



**Episode 36 Transcript**

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### ***Larger-than-Life Lifting and Eating with Branch Warren***

**Nick Collias:** Hey, everyone. Greetings from Boise, Idaho, and welcome to *The Bodybuilding.com Podcast*. I'm Nick Collias, an editor at Bodybuilding.com. Our normal co-host, Heather Eastman, is off gallivanting in Barcelona, and is not with us today. But we have three guests in her absence.

Branch Warren and his quads are here. Branch needs no introduction. He's an IFBB pro bodybuilder, a two-time Arnold Classic winner. Been in the top six at the Olympia more times than we can, even need to mention. Nobody works harder than the Texas Rattlesnake, we all know that. And nobody comes in quite conditioned like you *still* look. I was looking at Instagram, I'm like, what year is this? Looks exactly the same. So, Branch Warren, thanks for coming.

**Branch Warren:** Thank you, glad to be here.

**Nick:** Also the only bodybuilder, to my knowledge, to be a regular on a hunting show, he looks like he may have just been on a hunting show like ten minutes ago.

**Branch Warren:** Just the BB.com gym.

**Nick:** Yeah, exactly. But, looking at, reading about you. You've been at this so long, it's kind of a surprise to me you're still only 42 damn years old, right? Still in your competitive age, in a competitive age range for high-level bodybuilding, and it blows me away to think. I saw this picture of you on your [Instagram](#), it was 25 years ago, more than 25 years ago, you're 17 years old, at the Lee Labrada Classic. It made me realize, you've been doing this a long time.

**Branch Warren:** I've paid my dues.

**Nick:** Yeah.

**Branch Warren:** So, yeah, I remember that picture. I'm not, I don't know how pictures like this end up on the Internet, sometimes. I see stuff all the time, I'm like, I have that picture in a trunk in my office, how'd that get on here?

**Nick:** Right! Well, yeah, and we just, you see, people respond to that, and they say-

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, they do. So, that ... I did my first show when I was 16. And I did the Teenage Mr. Texas. And I won, actually. I didn't, my goal for that show was not get last place.

**Nick:** It's a good goal.

**Branch Warren:** I just wanted to beat somebody, and I actually won it. Which surprised me.

**Nick:** But you hadn't been lifting for very long, at that point, right?

**Branch Warren:** No, not very long at all. Less than a year, probably.

**Nick:** I mean, because let's be perfectly clear, that picture when you're 17, you're pretty freaking jacked, for a 17-year-old.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I did my first show when I was 154 pounds, and then I think that Lee Labrada, I went from 154 my first show, then I think my next show was that Lee Labrada show. And I was 180. And I was 17, so, and I went on to, later that year, I turned 18, and then when I won the Teenage Nationals ...

**Nick:** So you were ripped at that point.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, so, I won the Texas State Championships when I was 19. Then, I didn't compete for a few years. Went to school. Worked three jobs.

**Nick:** Still just lifting your ass off all the time, though?

**Branch Warren:** Man, you know what, I actually got into powerlifting. I didn't have the time, going to school, and working three jobs. And I drove a delivery truck in the morning. I had to be at the dock at like 5 a.m., to do my route. And then, I had a few clients I personal trained. And then the weekends, I worked a doorman, at a club. And so, I had no life.

I actually got into [powerlifting](#) because there's no way I could, you know, the bodybuilding regimen, training, cardio, the diet. There was no way. And, you know, keep my grades up, and working all my jobs. So, I got into powerlifting, started powerlifting, and did some meets. It turned out to be a blessing, because during that time period, that's when I really got thick, and I put on a lot of dense muscle from lifting heavy weights.

**Nick:** So, what led you back to bodybuilding, then?

**Branch Warren:** It was still my first love. It's just, I just, had to get, had to have your priorities in life straight. Getting an education is a priority. You know, I wanted to be a pro. That was always in my-

**Nick:** Just still, still back in there.

**Branch Warren:** It was still there. But you've got to, like I said, you've got to get your priorities right. And it's like, if you're trying to be pro anything, there's only a very few people that actually get to be pro, and then, of those pros, how many of them actually make it to the top?

You know, look at football players. They all make good money, but there's only a, the superstars that make the really big money, you know what I'm saying?

**Nick:** So, who was the first bodybuilder that really made an imprint on you, where you were like, all right, this showed me what a bodybuilder is? Because that's, because you were this for a lot of people. I see this online, where they say, I met this guy, or I saw a poster of Branch in 2002, and it said this is what bodybuilding is to me.

**Branch Warren:** You know, the second bodybuilder I ever saw in my life was Ronnie Coleman.

**Nick:** Oh, really? Well, that's a good place to start.

**Branch Warren:** When I walked into a [Metroflex](#). Now, Ronnie wasn't pro, then. You know, he was a police officer. And, but he was still jacked, by far the most jacked human being I'd ever seen.

**Nick:** So, this was in person.

**Branch Warren:** I walked into a Metroflex, and I was 17. And the guy who got me started bodybuilding was Ronnie's workout partner. So, when I told him I wanted to do a bodybuilding contest, he said I'm going to take you to a real gym. I'm like, where we at right now? He's like, this ain't a real gym, this is a health club.

**Nick:** You were at basically at 24-Hour Fitness, or something like that?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, basically. And we pulled up to Metroflex, and I could hear the music in the parking lot. Because the garage doors were open, and it was just cranking. There were some chicks in bikinis squatting in the parking lot.

**Nick:** Sounds like a music video.

**Branch Warren:** All these big, jacked dudes walking around, and I remember thinking to myself, I just made it to the promised land. And, I'm like, this is home. And, fast forward 26, 27 years, I'm still there.

**Nick:** So, did you just sign on the dotted line, like, make me a member, on that day?

**Branch Warren:** No, it's a pretty cool story, how it all went down. I was 17, you know, it was just me and my mom. And I actually, I started working when I was 14, actually. And I've always had to help out, I helped out with bills and stuff. Me and my mom were struggling. And I went to this gym, and I wanted to get ready for a competition, actually the Lee Labrada competition.

And so, I met Brian, who trained Ronnie, Mark, and owns Metroflex, and I told him, I said, hey, I want to do this competition, this was at the beginning of the summer. And I said, I can't afford a membership, but I'll work for you, I'll clean the gym up, pick the weights up, whatever, if I can just train here, for the summer.

And he said, let me look at you. So he took me in the gym, I hit a few shots, and he said, I tell you what, kid, you represent the gym, and you win, you don't gotta buy a membership.

**Nick:** I like it.

**Branch Warren:** He said, if you don't win, you're gonna work it off. 26 years later, I still haven't bought a membership.

**Nick:** Wow. So, having worked out at wherever you were working out at before, how different was it? I mean, not just in, like, oh, yeah, it's-

**Branch Warren:** Totally different.

**Nick:** The training, what did it feel like, differently?

**Branch Warren:** It was just a whole 'nother level. I mean, you're training with, I got to train, I went on with the trainer of the man, and the man who went on to become the greatest bodybuilder of all time, and his workout partner, Mark, actually, back then, trained harder than Ronnie did. He was stronger than Ronnie, back then.

**Nick:** Ronnie's one of the strongest.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, and Ronnie eventually went on and surpassed everything Mark had done. But at the time, I mean, these dudes were animals, you know, and I'm just like a kid. They let me work out with them, because I just did what I was told. I gave 100 percent, of course, they didn't care how much weight I lifted, all they cared about was how much intensity, how much work, if you gave 100 percent. So I gave everything I had, every set. And so, I think they respected that, and so they let me, you know, I paid attention and listened.

I didn't ask questions. I learned early on, you don't ask questions. If they say do 20, you don't ask why. You shut the fuck up and do 20.

**Nick:** Twenty!

**Branch Warren:** So, that's how you, I could tell you anybody, you start asking questions, or questioning what was going on, you got kicked out. I wasn't stupid, I was like, it works for them. So I'm going to do what they do.

**Nick:** But you were just 17 at that point, too, it's easy to say, all right, I'm going to try to lift the weights the big boys lift, too.

**Branch Warren:** No, they ain't going to let you. You got stupid, and you get a, I probably did, they slapped me in the head, or something. If you've done 12 reps, you do it with weights you can do 12

reps with. But you better make sure you give 100 percent, to get that 12 reps, you know? Not coasting. I just busted my butt, and won. At that gym back then, it was, they used to give out team trophies. Back home, Metroflex would win every team trophy, every time, every contest. So there was a lot of, from the very beginning, the whole focus was win. If you're going to get ready for the show, give 100 percent and win.

**Nick:** Your first couple of preps there, were they a whole other level from anything you had imagined, as well? Made it a science?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, it was, I played football, you know, two-a-days. I thought that was hard. But, training with these guys in the summertime, at Metroflex, getting ready for competitions, it was a whole 'nother level. I remember, because I still played football.

**Nick:** On the side, while you were doing this?

**Branch Warren:** On the side, yeah. I would train for competitions in the summer, I would compete, and then I would play football in the fall.

**Nick:** That's a good approach.

**Branch Warren:** And then I'd go back to playing, to bodybuilding in the spring and the summer again. Yeah, so after going through that kind of training, when I got to two-a-days, that was nothing.

**Nick:** Do you feel like, as you've gotten older, is the way that you prepare for a serious event just a variation on the same way you always did it then?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, it's just a variation. It's the same thing. I think the only difference is, there's more at stake. If you're getting ready for the Olympia, it's the Olympia, you know? You've got the contracts, and the money, and all the pressure, and all the stuff on you. So it's just more pressure. Other than that, it's the same thing.

**Nick:** Yeah, because we've heard from a lot of people, like, oh my God, the first couple that I did, I did everything wrong. It's amazing that I survived them. But you were strong from the start?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I was a, I was blessed. I was blessed to be surrounded, by the kind of guys I was surrounded with, and they gave me the foundation. The foundation of training, and diet, nutrition, supplements, all that.

**Nick:** They showed you how to eat, too?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, all that. So, I guess from the time I was probably 18 on, I did it, I did my own diet. Did my own nutrition and all that stuff. They gave me, those guys gave me the foundation, Brian and Mark and these guys showed me the basics. And I listened to my body, I read everything I could read, and educated myself.

**Nick:** Yeah, because this wasn't the Internet age here, right?

**Branch Warren:** No.

**Nick:** So, how did you educate yourself? Aside from just paying attention.

**Branch Warren:** I would read Flex, Muscle & Fitness, MD from cover to cover. Every month, when it came in. And I would talk to guys, and any kind of literature I could get to read about nutrition, I would read nutrition books, and I would study metabolism, all these things. How your body breaks down, uses carbohydrates, and proteins, and things like that. And then, you just have to be in tune with your body. I'd try something different, see how I looked, how I reacted, how my strength responded. And just kind of figure it out.

**Nick:** Yeah, we had Evan Centopani on here last year, and he was telling us, as a professional bodybuilder, I'm a professional eater, first and foremost. And that means quantity, right? You've got to get a lot, but it's also serious, you've got to be serious.

**Branch Warren:** You're actually more of a nutritionist than you are anything else. 70 percent of what I do is nutrition. If you don't have your nutrition right, you'll never, ever look the way you want to look. You can't get growth if you don't have proper nutrition, you're surely not gonna get in shape if you don't have proper nutrition. And so, you really have to be in tune with that.

**Nick:** Yeah, I mean, this is something that's well-known about you, but I was reading a little bit more online about how much [game meat](#) is pretty central to your protein, as well.

**Branch Warren:** Well, you know, I think there's a big, like Whole Foods and these type of things, they, these type of stores are very, becoming very popular, because they don't use hormones and preservatives, and things like that. Well, show me a meat, a protein source, that's more natural than game. An elk, or a deer, or a buffalo or something like that. You know, that's the best source of protein you can get. There's no preservatives, no hormones, no nothing. Plus, I love to hunt.

**Nick:** Sure. Has that been something that's been part of your life from way back?

**Branch Warren:** From day one. Yeah, I grew up in west Texas, in the country. And the only two things to do out there was drink beer, and hunt. So, you know, the two best-looking girls in my school were my cousins, so there wasn't much to do, man.

**Nick:** And it's cardio, right? Okay, so as long as you've been a bodybuilder, you've been somebody who's been eating game meat as well.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I grew up, you know, I grew up in the country, man. I grew up in west Texas on a cattle ranch. Our closest neighbor was probably eight miles away.

**Nick:** Eight miles? Wow.

**Branch Warren:** So, we were way out there. So, hunting and fishing was just something my dad taught me at an early age. I think when I was five years old, my dad started taking me with him, just to tag along, and started teaching me.

**Nick:** I mean, I think I've edited probably a dozen articles about how healthy game meat is. For you, as somebody who's been eating it your whole life, and using it to be fuel for your training, how different is it? Do you feel like, do you feel a difference in, is your healthy-

**Branch Warren:** I do, actually, I think it makes me stronger, tell you the truth. I think when I eat game, which I do pretty much on a daily basis, a combination of buffalo, elk, or deer, something like that. I think I'm stronger. Because it, my wife laughs at me, she's like, oh he thinks it makes him stronger.

**Nick:** Like a superhero.

**Branch Warren:** Maybe it's just my imagination, but it's definitely healthier. I think the science behind it will back that up.

**Nick:** And it's pretty straightforward, too, I mean, most of the game meat I eat is ground. It makes it a little easier for prep, too.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, that's what I do, I'll grind all mine up, the buffalo, the elk, the deer. I'll grind it up, and I would add nothing to it, just straight. And it makes it much easier, so if you need eight ounces, or ten ounces, it's much easier to get exactly what you need, and prepare it.

**Nick:** So what about bear and stuff? You ever go out and get a bear and eat that?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I've eaten black bear. At a-

**Nick:** I only ate it one time, it tasted pretty funky to me.

**Branch Warren:** It's rough, man. I hunted a bear one time in New Mexico. And of course, we hauled him out and processed him and ate him. We ate him, but it was-

**Nick:** It's an adventure.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, we kind of left him alone after that.

**Nick:** One of the great things about hunting, though, is it's a great activity, and it's a great way to just add in something extra to your strength training. We had a woman on a few weeks ago, who said, she's a construction worker on the side, and she said, all I do is the same Ronnie Coleman routine over and over again. But the construction work gives me this extra magic something, because you've got to carry something, you've got to walk, you've got to work hard.

**Branch Warren:** Absolutely.

**Nick:** Do you feel like hunting actually, and being outdoors?

**Branch Warren:** Hunting is very physical. You go on a back-country elk hunt, and you get a big bull, it might weigh a thousand pounds. And so, the only way to get him out is you've got to cut him up and haul him out on your back. You know, if you take 150 pound, 200 pound piece of elk strapped to your back, and you're walking at altitude, through the mountains trying to get out, it'll kick your butt. You're probably going to have to make several trips, to get him out.

**Nick:** Right. That's what keeps me from going out there. I helped my friend butcher it, but man, hauling that carcass, that's like a three-day process sometimes, you know?

**Branch Warren:** And then, of course, back home in Texas, we hunt wild boars. We hunt them with dogs, so you've got to run to keep up with the dogs. That's very physical. You can end up going several miles in a night, through the countryside.

**Nick:** Right, and they can be a bit more dangerous than an elk, too, I imagine.

**Branch Warren:** Agreed. Then, same thing. You get one, you've got to haul him out.

**Nick:** It's a pretty interesting thing. I imagine that the guys you go hunting with, they, do they say, like, Branch has these 30-inch quads, let's make him haul it out?

**Branch Warren:** No, everybody kind of shares the burden there. Because if they didn't help me, I wouldn't help them. So everybody pitches in. The guys I hunt with are pretty much the same guys I've been hunting with forever. So, a good group of guys.

**Nick:** That's another great thing about it, it's just a good ritual built in, too, for sure.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, we have a lot of fun.

**Nick:** So, now, let's talk about longevity a little bit. As a bodybuilder in your 40's, who's been doing this for 25 years, how do you feel?

**Branch Warren:** I feel really good. You know, like I was saying earlier, after my workout, I still train hard. I don't train as heavy as I used to. I probably dialed the intensity scale back a little bit, from what it was. All those years I trained the way I did, was for one reason, I wanted to win. I wanted to be the best in the world. And I'm not competing anymore.

**Nick:** Do you feel like you're done competing? Because you still look like it's on your mind, physically. When I see you on Instagram, I'm like, this guy looks like he still thinks like a competitor, you know?

**Branch Warren:** I don't want to say I'm retired, yet. But I'm just not competing. I'll leave that door cracked. Right now, I've got a lot of good things. In the past few years, since I haven't competed, I've had a lot of things come my way, good opportunities. And I'm having fun. I've got some challenges.

**Nick:** Sure, including a daughter.

**Branch Warren:** Yes.

**Nick:** Does that change that equation, too?

**Branch Warren:** That changes everything. The moment she was born, everything changed for me, for the better. You know, as a bodybuilder, especially a world-class bodybuilder, you're going to become a very self-centered, selfish person.

And if that's not who you are naturally, because if you're training for the Arnold, the Mr. Olympia, any pro contest, for that matter. It's all about you. It's about your training. It's about you eating all your food, it's about you doing cardio. It's about you posing practice. It's about you, you, you, you, you, all day long. Because to win, you have to be. Because if you're not giving everything you've got, and



giving 100 percent to every facet of that preparation, somebody'll beat you. Every time.

And so, even if you're not that type of person, you become that type of person, in the quest to win and be the best. I think that's why you see a lot of guys, a lot of marriages and relationships that don't last, because-

**Nick:** Sure, gym widows.

**Branch Warren:** Yes, so, my wife, she was a top pro, too, so she understood that. And she always put me first. So now that I'm not competing, I would say, when my daughter was born, it all changed. For the first time, I put someone else first, and I always thought about someone else before anything I did. That's a good thing.

**Nick:** How old is she now?

**Branch Warren:** She's five, she'll be six in three weeks.

**Nick:** Yeah, I have a five-year-old who'll be six in three weeks, as well. And it's funny, because now that he's four, five, right around in there, they start to notice a lot more, okay, this is how my family acts, versus other families, right? My son, he's a pretty active guy, and he loves, he gets the fitness thing. As play, but, they pay a lot more attention, all of a sudden, right?

**Branch Warren:** No, she came home the other day, and she was like, you're famous, huh daddy?

**Nick:** It hit her, eh?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, and I started laughing. I said, why do you say that? She goes, well, some of the kids I go to school with said they knew who you were, and they were showing me pictures or something. And I started laughing.

**Nick:** Has she been to Metroflex?

**Branch Warren:** Yes.

**Nick:** Are kids allowed there? I don't know.

**Branch Warren:** I don't know if she's ... It's a dirty place, man. So, I don't know, man, there are some bugs in there almost as big as she is. So, I don't let her run around. I know there's some rats in there that big.

**Nick:** And we've talked about this with guys like Jay Cutler and Evan Centopani as well, but there's also a point where it's like, all right, the eating starts to wear on you, as well. Those guys, the start to think about, like, how big do I want to be, at some point, you know?

**Branch Warren:** The eating is the be-all end-all in bodybuilding. It's, I think that's why there's a lot of guys out there that have Mr. Olympia-caliber physiques, and they never get there because of the eating. I mean, it's, I used to joke, I'm like, I'm never, I'm always miserable. Because off-season, you eat so much because you're trying to grow and make progress.

That's when you actually make the progress, and make gains, is in the off-season. I'll be up 'til one in the morning, sometimes, trying to finish my food. And you take a bite, and you chew it up, and you get some water and swallow, and then you get the next bite. And I just cuss my food. But I was so driven and motivated, I didn't care, I'd do whatever, I would get mad at my food, and just sit there, and, like I wanted to train it or something.

**Nick:** You'd hate-eat it?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I'd hate it. And I'd eat it anyway, just because I wasn't going to let it beat me, almost.

**Nick:** We call those "forced bites," around here.

**Branch Warren:** Then you start preparing for competition, now it's the other extreme, you're always hungry. Even though you're eating six, seven meals a day, you're starving all the time. So, now I'm getting up at three, four in the morning, to go do cardio, so I can eat breakfast. Because I can't sleep, because I'm laying in bed starving. So, it was just a constant cycle, one extreme to the other.

And yeah, I got to where I hated food. Because it was always, you're either force-feeding yourself, or you're getting, you're hungry all the time because you're getting ready for competition. Yeah, after a competition, I'd usually try to take a few weeks and-

**Nick:** Just eat a little bit more normal.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, if I wanted to eat, I'd eat. If I didn't, I didn't. Same thing with the gym. I'd just stay away from the gym. If I wanted to go, I would go, if I didn't, I didn't. Just sort of to give myself mentally a break.

**Nick:** Sure. And now that you're mostly not thinking about competition any more, do you find that the eating, you can just kind of eat how you want, and it's programmed into you at this point? Or are you still pretty serious about that part of it?

**Branch Warren:** I naturally will just pick healthy stuff. Naturally, I'll eat, you know, the game, or the chicken and the rice and potatoes, and egg whites.

**Nick:** So just quality, as opposed to the quantity.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, quality food. And I eat as much or as little as I want. I probably average four meals a day, as opposed to six or seven.

**Nick:** Four is a good number. People can do that.

**Branch Warren:** And you know, it keeps, I still can stay big, I still can train hard, and look decent. Right now, I'm good. If I decided I wanted to get back on the stage, I'm not that far off.

**Nick:** Right. And do you feel like this is a good spot, where you can see yourself hanging out for five to ten years, kind of in that?

**Branch Warren:** I do. This is, well, where I'm at now I'll be easily maintained. I'm not being the, not

killing myself, trying to eat seven meals a day.

**Nick:** Right, not crushing yourself.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah.

**Nick:** Okay, and you mentioned that you just maybe, you know how to dial back the throttle, obviously, a little bit by now. You've had a few serious injuries over the years, and I'm sure plenty of not-as-serious ones, that just, yeah. How do you find that, that sweet spot as you get older?

**Branch Warren:** Go by feel. I mean, I don't push it to the level that I used to, when I'm in the gym. I surely don't go as heavy. Those days of squatting that super heavy weight, and deadlifts and benching all that, why? There's no point. I could justify it back in the day, when I'm trying to, getting ready for the big show or something, but now? I've got nothing to prove. It was fun, but my joints are all pretty healthy.

**Nick:** Which is saying something.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah. And I live a pretty active life. I like to get out, and hunt and be in the outdoors, and do the things I do. My goal right now, when I'm in the gym, is don't get hurt.

**Nick:** Sure. That's a good goal, and I think you, that point's something important, there, just like, it's so easy to look at the gym, and say you know, there's my activity. But we have more and more people coming, experts coming to us, saying the stuff that you do outside of the gym is so much more important. Those two together, like yeah, just walking, and carrying stuff around, and parking as far away as possible. Going hunting, things like that. That's crucial.

**Branch Warren:** I've actually incorporated some new training into my schedule.

**Nick:** Ultra-marathons, like Kris Gethin?

**Branch Warren:** There will be no ultra-marathons in Branch's future. Ever. I mean, I have respect for anybody that can do it, but man, that's why they invented cars. And airplanes.

But I've incorporated some new kind of training. One day a week, we go out and do some functional training. You know, we're flipping tires, carrying sandbags, doing this kind of, pulling sleds.

**Nick:** Is that pretty new to you?

**Branch Warren:** It is. I've been doing it for the past couple of years. I'd done it a little bit in the past, but it kind of interfered with my competition and training. But now that I haven't been competing, I've been doing it. We do that kind of training sometimes, we incorporate actually shooting with it. So, that's my reward.

**Nick:** I like that, the biathlon style.

**Branch Warren:** Exactly. So, very much like that. We'll run, and do all this stuff, and then, when your heart rate's about 160, 170 beats a minute, then you go and you try to shoot and hit something.

**Nick:** Just like, right in the Metroflex parking lot?

**Branch Warren:** No. Actually, I've got a buddy on the, that's a S.W.A.T., police officer and S.W.A.T. team member back in Dallas, so we get to go down to their facility, and do it down there. Then, I actually have a pretty large farm, and I built a-

**Nick:** Okay, so you'll train at home, and do some of this as well.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, so I built my own little range out there, and I've got all that stuff. So we can do it there, too.

**Nick:** That's cool. Yeah. I remember, I lived in Europe about ten years ago, and the sports that they watch on T.V. there, aside from soccer, are Olympic sports. And I watched a ton of the biathlon then, and it's just an amazing sport. Because it's, they work so damned hard, skiing in these incredible circles, and then you sit down, and they start shooting, and it's, it's high drama, man! It's for real. It's a really cool sport.

**Branch Warren:** It's, it can be very frustrating, too, when you first start off, because if you haven't ever done that, and your heart rate is up so high, and then you're trying to shoot this little target, that's like the size of this Gatorade top here. It's hard, and you can get frustrated.

**Nick:** So, all that sort of [strongman](#)-style stuff, carrying stuff around, pulling sleds. Was that a rude awakening for you ever? Were you like, oh my God, this is way harder than I anticipated?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, it was hard. I actually did, [Tony Sentmanat](#), down in Florida, he, [RealWorld Tactical](#), we did one of his courses.

**Nick:** He does crazy shit.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, we've become really good friends over the years. Couple of years. But, I went down and took his course, and he does a lot of it. And he'd come up and try it with me, and then we went down and did his course.

**Nick:** So, it was like a course, that was just personal trainers and all these different people, and they show up, and here's Branch Warren taking the course with me?

**Branch Warren:** No, man, it was, we pulled up and these were like dudes. They were like Marines, and S.W.A.T. guys, and these contractors, and people like this. And here's Branch the bodybuilder. So, I'm like, I'm gonna get killed. It was a lot of fun, man, I had a blast. I learned a lot, and it was really hard.

**Nick:** It's hard, that style of training. It's cool, though, like there's a different sort of feeling, but it toughens you up ...

**Branch Warren:** I think it was eight hours. We had about a 30-minute break in the middle for lunch. It was hard, but it was super intense. I learned a lot. At that point, I was like, I got so much out of it, I'm like, I'm going to start training like this on a weekly basis.

**Nick:** Sure. So, what do you like to do? You said, like a heavy sandbag, or?

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, we do all kinds of stuff. We've got a sandbag, we have a sled, weighted sled. We pull or push it. We got some of those big giant tractor tires we flip. Got a sledgehammer we swing. What else we got, we run. Bear crawls, all this kind of stuff.

**Nick:** Crawling is no joke.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah. Good mornings, burpies, all this kind of stuff. Then, just anything, we change it up all the time. And just basically anything to kick your ass.

**Nick:** Sure. Well, that's one of, kind of fun thing about it, is that you can really mix it up. That's, there's really no sets or reps, it's you come out and work-

**Branch Warren:** I like it because it's something different, and it's a new challenge. After doing what I've done for so long, it's just something new. Plus it's outside, you can do it outside, and it's just a new challenge, something different.

**Nick:** And I find that that sort of training makes sense to my five-year-old, too. He gets that, in a way that, the gym, I think he would go in there and be like, what the hell are these people doing, doing curls? That makes no sense to me at all, you know? But like, yeah, pick something up, carry it. A kid can understand.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, get to flip a big tire over and all that, I think that's cool.

**Nick:** Okay, this was fun, right. Okay, so, what do you want your legacy to be in the sport, then, if you're like, okay, I maybe compete, maybe I don't. But looking back, what do you think your legacy is in bodybuilding?

**Branch Warren:** I don't know. I don't know if that's for me to decide. I think I'll let the people decide that. I think the thing, one of the things I'm most proud of is everywhere I go, I hear people, the younger generations, saying how I've, they watched my videos, and I inspired them to start working out or start training or competing. And I didn't even realize that, when you're in the, when you're doing it, you don't, I never really enjoy, I don't think I ever took the time to sit back and enjoy any of my accomplishments that I achieved. It didn't matter what it was.

**Nick:** You were just grinding.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah, I was grinding. I mean, it didn't matter what I won, or what I achieved or did. I mean, I would go out that night, probably eat something, and the next morning, I'm up and already focused on what's next. And I never took time to step away from it and say, wow. I actually did that, that was a goal I had since I was 17, and I just did it. I never really, it wasn't until the past couple of years that I was actually able to look back and be like, wow. I wish I would have enjoyed it a little bit more, but at the same point, I don't know if I would have accomplished what I did, because I was so focused. No matter what you do, it never was good enough. I never looked in a mirror and was like, wow I look great. I looked in the mirror and pick myself apart.

**Nick:** I've got to bring this up.

**Branch Warren:** I've got to bring this up, this up, this sucks. I've got to focus on this, and I was

always focused on what had to be done. And how to get to the next level, and take the next step forward. Instead of, I never took time to sit back and enjoy it.

**Nick:** Right. But now, you feel like you can breathe deep and appreciate it a little bit more?

**Branch Warren:** Absolutely. You know, I think I do miss game day. I miss being on stage with the guys, and battling it out. That was fun. And I think the challenge of trying to push myself to be better than the previous time, that was fun. But I don't miss the diet.

**Nick:** Sure, right. I mean, there are all these other competitive avenues out there, like there's more strength sports than ever. Do you ever look at some of that other stuff and go like, that may be kind of fun to try? Like another powerlifting meet, or whatever?

**Branch Warren:** No, powerlifting meet is... I loved it back in the day, definitely not on that. I don't know if my joints would, my joints are great right now.

**Nick:** Right. Leave well enough alone.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah. So, I think that ship sailed a long time ago.

**Nick:** Right. Strongman can be kind of the same way. It's like, it looks like a lot of fun, but when you start taking it competitively, you're just going injury to injury.

**Branch Warren:** Yeah. Strongman would be a lot of fun. But I think maybe a bit younger, ten years ago, absolutely. But now, it's just-

**Nick:** You have to eat enough game meat. If you just eat it. You haven't found the right animal yet, you know, like elephant.

**Branch Warren:** Maybe if I get as big as the buffalo I might.

**Nick:** Well, Branch Warren, thanks for coming and talking with us. We really appreciate it. Branch is on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)—@TheBranchWarren, right? And you have a website as well, with a whole bunch of stuff on it.

**Branch Warren:** [TheBranchWarren.com](http://TheBranchWarren.com).

**Nick Collias:** TheBranchWarren.com, and as for us, we do have an email address, if you want to send us any suggestions or complaints, it's [podcast@bodybuilding.com](mailto:podcast@bodybuilding.com), thank you everybody!



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