

Tips From The Pros

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Category: Men's Physique

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Competition Highlights:

2017 NPC Teen Collegiate & Masters National Championships, Masters 40+, 1st place Masters & IFBB Pro Card obtained, 45+ Men's Physique, 1st place

2016 NPC Teen Collegiate & Masters National Championships, Masters 40+, 5th place Masters 40+ Classic Physique, 13th

2015 NPC Lee Haney Games, Open Men's Physique, 2nd place Masters 40, 1st place

Like many National Level competitors, I had high hopes competing in my very first National Show. I had put in the work and I was coming off an impressive showing at the inaugural NPC Lee Haney Games in Atlanta. I placed 2nd in Open Men's Physique and 1st in Masters Men's Physique. I was nationally qualified! Next stop the 2016 NPC Teen, Collegiate, & Masters Nationals in Pittsburgh, PA.

I prepped for this national show with the same focus and vision I had for all of my previous shows. I had a winning formula and stuck to what I knew. I had never placed out of the Top 2 in any show and I had no reason to think Nationals would be any different. I trained hard, brought up my weak points, practiced my routine and stuck to my nutrition 100%. I was never more prepared for any show. I knew I had it in the bag. The day of the show arrived and I didn't feel any nerves. I was ready. That Card was mine for the taking.

I was qualified and had decided to compete in Classic Physique as well as the Men's Physique categories. Prejudging for Classic Physique was an absolute disaster.

“Become a student of the sport. Study the champions' habits and methods.”

I cut too much sodium during peak week. BIG mistake. No matter how much I tried I couldn't maintain a pump! One of the more seasoned competitors saw my struggles and offered me some rice cakes and peanut butter. Too late, I hit the stage "pumpless". I posed my butt off but didn't make 1st callouts. Didn't make 2nd callouts. 3rd Callouts!!! What the Hell just happened? I'm standing there gobsmacked. Going from NEVER having placed outside of the TOP 2 to being 3rd callouts...Well damn.

I had to regroup and get ready for Men's Physique competition. I was still a little miffed having made 3rd callout. Now I was down to my throw away class. I only did Men's Physique because my coach Steve Payne suggested I give it a go at Nationals. He said "Markell you look like a National Level Physique Guy". The rice cakes and peanut butter did the job. I was able to get a better pump and did much better in Men's Physique. I made first callouts and ended up placing 5th in my first National Show!

I took my feedback from the judges, refocused my efforts on Men's Physique Class and trained my ass off for an entire year. I came back to Masters Nationals and won both of my Classes Masters +40 and Masters +45 and won my IFBB Pro Card. Even though I actually obtained my Pro card in 2017, it was the wake up call I got in 2016 that sticks in my mind!

Here are a few takeaways from my experiences:

1. Check and double check your training sessions and nutrition. I was so focused on banging out a national win that I didn't listen to my body. The SHOW is only one endpoint. In bodybuilding we have endpoints everyday. Nutrition, Training, Rest. Those are the components that lead to the SHOW.
2. Examine each division. How does your chosen division fit your natural body type? What are your weak points and strengths as they relate to your chosen division?
3. Become a student of the sport. Study the champions' habits and methods. Tweak them to fit your training style and temperament. I, for example studied Jeremy's FST-7 training style and adopted it into my own training sessions. It helped improve my physique and that's when I won on a national level.
4. No matter how many shows you have won, every show is different. Commit to learn from each experience.
5. Lastly, if you have the opportunity to help or advise new competitors, be a good sport and give them a good word.

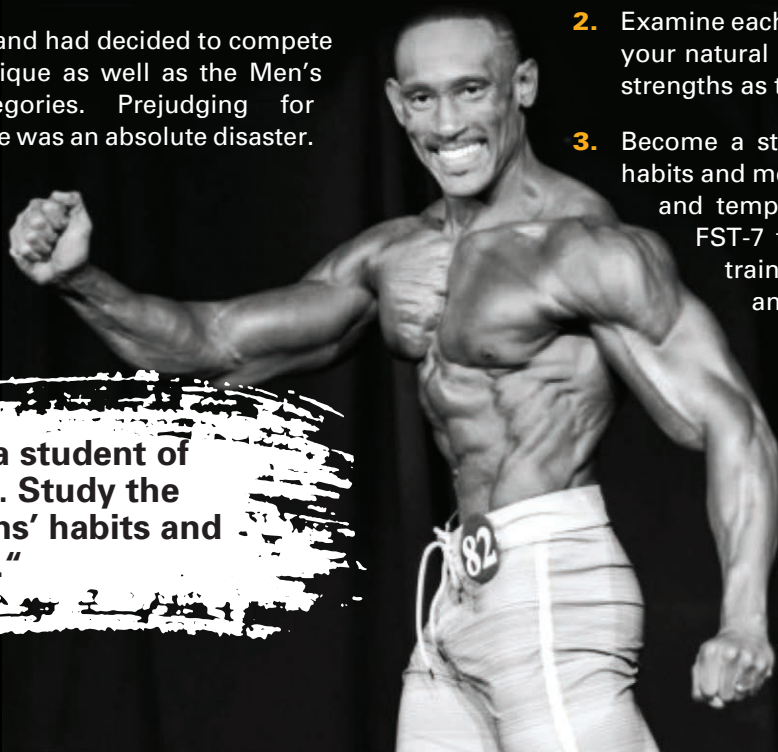


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