

the **CrossFit** JOURNAL ARTICLES

CrossFit North's First Annual Championship

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On October 2, 2004, CrossFit North in Seattle held the 2nd Annual CrossFit Championships. This year's competition had a strong field of 28 competitors and even more spectators. CrossFit North has a new facility this year that is more than double the size of the original and the field of competitors almost tripled. Participation at last year's event was buoyed by a few ringers brought in from CrossFit Headquarters in Santa Cruz, CA. The participants at this year's competition were all from the Northwest, showing that the CrossFit concept is clearly expanding thanks to the efforts of Dave Werner, Nick Nibler and the newest member of the CrossFit NW family, Kurtis Bowler- owner of Rainier CrossFit.

The format of the competition was unknown by all of the competitors till the day of the competition. Last year's competition was three rounds of: 400m run, 21 kettlebell swings and 12 pullups. That workout is now known as "Helen". The workout this year was a long, linear circuit resembling an obstacle course with fitness implements.

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The winner of this year's competition, Brian Kammerer, finished with a time of 12:20. The majority of the competitors finished in under 20 mins and the average time of completion was roughly 18 minutes. Several competitors struggled with the rope climb due to inexperience, but the most time consuming event was Bell Ball. This event is similar to Wall Ball, but instead of hitting a stationary target on the wall, the target is a bell suspended from the ceiling. The bell swings mercilessly when hit by the ball. As a result, many men and women tossed their 20 or 6 pound medicine balls only to strike air. Thirty direct hits were required and many competitors hurled more than double that number. In fact, a few competitors hurled more than just their medicine ball.



Competitors went out in groups of two, separated by six minutes. If a competitor in one group catches up to the group ahead of them, the leading group must step aside to allow for the faster competitor to play through. The rationale behind the workout was a seven point plan explained to me by former Navy SEAL Dave Werner, "The plan in designing the event was to:

- 1 Come up with some exercises that were not common in order to minimize anyone's chance of special preparation.
- 2 Hit the competitors with a tough metabolic demand right off the bat. This was accomplished with the Wheelbarrow-sprint/tire dragging/sandbag-carrying/bearcrawling/ rope-climbing complex.
- 3 After the metabolic hit, give a chance to "recover" with some nasty ab work.
- 4 Then demand some more strength type work with the DB deads and "bell-ball".
- 5 Nick and I invented bellball because we wanted to throw in a requirement for accuracy when people were already gassed. The exercise is a derivative of a drill called "Barball" invented by Kurtis Bowler of Rainier Crossfit. We think of this accuracy requirement along the lines of a Biathlon.
- 6 Finally some more metabolic work with rowing and pull-ups again just to be mean.
- 7 The final free-throws were another accuracy drill and a bit of fun after the work was over."



Several of the competitors were quite surprised by the composition of the contest. Two of them, Microsoft employees Micky Snir and Michael Street, went as far as to create a matrix of all of the movements used in CrossFit and chart their frequencies of occurrence



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in CrossFit workouts. From this, they calculated the statistical chance of them appearing in the contest. Micky Snir was dead wrong in his predictions, but he did finish with the fastest time. But in a cruel twist of fate, the free throws turned out to be the spoiler. The champion, Brian Kammerer, drained 7 of 10 free throws. Each shot subtracted 5 seconds from his time. This was just enough to propel him to the lead by a margin of 13 seconds. As an Army Ranger, Brian clearly understands the importance of accuracy under stress. However, the cruelest twist of fate is that in a competition designed by a former Navy SEAL (Dave Werner) and a former Recon Marine (Nick Nibler), the champion was an Army Ranger! Irony such as this could only be explained by Pukie's spirit watching over the competition.

Joining Brian Kammerer was a whole group of elite Army soldiers, led by Captain Michael Perry. Perry is the type of leader who leads from the front. He was the first of the soldiers to join the fray and he put up an excellent time of 13:46. One of his fellow soldiers, John Uhrig, placed fourth, just seconds ahead of Perry. Uhrig and Perry are from the Army's 1st Special Forces Group. The soldiers' presence at the competition was an honor and a privilege for all of us who had the chance to meet them.

Greg Glassman, founder of CrossFit, said of the event, "It was exciting to come up here one year after celebrating CrossFit North's move out of the SureGuard Storage unit to the Navy base, but to meet two excited communities of CrossFitters one from the U.S. Army's First Special Forces Group from Fort Lewis and another from Vancouver, B.C. proved that CrossFit was not only contagious but thriving."

Another inspiring story at this year's competition was Susan Geier, 53, of Seattle. When she first began CrossFit, she struggled with even the most basic exercises. Due to patience and diligence, her training at CrossFit North allowed her to put up a good enough time to beat one of the soldiers. As he was communing with Pukie, Ms. Geier charged to the finish line. Her improvement over the past year is one of the things that CrossFit North owners Nick and Dave are most proud of. The entire CrossFit community is proud of the success of the 2nd Annual CrossFit Championships and we are eagerly awaiting the third. Many thanks to CrossFit North and the many volunteers who helped make this a special event.

