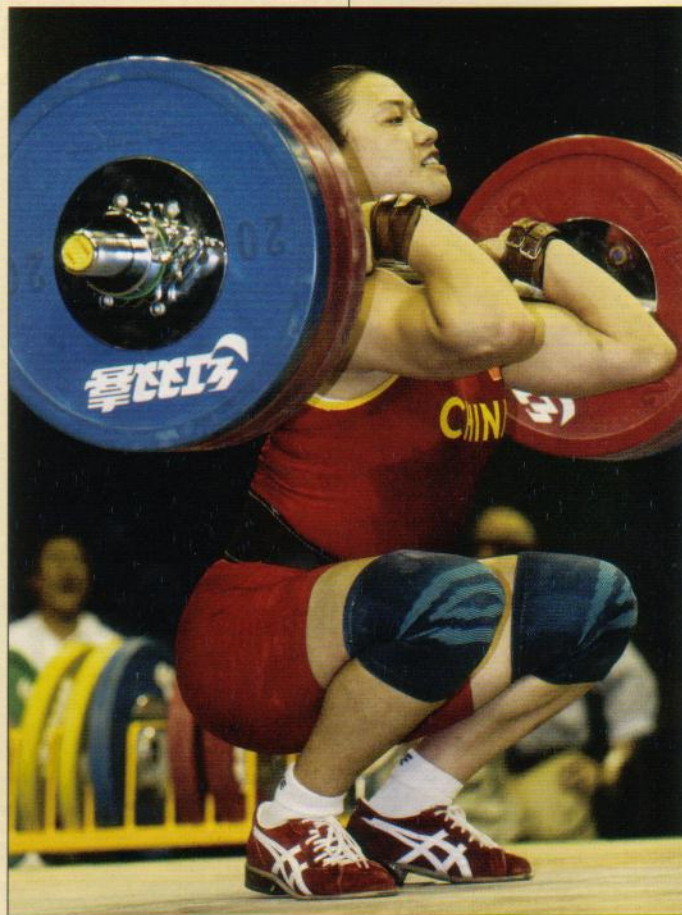
Though four years ago, in Athens, Jang Mi-Ran and Andrei Rybakou could both rejoice with Olympic silver medals, it was only in the course of the world championships held since that they grew into real Stars. On the score of their serial victories, world records, both lifters can duly be ranked among the Greatest. In addition to them quite a few other prodigies emerged after the Athens Games and are now claiming the protagonists' roles on the Beijing stage. Although many other them will celebrate their first ever entry to the Olympic Games, in the last three years they furnished ample evidence of their supremacy and flashed their potential. We are herewith introducing a group of new stars expecting Olympic gold.

World Weightlifting sent some questions to the potential champions, expecting replies – partly fulfilled. However, alone the list of the main achievements in their careers will tell us how they imploded into the top ranks of the world and that their Olympic dreams are far from being unfounded.

CAO LEI – CHN

24.12.1983

Already back in 2001, there was someone named Cao Lei in the world-ranking leader position in 63kg, with a 235kg total achieved in Jeonju. Her year of birth was indicated as being 1985. The best 75kg lifter of our days, Cao Lei, occupied the 7th position in the world ranking in 2005 (in 69kg) with her 248kg result (113 and 135kg). She shifted into a higher gear in 2006 and launched



Cao Lei

a series of victories. She took the total and jerk titles (268kg and 150kg, resp.) at the World Championships and won silver in snatch (8118kg). In the annual world ranking a total of 272kg put her into 3rd position. That was already in the 75kg category.

In 2007 Cao Lei defended her world champion title lifting 158kg in jerk and 286kg overall – in snatch she was once again the second. In the world ranking she was promoted to the lead.

At the end of April 2008 she lifted at the Asian Championships and won with an easy 276kg total, meaning a 10kg lead on Alla Vazhenina (KAZ).

Unfortunately, we did not get her replies to our questions.

JANG MI-RAN – KOR

9.10.1983

We have been able to follow her course since 2001. In that year she took the bronze medal from the junior world championships with a total of 250kg (110, 140kg), later making 252.5kg for a 10th position in the world ranking. Next year she improved her score to 272.5kg, a total she repeated one year later, putting her into 7th, then into 9th positions in the world. In 2004 the Olympic silver medal suddenly elevated the Korean to the ranks of the best. Her 302.5kg (130, 172.5kg) qualified her as runner-up in the annual world ranking. In the three years since 2005 she has produced a winning series in jerk and total – the latter results being 300, 314 and 319kg, adding three silver medals



Jang Mi-Ran

in the snatch. These performances have consolidated her in the world-ranking leader's position.

In total she broke the world record in 2006, which is now 318kg. In 2007 she was elected "Best Lifter of the Year".

Jang Mi-Ran answered **World Weightlifting's** questions:

First of all, I would like to thank everybody casting their vote on me in the Lifter of the Year election. This is indeed a big success and I am very proud of this title. Of course, I am getting prepared for the Olympic Games, but not only now: for several years.

So far, thanks God nothing has impeded me in my train-

ing, so we can proceed with the plan drafted. Prior to the Olympic Games I shall only compete in Korea, in the national Olympic qualification event.

My goals for Beijing are no secret: the gold medal and a total over 330kg.

OXANA SLIVENKO – RUS

20.12.1986

The weightlifting audience had the first chance to meet and remember her when the young Russian collected three junior world championship gold medals in 2004

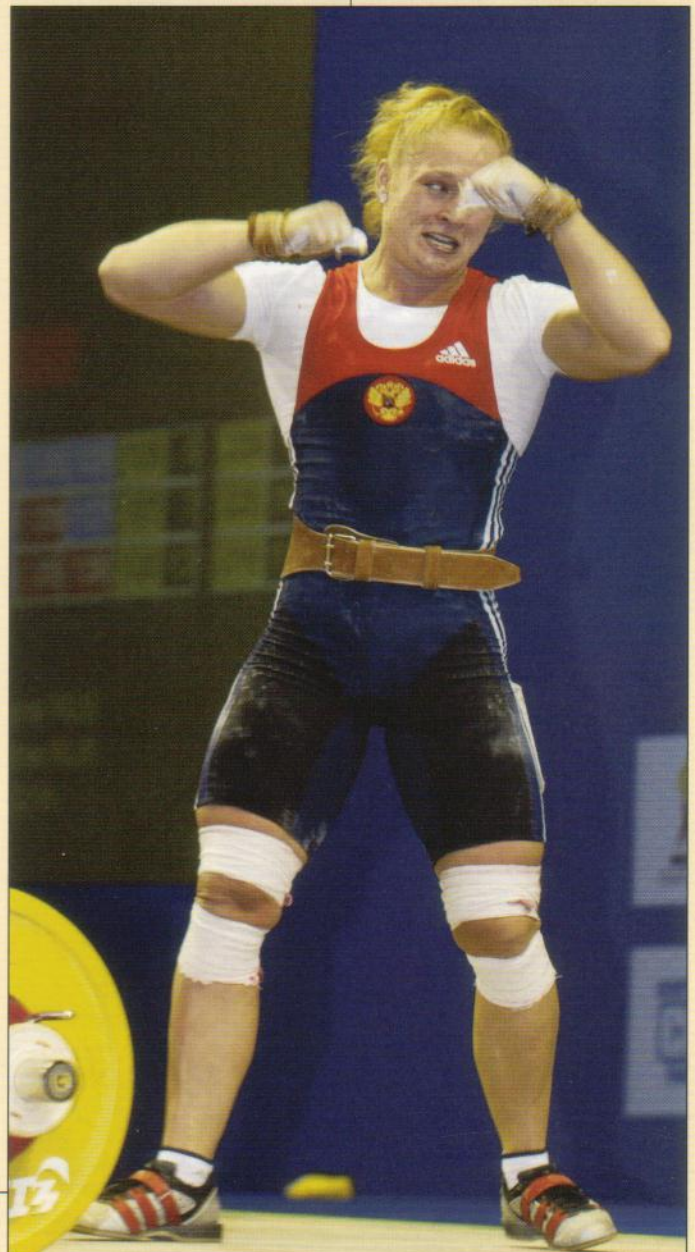
(97.5, 125 and 222.5kg). By the end of the year she occupied the 4th position in the world ranking (102.5, 125 and 227.5kg). For 2005 she increased her output to 230kg (105, 125) and added two silvers and one bronze to her junior medals.

In 2006 she joined the 69kg category. At the junior worlds her 257kg total (8116, 141) qualified her only as a runner-up. At the senior world championships, in contrast, she lifted 263kg (123, 140) with which she earned three gold medals.

In 2007 Slivenko dominated pocketing three world titles (120, 156 and 276kg) and jumped to the first

place also in the world ranking. In the Lifter of the Year election she received the second highest number of votes. She boasts some world records too: 123kg in snatch in 2006 (senior and junior), as well as 276kg in total in 2007.

"I am very much looking forward to the Olympic Games. I hope everything will be all right. In weightlifting you are very much exposed to injuries so one must take care of herself. Before Beijing I am not planning to enter any significant international competitions, but most probably I shall be lifting in the Russian championships. In Beijing I am aiming at the gold."



Oxana Slivenko

ANDREI ARAMNAU – BLR

17.04.1988

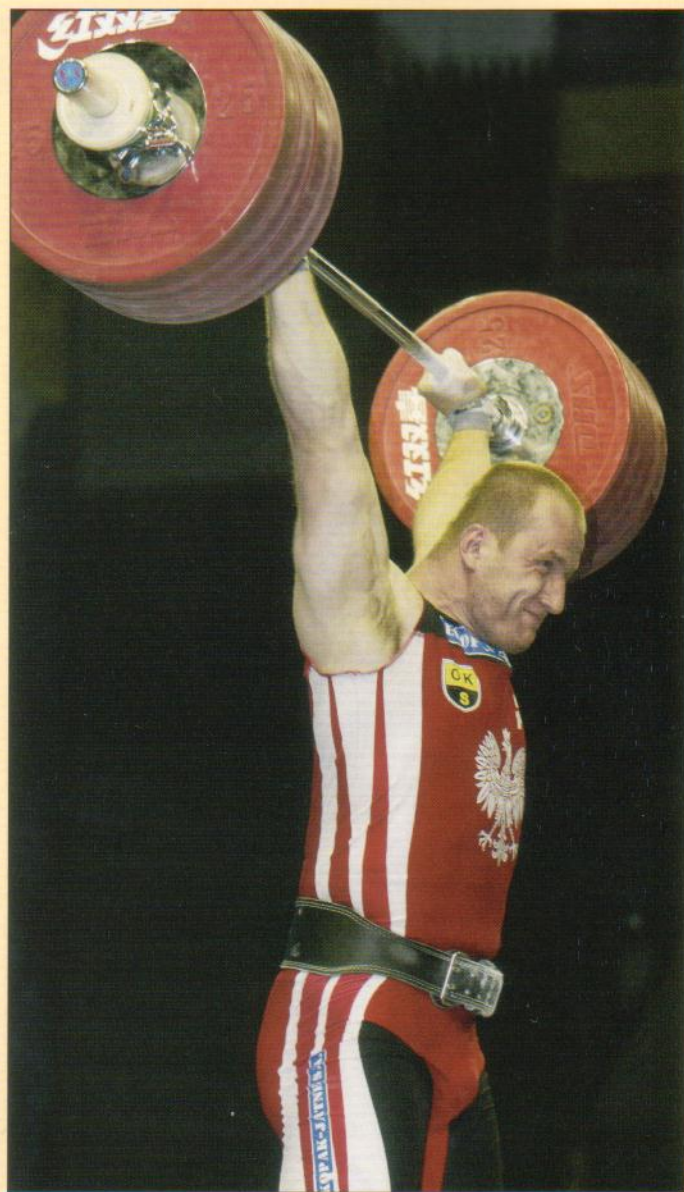
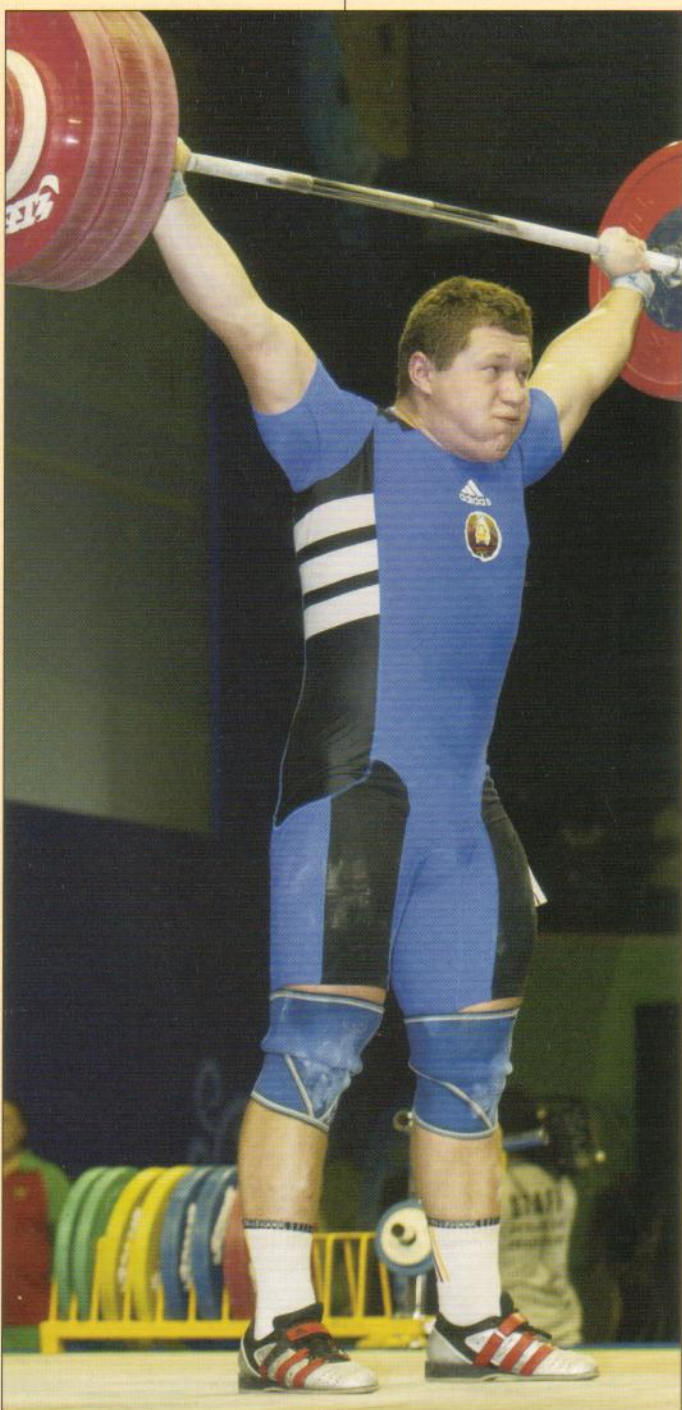
In the year of the Olympic Games of Athens he was sitting in 72nd position on the world ranking, in the 94kg category. His total was 325kg, with 145 and 180kg being the components.

A short year later Aramnau totalled 375kg (171 + 204kg) and jumped up into 17th place.

His first junior worlds appearance was in 2006. He took the silver medals in

jerk and total (216 and 393kg) behind Ilin and in the snatch (177kg) he defeated the famous Kazakh. This 393kg total ranked him third in the world for that year. In 2007 Aramnau moved up into the next category. In the 105kg he captured two gold medals (407 and 187kg) and one silver (220kg). In what was his first ever senior world championship, the young Belarussian collected the same set of medals as among the juniors: winning the snatch and the total (195 and 423kg) and taking

Andrei Aramnau



Marcin Dolega

the runner-up position in clean and jerk (228kg). He rewrote Marcin Dolega's junior world record in total, first to 420, then to 423kg. In the "Lifter of the Year" election, he got the second highest number of votes, following his compatriot Rybakou. Unfortunately, we did not get his replies concerning the plans for the Olympic Games.

MARCIN DOLEGA – POL

18.07.1982

His brother, Robert had taught the family name Dolega to the weightlifting community a while ago. Marcin entered the scene in 2000, making his debut at the junior world champi-

onships. His scores – 167.5, 197.5 and 365kg – qualified him as fourth in his class.

However, 2001 brought about a big change for the younger Dolega brother. In that year he recorded 175, 210 and 385kg, followed by 198.5, 217.5 and 415kg in 2002 – results that made him invincible as a junior. In 2002, he snatched 198.5kg in Havirov: junior and senior world record. His 415kg total is a still untouched junior world record. In those two years he also entered the senior world championships, where he first finished in 9th (with 415kg), then in 6th position (with 412.5kg).

It was in 2006 that Marcin Dolega conquered the

105kg category. In Santo Domingo (193, 222 and 415kg) he was crowned world champion in jerk and total and awarded the silver medal in snatch. He was second best in the world thanks to his 199kg world record plus 225kg = 424kg total. In ChiangMai he shocked everyone by dropping out in snatch 8at 193kg).

Here are his replies to **World Weightlifting's** questions:

Of course, I am getting ready for the Olympic Games! In 2007 I was not lucky, because in February I had a surgical operation on my right knee and in October on my left knee. So, I was very much looking forward to the European Championships. Unfortunately, I was unlucky again. Two weeks before the Championships I fell ill

with my angina and it disabled me from taking part in the Europeans. By Beijing I will be OK and I shall fight for a medal – I hope that I shall be successful and that the medal will be a nice one...

ILYA ILIN – KAZ

24.05.1988

A young prodigy, Ilin first appeared on the world ranking list when he was only 16 years old. In the 85kg category he was ranked 44th with results of 147.5, 187.5 and 335kg.

In 2005 Ilin first invaded the junior world championships, taking two titles with the 206kg jerk and 374kg total, and added a silver medal with 168kg in snatch, before continuing to the senior world championships and earning similar honours in jerk (216kg)

and total (386kg). With this 386kg result he topped the world ranking, of course. In 2005 he was elected as Best Lifter of the Year.

In 2006 Ilin shifted into another bodyweight category. Amazingly, he was able to safeguard each and every title and medal of his from the previous year even in the 94kg field. Junior world champion (225 and 401kg) and silver medallist (176kg). Among the seniors: gold in total (392kg), second in jerk (217kg) and third in snatch (175kg).

Once more he received the most votes to the 2006 Lifter of the Year title.

In 2007 he could not compete due to a serious spine injury.

An injury never comes at the right time, Ilin said to **World Weightlifting.**

As far as I was concerned, it interrupted my career just when I was about to realize my biggest dreams and when I was in the middle of intensive training. I had to stop for weeks and had to give up the planned routine, let alone competing. For seven months I did not train at all.

Meanwhile, however, I was watching what was happening on the international stage. I know that in ChiangMai Konstantinov won the 94kg with a 397kg total. Before my injury I had plans for 2007, including a very different result. That means, the world did not go forward too much during that year.

At the moment my physical condition is average. Still I am not supposed to train as intensively and as hard as originally intended. I still don't know if I can take part in the Olympic Games in Beijing. The truth is that I have not yet fully recovered from this injury. If I had



Ilya Ilin

On the Road From Athens to Beijing



On the Road From Athens to Beijing

Beijing 2008



to compete today, I don't think I could do more than 160 and 200kg. In the 94kg category I consider the Russian, the Polish and the Bulgarian competitors to be the strongest favourites.

DMITRY KLOKOV — RUS

18.02.1983

In the 94kg category, he impressed at the 2002 junior world championships, scoring 157.5, 207.5 and 365kg, capturing two gold medals and qualifying as 20th best in the world for the year with 367.5kg. The year 2003 welcomed Klokov to the 105kg category. His 380kg total (170, 210) was worth three silver medals among the juniors and 26th place in the world ranking.

In 2004, he occupied the 6th position in the world ranking (185, 225, 410kg). In the following year, he was entered to the senior world championships where he overwhelmed the field pocketing the three gold medals. His results: 192, 227 and 419kg, put him into second place in the world ranking.

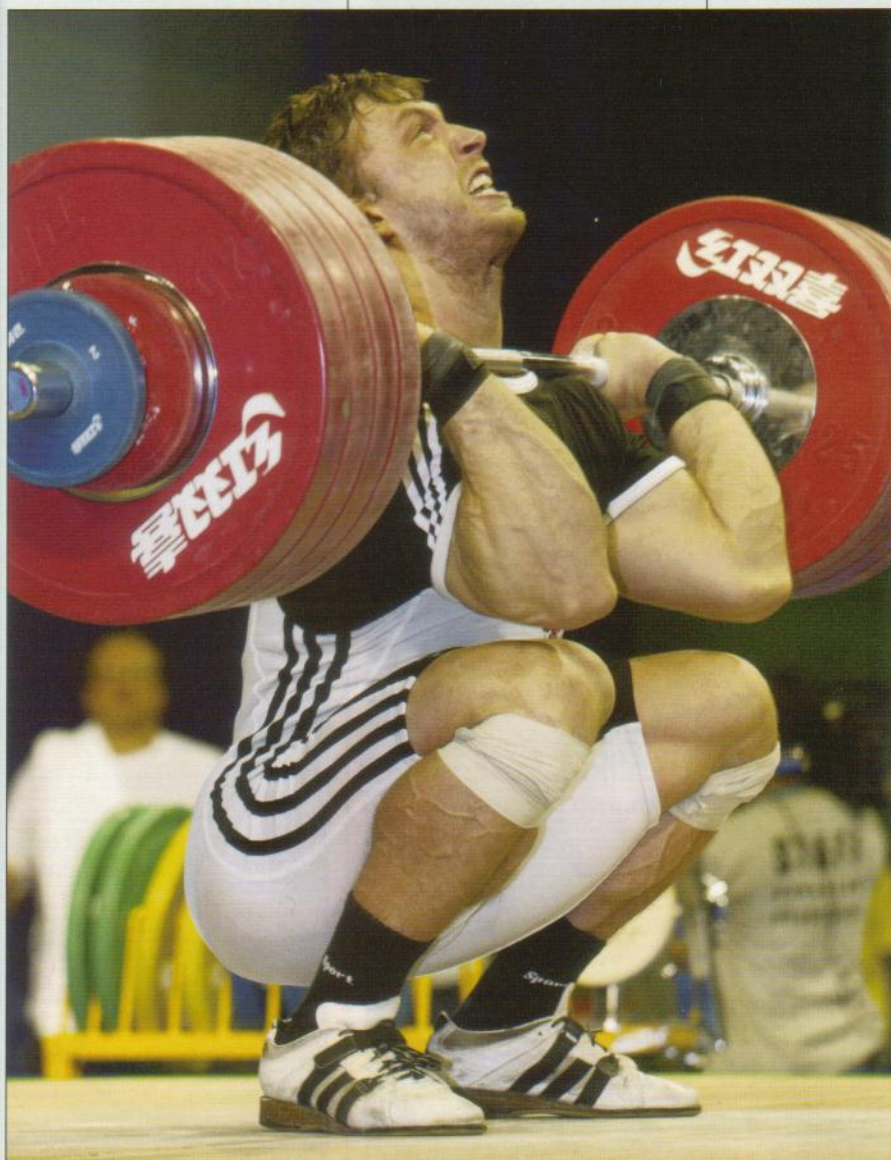
At the Worlds in 2006 and 2007 he slightly disappointed us winning only one silver medal each, thanks to results of 406 and 411kg. In the world ranking his name was listed in 6th, then in second place.

Klokov's answers: I am awaiting the Games and I want to do well in Beijing. Of course, several months before the Games I am not yet in a hundred-

percent shape. It would be too early and even a mistake to be in top shape already in the spring. At the 2007 world championships I was seriously injured but now I am fine. Prior to the Olympic Games I will only compete in the Russian Championships.

Every athlete's dream is to compete in the Olympic Games. In my family there are already two world champions but there is no Olympic champion yet. If I can go to Beijing and if I don't win the gold there, I shall do everything to let my son realize the family dream and win the Olympic title.

Dmitry Klokov



IVAN STOITSOV – BUL

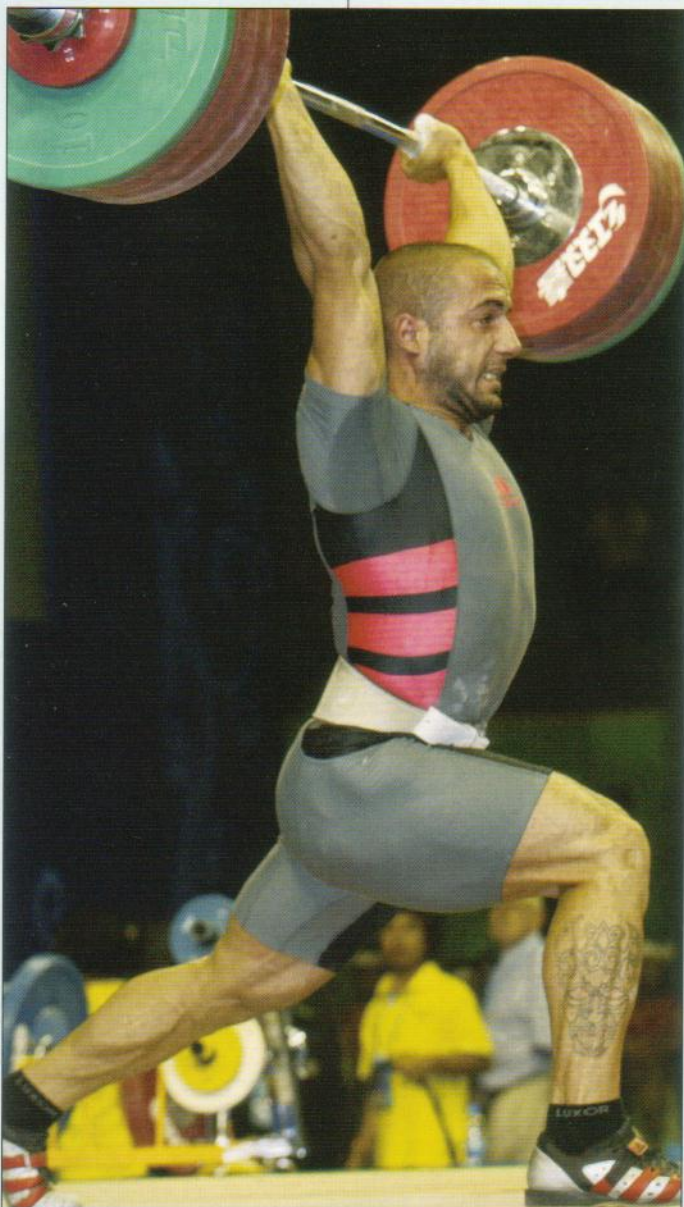
22.03.1985

The Bulgarian is already a one-time Olympian. However, four years ago in Athens, he was not yet ran-

total of 363kg (158 + 205kg) and taking two championship titles in jerk and total. This 363kg score elevated Stoitsov to the runner-up position in the

win! According to my estimate, one will need 164kg in snatch, 208kg in clean and jerk, that is 372kg in total to take the title. And I think I have the capacity to produce these results.

year 2005 was not particularly successful for Rybakou: 5th place in the worlds and 4th in the world ranking. Total: 380kg. However, since 2006 he has been on the top on end. In Dominica and in Thailand he swept in three gold medals each time. He pushed up the total to 383kg then to 393kg. Needless to point out that he topped the world ranking in both 2006 and 2007. In 2007, Rybakou was elected to "Lifter of the Year". In the



Ivan Stoitsov

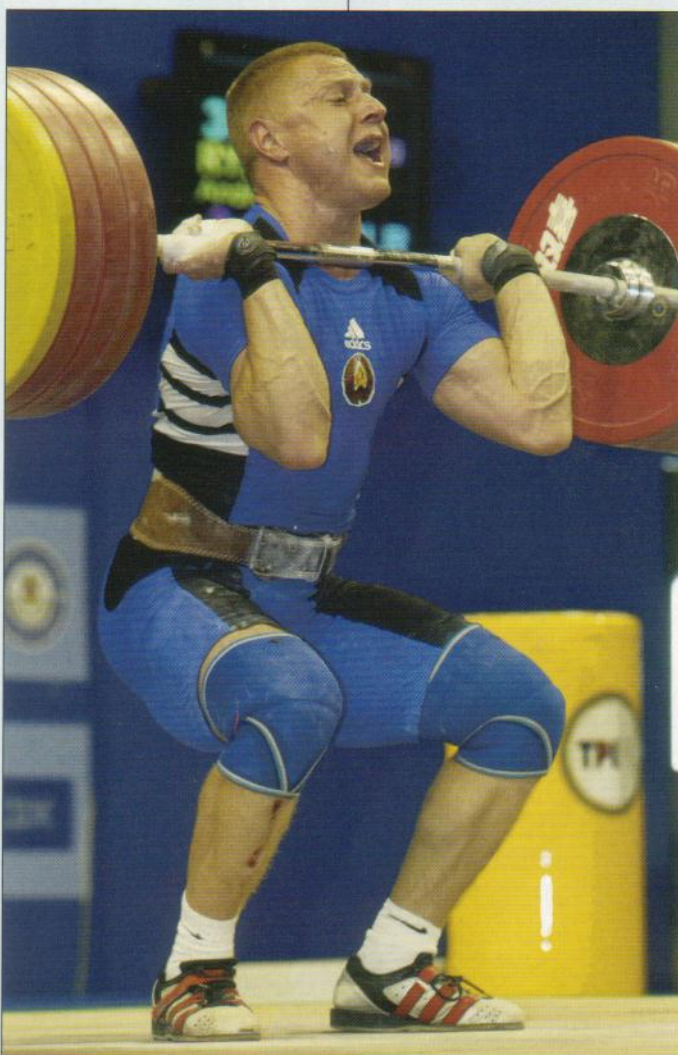
ked among the best: 355kg put him into 8th position in the 77kg category. That was enough to a 10th position in the world ranking. In 2005 he failed to reappear in any major competition. 155kg plus 200kg added up to 355kg for him: giving him the 8th place in the world. Then he skipped the next season, 2006. All the more surprising was his gate-crashing victory at the 2007 world championships, with a personal best

world ranking. Stoitsov: I have now tasted victory and so I want to go on winning. Naturally, I am training for the Games in Beijing. Fortunately, I am on the right track by now and I hope to progress according to plan. I started training in December, but a back injury put me out of action for two months. This break was seen at the European Championships in Lignano. But there is still enough time to Beijing and I shall catch up. For the Olympic Games I have a very specific goal: to

ANDREI RYBAKOU – BLR

03.04.1982

The young, fair guy can boast an Olympic silver medal from Athens, yet his real "Champion-time" arrived only after the 2004 Games. He was first listed



Andrei Rybakou

in the world ranking in 2001: 25th with 350kg (167.5, 182.5kg). In 2002 he was the seventh best (177.5, 195, 372.5kg). Next year, he had to step back by two places with a 370kg total. In the Olympic year his 380kg scored at Athens was good enough to rank him second best. The

snatch, he improved the world record five times between 2002 and 2007. His current record is 187kg. What Rybakou expects from the Olympic Games we cannot know as we failed to receive his replies to our questions.