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The Ultimate Physique

During the time that he was in DeLand for a brief visit, a recent Mr. America told me that he was one of two surviving triplets – and that his brother actually has better calves than he does, even though the brother has never trained with weights. Later, I saw both brothers together – and the untrained man does have the best calves; which simply means that the former Mr. America has managed only to reduce both the size and muscularity of his calves by several years of hard training. His outstanding calves are a result of heredity – and would probably have been better than they are if he had never trained them.

Yet, later, upon hearing that I had mentioned this fact in an article for Iron Man, this man called in an attempt to reach the publisher of that magazine – in order to lodge a strong complaint, demanding that this fact not be published. Why? Since it was the man in question who pointed it out to me in the first place.

Apparently because, now, he intends to give the credit for his calf development to a machine to be touted by an associate of his – a man who has already joined forces with several other men in an attempt to copy some of my machines.

But my point here is this; a lot of what can be done in any individual case is entirely dependent upon heredity – some people, like the man mentioned above, will have outstanding development in at least some body parts with absolutely nothing in the way of training, and some people will never reach an equal degree of development, regardless of how they train, no matter what they eat, in spite of any and all efforts in that direction.

But most people can reach a degree of muscular size-strength that is probably far beyond anything they might believe – and given good heredity, some few men can reach a level of size-strength that is almost unbelievable to anybody. Now please note, I am not talking about what is, or what is not, "desirable" – I am merely talking about what is possible; that which is highly desirable to some people might be actually repulsive to some other people – but since most of the readers of this bulletin are probably interested in at least attempting to reach their own particular limits of muscular size, the following points should be of interest.

To begin with, most of the claimed measurements of top bodybuilders are simply untrue. The largest muscular arm that I ever measured – or saw – was Sergio Oliva's, which, accurately measured, "cold" was 20 1/8 inches. Arnold Schwarzenegger's arm was 19 7/8, slightly pumped – probably 19 1/2 "cold". Bill Pearl's largest arm, his left arm, was 18 5/8 at a bodyweight of 222 in 1960 – at the 1971 NABBA Mr. Universe contest in London, his publicized arm size was listed as 20 1/4, but it was obvious to me that his arms were actually smaller than when I measured them in 1960, and it was obvious to anybody who saw the two men side by side that Sergio's arms literally dwarfed Bill's arms, and now you know how big Sergio's arms were at the time.

Casey Viator's arms were 19 15/16 at their largest when he was training in DeLand – and were 18 1/16 when he first came to DeLand, immediately after the Mr. America contest in 1970.

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But the "appearance" of size of an arm is only partially dependent upon its measurement; Bill Pearl's forearms look very large, but in fact are not very large – Boyer Coe's forearms look quite small (in comparison to his upper arms), but in fact are actually larger than Bill Pearl's. The insertion point of Bill's forearm muscles is far down the arm, near the wrist, and as a result the major mass of his forearm muscles occurs near the middle of his forearms – making them appear large; Boyer's insertion point is much closer to the elbow, thus his forearms are largest up "high" and don't appear as large as they actually are.

Many other factors also affect the appearance of size – the overall size of a man, the size of his head, the length of his arms, the shape of his arms, etc. Thus, an arm might measure 17 inches and look quite large, or measure 18 inches and appear to be a little above average size. But in fact, an actually muscular arm that measures a full 18 inches is enormous – a 19 inch arm is simply huge – and a 20 inch arm almost defies belief; claiming 20 inch arms – or even larger measurements – is common today, but I have measured many of the largest muscular arms in the world, Pearl's, Coe's, Schwarzenegger's, Viator's, Oliva's, Caputo's, and many other men's arms, and I have measured only one 20 inch arm – and while I haven't measured the arms of literally "everybody" on the bodybuilding scene, I have seen all of the better-known bodybuilders standing immediately next to one of the men I have measured, and the arms of Oliva and Schwarzenegger literally dwarf the arms of any other men I have seen.

In many cases, the actual mass of an arm may be quite large while the measurement may not be so large; if the biceps and triceps are "longer" than normal, then the bulk of muscle may be far out of proportion to the measurement – and the same thing is true in regard to the forearms. Both Casey Viator and Sergio Oliva have very long forearm muscles – and while both of these men have much larger than average forearm measurements, the actual mass of their forearm muscles is even greater than the measurements might indicate; Casey's forearms are nearly 15 1/2 "cold", straight, at right-angles to the bone – Sergio's forearms are a bit over 15 1/2 measured in the same manner. By comparison, Bill Pearl's largest forearm was 13 3/4 inches.

Sergio Oliva's biceps muscles are so long that he has much less than the normal range of movement around the axis of the elbow, something on the order of 120 degrees of rotary movement – as opposed to nearly 160 degrees of movement in the average man; he simply cannot "bend his arms" as far as most men can – but this has little or nothing to do with his degree of development, it is, instead, a result of much longer than average biceps muscles. Arnold Schwarzenegger's arms are almost as large as Sergio's, and he shows no signs of restricted movement around the elbow joint. Secondly, since the greatest thickness of Sergio's forearms occurs near the middle of his forearms, it happens that this also serves to restrict his movement – instead of fitting into the normal hollow of the biceps just above the elbow, the mass of his forearms meets the middle of his biceps.

Thus, while his arms are the largest muscular arms I ever saw, Sergio's arms are actually "larger than they measure" – the mass of muscle is far greater than the measurement would normally indicate; which, of course, is a result of heredity – not something that can be changed, and not a result of his training. While his training obviously produced his present size, his heredity made it possible.

His limited range of movement, however, prevents Sergio from fully contracting his biceps into the high "peak" displayed by many advanced bodybuilders – he simply can't bend his arms far enough to reach the required degree of contraction; this it might well be that Sergio's arms would measure more than they do if they were actually a bit smaller – if this reduction came in the form of "shorter" biceps and-or "higher" forearms.

But, regardless of their measurement, Sergio's arms are so big that they literally must be seen to be appreciated – and some people, upon first seeing them, are almost unable to believe their eyes; in a recent full-length picture of Sergio, the width of the flexed upper arms exceeded the height of Sergio's head – his arms were literally larger than his head, a size ratio never before approached by anybody else.

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Is that, then the "ultimate physique?" For most people, it is far beyond the limits imposed by individual potential; but it is almost certain that somebody will eventually exceed even Sergio's present size and proportions. I recently measured the "cold" upper arm of a 19 year old boy in New York at 19 1/2 inches, and with continued training this boy can almost certainly exceed Sergio's measurements – but he is at least six inches taller than Sergio, so even with Sergio's measurements he would not have Sergio's almost unbelievable proportions, would not give the "impression of size" that Sergio does.

I am reasonably certain that Sergio could attain even more size with continued training – while maintaining or improving his present degree of muscularity (muscular definition), and if so, then his proportions would be almost unreal. But in the meantime, until he does get larger, or until somebody at least matches his present proportions, Sergio certainly does represent the "ultimate physique".