

Novice weightlifter snatches silver medal at world championships

by Tuls Bramley

Weightlifting may be a minority sport in New Zealand, but one North Shore man is already topping the international field after his first competition.

Cliff Harvey of Glenfield set world records and came away with a silver medal at the International All Round Weightlifting Championships in Perth last month.

He was in the under-75kg class, the biggest category in the competition.

The 24-year-old returned home happy with his performance.

"I was rapt with how I did. I didn't know what I was going to be up against going in fresh and there was a lot learn.

I was thrilled to come away with silver, especially in the tough weight class. Now I'm fired up to go a step better at the world champs," says Harvey.

He broke an individual world record in the thumbless dead lift, lifting 140kg - 20kg over the previous record. Harvey and the gold medal winner in his category, James Power of Ireland, also broke a world record in

a two-man lift with 300kg.

Harvey has spent the whole of this year training. He fell sick last year with an auto-immune disease, ulcerative colitis, which is similar to Crohn's disease.

After battling his way back to full fitness he discovered the appeals of weightlifting.

"After I stopped boxing I wanted a competitive outlet and there's such a wide range of lifts in this sport there's always something new to try."

All round lifting is what weightlifting used to be before the Olympics.

"Power lifting, squat, strength and deadlifts. All those and more are covered by the sport, which has

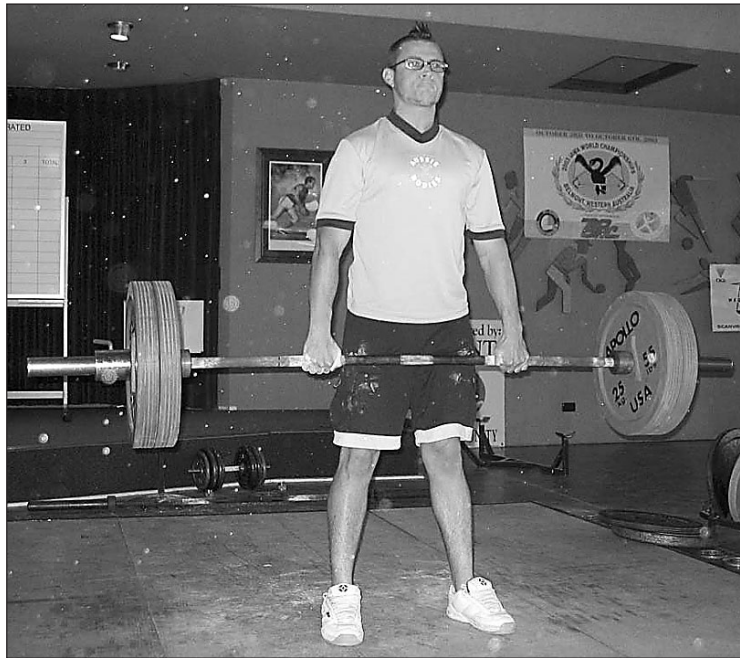
20 core lifts in the championship programme," says Harvey.

He aims to be the strongest man kilo-for-kilo in the world.

"I just like the challenge of being stronger and stronger. In daily life it also means things that would be a challenge for other people aren't for me - like opening jam jars."

Harvey also runs his own nutrition and health consulting business.

"I just like the challenge of being stronger and stronger."



WEIGHTLIFTING: Glenfield's Cliff Harvey beats illness to gain silver.

"It would be pretty tough without really good sponsors. Not just the cost of travel but lost business as well.

Fleur Revel from Aussie Bodies says the company enjoys sponsoring Harvey.

"He's really self-disciplined, really

motivated, incredibly talented. It's nice to see someone who excels in their sport who's also got a lot of humility."

Harvey is preparing for New Zealand's first major all round lifting championship in March next year and for the Worlds in Britain next October.

Warriors battle niggling injuries

by Gordon Gillan

Last season's New Zealand Warriors physiotherapist Jonathon Moyle says around three quarters of the squad have to deal with minor niggles between NRL games.

The Warriors had their fair share of major injuries during the season, but what is less known is the work staff put in to control the squad's less significant injuries. With 24 games of regular NRL action and four games of finals football, if the Warriors had reached the grand final, the players' bodies are stretched to the limit.

Moyle expects the number of minor injuries to be similar for other NRL sides. Stacey Jones is the highest profile Warrior who struggled through the 2003 season, despite having a persistent groin problem.

"Most of the problems are just bruises and we can't afford to rest our best players in finals football.

"If you were playing social sport, these types of injuries would keep you out. But our players are used to the knocks and we have the best recovery treatment available."

The players begin their recoveries with ice baths and will often have a swim session. They then wear special tights to keep bruising down after the game, and for plane trips.

Warriors doctor Chris Hanna says although incidents of injury are random, intensity does play a role.

"Finals football is more intense, shown best by the Warriors' game against a physically strong Canberra pack, and it is surprising we came away without any new injuries."

Hanna admits his major concerns are acute injuries and felt the Warriors were unlucky in 2003. Standoff Lance Hohaia suffered a serious knee injury against the Broncos and loose forward Ali Lauti'iti was ruled out with a cyst on his left arm. State of Origin hooker PJ Marsh missed almost half of the season with a neck injury.

The Warriors' doctor puts the team's success in dealing with minor niggles down to good work between different parts of the coaching team.

"The coaches can help cut down the risks of injury by picking up on bad tackling technique or poor body positions during games," says Hanna.

He also stresses the change in physique in the players from the off-season as a factor in helping reduce injuries.

"Even the smaller players build up walls of muscle which protect them against minor knocks."

AUT impresses at university games

by Sarah Lang

AUT just missed out on second place at the New Zealand University Games in Palmerston North over Easter weekend.

Otago, with 80 more competitors, pipped AUT by just three points.

Home-towners Massey Palmy won the shield with 500 competitors, at least twice that of most other universities. AUT had 200.

Massey Palmy finished on 171 points, Otago 120 and AUT 117.

AUT sports and recreation co-ordinator and games organiser Bruce Meyer says his hope was for AUT to finish in the top three.

"I'm thrilled with my team."

Fourth was Victoria, then Canterbury, Waikato, Massey Albany, Massey Wellington and Lincoln.

The games were played at different venues around Palmerston North, many at the Massey sports fields and the Arena Manawatu in town.

This year lesser-known sports, like extreme Frisbee, badminton, fencing, karate, rowing, canoe polo, water polo, inline hockey, aerobics, debating and theatre sports, joined the mainstream



PALMERSTON NORTH: AUT's netballers won the silver medal at the Easter University Games.

events. AUT did not have the numbers to compete in a lot of these events, but did fabulously in what they entered, says Meyer.

AUT basketball had a tremendous tournament, with the women's team

taking gold and the men losing narrowly 75-62 to Massey Palmy. Four of the team, including captain Wayne Fausett, are national league players.

Both the rugby team and the mixed touch rugby team won silver.

PHOTO: SARAH LANG

Inaugural gridiron test attracts crowd to Eden Park

by Kathryn Philpott

Tights and shoulder pads do not make American football the most fashionable sport, but its profile is growing thanks to passionate administration and an increasing number of fans.

More than 1000 people went to Eden Park in July to witness the first international American football test on New Zealand soil.

Despite losing 8-0 to Australia Outback, the New Zealand Iron Blacks can take some comfort in their success this year, says Leroy Sisnett, president of the New Zealand American Football Association (NZAFA).

"Obviously we were disappointed. We put a lot of work and effort into winning. But for the sport itself, I was extremely happy. I never thought we'd

have a gridiron field set up at Eden Park."

He says the aim of the event was more than just the game itself.

"We wanted to win, but we wanted to grow awareness and let people know we are there."

Played by more than 1500 people throughout the country, American football started here about 25 years ago. Sisnett has been involved in the sport for 13 years, first as a player and for the last three years as an administrator.

The sport is divided into three conferences in New Zealand - the Northern Conference (Auckland), the Central Conference (Waikato) and the Southern Conference (lower North Island) - all of which hold local competitions and compete for the national Kiwi Bowl title.

With the domestic season starting in November, American football attracts rugby players looking for a summer sport.

One convert is Adrian Smith, a former senior rugby player who has played American football for 10 years and is defensive captain for the Iron Blacks.

"Basically I'd seen it on TV on ESPN. I was playing rugby in Hamilton and wanted something to play in the summer."

Like many minority sports, American football struggles for funding and relies on grants, TAB profit distribution and fundraising.

Smith says funding from official sources is minimal.

"The New Zealand Sports Foundation decides who gets what share of funding, and for a sport like

gridiron, you've got a very limited set of resources."

American football's minority status also means a struggle for media attention.

Despite the NZAFA working hard to secure coverage, Sisnett says more popular codes are given priority, especially by the larger media organisations.

"It's hard to get coverage. We send PR releases out. We try to drum up support, but it's hard getting into the big papers."

He hopes interest in the recent international test will lead to a boost in participation.

"That little bit of media interest raised the profile. Now we have to transfer people talking about it to bodies on the field."

Misconceptions about American

football as a weakling's sport do nothing to help its image.

Smith says the appearance of players in tights and padding is often compared to the staunch appearance of rugby players.

He says this comparison ignores the sport's hard-hitting qualities.

"It's in your face. It's very aggressive."

On the flipside, Smith says an American football game can be highly strategic.

"I love the mental aspects of American football. It's like a game of chess. You are always trying to think a step ahead of your opposition."

And unlike rugby, American football acknowledges all levels, says Smith.

"It's not like rugby which is very elitist."