

# Charles Rigoulot

(Continued from page 51)

snatch with one hand more than he could clean and jerk!

On October 6, 1925, Rigoulot turned professional by meeting in a personal contest the French professional strong-man Ernest Cadine. Rigoulot had by that time systematically "improved" his lifting poundages and had left behind him amateur world's records in the right hand snatch of 222¾ pounds, in the two hands snatch of 278¾ pounds, and in the two hands clean and jerk of 355 pounds. Also, he had gained proportionately in bodyweight, and when he met Cadine weighed 216 pounds. Cadine at the time weighed 200 pounds, but since he stood only 66 inches in height as compared with Rigoulot's 67.7 inches, he was very nearly as large in the general girth of his body and limbs as was Rigoulot; moreover, he was the more experienced in lifting of the two men. Ten lifts were used to decide the winner of the contest, and Rigoulot emerged victorious by a slight margin. Here are the lifts that he and Cadine made, together with the results as figured both in total poundage (an incorrect method) and in percentage. The kilograms, in which the lifts were actually weighed, are here converted into the nearest quarter-pounds.

Lift	RIGOULOT		CADINE	
	Pounds	Percent	Pounds	Percent
Right hand military press	100¼	100.0	99¼	90.0
Left hand military press	99¼	90.0	110¼	100.0
Two hands military press	208¼	100.0	201¾	96.8
Right hand swing	176¼	91.4	192¾	100.0
Right hand snatch	212¾	100.0	196¼	92.2
Left hand clean and jerk	201¾	100.0	196¼	97.3
Two hands snatch	266¼	90.4	253½	90.9
Two dumbbells clean and jerk	229¼	90.4	253½	100.0
Two hands clean and jerk	343¾	100.0	302	87.8
Two hands dead lift	540	93.9	575½	100.0
Total	2388¾	98.6	2370	95.5
		Av.	Total	Av.

Clearly, from these figures, it is seen that Rigoulot's margin of superiority was very slight; to be exact, only a trifle over one percent. (Figured from the total poundage lifted, it was only eight-tenths of one percent; but this, as before mentioned, is an incorrect method). Nevertheless, Rigoulot was definitely the winner. It should be noted, however, that when any contest is won by a margin as slight as one percent, the result under the slightest of changed circumstances could have been the reverse. And it is interesting to speculate on what would have happened after this contest if Cadine, not Rigoulot, had won. Would there have been a return contest? Would Rigoulot have gone on to make the remarkable world's professional records that he did make after winning over Cadine? In other words, would the course of weightlifting history have been appreciably altered?

It was some time after turning professional that Rigoulot put up his best performances in lifting. During the several years following his contest with Cadine, he periodically (about every six months, on the average) raised his records in snatching and jerking and in the one hand swing. Here is a list of his final best marks, together with the dates and his bodyweights. All lifts were made as a professional.

Lift	Kilos	Pounds	Date	Body-weight
Right hand snatch, with dumbbell	100.5	221.56	Fall, '28	234?
Right hand swing, with dumbbell	99.5	219.36	2/28/'32	?
Left hand swing, with dumbbell	88	194.00	12/ 5/'33	?
Two hands press (Olympic style)	115	253.53	'30?	?
Two hands snatch	143	315.26	5/ 4/'31	231
Two dumbbells clean and jerk	133.5	294.31	'29?	235
Two hands clean and jerk	182.5	402.34	2/ 1/'29	236
Two hands dead lift	282	621.70	1/16/'26	220
Right hand snatch	115	253.53	2/ 1/'29	236
Left hand snatch	100.5	221.56	2/ 1/'29	236

Outside of his mark in the dead lift, which surely could not have represented his ultimate limit, all of Rigoulot's records were made during the years 1929-1933 inclusive; that is, during the period in which he was from 25 to 30 years of age, and during which he ranged in bodyweight from 231 to 236 pounds. In the above list, his right and left hand snatches (both with barbell and dumbbell), his two hands snatch, and his two hands clean and jerk with barbell are still after more than twenty years the world's heavyweight professional records. No other lifter, amateur or professional, has come within 20 pounds of Rigoulot's records in the one hand snatch. Only two lifters, John Davis and Norbert Schemansky, have approximated or beaten his record in the two hands clean and jerk. In the two hands snatch, however, Davis has surpassed Rigoulot's best effort by more than 15 pounds. This is difficult to account for, in view of Rigoulot's having been able to clean more weight than Davis, unless we assume that Davis's great pressing power somehow helped him in the snatch! Unofficially, Rigoulot is said to have cleaned no less than 185.6 kilos (409.18 pounds) and to have jerked this weight twice in succession! Certainly he possessed tremendous leg strength, for he could be depended upon to jerk any weight that he was able to clean. It is said that when he made his official record of 182.5 kilos (402.34 pounds) he succeeded in cleaning the bell only on his tenth attempt!

Up until now, I had always credited Rigoulot with having snatched officially with his right hand 116.5 kilos or 256.84 pounds (on April 14, 1930). Recently, however, I was informed by Edgar Müller, Germany's foremost weightlifting statistician, that Rigoulot did not make this lift, and that his official best mark is the lift of 115 kilos (253.53 pounds) that he raised on February 1, 1939. Furthermore, according to Müller, the unofficial snatch of 120 kilos (264.55 pounds), Rigoulot is supposed to have lost after having the bell at arm's length and losing his balance, was actually a weight of 116 kilos or 255.73 pounds. The latter lift, if successfully completed, would have been in exact ratio to Rigoulot's unofficial two hands clean and jerk of 409.18 pounds. This poundage, curiously, was exactly the same (185.6 kilos) as that which the gigantic Austrian heavyweight, Karl Swoboda, shouldered in four movements and jerked (in 1912).

Rigoulot's best lifts were, in order: (1) his two hands clean and jerk, in which his official 402.34 pounds has a rating of 84.8 percent and his unofficial 409.18 pounds a rating of 85.4 percent; (2) his right hand snatch of 253.53 pounds, which has a rating of 84.4 percent; and (3) his two hands snatch of 315.26 pounds, which has a rating

of 83.4 percent. His highest-ranking one-hand swing with dumbbell is not his best lift of 219.36 pounds performed in 1932, but one of 201.72 pounds which he made as a bodyweight of only 190 pounds, in 1924. His two dumbbells clean and jerk, while seemingly a good lift, has a rating of only about 74 percent, and his best two hands press only 69.6 percent! When it is considered that the immortal Arthur Saxon (see *Muscle Power*, July 1952) had an average rating in no fewer than twenty different and highly varied lifts of 85.2 percent—a higher rating than Rigoulot has in any one of his official records—it can be sent that Rigoulot, remarkable as he was in a few specialties, cannot fairly be compared with Saxon as an all-round strongman.

Rigoulot's best-developed muscles, it would appear, were the extensors of his hips and thighs and the sloping portions of his trapezius, respectively. While he had huge deltoids, his ability in erect pressing was relatively poor, and there is no record of what he could do in supine pressing—nor for that matter in curling, gripping, or deep-knee bending. So, in the final analysis, we can recognize him only as having been the relatively best heavyweight performer to date in two lifts: the one hand snatch and the two hands clean and jerk (with barbell).

In 1927, when Rigoulot was in his youthful prime and weighed 230 pounds, his other measurements were as follows: height 67.7 inches; girth of neck 18.7 inches; flexed upper arms 17.5 right and 17 left; forearms 14.4 right and 14 left; wrists 7.8 right and 7.7 left; chest (normal) 48.9; waist 37.3; hips 45; thighs 27.6 right and 27.2 left; knees 17.2; calves 17.6; and ankles 9.8. I have figured, in estimating his percentage ratings in lifting, that his maximum "muscular" bodyweight was 215 pounds.

After retiring from weightlifting as a means of livelihood, Rigoulot went in for wrestling and automobile racing; and so far as I know he is still active in these sports today.