

---

# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

---

## You Were Saying ... With Nathan Chmura

Nathan Chmura of CrossFit Nor'Easter talks  
about CrossFit, beer and *The Big Lebowski*.

---

By E.M. Burton

January 2012

---



Roland Dufresne

The *CrossFit Journal* is pleased to present the first in a series of profiles designed to help you get to know some of the best people in our community.

---

1 of 3



Jennifer Sirko

*How would Abraham Lincoln handle this load?*

### **Nathan Chmura**

**I got involved in athletics because ...** I think it breaks down to part camaraderie and part the challenge of it all.

**I first heard about CrossFit from ...** my wife, who heard about it from a friend. She started by making me do planks and burpees in our living room. Eventually she dragged me to a few classes; I liked it enough. Then I decided to give it a shot for a few months to get ready for mountain-bike season. I don't bike much anymore.

**My first CrossFit workout was ...** a terrible and humbling experience: kettlebell cards. I walked into an ambush! It started out innocently enough with three rather unassuming, ordinary, everyday folks, two of whom were pushing 60. I got absolutely crushed. I now take some solace in the fact that one of these people took seventh place in the 60-Plus Masters Division at the 2011 CrossFit Games. Still ... crushed. I will never forget that day.

**If I could force one person to do Heavy Fran, it would be ...** I am a being of light. I wouldn't dare.

**My favorite workout is ...** I keep seeing that "Rest Day" one showing up on the main site. I think I would really like that one. Unfortunately, if you own an affiliate, they don't tell you what it is.

**The person I would most like to WOD with is ...** Abraham Lincoln. Dude was all into strongman-type working out.

**When I was growing up, I wanted to be a ...** full-on lab-coat-wearing scientist with beakers and test tubes. Maybe even crazy hair.

**When I grow up, I want to be ...** I have no idea!

**The most rewarding thing about training people is ...** watching people evolve through CrossFit.

**The greatest challenge in coaching is ...** the first five minutes after waking up to teach the morning classes.

Jennifer Sirko



**Chmura tells his athletes to go hard and be smart—and keep their shoes and socks on. He hates feet.**

**The movement I find hardest to teach is ...** I want to say the snatch or clean because there are so many moving parts to it. But all that comes to mind is how I have to remind people nonstop to keep their elbows out in front of the bar when starting any type of overhead barbell movement.

**My favorite coaching cue is ...** I often find myself telling people to “go hard and be smart;” ... or something like that.

**My favorite cheat food is ...** beer and fries. Yes, that is two.

**The most inspiring person/athlete I’ve ever worked with is ...** Coach B (Mike Burgener). He has amazing knowledge, presence and enthusiasm.

**I find the thing that makes a successful coach is ...** patience and genuine investment.

**My secret identity is ...** in the CrossFit world? A vegetarian.

**The thing I most value is ...** “egolessness.” Unless that is not a real word. Then I am going to go with “dictionary.”

**The thing that sets my coaching apart from others is ...** apparently I am not mean enough, but I think some weeks my programming tells a different story.

**The most outrageous thing someone has done while I’ve been training them is ...** I let them know this is no time for shenanigans; this is CrossFit!

**My ideal mate is ...** my wife, of course.

**The country I’d most like to visit is ...** Belgium, because I like beer, and word on the street is they have crazy good fries there. I have had their waffles at IHOP, and if they are any indication ...

**The CrossFit trainer I most admire is ...** E.C. (Synkowski). She is tall and understands my plight.

**The non-CrossFit person I most admire is ...** I want to say somebody along the lines of Gandhi, Einstein, Vonnegut—but Bill Murray keeps coming to mind.

**The thing I have the most patience for is ...** athletes who want to get things right.

**And the thing I have the least patience for is ...** people not paying attention. I would annoy the shit out of myself.

**My favorite movie is ...** while I probably end up watching *The Hunt for Red October* or *Point Break* once a week on TBS, I think it comes down to *The Big Lebowski*.

**More than anything, I fear ...** I think feet are disgusting, almost to the point of fearing them.

**My most guilty pleasure is ...** beer and fries. Yes, that is two. Sorry again.

**My greatest regret is ...** I ran a half marathon this past fall. The good news is that CrossFit works! The bad news is that it was so boring. I don’t regret it, but I do regret that I am thinking about shooting for the full pull next year.

**I’m really looking forward to ...** the arrival of our daughter in March! Look out CrossFit Games 2030!



Nate Chmura is a Level 1 trainer at [CrossFit Nor’Easter](#), in Hartford, Conn.