

Pittsburgh Sports Performance Center Opens With Young Guns Invitational

Peter Roselli September 17, 2011



A Young Guns Invitational competition marked the opening of the new Pittsburgh Sports Performance Center on Sept. 3.

This center, previously the site of a for-profit sports training facility, was purchased and renovated by USAW Grassroots Board member **Regis Becker**, president of the Pittsburgh Barbell Club, and donated to the Pittsburgh Sports Performance & Development Corporation – a non-profit foundation created by Becker for the advancement of Olympic weightlifting and the application of Olympic lifting methods and means to other sports. The generosity of the Becker family in making this substantial investment is a noteworthy development for USA Weightlifting.

Located in the Pittsburgh suburb of Bridgeville, Pa., the Center has been configured specifically for Olympic weightlifting in a 4,000 square foot space, including one competition and six training platforms, together with supporting strength training and related fitness equipment. The space is ideal both for day-to-day training and competitions. The facility has also been designed to support athletes from other sports seeking high level strength and conditioning, with ample space for expansion as needs require. Specialized kettle bell training is offered on-site, as well as boxing and martial arts training.



The opening of the center represents a serious and significant commitment on Becker's part to expand and energize Olympic weightlifting in Pittsburgh and the surrounding region – an area with a rich weightlifting history. Located in the western most part to Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh is situated three hours west of York which has been the center of weightlifting in the United States. Former weightlifting greats Russ Knipp, Cal Shake and Kurt Setterberg as well as USAW Hall of Fame Coach Marty Cypher have hailed from the Pittsburgh area.

The York Barbell Company, less active for the most part in recent years in terms of involvement in Olympic weightlifting, has again offered its facilities for competitions. With this development and the opening of the Pittsburgh Sports Performance Center, significant weightlifting activity can be anticipated to return Pennsylvania and revive the connection that formerly linked weightlifting in the Northeast with the Midwest.

The weekend's events at the center included an A Session invitational component on Saturday, followed by a pizza supper at the center provided by the Becker family for lifters and visitors. A novice competition was conducted on Sunday morning, followed by an open B Session.

The quality of the lifting on Saturday was high level, reflecting the caliber of the lifters in attendance, including National Champion Mike Graber, National Junior Champion and Junior World Team member Mike Nackoul, National silver medalist Mike Cerbus and national level competitors Kelly Charniga, Drew Dillon, Kevin Cornell, Mike Kreatsoulas and Tony Blanksteen. All were fit and in good lifting condition.

International level coaches in attendance with these lifters included Lou DeMarco, Mark Cannella and Bud Charniga as well as former national level lifter and Pittsburgh resident Frank Remschel. Since former Olympian and Team New Jersey coach Bob Giordano was unable to attend, having just returned from the World University competition in China, USAW High Performance Director Peter Roselli handled coaching duties



(L-R): 2011 Junior National 85kg Champion Mike Nackoul, 2011 National 56kg Champion Mike Graber and 2011 National Championship 77 kilo Silver Medalist Mike Cerbus.

for Mike Graber. Notable visitors in the audience were former elite international U.S. weightlifters Roy and Kurt Setterberg.

On Sunday, Roselli refereed the novice session comprised of high school level athletes, primarily wrestlers using weightlifting for strength and conditioning, and identified four of the most promising lifters from among the group. Roselli, Becker and Graber, a former intercollegiate wrestler, talked with the group and their forward thinking coach, Paul Recrosio. Graber was able to provide some insight and a unique perspective from a wrestler's point of view regarding the benefits of Olympic weightlifting and the opportunities in weightlifting for wrestlers once their scholastic or intercollegiate careers end.

Complete results for the competition can be found in the events section of the USAW web site.

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