



GOLD CUP CHALLENGE

OCTOBER 23-24, 2010



Dave Sneberger, Locks and Dams, who won first place in his most recent weightlifting competition and was named National Weightlifting Champion in his age bracket, is shown "jerking" 106 kilograms. Below: Sneberger receives first place medal for his grand total lift of 192 kilograms.

Sneberger 'lifted' to top spot at Masters

By Sheila Tunney, PAO

Navigation Chief Dave Sneberger was named the National Weightlifting Champion in his age bracket after lifting 192 kilograms (422.4 pounds), the average of two lift categories, during the National Masters Championship in Savannah, Ga., in October.

His total in the two categories exceeded the second place competitor by a hefty 35 kilograms (77 pounds).

"I opened with higher lifts than the competition and I made five of my six lifts, while they made their openers and didn't do much after that," Sneberger said.

In his three attempts at the two-hand snatch, where the competitor must take the weight from the floor to an overhead position with arms straight in one movement, Sneberger was credited with lifting 85 kilograms (187 pounds), the heaviest of his lifts.

And in the two-hand "clean and jerk," where the weight is lifted from the floor to the shoulders (the clean) and then rapidly pushed overhead to arms length (the jerk), he was credited with 107 kilograms (235 pounds).

"I equaled my personal best snatch and set a new personal best clean and jerk, which gave me a personal best total of 192 kilos! My previous best total was 186 (kilograms)," Sneberger said.

Sneberger, who has been with the district's Locks and Dams Branch throughout his 40 years with the district, has been lifting weights since attending college.

"I was originally a track athlete and used weight training to increase my strength to be able to throw the discus. I became more interested in weightlifting and eventually quit track to devote my time to it," he said.

He began competing shortly afterward and continued in the weightlifting arena until his late 30s, achieving the Allegheny Mountain Association (regional governing body for weightlifting) Weightlifter of the year in 1986.

"Although I was never quite good enough to compete for the Olympic Team, I lifted against many Olympic and 'World' competitors over the years," Sneberger added.

Sneberger took a break from competing for many years, but continued to lift weights and work out regularly. He is a certified coach under USA Weightlifting (national governing body for Olympic weightlifting in the U.S.), and works with a lot of up and coming young weightlifters to promote the sport.

When he was in his mid 50s, he said the urge to compete returned. So he joined the Pittsburgh Barbell Club in Bridgeville, Pa., and began training.

"I competed in the Masters National Championship back in 2007 and finished fourth. After a few years of training and numerous State and local championships, I was able to win the National Masters Championship this year," he said.

(Editor's note: story compiled from interviews by Katie Cunningham, Water Management, and with added technical details from Dave Sneberger.)

Weightlifting 101

by Dave Sneberger

Weightlifting is the only recognized strength sport in the Olympics. It consists of two separate lifts.

The "two-hand snatch" requires the weight to be lifted from the ground to an overhead position to arms length in one motion.

The "clean and jerk" is a two-part lift, in which the weight is lifted from the ground to shoulder height (clean) and forced overhead to arms length (jerk).

Sometimes people confuse weightlifting with power lifting. Power lifting consists of the squat, dead lift and bench press. This is also a great sport, but not what I do.

While power lifting is more of a pure strength sport, weightlifting combines strength with speed, agility and flexibility and is a little more athletic.

Visit weightlifting.teamusa.org for more information on the sport.

Photos courtesy of Dave Sneberger

