



Feature Interview
IFFB Figure Pro Amanda Savell

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By figure and fitness industry definitions, IFBB professional Amanda Savell had an amazing year in 2007. As she reached the pinnacle of her sport, Amanda took the fitness magazine world by storm as well with a much heralded cover on Oxygen magazine and major appearances in Muscle and Fitness, Flex, and M&F Hers. On the competitive stage, she finished runner up at the 2007 Figure International and in the top five at the 2007 Figure Olympia. Throughout the year Amanda was the epitome of stage-defining figure excellence, with a combination of muscle size, shape and symmetry, incredible conditioning and undeniable beauty and femininity.

On top of all these successes, Amanda has that attitude and determination that can't be taught. She lifts heavy and diets hard, and at the same time works to achieve balance in her life. But the past year has also been important in Amanda's life in many other ways, with an opportunity for personal growth. As she has faced one challenge after another, including most recently not getting an invitation to the Arnold, she has met them head on and has learned a lot about herself and her focus in life, and has moved forward with inner and outer strength and without regret.

Amanda's Fast Facts:

Name – Amanda Jo Savell

Height – 5'6"

Weight – 128-130 lbs contest/ 140 lbs off season

Birthday – January 26, 1978

Home town – Plano, Texas (Dallas area)

Hair / Eyes – green / blonde-brown

Favorite music – techno to rock and rap

Favorite diet food – oatmeal and whey

Favorite cheat food – sushi

Current occupation – IFBB Figure Pro and Fitness Model

Athletic background – Top level tennis, junior circuit and in college

Hi Amanda, thanks for this opportunity to talk with you. Let's start out with what everyone wants to know, what did you do for that big milestone birthday last month? Any notable gifts?

Thanks to FigureRX for featuring me and for all your recent support on your site and on the message boards. I had an incredible birthday celebration, especially because it came after I found out I would not be competing at the Arnold! It was the first real birthday in many



years, because in the past I was always preparing for a show, or traveling frequently. This time my boyfriend set up a surprise party at a private lounge that we like to go to, and I had a *huge* meal. And then we had a second celebration at my sister's house, with cake and good food. As far as gifts, I received my new iPhone and jeans and some other things, but it was really the best gift of all to have the support and love from family and friends.

It's well known that you started out in sports as a tennis prodigy at a young age, and then competed at a high level in college. When did weight training become a part of your regimen, and to what extent?

My coaches and trainers originally encouraged some light weight training, although the focus was on agility. As far as workout off the tennis courts, we spent a lot of time on the track doing shuttle runs, and we also did some long distance running. Some of these things are still incorporated in my training today.

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CHART 4

Exercise	Sets	Reps
Bench Press	3	10*
Smith Machine Incline Press	3	10*
Pec-Deck Flye	3	10
Dip	3	to failure ¹

¹ Do negatives on the last set once you've reached positive failure. Select a weight that allows you to fail at the designated rep range.



We're familiar with Nick's famous tennis academy down in Florida, what was your experience like there?

It was definitely a place to learn discipline at a young age! I went there all by myself when I was nine years old, and the experience was a lot like being a robot. You would get up, eat, and then hit the track with coaches There was a break for lunch, and then tennis practice usually lasted up until 7pm. After that I would be in the gym working out at night. There were tutors to help with school work, and in many respects when we finished training it was a lot like college because we had our own apartments with roommates, had to do our own laundry and other things. Huge responsibilities and dedication at a very young age!

What were some of the things the coaches and trainers did to try and stop you or punish you for lifting too heavy and too often?

Well in college (on a tennis scholarship at Texas Tech), I would be up at 5am in the gym lifting heavy weights with the guys on the football team. And then I would go back to the gym later in the day! Eventually this was leading to injuries in tennis, and it even got to the point where the coaches would actually tell me that if they found me in the gym I would get suspended.

So now flash forward to today And all that discipline and weight training has really paid off because you have one of the best physiques in the industry. So take us through an Amanda day What's it like, what's your focus?

I wake up I eat, then we package up and deliver supplements to houses. We used to have a supplement store but now we run it out of the house and do home deliveries. Then I clean house, I love to clean! Depending on the time of year, in the afternoon we both go to the gym, of course if I am doing more cardio I will be there more often. Then I buy my groceries and cook for 1-2 days, I also love to cook. The rest of the day, depending on the schedule, would involve training clients both in person and online. At night I catch up on computer work and e-mails, and we are both big movie buffs so the evenings often involve watching movies.

What are some of your skills and hobbies, outside of lifting?

Lots of scary movies! I used to love to garden when getting ready for a show, it would keep my mind busy and not on food. I love to cook and clean, and when I have been near the beach I like surfing and riding on wave runners.



Amanda competing at the 2007 Olympia

Where do you find the best training and diet advice? Do you still work with Kim, and how are the national mega-trainers as far as being able to focus on each client?

I worked with Kim Oddo since I first started, but as of now and recently we have been doing everything on our own. But I would highly recommend Kim, all the big trainers including Kim have secretaries to help with everything and I would actually say that he is amazingly on top of everything. You end up feeling like you are being doted on about every single detail, which is the level of caring that goes into his preparations. If not him, I do recommend that up and coming competitors get help from the major trainers or other competitors as long as they are fully qualified, and are focused on what the judges want.

What would you say is your favorite thing about being on stage, about competing? And what is your least favorite thing about competing?

My least favorite thing would be how competing takes time away from friends and family and forces you to be so selfish. The best thing would be the reward of knowing that I have my body in the best shape possible ... the feeling of knowing that I have come in the way I want



to, along with the countless hours and work put in, and then getting to show off those accomplishments.

What is your training philosophy (heavy or light, cardio, lifting)?

Training heavy has always been in my heart, of course when I switched to figure I used less weight and did more cardio. I always go heavy for my shoulders, moderate on back, and I train abdominals every day to keep my waist tight. I lift a little lighter as I get ready for a show.

One of the things that people always seem to wonder about would be the vascularity in your delts, on top of your great cap. Is there a secret behind the vascularity, is it mainly genetic?

Yes you are right I get that question a lot! I think the delt vascularity comes from having done bodybuilder before, it's muscle maturity. I also lift very heavy for shoulders even close to a show so that's a factor. I even get veins going down my back which is another sign of being in great shape!

So do you consider delts to be your best feature or body part?

Actually along with delts I would have to say my abdominals, I get veins in my lower abs and as you probably know that is one of the big signs of being in shape. I take pride in that when I get on stage.

The other thing we think is amazing would be your upper chest development, probably the best in the sport, and that was really on display in your article for M&F Hers. Any tips to convey?

I don't really train chest very much! Staying with the delt theme, I think that upper chest is really a by product of my shoulder strength. I train with everything from dumbbells to bar presses, and use 70 lb dumbbells at a slight incline on presses. My bench has been around the 245 lb range, and like in the article I employ the techniques that are there such as negatives.

I want to focus a little bit on your prep and showing at the Olympia, because I know a lot of people were absolutely blown away by your package at that show almost as soon as you touched down in Las Vegas. How far out do you start preparing, dieting, etc?

I started at twelve weeks out; sometimes I start at ten weeks depending on what has happened that year because I lean out pretty fast. The time leading up to the Olympia was a very trying time for me. My father was ill with Parkinson's disease, I was going through my divorce (from Greg Savell), and then there was the case with my boyfriend. One of my greatest achievements was being able to stand up there and be strong, to the point that very few people



even knew that I was going through anything. I did come in harder and tighter than I had planned because I wasn't eating and sleeping. My body was holding on in any way that it could, because not only was I competing I was also holding my emotions in until after the show.

In many respects 2007 was actually a pretty amazing year for you, 2nd at the Arnold, 5th at the Olympia, and one of the best covers in Oxygen Magazine history – a lot of people were really happy when you did that cover because of the slightly more muscular image that you project. It also has been a very tough year in many ways. What have you taken away as the biggest lessons over the past year, and how will you use that to achieve even greater things later?

This past year has been the biggest personal growth experience of my life. I have been a lot of things up until this point, but now I can say that I have become a very strong woman in even more ways. Before this year I would have given anything of myself to the fitness industry. The biggest reward has been knowing that decisions now are being made by thinking what is best for Amanda, and during it all my family has stood by me.

It was a pleasure to first meet you at the Kemistry booth at the USA's last year, thanks to Jamie aka "Fury" for the introduction. How was it to work with Kemistry and what's your understanding of what happened as far as their athlete sponsorships?

We all just received letters that they were releasing their athletes in November, the contract was actually set to be up in January. I enjoyed working for them, they have great products and I was treated very well. It's possible that they could have done more to use their athletes effectively, to put us out there more to benefit the company.

Obviously the big question right now concerns the Arnold, and not receiving an invitation to the event after placing second last year. We don't want to dwell on it too much, and we already have your statement (please go [here](#) to see Amanda's official statement), but tell us a little bit about the situation.

I don't want to mislead anyone into thinking that it has been easy. I've been out there essentially with my heart on my sleeve, saying that winning the Arnold has been my dream and my main goal, and if I had been able to do that I would have been able to say that I had accomplished all my main dreams and goals in this industry. I still don't know why I wasn't invited, and I may not ever know. There a number of theories out there and I know you guys plan to address them in your preview. If it is due to personal reasons then I can't do much about that, my values and my beliefs are firm and how I treat others and my friendships and relationships define me, not the industry. As I said, I can't ever do anything because I am afraid of regret! I do wish all the girls the best of luck next weekend; it was my most memorable show because it truly epitomizes the industry as a whole.



What are your thoughts on the direction figure is going at the pro level? What's the recent feedback that you tend to get, say, for example, to move up a few spots at the Olympia?

At the Olympia, I was told not to train so hard!! But people really want to see the results of dedication and hard work. You have to try and come in at your personal best, because the results are too inconsistent to really tell what anybody wants. And the comments don't necessarily match the reality on stage, so you have to be careful. Gina obviously is muscular and comes in hard, and Jenny has come in harder in the past and won shows. Monica felt and looked the best when she was harder and more muscular, and then she softened up and placed worse. Mary Lado, who placed first at the Arnold last year while I placed second, is pretty much the opposite of me as far as pro figure physiques go. You put us both side by side and it can get confusing!!

Training **oxygen Training**

standing one-arm dumbbell press
 1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, holding a dumbbell in your right hand. 2. Bend your right arm at the elbow and lift the dumbbell until your arm is parallel to the floor. 3. Lower the dumbbell back down. 4. Repeat for 12-15 reps. 5. Switch sides.

lying rear lateral raise
 Holding a dumbbell in each hand, lie on a balance ball on your stomach with your arms in front. Keeping your elbows fixed throughout the move, raise the weights until your elbows are aligned with your shoulders. Pause at the top and slowly lower them back down. Do four sets of 12 reps using 15-pound dumbbells. This move targets your posterior delts.

PAIR THIS ROUTINE WITH A CLEAN DIET AND YOU'LL START TO SEE THAT COVETED ROUNDNESS IN YOUR DELTS IN 6 WEEKS.

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Amanda in Oxygen and at the 2007 Arnold Figure Invitational



Do you have any predictions at all for figure at the Arnold?

I think that it will really come down to Jennifer (Gates) and Gina (Aliotti) Sonia is beautiful and she has most of the components but probably not quite the full package to win the title. I think Jennifer will win because if you think about it she more closely resembles the past winners, so you have to look at the past. Plus if Gina wins it will be even tougher to justify not inviting me because we have similar bodies. So I would say my predicted top five would be Jenn, Gina, Sonia, Nicole Wilkins and Laticia Wilder.

I've heard that you read your horoscope, do you still that? If so what defining characteristics of an Aquarius do you have?

Hmmm ... well I'm hard headed, very head strong, I'm huge on goals and achievement, and I'm a very loyal and a good friend. And yes I do still read my horoscope regularly!

So what's next for you, when does the great Amanda comeback begin? How will you make that determination? Do you coach and do prep for competitors, especially at the shows in Texas?

I have definitely not decided yet, it is still up in the air, I do have some big plans to come out soon that will be revealed later and I'll keep you posted. I'll be staying home from the Arnold to continue to focus on them. I do a lot more online nutritional advice than I do in person ... I do have a couple people locally who I have trained for shows.

We'd be really excited to see an Amanda prep camp, I think that yours would be somewhat different than those typically run by the IFBB fitness professionals. What would be the main focus of your camps, would they be in Dallas, and how can everyone help?

Yes I expect to start up my camps again, and we'll have seminars down here in the Dallas area, once or twice per month. It'll be great to take everyone out to the track and put them through the paces! To help, just stay tuned

How about a new web site, is that in the works?

Yes there will be a fully new one, when my friend JT at True Bodies passed on last year I had no information to access my web site or to capture the content, and some of the other domain names related to my name are owned by others. So there will be a completely new site coming up ... for now fans can find me on my MySpace page (which you can access by looking at the Team FigureRX top friends).



Thanks Amanda for allowing us to conduct this interview, and we look forward to supporting you in whatever you decide to do. We are certain that you will continue to achieve success in every area.

Thank you to FigureRX for this opportunity.