

Behind The Muscle

BECCA SIZEMORE

2016 IFBB Pro & Fitness Olympian
Knoxville, TN

Age: 30

Fitness/Posing Coach: Tanji Johnson-Team Save Fitness

Nutrition/Training Coach: Trey Hodge-Team Hodge

Occupation: Personal Trainer

How did you get started in Fitness?

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I was a gymnast growing up and saw a Fitness Competition on TV when I was 10 years old and said, "One day I'm going to do that!" I went on to do pole vaulting in college and later became a Lady Vol Strength and Conditioning Coach.

What led you to do your first Bodybuilding competition?

It was my sister who called me out on it saying - when are you going to stop talking about competing and actually get up on the stage? After trying both Figure in 2010 and Women's Physique in 2012, I met Michelle Blank, an IFBB Pro Fitness Competitor and she told me I should pursue my dream of competing in fitness. It was the category I was meant for. I met Tanji Johnson at the 2014 NPC Music City Muscle where we were both guest posing for the show. A week later Tanji asked me if I wanted to join team Save Fitness and compete at the 2014 NPC Midnight Sun. The next week, I was on a plane to Alaska and competed and won my first ever NPC Fitness show. I competed in 3 more fitness shows in 2015.

When did you turn Pro?

I turned Pro by winning the Fitness Overall at the 2016 NPC Jr. USA Championships.

How long did it take you to turn pro?

Once I discovered the Fitness category, it took 1-1/2 years.

You went from turning Pro to competing at the Olympia in only 4 months. Tell us about your experience.

I don't know if the idea of turning Pro had even really sunk in yet when I competed in my first Pro show. Feedback from the judges at Jr. USA's suggested I compete to see how I stacked up on the Pro level and then I would know where to go from there. So 6 weeks later, I made my Pro debut at the Charlotte Europa. I won the show and qualified for the Olympia!

Just ten short weeks after that I found myself at The Olympia. It was a surreal experience. Everything had happened so quickly. It was amazing to compete on the same stage as



my mentor, coach, and friend Tanji Johnson. It was my first time and her retirement year at the "O" and that is a memory I will cherish forever. I was nervous and excited and was trying so hard to keep calm. I kept telling myself, this is just like practice just go out there and perform what you know how to do. The next night, from the audience, I turned to my husband and asked him, "Was I really just on that stage?!" I couldn't be happier with my routine, physique, and total experience at my first Olympia, I wouldn't change a thing!

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What are your plans for 2017?

Feedback from the judges indicated they would like to see more delts and lats, a little more of a V-taper and more performance in my routine. I am working on these things and just found out I was invited to compete at the 2017 Arnold Classic Fitness International!

What advice do you have for competitors?

Never look at the placing or somebody's feedback to determine what you feel about yourself. The competition is with yourself and the improvements you've made. When you give 100% and you know you are bringing your best package to the stage that's a win. It's always about being your best, having fun, and meeting new friends!

To find out more about Becca Sizemore and her training program, go to SouthernMuscleGuide.com.

Terrence Ruffin

2016 IFBB Pro & Classic Physique Olympian
Ft. Walton Beach, FL

Age: 23

Height: 5'5

Contest Weight: 163lbs

Nutrition/Training Coach: Matt Porter

Occupation: Air Force, Avionics

How did you get started in Fitness?

Finished school, went into the military, was inspired by Call of Duty and figured "being like that can't be too hard!" so I signed up to train for Special Forces. It was way harder than I thought, and in fact I did not finish. (I made it through everything but the final month) For a while, I felt lost but then I went in a different direction in the Air Force. I started going to the gym, met a bodybuilder, researched the sport, got really inspired by Dexter Jackson and decided "this is what I want to do!"

What led you to do your first Bodybuilding competition?

I spent a year preparing for my first competition. I researched, made my own diet, went to Ft. Walton beach, met a coach and trained for my first show at 19 years of age. I placed 2nd in the teenage division and last in the Open, but it motivated me to focus more.

When did you turn Pro?

At age 21, I turned Pro in Lightweight Bodybuilding at the 2014 NPC National Championships. For a while, I even held the title of World's Youngest Male IFBB Pro. That title now belongs to someone else. But I still hold the title as the youngest male Olympian!

How long did it take you to turn pro? And then Qualify for the Olympia?

It took about 1-1/2 years after competing in my first show and a total of 2 years to the Olympia stage. I was preparing to compete in the 212 Division when the new Classic Physique category was announced. My first show as a Pro was the Prestige Crystal Cup in Boca Raton and the following week I went to the Tampa Pro where I qualified for the Olympia in the Classic Physique category on August 6, 2016.

You qualified for the Olympia and only 3 months later you were on the Olympia stage; tell us about your experience.

My experience was a lesson in Murphy's Law - anything that could go wrong, did go wrong! I flew to Vegas and finally met my coach in person for the first time. My debit card was stolen but fortunately I had brought some cash as well. I had arrived a couple of days early. I weighed in at 163lbs, and met my fellow competitors. I got along with all of them; it was like the comradery from the golden age. At the Meet & Greet, you are given your own booth so the fans can meet you. It was very cool! This was actually my first time even being at the Olympia, so I closed my table early

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so I could meet some of the veterans. Unfortunately for me, the night before the show I found myself in the ER with what was diagnosed as a muscle spasm in my jaw; I could not eat. I was trying to drink cream of rice through a straw and was in a lot of pain. At pre-judging, a fellow competitor and massage therapist, Derrick Farnsworth, readily identified the problem and adjusted my jaw. By the time I stepped on stage, I couldn't even feel it, the adrenaline of just being there took over. I brought my best package to date, had a good time and was happy placing 9th at my first Olympia experience. I can truly say, all of my training prior to bodybuilding, prepared me to stay calm and focused in the moment.

What are your plans for 2017?

I re-qualified for the "O", so I plan to compete there again. After that, I would like to do 3-4 more shows, travel to the west coast as well as up north. I really enjoy meeting people who support me and the sport.

What advice do you have for competitors?

Don't be so focused on what you don't have and Do what you can with what you have. Find a way. When I was prepping for my first shows, I befriended promoters, worked the grunt jobs and promoted their shows everywhere, and I helped at the gym. I did anything I could to pay off the cost. Don't wait to start your journey, and don't wait for everything to be perfect. Build on your knowledge as you go. For me, what began with a huge failure (not finishing the Special Forces Training) turned out to be another door opening. Ironically, I feel the Special Forces training actually prepared me for the mental toughness it would take to compete in Bodybuilding - Use what you have!

To find out more about Terrance and his training program, go to SouthernMuscleGuide.com

