

Larry Scott “The Legend”

by

Alan Palmieri



For years, the “The Legend” himself, Larry Scott ruled supreme over bodybuilding. He took no prisoners as he dominated every aspect of the sport. The first Mr. Olympia in history, the first multiple winner of the title and the first Mr. America, Mr. Universe, Mr. Olympia winner was unstoppable and untouchable. Even today, almost thirty years later, Larry Scott is a personality in bodybuilding people still seek information from and about.

There may very well have been more articles and stories done on Larry Scott than any bodybuilder in the entire history of the sport. Larry did and continues to recognize and appreciate his fans. This is something almost all of the greats from the “Golden Era” do. Sadly the same can’t be said about some of today’s stars that seem more interested in the dollar. Times have changed I know, whereas back in the 60’s bodybuilders had to work a regular job to make a living in addition to training. Today, professional bodybuilders have the luxury of making a living from their sport.

Larry was born and raised of Mormon faith in Idaho. Not new to fans of Larry's is the fact he lives in Utah. The first magazine photos of Larry appeared in a publication called "Tomorrow's Man." Of course he was featured and dominated not only the covers but also the contents of all bodybuilding magazines of the 1960's.

Some articles have been written about Larry's personal life, his marriage to the beautiful Rachel Ichikawa and his family. Simply out of respect for Larry and his family, I've decided not to go into that aspect of his life. Seems to me we often pry too much into the lives of people that are considered "high profile" and when it comes to bodybuilding there is no profile higher than that of the "The Legend."

As anyone who knew Larry growing up could attest, prior to him pumping iron or seeing early photos of him, he gave no physical indication of bodybuilding greatness at all. He was thin, narrow shouldered and short in stature. I guess you might say all indications were he was a genetic shrimp but... as we all know that was definitely not the case. Being too small for football and too short for basketball, Larry made the gymnastic squad. He soon became an outstanding tumbler and later specialized on the trampoline. In fact he was so proficient on the trampoline that while he was still in high school he toured with the Idaho State College Gymnastic Team.

1956, Larry's senior year in high school, is when he saw his first bodybuilding magazine and started working out with weights. To start with, he rigged up some old axle wheels that he found in a dump. In 1958 Larry made the move to California and started training at Bert Goodrich's Hollywood Gym. While training at Bert's Larry met Lou Degni who at that time was one of the best-built men in bodybuilding. Degni whose professional name is Mark Forest, the movie star made several movies and was getting a good reputation in Hollywood. Larry credits Degni with giving him many good training ideas.

Larry didn't waste any time once he arrived in California. It would probably be better stated to say he didn't have any free time once he got to the "Golden Coast." He

was living in North Hollywood and was employed as an electronics technician with Waugh Engineering. He also attended Valley College where he majored in Electronics Engineering. Add all that to his schedule along with his workouts and you can top it off by including recreational activities like golf and surfing. Tell me that wasn't a full load!

Soon Larry joined Vince's Gym and developed a deep and mutual friendship with the owner, "The Iron Guru" Vince Gironda. Over the years Vince and Larry both gained recognition from their relationship and forged a strong friendship. On top of everything else Larry was involved in, he took a part in a movie titled "Muscle Beach Party." I remember reading about it in Muscle Builder Magazine and couldn't wait for it to hit the theaters. In fact, to date the movie and myself, the first time I saw it was at a drive-in. That was the first release in my area. You know... there is a chance some readers might not be old enough to remember what a drive-in is. I thought it was a great movie, still do and watch it from time to time as I purchased it on tape.

Larry had the looks, charisma, charm, and fan support like no one else in the sport. His popularity extended outside the ranks of bodybuilding into the main stream. His demeanor was accepted in all segments and those meeting Larry never forgot him. He had an almost cult like following. People who never met Larry were totally committed to him.

Perhaps best know for his outstanding arm and shoulder development, by 1964 Larry's physique was considered the absolute best in bodybuilding...ever! He was also one of the first "champions" people listened to when he talked about nutrition and its importance in bodybuilding. I'm sure others said it before but Larry made it something special when he said, "Success in bodybuilding is 75% to 80% nutrition," People like Gypsy Booth, Rheo H. Blair, Vince Gironda, and others were talking about nutrition for years but it didn't seem to mean as much as when Larry said it.

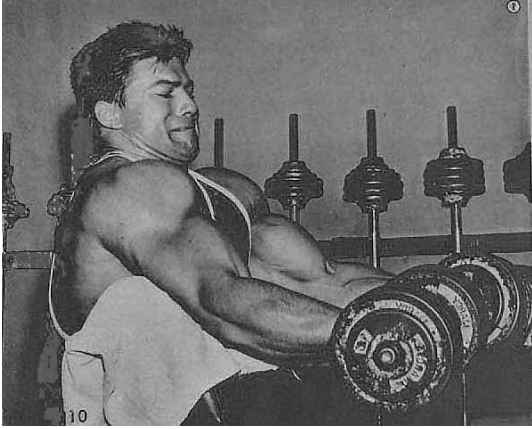
Larry's association with both Blair and Gironda caused a real change in the way bodybuilders viewed their overall programs. All of a sudden nutrition became just as

important as training. Although supplements had been around for a long time, once people found out Larry was using a protein powder, everyone had to have it, and not just any brand either, the brand Scott was using.

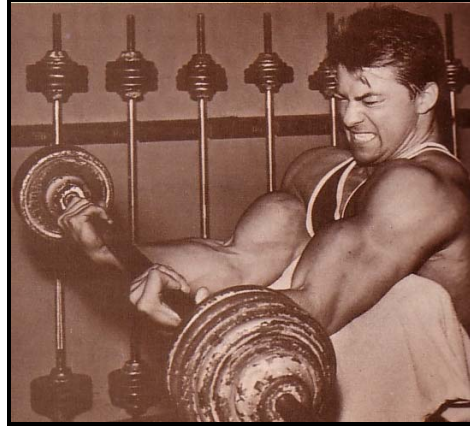
Famous in some circles already and always controversial, Rheo H. Blair (whose real name was Irving Johnson), was the nutrition advisor for Larry Scott, Don Howorth and many other bodybuilders. Vince Gironda and Blair collaborated on nutrition a lot until something came between them. Vince went his way and Rheo went his. Anyway, it was Blair's protein Scott was taking. Reportedly he consumed 2 cups of Blair's protein powder in heavy cream, 4 quarts of milk daily along with pre-digested amino acids and his normal meals. It is Larry Scott who has been credited with coining the phrase, "You need maximum nutrition to achieve maximum results."

It seems champions always lead the way. Leadership is a quality found in champions. Larry Scott was a leader as well as a champion. He chartered new courses for others who followed. Look carefully at pictures of Scott's physique when he was in his prime. What you see, if you study closely, is almost unbelievable.

A lot of different articles have been written about Larry training routines, some accurate and others the figment of someone's imagination. The truth is Larry followed several different programs. Larry gives an excellent account of his training in his book "Loaded Guns". If you haven't read it you need to find a copy. It's a great book and a "must have" for any fan of Larry Scott's. Everyone knows Larry made the Preacher Bench, used at Vince's Gym, famous (thus some have called it the Scott Bench), but there are a lot of other things true fans of Larry's may not know. He presents a lot of valuable information in "Loaded Guns".



Preacher Dumbbell Curls



Preacher Barbell Curls

Larry is best known for his spectacular biceps, triceps, and deltoid development. Even though, over the years he has followed many different programs, his arm routine has been witnessed and documented on many occasions. Here is one account of how Larry actually trained.

On this particular day, Larry was going to be working his arms. Naturally he was at Vince's Gym. His workouts are fast, diligent, focused, and productive. On this day here is what Larry did.

Biceps were worked first; he began his workout performing Dumbbell Preacher Curls. He made certain to keep his elbows in closer so the bells are actually wider than his shoulders. Larry gets a full contraction and extension on each movement with no cheating. He used 60 lbs dumbbells for 6 reps and performed three burns at the conclusion of each set. Immediately after each set of Dumbbell Preacher Curls he went on to perform Barbell Preacher Curls. Again gripping the bar so his hands are wider than shoulder width and the elbows are in closer. 6 reps followed by three burns at the end of each set were performed. Larry went back and forth from the Dumbbell Preacher Curls and Barbell Preacher Curls performing six reps of each until he completed six sets. After performing one set each of Dumbbell Preacher Curls and Barbell Preacher Curls Larry rested for about 1 to 1 ½ minutes before continuing on with his next set.

Next up was Reverse Preacher Curls. Using an EZ Curl Bar, loaded with 85 lbs on it, Larry preformed four straight sets in strict fashion. Once again his movements are performed in rhythmic motion. Larry uses a medium grip, and again does each rep with a full extension and full contraction followed by three burns at the end of each set.

Triceps are next on the agenda. First up are Lying Triceps Extensions with an EZ Curl Bar. Larry lowered the bar to his eyes and then pressed it up using only the power of his triceps. The elbows are locked out on each rep and three burns are added at the end of each set of eight reps.

Immediately after performing one set of Lying Triceps Extensions he moved to Kneeling Pulley Extensions for eight reps followed by three burns. In this movement, Larry rests his elbows on a low bench and keeps them in close to his head.



Kneeling Pulley Extensions

Back and forth he goes until a total of 6 x 8 are performed. His final Triceps exercise is the One Arm Triceps Kickback using a dumbbell for 4 to 6 sets of 8 to 10 reps.

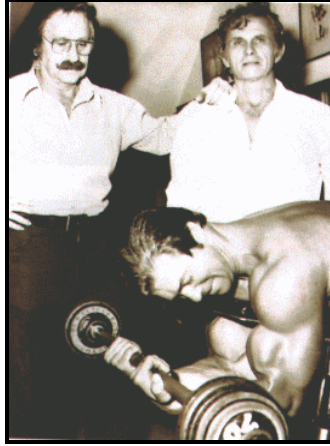
This completes Larry's workout for his arms. He used heavy weights and moved quickly from movement to movement taking only long enough to catch his breath between each set.

Larry's Arm Workout

Exercise	Sets	Reps	Weight
Biceps:			
Dumbbell Preacher Bench Curls	6	6	60 lbs
Super-set with			
Barbell Preacher Bench Curls	6	6	130 lbs
Preacher Bench Reverse Curls			
with EZ Curl Bar	4	8	85 lbs
Triceps:			
Lying Triceps Press	6	8	185 lbs
Super-ser with			
Kneeling Pulley Extensions	6	8	130 lbs
One Arm Triceps Kickbacks	4-6	8-10	60 lbs

This my friend is one heck of a demanding workout! Don't think so... try it! Larry uses incredible intensity in his workouts. He once said, "Every rep is a set and every set is a rep". This perhaps best defines the focus and mental concentration he calls into play while performing his workouts. Larry's movements are smooth and deliberate, not jerky and form is incredible.

When one thinks of bodybuilding and Larry Scott it is difficult to do so without also thinking about Vince Gironda, Rhea H. Blair, and Joe Weider. There always seems to be an association between them. Good or bad, it's a very select group and names that not only are part of bodybuilding but will be forever recorded in the annals of bodybuilding history as champions, leaders, and innovators.



Joe Weider “Trainer of Champions”
Vince Gironda “The Iron Guru” and Larry Scott “The Legend”

The last time I spoke with Larry I was working on the “Vince Gironda Legend And Myth” CD. I hadn’t seen or spoken with him in many years. When I called I was deeply grateful when he remembered who I was. We proceeded to spend a few moments reminiscing of the “Good Old Days”. It’s always nice to know someone that has the celebrity Larry does is also thoughtful and humble enough to not only remember but also say a few kind words to someone they have not seen or heard from in years. That’s Larry!

I wanted to include some of Larry’s comments in my project because I know Vince thought a lot of Larry and Larry felt the same way about Vince. In fact, a great many photos of Larry working out that have been published in various magazines were taken at Vince’s Gym. This was no small task for a photographer as Vince’s was a dark place. The lighting was very poor for photography purposes. Still it was Larry who insisted they be taken at Vince’s. Some may not think much of that but it shows Larry’s respect for Vince. Along with a lot of things Larry once said. “Humility, not arrogance is the true mark of a champion”. Larry Scott is a true champion.

Here is my interview with Larry that I did for the “Vince Gironda Legend And Myth” CD.

AP: Larry, thank you for taking the time to talk with me. I am working on a project updating my book on Vince. I know that Vince was very cantankerous but he was always very good to me. He would tell people not to call but always allowed me to do so. He sent me all his courses and would take a lot of time talking to me about training and nutrition. He would also give me updates on your training and the progress you were making. I believe that you are probably one of the most famous of all that came out of Vince's. I would just like to pick your mind a little and get some comments from you about your relationship with Vince because it appeared there was a special chemistry between you two.

LS: Well, as you are probably aware I think it was your southern accent that endeared you to Vince. He could be a hard guy to get along with and could make people nervous. We never socialized at all. Vince had a lot of knowledge and professionally we were close and I would go to him all the time when I had any questions about training and something I was trying to figure out. Vince was always really good about giving me ideas. He was very knowledgeable about physiques in that he wouldn't give you an idea and just say, "you got to do this," he would say, "try this." Then I would take it and try it and let him know whether or not it worked. So our relationship in that regard was very good. Sometimes he would make me nervous because he could be so unpredictable in his emotional outbursts he made me feel like he was a walking time bomb or something. Never knowing when he was going to go off. I remember the very first time I met him, I walked into his health club and I guess I must have had, you know, kind of a big head. I managed to appear in one magazine and I walked in and I said "how do you do, my name is Larry Scott." I must have said it in a way, that sounded like: "Hey, here I am," because Vince said "so what!"

AP: Typical Vince Girona fashion.

LS: Well, that kind of defines our relationship. Then when I won the California contest, some of the guys came back to the gym and said, "Larry won," and Vince said, "he didn't deserve it." They said, "What do you mean he didn't deserve it?" "He looked great!"

Vince said, “He wasn’t ready physiologically.” Maybe I wasn’t and maybe I needed to pay the price first and he paid the price and knew what he was talking about. It all kind of, I don’t know, defines the relationship we had.

When I moved back to Utah, and I would go back to take photos for Joe Weider, I would always insist that we would take them at Vince’s Gym. Joe would say that it was too dark in there, “it’s not a good light Larry.” I would say I would just like to do it because I always wanted to help keep Vince in the limelight as well as I could because he had given me a lot of advice, a lot of which I wasn’t aware of. I was ah, shocked, that’s almost the right word. At one point later on I had told Vince: “If you can give me all your booklets, I will design an ad for you, to put in MuscleMag International that will help sell your booklets.” One that I think would be better because I had seen the one he had in there currently and I could see some of the things I knew about marketing were not being utilized in his ads. I thought I could help him. In order for me to do that I needed to know what the content of each one was so I could pick out “hot buttons” out of each one to use in the ad. Vince sent them to me and I started to read them and I was amazed to see how many things he had in his books that I thought I had come up with on my own. I had taken credit for them, not intentionally, I just thought they were mine, but they were actually his ideas he had about training. I was pretty amazed at that.

I guess out of thanks, appreciation, I went back to Vince’s for a photo session and he took me in the back and he showed me where he had hung a sign that said, Larry Scott’s Dressing Room. I could not believe it. I just could not believe that he would ever do something like that. He never ever gave me the indication that he would ever do something like that. I was flabbergasted. So that kind of shows you the relationship we had.

AP: The times Vince and I talked on the phone about you he was always very complimentary. He always had positive things to say about you and how hard you would work. He would get on my case quite often; in fact he even hung up on me one time, typical Vince style. I tried to call him back for about three days and he refused to take my

phone call. Finally he took it and I said, “well you hung up on me last time Vince.” He said, “If you start I’ll hang up on you again!”

LS: A lot of the things he did I would like to have had the courage to do.

AP: Larry how about some of the valuable lessons Vince passed on to you about training or anything else. Do you have any you would like to share?

LS: I remember when I competed in a Los Angeles contest, I took third. There was one chap in there named Franklin Jones, he won the Most Muscular. Three months later I went into the Mr. California contest. My sole intention was just winning the Most Muscular; I thought I could do that. I didn’t think I had any chance of winning but I did want to win Most Muscular. In the meantime, Vince had helped me with my posing and it made a tremendous difference. I won the California contest and it was an absolute shock, total shock. When I didn’t get fifth I gave up because I knew I wasn’t even going to be in the running. When I got first I was dumbfounded.

Just a short while ago, a guy by the name of Ron Kosloff, who is a real fan of Vince Gironda’s, sent me a video of Vince’s posing routine. I had never seen Vince’s posing routine. My posing was based on what Vince taught me. A lot of things, after you have done them for so many years you begin to think you came up with the ideas yourself. I watched the video of his posing routine and I’m telling you, they were the poses I did. The way he went from one pose to the next, I learned that from Vince. I’m a lot more of a fan or product of Vince’s than I ever realized, so I can’t say enough about Vince. I can’t say enough about his knowledge.

He helped me a lot. I learned the down the rack dumbbell system for shoulders. I couldn’t get big in my shoulders. I had tried all the things in the magazines and they didn’t work for me, I had to put on more meat because I wasn’t as big as some of the others. Vince taught me that down the rack system for deltoids which really helped me put on some extra weight in my shoulders which I needed so badly.

Vince led me to the Preacher Bench. I had never heard of the Preacher Bench. It was a funny looking little bench in his gym and I didn't like working biceps, I was more into triceps. He led me over to the Preacher Bench and showed me how to use it. It became a bone of contention between us because I got to where I used it so much that whenever I did an article for Joe Weider that talked about arms I would take him over to that bench. Joe is a real creative guy and he called it the Scott Bench. Boy, I tell you, I had fits over this. The first time the article came out in the Weider magazine and it said, the "Scott Preacher Bench," Vince put it up on his bulletin board and put a big red line through it and wrote "bullshit" under it. I said, "Vince, I didn't write that." Yeah, right he said.

AP: If I am not mistaken the Easton Brothers Gym had the original Preacher Bench.

LS: Yes, they are the ones that actually created it.

AP: You are the one that made the bench famous. I can't remember a time when you did not have name recognition with the bench.

LS: I guess I popularized it. There were a couple of things about it I didn't like so when I got out to California I asked Vince for his permission to remanufacture those pieces and change it. I didn't say anything about changing; I wouldn't dare say that to him. I asked him if I could manufacture them and he gave me his permission. I changed some things on them. After so long in the business you learn to improve on things if you can but Vince was the foundation of where it all came from.

AP: There toward the end I had heard that Vince's Gym really hit on some hard times and he eventually sold all his equipment for something like twenty thousand dollars, did you hear anything about that?

LS: Yes, I did know about that, and I was sick when I heard he sold all his dumbbells and all his equipment for five grand. I would never have even dared to offer him anything like that. I would have loved to have had those.

AP: Boy oh boy. Gosh, just the Preacher, Scott Bench that he had would have easily brought five to ten thousand itself. That is really sad.

LS: It was sad. As a matter of fact, I told Vince I was going to and help him. I was going to put together a special fund raiser for Vince and I was trying to get all the guys, you know; bodybuilders, movie stars, etc. to come. I wanted to help him raise cash and pay off some bills. Of all the actors that worked out there, and I won't mention names of those that wouldn't help, but the one that was positive and willing to pitch in was Clint Eastwood. A lot of the bodybuilders were but I couldn't get any of the actors that trained at Vince's. Vince had a lot of friends and people that spoke highly of him.

I remember one day when Clint Eastwood was in Vince's training, he was doing side laterals I think, for his shoulders. I said "Clint, come here and let me show you how to do this to make a lot more progress." He said, "Oh man, I'm leaving you make me tired." He wasn't very motivated.

I remember Clint Walker from the Cheyenne series trained at Vince's quite a lot. There were a lot of people that trained at Vince's, mainly movie stars and bodybuilders. At one time, there were four Mr. Americas training there at the same time. Most of the guy's who were training for physique contests had to work during the day so most of the actors were there around midday.

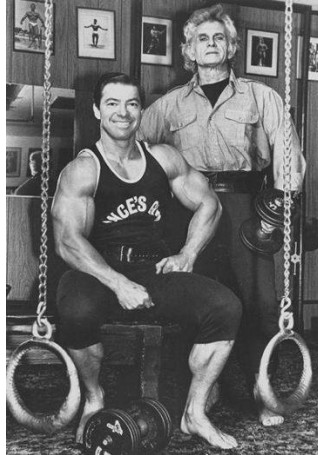
AP: Well Larry, you have certainly provided a great amount of information and I am deeply grateful for your time. Are there any last comments you would like to add about Vince or Vince's Gym?

LS: Some may think it didn't look like much but boy that gym had class. All the pieces were leather covered. Although it was dark inside, in the spring or when it would rain and water would come running down the hill (behind Vince's), we would have to walk around in bare feet; we were walking in water. The pieces (equipment), were tailored, I mean they were just good pieces. If you go to some gyms today the equipment is not

made for the body, not the way it should work. The equipment at Vince's were tailored for the guy who knew what he was doing. I always trained there when I went to California, it was a great club.



The incredible Scott arm



Larry & Vince at Vince's Gym



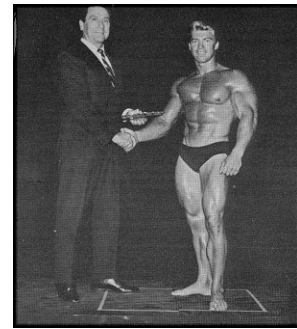
Larry a young champion



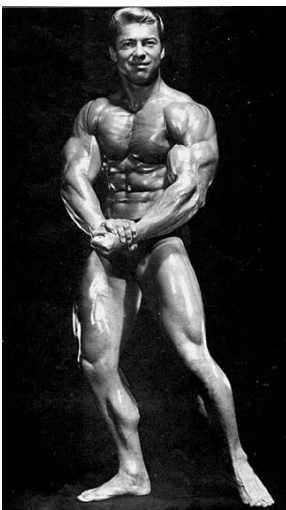
A youthful muscular Scott



A mature muscular Scott



Joe Weider & Larry



The Scott charm and personality come through even in his photos, from early on in his career until this day.

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