



IFBB Men's Physique Pro Michael Williams is Beyond Driven

by Rachel Payne

MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IFBB MEN'S PHYSIQUE PRO

Owner: BYDR Apparel, @BYDR_apparel

Website: BYDRapparel.com

Competition Highlights:

2021 IFBB Pro League NPC Worldwide Ben Weider Naturals PRO / AM – 2nd place

2017 IFBB Puerto Rico Pro – Pro Debut, Men's Physique 6th place

2016 NPC National Championships – Men's Physique 2nd place, earned pro status

2016 NPC Vulcan Classic – Overall Winner Men's Physique

“ Beyond Driven stands for discipline, values, consistency, and passion. It's an athleisure brand for both men and women. ”

Tell me about your journey to creating an apparel company. You started off competing, right?

Yes, yes, the journey started in 2016. I have always been in the gym but bodybuilding was never on my radar. One day somebody approached and suggested that I should compete. I just looked at him and I'm like, thinking to myself that's funny, because I couldn't see myself wearing the small shorts and I definitely wasn't an overly big guy, so I said, I'm not gonna get involved. Then I heard about the Men's Physique division. My brother and I both decided to compete in our very first show, the NPC Vulcan Classic in 2016. I went on to compete at a national level show that year and won pro status at the NPC National Championships. That was my amateur competition journey and it all happened in my first year of competing! It was a good year and one of my biggest accomplishments to date. I placed 6th at my pro debut at the Puerto Rico Pro in 2017 and enjoyed a little vacation afterwards.

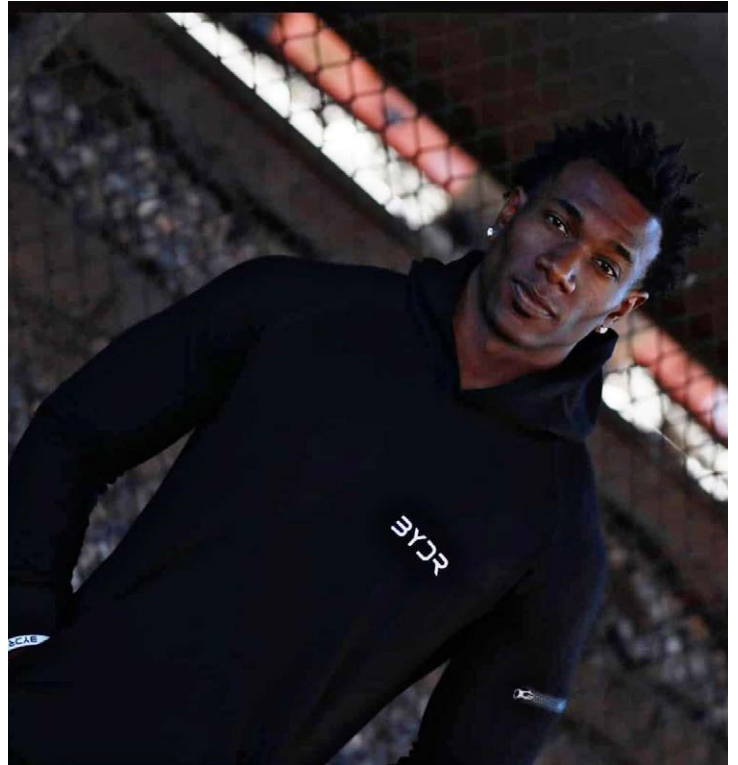
Since then I have competed here and there but I took some time to focus on my career. I am currently prepping for the 2023 IFBB Pro League NPC Worldwide Ben Weider Naturals PRO / AM on Nov. 17th-18th. I did this show in 2021 and liked it a lot so I decided to go back to see if I could make some noise.

When did you start your apparel company, Beyond Driven?

I started my company in 2018. Turning pro made me realize that if I applied myself and focused on what I really wanted then I can do well. I was already living to be my best. The creative side of me wanted to create a clothing line that expressed the drive within me in hopes that it would relate to others as well. Beyond Driven stands for discipline, values, consistency, and passion. It's an athleisure brand for both men and women. I developed the brand and the designs for clothes that I believe would make a person stand out. I believe if you look good, you feel good and it can make a difference in your workouts.

How is the business doing?

We're doing good. Last year, was the first year I started displaying my apparel at bodybuilding shows and that has really helped my business grow.



“ I look forward to the next steps with BYDR and being involved with the sport of bodybuilding. The meaning of what BYDR stands for is what a bodybuilder is. Right? ”

In addition to your own clothing line, you have a full time job?

Yes, I work at Geek Squad full time. I'm a home installer. I'm working towards doing the clothing full time. That's the goal. I don't want to name a time but I'm projecting 2024 is gonna be a good year. I'm about 70% there but with prices being so high I have to weigh the risk versus the security. I'm young and willing to work hard and right now I don't feel it has to be all or nothing, you know what I mean? My plan is to ease into it.

Tell me about the process.

I create small batches of the pieces I want and I source my clothing from a manufacturer in China. You really have to plan ahead because of the timeline. I get samples to make sure the product will be exactly what I want. The sizing can be tricky and overall the process can take several months. Timing is everything, for sure. I develop the concepts and use a third party service to create the actual graphic designs. That can also be a process but so far it's worked out pretty good and I've been able to create a business that keeps me involved and engaged in a sport that I love. I won't say it's rare, but yeah, its kinda rare.

**What direction do you want to go with the company?
What is your ultimate goal?**

I want expansion. I believe I can make that happen by continuing to be involved with the NPC/IFBB Professional League. It's a great organization to be a part of, and it's afforded me the opportunity to grow my passion into a business. I've taken it slow so I can learn the process and put systems in place. I look forward to the next steps with BYDR and being involved with the sport of bodybuilding. The meaning of what BYDR stands for is what a bodybuilder is. Right? I just started creating board shorts. That's my new piece. I continue to lay the foundation by going to shows, meeting competitors, shaking the competitors' hands, and letting them know I am here to help them. I want my customers to know me, see who I am as a person, and know that as a competitor myself I understand what they need and want. I believe that establishing a personal connection and building these relationships is going to help grow the business and at the same time I'm collecting contact information so I can reach out to these people to let them know what's coming.

Do you want to be a direct to consumer online business or do you want to be in retail stores or have your own storefront?

To date BYDR is a direct to consumer company however, I am open to putting my product in stores. Maybe starting with small stores or some local gyms in Alabama and even Georgia and gradually the southeast. With so many people buying online, I don't think a storefront would be the right move for me at this time.



How are you using social media to reach more people and let people know when a new item drops or you have special offers?

Currently, I'm using Instagram to notify my customers of new items, specials and more. My goal for 2024 is to increase marketing and maximize the digital opportunities that are available to me. Through the shows and other fitness events I have been able to get my product in front of people. They can see it, touch and feel it. Strategically my next move is to find the right balance of being in front of people and online marketing so my dollars spent are effective in terms of tracking acquisition cost, percentage of repeat customers and finding ways to improve those numbers.

I'm encouraged for the future. We are constantly growing and I'm betting the board shorts for men's physique competitors is going to be a hit. Being a men's physique competitor myself, producing a product that will help other athletes stand out on stage is one way I can give back. An athlete wants to love what they're wearing to look and feel their best on stage, that's what it's all about and the southeast market is open.

Do you have something new you're bringing out for the holiday season in your clothing line?

We just brought out a new line of hoodies and we will be adding some new leggings for the women for the holiday season. Check it out at BYDRapparel.com and [@BYDR_apparel](https://www.instagram.com/BYDR_apparel) on Instagram.

Michael, it's been a pleasure talking with you. Your brand looks good, it's nice, it's clean, it's sharp, and, it has good message behind it. I think it has potential to do really well as you continue to grow with it.