

SILVERBACK KREW

The Next Generation in World Domination!

by Rachel Payne

ADAM WEIDEL

Owner, Silverback Krew
Apparel brand established 2010



Adam, How & why did you start Silverback Krew?

It all started 13 years ago when I made some hats for my buddies that said Silverback on them and a girl I knew asked what it was. She said, "that's a brand!" I just really liked the Silverback Gorilla, it was cool, so I decided that I would make it my brand. I made about 10-15 hats for my buddies put their nickname on the back and gave them out. People started coming up asking how much they were, so I made a few more. I think it was in August that year that another friend took the logo and put it on some shirts. I went back the same day to print more and handed those out at a local show. I was prepping to compete at the NPC National Championships in November. My thought was to have my new logo printed on some apparel to take with me to the show and see what happens. It just kind of exploded from there.

Wow, I mean like purely by accident. Even so, Silverback Krew remains a side hustle for you, right? Is that how you view it?

Yes. All the money that I make off of it I put back into, more merchandise, athletes, and show sponsorships.

In particular, you've been one of the main sponsors for the shows put on by KD-Promotions since you started in 2010, correct?

The first show I sponsored was one of the KD-Promotions shows, the NPC Mid-Atlantic Classic, October 2010. It allowed me to see what kind of response I would get before going to my big show in November. While Silverback Krew basically launched at this local show, we did so well at the national show that we were convinced to travel to Ohio for the 2011 Arnold Classic. It all happened very fast and I needed to make a bold move to be seen. What I did was, and I never seen anybody else do, I took several, 3XL, 4XL, & 5XL t-shirts and gave away to everybody that was big and came by the booth. They throw out a lot of promotional products and t-shirts but they never fit the big guys (both bodybuilders and the strongman athletes) so these very popular, big name guys can't wear them. They were able to wear my shirts and many of them still do! I'm the only one I know of that's ever thrown out 2XL, 3XL, 4XL and 5XL shirts!

“ I just really liked the Silverback Gorilla, it was cool, so I decided that I would make it my brand. ”

I understand that Silverback Krew is a not your main source of revenue however, you've been a major sponsor of many shows for over a decade. About how many shows do you sponsor a year?

I'd say Silverback Krew sponsors at least 20 shows and a few of the bigger workshops. Some money, a lot by providing t-shirts for the competitors. I don't commit too far in advance because I don't want to have to back out if something happens. Usually, if a promoter sees me coming, they know I'm probably going to be bringing something to the table with no strings attached. We also sponsor athletes by paying entry fee, hotel, tanning, travel and more. There's been a few we've spent over \$1,000 for one show. I do it because if I see potential in somebody, I don't mind helping them, especially if I see them as somebody who's gonna win, right! I would say, 95% of the amateurs I've sponsored have continued to compete and turned pro. From the beginning, I've wanted the biggest, baddest best looking athletes to be wearing my brand.

You've been very generous in the various ways you support the sport of bodybuilding and the athletes, and you continue to do it year after year, many times not looking for a whole lot back in return. You do it just because you see potential in someone and your passionate about the sport.

Yeah, I just want to help out where I can.

What do you see for 2024? Are there new events that you're going to be doing? Do you have new products that are coming out?

I do try to do new releases throughout the year and especially when the seasons change. So I'll have some items for the fall/ winter coming out here in the next few weeks. I'm sponsoring the NPC National Women's Workshop in Orlando in January. I plan to sponsor what I can.

How can people purchase Silverback Krew apparel?

I don't really set up a booth at shows anymore. I sell direct to my customers online. For the holidays I'll have some new hoodies and joggers.

Are there any new events that you're looking at for 2024?

No, I just kind of pick them as I go. I'm definitely linked up with the Klash Series as well as other shows in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. I still like to compete, and I don't know of a lot of other brands that sponsor an athlete and the owner is competing, too. Most owners have retired from competing and are now just focused on their business.

Well, you are correct. There's not a lot of people who sponsor other athletes and continue to compete themselves.

I practice what I preach.

You also compete in Strongman competitions?

I did compete at the North Carolina Strongest Man Competition this past summer. That's the third year I've won it, 2012, 2021, and in 2023 NC Strongest Man Masters. Since August, I've been leaning out and thinking about possibly getting back on the bodybuilding stage.

Are you planning to compete in the Strongman for 2024?

Probably, right now, I'm focused on bodybuilding, maybe masters nationals next year, but I'm not sure yet on that. I just kind of play by ear. I may get back into Strongman next year, too. I don't know yet. We'll see.



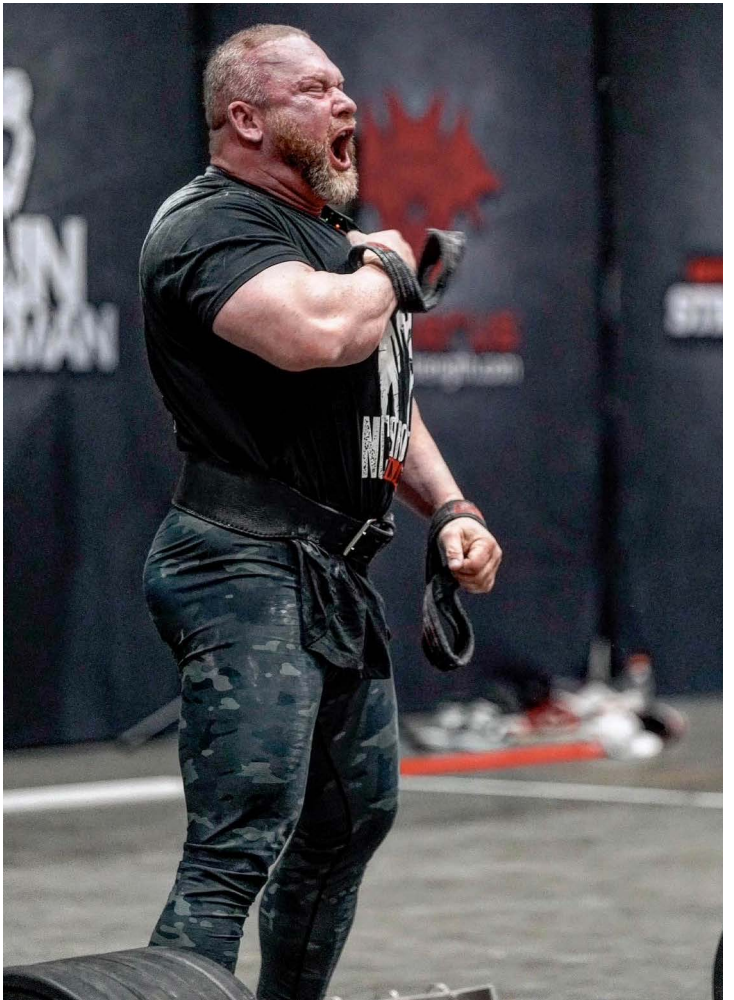


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That's a lot. I had no idea you've had such a huge impact on so many competitors.

I do it because I just want to help out. For the most part, I really don't expect anything in return. As a business person, it surprises me that so many athletes want to be sponsored but don't understand the responsibility or even the simple courtesy of a shout out or social media post that comes with the job. I grew up understanding that generosity should be appreciated and loyalty is one of the pillars of success.

As I've said, I have paid for tons of entry fees, tons of tanning, some cash here and there, just to help out. I am never going to say you absolutely have to do this or that if I'm going to sponsor you and I'm never going to 1099 these athletes. I'm just not the kind of guy that's going to force anyone to do anything. However, because I am still an athlete myself, I wish these young and rising stars could learn that they could benefit so much more if people see you as added value.



What drives you to still want to compete in both strongman and bodybuilding? Usually people pick one or the other, but you still like to do both?

I'm probably better at the Strongman competitions, but I just like bodybuilding. You know, I like to be in control of whatever look I want whether that means getting big or getting lean, whatever the current challenge is.

Do you sponsor any of the Strongman athletes?

Oh, yeah. Quite a few of those guys actually. One of my guys got fourth at the Arnold Amateur last year.

Where's the largest Strongman take place?

It's probably the Arnold at the World's Strongest Man. One of the guys that I sponsored back in the day was Adam Scherr. He won the Arnold Amateur and went on to become the number one WWE superstar in the world. He's turned into a giant superstar but he's still wears my clothes!

Do you have any idea how many athletes in bodybuilding you've sponsored? And you said a bunch of them have turned pro? Do you know how many?

I have no clue how many have turned pro but I'd say over the course of the past 13 years, I've easily sponsored over 100 athletes.

Well, again, we appreciate you and definitely think it's extremely generous how many people you've helped. Over the years, we've seen the fitness apparel industry evolve significantly, what changes do you see in terms of fashion? What's going to be really hot for next year? Is it going to be the oversized shirts that I hear people talking about?

The oversized shirts are coming back for guys and girls. Of course, those scrunch booty leggings and shorts are going to continue to be popular as well as the crop top shirts and hoodies. For the Silverback Krew merchandise we've always tried to keep our prints simple, just the logo on the front, and styles and colors. Black seems to continue to be our best seller and Olive Green it still popular. Camo has kind of run it's course.

Well, you know, I think it's really I think it's really cool. I know that your regular day job, keeps you busy and has you traveling all over the country. So where do you find time to work on this? And do you have a crew that just prints and ships for you? Or are you handling all that? Are you a one man show? How does all that work?

I'm set up at a warehouse and have a couple of people that take care housing the inventory. We do it all in-house. We get everything in the US now from different wholesalers. I couldn't tell you where they get our inventory, but we get it all in the USA. I rent out part of their space and they have people that help gets the jobs done. I still go in there and do a lot of the work myself, just to make sure things are done the way I want.

I just don't know where you find the time to do it all because I know your day job is fairly demanding.

I'm fortunate to be able to create my own schedule because it's my own business. So it's not like I have to ask off, I'm the boss.

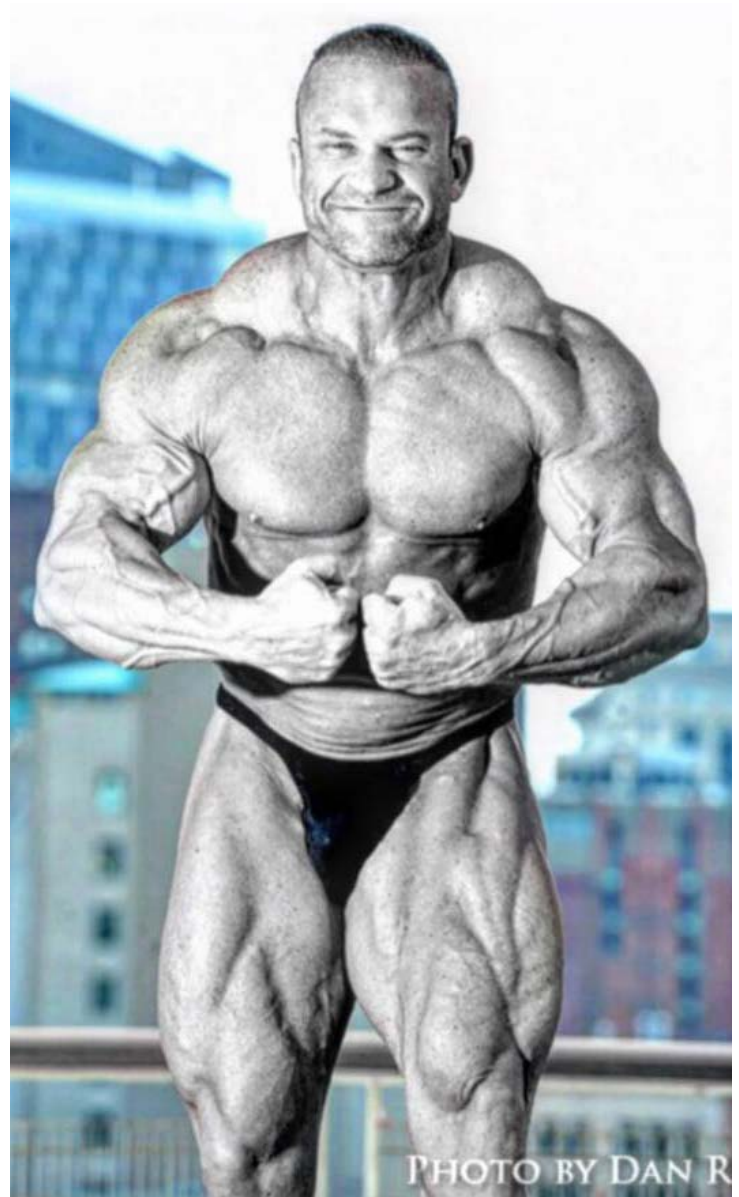
The Silverback Krew brand seems to be well received by everybody, not only because it's cool looking, but also because of what it represents. Tell us in your own words what the Silverback Krew brand represents.

Silverback Krew is the biggest, strongest, most muscular guys out there as well as the best looking, the most in shape, and strong females. The elite athletes. I still have people say to me, "I'd wear one of those shirts, but I'm not big enough" It's not just about being the biggest, it's about being the best of the best.

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I've always seen you as somebody who really thinks outside the box. Your vision for wanting to be bold and how you want to shape the way the business works for you is inspiring. You see things in a way that others might not ever see. I believe it's because you're an athlete, and because you've been around for as long as you have.

Yeah, I've seen a lot of businesses come and go, that's for sure. I think competing in both bodybuilding and Strongman, allows me to see things from the athletes perspective. A lot of people would never consider giving away shirts because of the cost, but because I'm a big guy, I'm going to make sure I give out shirts for the other big guys at these events. For me that's marketing and it's worked.

All I can say Adam, as lean as you were looking at the Olympia this year, the NPC Collegiate & Masters Nationals better watch out. It's been a pleasure interviewing you, thank you for taking the time. I am so grateful that Kevin DeHaven, KD-Promotions chose you as the sponsor to feature. For all you've done for the sport of bodybuilding and the athletes, I feel honored that I get to toot your horn a little bit.