

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

September 2013

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THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Taxing Our Patience

Washington state CrossFit affiliates not considered “instructional,” burdened with confusing tax. Maureen O’Hagan reports.

By Maureen O’Hagan

September 2013



All: Mike Warkentin/CrossFit Journal

CrossFit Bellevue owner Leilani M. Cerrillo looked around one day and realized something: her clients were paying sales tax and her neighbors’ clients weren’t.

The gymnastics studio next door? Not subject to Washington state sales tax.

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The cheerleading school? Not taxed. But Cerrillo's box? Taxed.

"I don't see why my people are being charged sales tax and those people are not," she said. "I think there's a lot of gray area."

No one ever accused the taxman of being logical. In fact, if you bore into state sales-tax rules that apply to physical-fitness activities, things quickly get confusing. Washington's system is so unclear that while some box owners just buck up and pay, others aren't forking over a dime; some are getting away with it and others are being penalized.

"It seems like the primary driver is what kind of advice you're getting from your tax expert," said Thomas Crubaugh, Director of Finance and Risk Management for CrossFit Inc. "That's kind of random."

Under Washington's jury-rigged system, if the "primary purpose" of the fitness activity is instruction, it's not subject to the sales tax.

The stated position of the Washington Department of Revenue (DOR) is that CrossFit affiliates must collect sales tax on everything: dues for group classes, personal training and actual retail goods like T-shirts.

So why are some affiliates paying the tax while others aren't? The non-payers aren't eager to say.

"We are not interested in bringing any additional attention to ourselves regarding this matter," one affiliate wrote in an email to the *Journal* after successfully fighting back scrutiny from the DOR.

Meanwhile, other affiliates are paying penalties. Laurie Bowler of Rainier CrossFit said her gym's 2008 tax returns were audited last year. They had to pay the state US\$7,500—about half of which went toward four years of penalties.

The sales-tax mishmash began long before there were CrossFit affiliates to complain about it. In 1993, the state legislature tossed out a well-planned (though controversial) funding scheme for a new state health plan and replaced it with what *The Seattle Times* called a "drastic and haphazard" makeover that included a slew of taxes, including both sin taxes and taxes on "personal services." You know, services—things like massage parlors, tattoos, dates arranged by escort services, Turkish steam baths and ... physical-fitness services.

Putting aside for the moment the idea that fitness is being taxed to pay for health care, the question remains: how do you explain things like the gymnastics loophole? Or, for that matter, the boxes that aren't paying?



Washington state CrossFit affiliates are caught up in a tax situation that is confusing, arbitrary and inconsistent.

Under Washington's jury-rigged system, if the "primary purpose" of the fitness activity is instruction, it's not subject to the sales tax. If it's primarily about fitness, then it is. The *CrossFit Journal* recently asked a DOR spokesman for more specifics. See if you can follow:

Tennis lessons? Not subject to sales tax.

Membership at a tennis club? Taxable. And if there's a separate fee to use the tennis courts, that's taxed, too.

How about tae kwon do? Nope.

Mixed martial arts? No.

Playing in a baseball league? Depends. (Is it a nonprofit?)

Membership at a Globo Gym? Taxed.

Personal training at a Globo Gym? Taxed.

Perfectly clear, right? We thought so. And we didn't even mention the loophole that really irritates box owners: yoga.

It used to be that yoga classes were considered to be subject to sales tax. But in 2009, studio owners faced down DOR auditors and convinced them they should be exempt. Their main argument wasn't that they were instructional, per se. Instead, they argued that the primary purpose of yoga isn't fitness.

You can stop your snickering now. The argument worked.

So, if you're working out to try to get fit, it's taxed. But if you're doing it to breathe, or to meditate, it's not?

"Yoga originated as an Eastern philosophy and discipline approximately 5000 years ago," a [2009 Excise Tax Advisory reads](#). "In addition to physical postures ('asana'), traditional Yoga classes typically emphasize significant breath regulation ('pranayama') and meditation ('dhyana') components as well as significant discussion of the historical and philosophical origins of Yoga."

The advisory goes on to state that though there may be physical benefits from yoga, "Those benefits are not the primary focus of the class."

So, if you're working out to try to get fit, it's taxed. But if you're doing it to breathe, or to meditate, it's not?

"I'm deeply annoyed," said Jesse Ward of Lynnwood CrossFit. "They're some kind of quasi-religious thing, so it becomes OK? They're ostensibly doing exactly the same thing we're doing, which is trying to help people live a healthier life."

Maybe the yoga people are onto something. People say CrossFit's a cult—shouldn't that count for something?

"No, I don't think so," said Mike Gowrylow, a spokesman for the DOR.

"It sounds like a good, positive activity to me," he added. "(But) it's a taxable activity."

In truth, said Diane Yetter, founder of the national Sales Tax Institute, "A lot of what it comes down to is who had the best lobbyist."

And Washington isn't outside the norm in all of this, according to Yetter. It's true that some states have no sales tax at all. But as the country has moved from a manufacturing economy to more of a service economy, an increasing number of jurisdictions are beginning to tax things that haven't been traditional revenue drivers. Today, she said, some states tax just about every product or service under the sun.

Washington has no state income tax, so sales tax is an obvious funding source. The base sales-tax rate is 6.5 percent, which puts it around the middle nationwide. (Some cities, including Seattle, tack on additional percentage points, as well.)

Recently, there has been talk in Washington state about fighting the sales tax on services. Crubaugh is working on a strategy that he hopes will benefit affiliates broadly. The affiliates who have already figured out a sales-tax loophole aren't happy, he said, because they don't want to jeopardize their situation, but he thinks educating the DOR about the CrossFit model might help. It appears the state thinks CrossFit is just like a Globo Gym, where the client gets minimal, if any, instruction.

"Perhaps in some boxes' case, that may be true," he said. "But with most CrossFits, there is significant instruction going on. You work on skills."



CrossFit believes the program's significant instructional component places it outside the reach of Washington state sales taxes.

Meanwhile, others, including Cerrillo, are working with lawyers and accountants to appeal their tax bill directly. She says it's unfair to her customers.

"I think it's made the difference in whether people have signed up or not," she said.

It's also a matter of principle. Before opening CrossFit Bellevue, Cerrillo worked for years in retail.

"I know retail," she said. "You walk into a store and purchase something and walk out with it. That's not what I do in my gym."



About the Author

Maureen O'Hagan is a Seattle-based journalist who is the recipient of numerous national writing and reporting awards. Skeptical by nature, she tried CrossFit for a newspaper story in 2009. Now she's hooked.

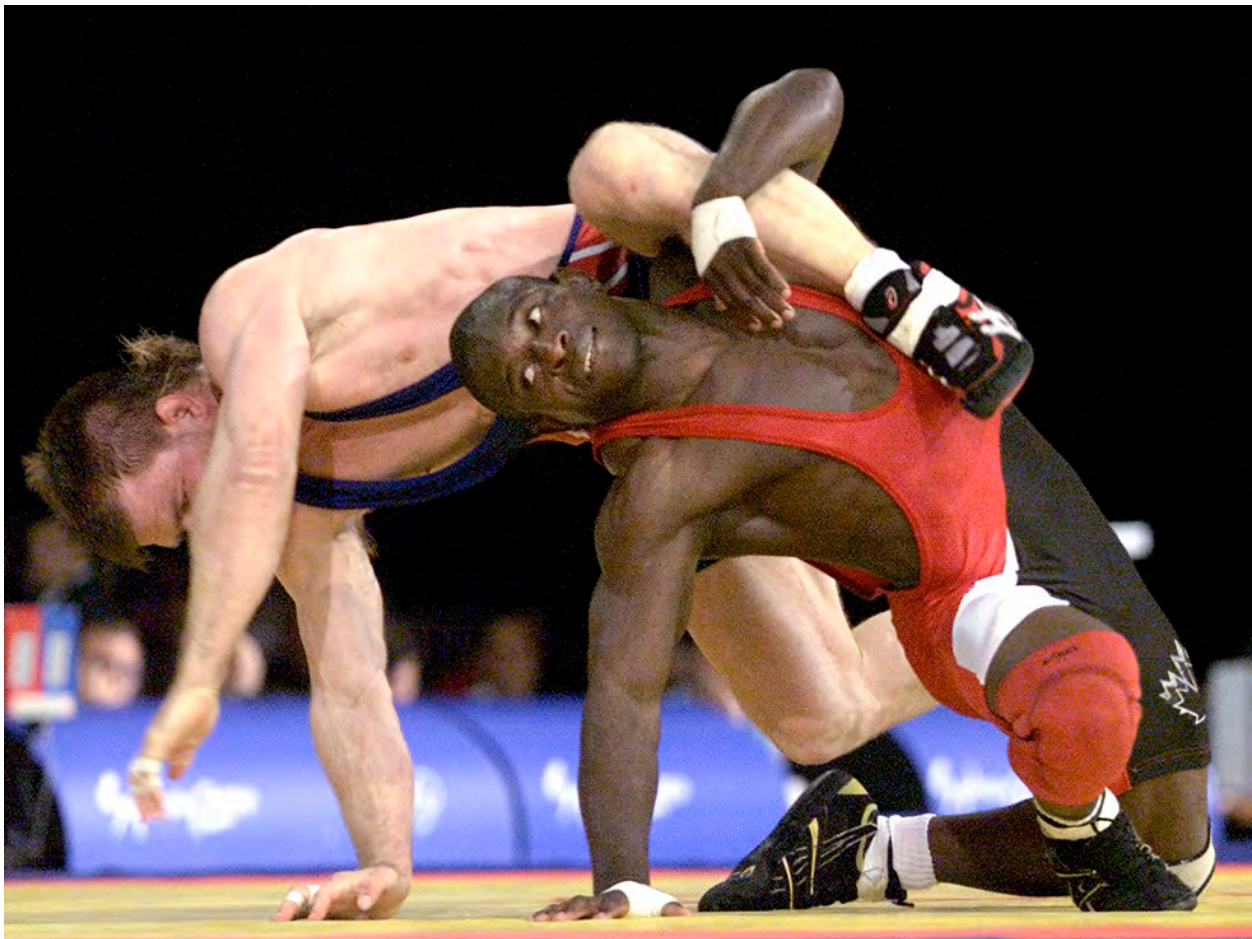
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Choke Out?

International Olympic Committee to decide fate of wrestling at the Games on Sept. 8 in Buenos Aires.

By Chris Cooper

September 2013



Toronto Star Via Getty Images

The announcement knocked the wind out of many wrestlers around the world.

In February, the International Olympic Committee, which organizes the Olympic Games, said wrestling would no longer be part of the international sporting event after 2016.

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Three months later, though, the executive board of the IOC chose wrestling as one of three sports for possible inclusion in 2020. Wrestling will grapple with squash and baseball/softball when the IOC makes its final vote on Sept. 8 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Many thought the IOC's initial decision was financially driven: with a small and declining viewership, wrestling has never had top television rankings. The IOC's official stance was wrestling didn't provide enough opportunities for women, and that the rules—dictated by the International Federation of Associate Wrestling Styles, or FILA—were too hard for the viewing audience to follow. The real reason might have been entirely different.

After years of asking FILA to make its sport more exciting to viewers through rule changes, points reassignments and penalties for stalling the action, the IOC might have decided on a display of power.

Many wrestlers, current and former, have found their way to CrossFit, and some CrossFit coaches worry the exclusion of wrestling from the Olympics will cut opportunities for young athletes, killing scholarships and, eventually, the sport.

The Olympics are generally regarded as the pinnacle of competition, and the removal of the sport is in some minds a death knell for a discipline depicted in cave drawings dated as early as 7,000 B.C.

Wrestlers in CrossFit

LeRoy Gardner III owns CrossFit Soul Ruckus in Katy, Texas. Gardner was a collegiate wrestler in Minnesota and says the Olympic dream kept him focused in school.

"When I went to college," he said, "I had three goals: to be national champ, to position myself for the Olympics, and to get a degree. In that order."

Gardner used wrestling to keep him out of trouble through school and says without the potential for Olympic glory, wrestling wouldn't have had the same appeal.

"That was always the dream, out there on the horizon. It kinda pulls you," said Gardner, who achieved wrestling success to the collegiate level. "How many times in college do you feel like, 'Today's the day I want to go to the library and study'? None. You don't want to do it, but it's necessary, so you do it anyway."



Chris Cooper

Gardner, a former collegiate wrestler, coaches both CrossFit athletes and competitive wrestlers in Texas.

"Like there's going to be a time when you don't want to do sprints in the morning, but you do it anyway. Maybe you're staying in, not partying. You have to be the exception, the weirdo. You have to do things that no one else will do, but you can see the payoff. Like CrossFit—there's no one telling you that you can be too good at pull-ups. Do more and benefit. Go find out, express whatever genetic potential you have."

Gardner used wrestling to keep him out of trouble through school and says without the potential for Olympic glory, wrestling wouldn't have had the same appeal.

Now a CrossFit coach, Gardner applies much of the philosophy he learned as a wrestler.

"I try to get the athletes to understand—when you start feeling challenged, that's the beginning of getting better. That's when it starts. I tell CrossFitters and the wrestlers that I coach to hurry up and go get tired. That's where the magic is," he said.

Gardner uses CrossFit and wrestling to move athletes toward their athletic goals, but he fears that without the goal of the Olympics for wrestlers, many will quit the sport to pursue others.

"I've seen athletes forgo the best they could be in wrestling in order to play junior varsity football—third or fourth string. And these are people who are varsity athletes for wrestling in the area," Gardner noted.

Big Changes at FILA

Immediately following the IOC's decision to remove wrestling from the 2020 Olympics, FILA held a confidence vote on then-president Raphael Martinetti.

"Martinetti was antagonistic to the IOC. He had done some things that were overtly confrontational with the IOC. The new guy (Nenad Lalovic) has been more willing to engage

with the IOC. Now FILA is saying, 'How do we do better? How do we meet what you guys are asking of us before we lose it all?' I credit FILA for mobilizing fast after the decision was reached," Gardner said.

Under Lalovic's leadership, FILA moved quickly to change the rules for wrestling matches and accommodate the IOC's requests. The new rules encourage more aggressive offense. The wrestler who scores the most points will win instead of the one who wins two out of three rounds. Pushing an opponent out of bounds is now worth less than a takedown, and penalties for stalling have become more costly.

"I couldn't tell you the rules of wrestling in two minutes. It would take 15 minutes to explain the points. The IOC didn't like this system."

—LeRoy Gardner III



Chris Cooper

Taylor Rosario has Olympic dreams that might end with the Sept. 8 IOC vote.

"This decision recognizes the great lengths to which we are going to reform our sport and address the IOC's concerns," Lalovic said in late May in a statement released after the announcement.

The new rules will make viewing simpler for a television audience without wrestling experience. Because Olympic events are often broadcast for hours at a time, the IOC doesn't want viewers to change the channel when they see flat soles and Lycra.

"Maybe some of it is just putting FILA in its place a little," Gardner said. "Maybe we should change the rules to make it more media friendly. I couldn't tell you the rules of wrestling in two minutes. It would take 15 minutes to explain the points. The IOC didn't like this system and is saying, 'You'd better take us seriously.' We've corrected a lot of these (problems) in the last three months."

In Gardner's opinion, the IOC's initial decision to remove wrestling from the 2020 Games was a shot across FILA's bow. Play by our rules, or take your singlet and go home.

"We have to be more spectator friendly, not cryptic. A fan should know who's winning and why. That hasn't been the case the last two Olympic cycles," Gardner said.

IOC vice-president Thomas Bach on July 31 addressed FILA's changes in Berlin, Germany.

"I have the impression that the international federation (FILA) has understood very well the messages sent to them," Bach told the Foreign Press Association. "The international federation has drawn its conclusions. It is now here with a new president, new program and new ideas for the sport. That is why I personally believe that wrestling has good chances to come through the vote in September."



Chris Cooper

Rosario (right) uses CrossFit to train for wrestling and finds she has better endurance than most of her competitors.

Olympic Sports?

Olympic sports are not set in stone, and many have been dropped or added over the years.

For instance, power boating was an Olympic sport in 1908, and tug of war was a sport from 1900 to 1920. Golf was last contested in 1904 but will be back in 2016. Baseball and softball were dropped after 2008.

After the 2010 Winter Olympics, in which the Canadian and American teams outscored opponents by incredible margins, women's ice hockey was warned that uneven competition could affect its status in future Games. Also in 2010, female ski jumpers petitioned the Supreme Court of B.C. to force the IOC to include women's ski jumping. They lost; the IOC said there are too few female ski jumpers to warrant inclusion in the Games.

The IOC determines which sports make the cut, with tangible and intangible aspects considered.

"To be on the Olympic program is an issue where you need universality as much as possible," IOC president Jacques Rogge said in a [2008 article](#) on MLB.com. "You need to have a sport with a following, you need to have the best players and you need to be in strict compliance with WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency). And these are the qualifications that have to be met. When you have all that, you have to win hearts. You can win the mind, but you still must win hearts."

The IOC has put pressure on Major League Baseball to allow its players to participate in the Games to showcase the best athletes in the world, but professional athletes were actually banned from the Games prior to 1971.

Sports that are dropped from the Olympic roster often receive less government funding, as was the case with [softball in Australia](#).

—Mike Warkentin



Courtesy of Roy Shoaf

Rosario is focusing on the Olympics rather than a college scholarship, a gamble considering wrestling's tenuous Olympic future.

Neither the IOC nor FILA responded to the *Journal's* request for comments.

Playing ball with the IOC appears to have helped FILA's case. After FILA changed from three two-minute rounds to two three-minute rounds, simplified its scoring and added women to its executive committee, the IOC agreed to consider wrestling for the 2020 Olympics. However, the sport's fixed spot in the Games, once thought unassailable, is gone. FILA will have to campaign to have wrestling included in the 2020 Games and every Games after that.

Taylor Rosario

One of the athletes training with Gardner at CrossFit Soul Ruckus is Taylor Rosario. In her first year competing, Rosario won the cadet (14-15) age bracket at nationals in Fargo, N.D., in July. Although only 14, Rosario was eligible to wrestle in the junior (16-18) category, in which she finished second in the nation against girls four years older.

Rosario's mother, Pam, credits CrossFit and Gardner's coaching for Taylor's success.



Courtesy of Roy Shoaf

"Taylor's a great third-round wrestler. When the others are gassed, she's turning it on," Pam said. "When freestyle wrestling changed to three-minute rounds, she was ready to go."

After her victory in Fargo, Taylor was quick to return to the gym and the mats. She does CrossFit both at Soul Ruckus and NHB CrossFit, where Pam coaches. Taylor chooses to compete primarily in matches that will position her well for an Olympic shot, rather than focusing on smaller, local folkstyle (aka "collegiate") matches—the quickest road to a scholarship. It's a risk she's willing to take in her pursuit of Olympic glory.

Taylor will be eligible for the 2016 Olympics but will likely be at her peak for 2020—if wrestling makes the cut for the Games.

"There's a difference in training paths between Worlds and scholarships," Taylor said. "Colleges look at your high-school career more. Worlds look at your career outside of high school."

High-school wrestling is folkstyle, while world-championship matches—and the Olympics—are freestyle.

"The Olympics are the biggest reward you can get from wrestling. If it were removed, I would still wrestle, but it wouldn't have the same impact. Some girls would quit the sport."

—Taylor Rosario

"The Olympics are the biggest reward you can get from wrestling," Taylor said. "If it were removed, I would still wrestle, but it wouldn't have the same impact. Some girls would quit the sport."

She continued: "Girls' wrestling is just starting to get popular. It probably has something to do with Clarissa Chung winning bronze at the 2012 Olympics."

Gardner worries losing Olympic exposure for wrestling could mean fewer opportunities for kids like Taylor. High-level matches could lose their luster and the collegiate scholarship system could suffer as a result.

"NCAA participation would definitely drop," he said.

Without the distant promise of the Olympics, the best athletes would simply switch to other sports, killing the feeder system for NCAA and World Championship wrestling in the U.S.

"The trickle-down effect is a much scarier proposition than just the short-term decision," Gardner said.

From the athlete side of the equation, Taylor can also see the looming threat to collegiate wrestling. She thinks participation at all age levels will decrease if wrestling is permanently removed from the Olympics.

"I could definitely see it happening. Scholarships are because of the Olympics. For girls, it's harder for us to get scholarships in the first place, but girls can get good wrestling scholarships," she said. "They'd think, 'If I'm not going to get a scholarship, why should I do this?' That would be when girls would start quitting."

The Match in Argentina

On Sept. 8, young wrestlers and their coaches will eagerly watch the news for the IOC vote on wrestling's fate for 2020. Teenaged hopefuls, and those in the development stage, could miss the opportunity of a lifetime if wrestling is cut from the Olympic program for even a single Olympiad. Because the Olympics are held only once every four years, an eight-year gap could mean that many miss their window.



Courtesy of Daniel Igali

If wrestling is out in 2020, some of Daniel Igali's young athletes might miss their chance at Olympic glory.

A vote to keep wrestling in the 2020 Games won't guarantee it will be in the 2024 Games. On the shortlist, wrestling will continue to fight for its presence at every Games. This fight is the biggest of Daniel Igali's career, and he's had some big ones.

Igali won the Olympic gold medal in 2000. Born in Nigeria and representing Canada, Igali beat Arsen Gitinov to stand atop the podium in Sydney, Australia. Wrestling created opportunities for Igali; now he's creating a better life for many youth in Nigeria.

Born in Eniwari, one of the poorest villages in the Niger Delta, Daniel—known by his birth name, Baraladei, in Nigeria—would literally have to wrestle his 19 siblings for a share of food. He was winning national competitions at the age of 16 and was given refugee status in Canada in 1994. He won the World Freestyle Wrestling Championships for Canada in 1999, and he won the country's first Olympic gold medal a year later.

Daniel Igali feels if wrestling were removed from the Olympics, it would be the end of wrestling in Nigeria.

Igali established the Daniel Igali Foundation almost immediately after his win in Sydney. He began securing funds for a school in the village of Eniwari and opened the doors to the Maureen Matheny Academy in 2006. The school is named after his surrogate mother in Canada. Kids—boys and girls—study and eat at the school. And they wrestle.

"We provide wrestling shoes and a mat for them to ensure that kids have the opportunity to go to school," Igali said. "I want them to be able to pursue that path, and if we don't have the Olympics, the drive to pursue that sport will be lost. It will become a recreational sport and it will lose its luster."

Igali's coaching helped a team of four Nigerians qualify for the 2012 Olympics, which had significant effects on their



Courtesy of Daniel Igali



Courtesy of Daniel Igali

In the village of Eniwari, Nigeria, wrestling represents a chance for a better life for many young students. That might change if wrestling is no longer an Olympic sport.

lives. Although they didn't make the medal round, they returned home as local heroes.

"A lot of young kids look up to them as role models. They have a lot more responsibility to lead lives that are exemplary because of it," Igali said.

The kids who attend Maureen Matheny Academy might be able to attend school elsewhere but would not achieve the same level of education. They would lose most opportunities for travel.

"It gets them out of their villages and into the cities," Igali said. "They would never have that opportunity otherwise, and that's just a start. The older ones are 14 now, and soon they'll get into representing their country in other countries. They all want to do it more than anything."



Gardner and Rosario, along with the worldwide wrestling community, anxiously await the IOC's decision on Sept. 8.

The Nigerian government is focused on the Olympic Games. Its funding for projects like Igali's wrestling school is predicated on national glory. Igali feels if wrestling were removed from the Olympics, it would be the end of wrestling in Nigeria.

"There would be no funding from government. Then it would be very difficult for individuals to fundraise and pay to go to competitions," Igali said.

Igali's fame in Nigeria led to political office; in 2011 he was elected to the Bayelsa State House of Assembly. He also coaches Nigeria's national wrestling team. When he flies to Buenos Aires to petition for the continuation of wrestling as an Olympic event, Igali will have far more than medals on his mind: he'll be carrying the hopes of a host of young athletes. He's vowed to return to Nigeria victorious.

"I'm going to Buenos Aires on Aug. 28. I'll be there for a week, trying to rehearse what I'll say to the IOC," he said.

Igali's savage dedication to his cause—be it a gold medal, a school or a scrap of food—has led him to triumph before.

This time, he and the rest of the wrestling world will be fighting the IOC, as well as squash and baseball/softball. Only one of the three sports will be contested at the 2020 Games.

In September, the wrestling world—and thousands of CrossFitters—will be watching.

In or out?



About the Author

Chris Cooper is the owner of CrossFit Catalyst and a staff writer for CrossFit Inc.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Back on the Mat

International Olympic Committee votes to reinstate wrestling for the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games. While wrestling officials celebrated the victory, they said the work has just begun.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

September 2013



FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/Getty Images

FILA members and wrestlers celebrate the announcement that wrestling would be included in the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games.

Wrestling's back in—at least for the next two Olympic Games.

After seven months of collectively holding its breath, the worldwide wrestling community can not only take a sigh of relief but also jump for joy.

Scott Halleran/Getty Images



Interim President Nenad Lalovic guided FILA to its victory after his predecessor, Raphael Martinetti, resigned after a no-confidence vote when wrestling was omitted from the Olympic Games.

At its 125th Session, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on Sunday morning voted to include wrestling in the 2020 and 2024 Games over softball/baseball and squash. Wrestling received 49 votes, while softball/baseball got 24 and squash tallied 22.

After outgoing IOC President Jacques Rogge made the announcement, members of the International Federation of Associated Wrestling Styles leapt from their chairs inside the room where the vote took place, shouting, cheering and hugging one another. The federation, known as FILA, dictates wrestling's rules.

"It's a great day for wrestling, that's for sure," said Mike Moyer, executive director of the National Wrestling Coaches Association, as he stepped outside a noisy New York City café whose patrons were celebrating the news.

"In a lot of ways, that vote, it's a testament to the resolve in the wrestling community. It's hard to describe—it's a fraternity like none I've ever been part of," he said.

**"That vote, it's a testament
to the resolve in the
wrestling community."**

—Mike Moyer

"We Have Made Mistakes"

In February the IOC announced wrestling would not be part of the Games after 2016. Three months later, the IOC Executive Board shortlisted wrestling as one of three sports for possible inclusion in the 2020 Games.

At the heart of the issue were the rules. For years, the IOC had asked FILA to change them to make the sport more exciting and easier to follow for viewers. Finally, after losing a spot in the Olympics, FILA listened. The IOC agreed to consider wrestling for the 2020 Olympics only after FILA

changed the rules to make for two three-minute rounds—instead of three two-minute rounds—simplified scoring and added women to its executive committee.

In general, the rule changes focus on encouraging more aggressive offense. The wrestler who scores the most points will win rather than the one who wins two out of three rounds. Pushing an opponent out of bounds is now worth less than a takedown, and penalties for stalling have become more costly.

Nenad Lalovic became interim president of FILA after the IOC announced wrestling would not be part of the 2020 Games and previous president Raphael Martinetti resigned after a no-confidence vote. On Sunday morning, Lalovic answered questions from IOC members. He said the organization had evolved.

"We have made mistakes. We admitted it, but we decided to listen and learn, and this is the only way to be (a) partner of the IOC and a member of this family. We are aware of our mistakes and it will not happen again," he said. "To make our sport more competitive, we have to rebuild our house, our federation. The federation is just an accessory of the sport itself. We are developing the world wrestling plan."

The rule changes were a positive step said Rich Bender, executive director of USA Wrestling.

"The sport of wrestling is way better today than it was (in) February 2012," he noted.

Because there isn't a professional level for high-school and college wrestlers to work toward, Sunday's vote was that much more important for the cultivation of the sport, Bender explained.

"The Olympic gold medal is the pinnacle of wrestling, and ultimately it's the inspiration for young boys and girls to try the sport, to participate in the sport. Certainly that recognition provides incredible opportunity for wrestling to grow its significance around the world," he said. "It provides an incredible level of credibility to our sport. It's certainly a designation worth fighting for."

Despite Sunday morning's victory, wrestling's fixed spot at the Olympics no longer exists. FILA must campaign to include wrestling in each Games after 2024.

"This is just the beginning. We need to get back in as a core sport," Moyer said, referencing the 25 sports that always are part of the Olympics. They include track and field, gymnastics, weightlifting and judo. Up until this year, wrestling was on that list.

**"For a few minutes we'll
celebrate a victory, and (then)
get to work tomorrow for the
sport of wrestling to take it
to the new level."**

—Rich Bender

"Lesson learned. We have to continually evolve and innovate and make sure we keep our sport current and relevant," Moyer said.

Bender echoed those statements.

"The first part of this mission's accomplished," he said. "The work's just beginning now."

Bender continued: "There's a big expectation within the International Olympic Committee family that wrestling will push itself forward (and continue) to look at ways to conduct the sport better. There's a big task yet to undertake, and I think our sport's up to the challenge. For a few minutes we'll celebrate a victory, and (then) get to work tomorrow for the sport of wrestling to take it to the new level."

No Shock, Just Disappointment

When wrestling made it onto the list of three sports for possible inclusion in the 2020 Games, Kevin Klipstein said he knew the sport would be a tough competitor. Still, the USA Squash CEO expressed doubts about the sport's evolution.

"It's difficult to transform a sport in just a few months. Hopefully they follow through on a lot of changes that they're suggesting," he said of FILA.

Although it's up to the IOC to determine the right mix of sports, Klipstein said the promise of adding a new sport was not met.

"It's a bit of an odd situation where (the IOC was) opening up the Games for new sports, yet (it) didn't add any new sports, and that's very disappointing," he said.

As it stands, squash meets all the IOC's criteria for an Olympic sport, Klipstein added, and boasts roughly 3 million players in the country.

FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/Getty Images



Each of wrestling, squash and softball/baseball made its case for inclusion in the 2020 Games before the IOC, and wrestling won the vote handily.

"I don't think the issues are really on squash's side. I think we'll just continue to do what we're doing," he said. "We do feel like we have momentum and that eventually we'll get a chance to compete in the Games."

E.T. Colvin, president of USA Softball and North American vice president of the International Softball Federation, also expressed disappointment—but not surprise.

"We never really understood why they came up with taking wrestling out of it," he said. "We knew it was an uphill battle (for softball/baseball)."

Still, there's optimism.

"The thing that we can do now is we've got to become more visible," Colvin explained.

Championships typically have been held in places such as the Netherlands and Whitehorse, Canada, Colvin said, making it difficult to broadcast the sporting events or for fans to travel to them.

"The only thing north of Whitehorse, Canada, is the Arctic Circle," he noted.

"We've got to go to work and make those better events, make them more visible so that the IOC and the world will

be able to look and see that we're doing a better job. We don't want to give the appearance that this is an end-all decision or something that might kill the sport of softball or baseball," he said.

Softball officials also can better lobby the IOC, said Colvin, whose U.S. organization represents 200,000 teams.

"We're going to work through the (United States Olympic Committee) and other people and get the IOC to take a step back ... and see if they can change some things," he said. "Maybe there's no limit on the number of sports but the number of athletes."

Colvin added: "If we could get them to look at it a little bit different maybe we can get something to come about."

Sunday's loss just means harder work is ahead, he said.

"It's a setback, but it's not the end of the world," Colvin said. "We're gonna be OK."



About the Author

Andréa Maria Cecil is a *CrossFit Journal* staff writer and editor.



Sept. 11, 2013, CrossFit.com WOD

The Don

For time:

- 66 deadlifts (110 lb.)
 - 66 box jumps (24 inches)
 - 66 kettlebell swings (1.5 pood)
 - 66 knees-to-elbows
 - 66 sit-ups
 - 66 pull-ups
 - 66 thrusters (55 lb.)
 - 66 wall-ball shots (20 lb.)
 - 66 burpees
 - 66 double-unders
-

Never Forget

CrossFit Kids Lifeguard Test

Based on a lifeguard drill observed at Moonlight Beach in California, this game encourages recognition, reaction and speed in martial-arts students or CrossFit athletes.

By Mikki Lee Martin CrossFit Kids

September 2013



Equipment

- As many lacrosse balls or bar clamps as you have athletes
- Bucket

Set-up

1. Designate a space, at least 10 meters in length and wide enough to accommodate an 18-inch lane for each athlete.
2. Line up the lacrosse balls (or bar clamps) in a row at least 18 inches apart.

Object

Retrieve a lacrosse ball or bar clamp, perform the required exercise, and return the ball to the trainer.

Game Play

1. Athletes lie with their hands by their sides, arms straight, at least 10 meters away from the balls.
2. On "Go!" each athlete sprints to retrieve a ball or clamp, performs the predetermined exercise (e.g., squats, two spinning burpees, or three jumping jacks) and then returns it to the trainer (a bucket is helpful for collection).
3. The last athlete back is removed from the game and becomes a helper, and one lacrosse ball or bar clamp is removed from play. The last athlete standing wins.

Options

For additional difficulty, a bear crawl or broad jumps can be substituted for burpees or jumping jacks.

For increased difficulty, as well as for smaller groups, you can hide the lacrosse balls or clamps in mildly challenging locations rather than placing them in plain view.



THE CrossFit JOURNAL

“Taking the time for the time of your life”

Pat Sherwood sets off on a 16-country motorcycle tour and discovers the secret to finding spare time.

By Pat Sherwood

September 2013



All photos: Staff/CrossFit Journal

They say that time is money. They also say that money is power. If that's the case, then by my reckoning, time equals power. I'm actually talking about what you need to live the life you dream about. As I write this, Ian Wittenber and I are on day 30 of a 100-day motorcycle odyssey through 16 countries. The purpose is to explore the CrossFit community in Latin America while having the kickass adventure of a lifetime.

1 of 2



"There was nowhere to go but everywhere, so just keep on rolling under the stars." —Jack Kerouac, On the Road

As it turns out, having a mud-splattered motorcycle fully loaded with cases and waterproof bags is one hell of a conversation starter. Someone walks over to chat at every gas station we pull into, every place we stop to eat, every border crossing, in fact, any time we are parked. The questions are similar: What kind of bikes are those? How do you like them? Where are you guys coming from? Where are you heading? The first three answers are met with mild interest but the final one leaves them stunned.

"We are riding to Chile in South America."

There is usually a pause while my response is processed. After I assure them I'm not kidding, they ask how long it will take. "About 100 days," I say. The look of shock upon learning we're riding to South America is suddenly intensified when they hear the duration. People cannot believe we are spending 100 days on the road. And they always respond with the same thing: "Wow, I always wanted to do something like that, but I just don't have the time."

This common reply has hit me harder than anything else.

Many people have a long list of things they would truly love to do, places they want to see, and rich experiences they hope to capture. From my findings it's not money that prevents these bucket-list items from becoming reality. Most things can be accomplished for a very reasonable amount of money just so long as some sacrifices are made.

The desire is there, the funds are there, and one simple little thing is preventing dreams from coming true: Time.

I'm not going to act like I have the magic solution to getting you the time you need to do the things you want in this world. However, I can tell you that there will never be the "perfect" time for the adventure of a lifetime.

I've been told by my friends with children that there is no perfect time to have kids. You just have them and find a way to make it work. I think that theory holds true for the bucket-list items that people think they will get to "one day when I have the time".

Spoiler alert, you will never have the time. You have to take it. Now go dust off that list of things you always wanted to do and knock out the first one. Make it happen.



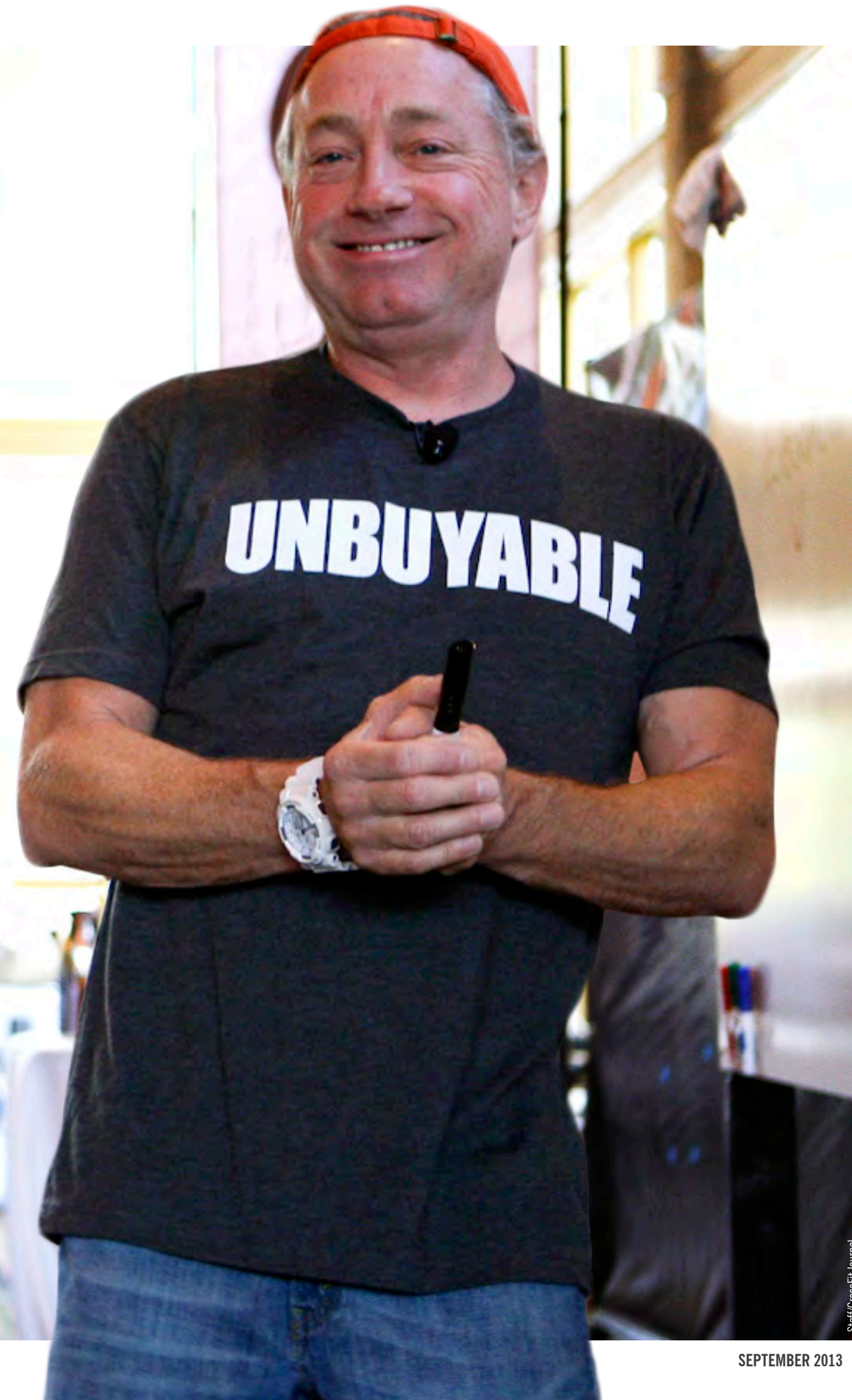
About the Author

Pat Sherwood works for CrossFit as a flowmaster and member of the Media Team. He's done just under 200 seminars all around the globe for CrossFit HQ and competed in the 2009 CrossFit Games. He hates HSPU and loves ice cream.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

CROSSFIT INC. HAS REVOLUTIONIZED THE BUSINESS OF FITNESS, AND
NOW HOSTS OF OTHERS ARE RIDING THE WAVE. CHRIS COOPER REPORTS.

BY CHRIS COOPER

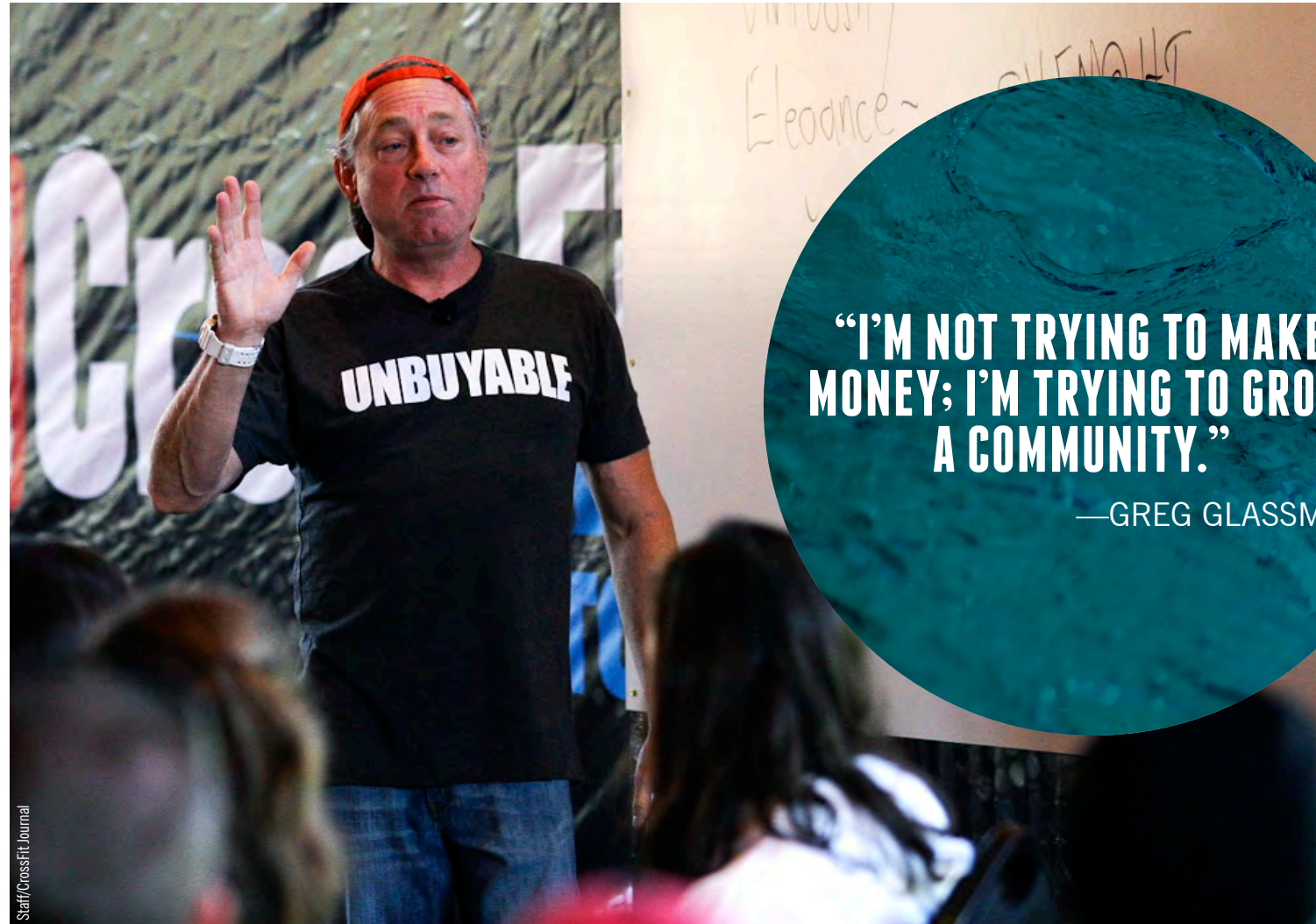


GREG GLASSMAN

INTRODUCED A NEW WAY TO MEASURE FITNESS OBJECTIVELY. WHEN YOUR FRAN TIME DROPS OR YOUR FRONT SQUAT GOES UP, YOU'RE GETTING FITTER.

Harder to measure is the effect that Glassman's ideas have had on the broader fitness community since he launched CrossFit.com in 2001. CrossFit has changed the landscape: powerlifters who have never heard of or done Murph can buy better barbells cheaper than they could have 10 years ago, USA Weightlifting's membership has tripled, and grandma has learned to deadlift. Hundreds of thousands have been introduced to kettlebells, snatches and Tabata intervals thanks to CrossFit.com programming.

CrossFit's open-source business model has produced success in a manner similar to its workouts. Even as the global economy continues to struggle in the aftermath of the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, the number of CrossFit gyms has swelled, growing to more than 7,000 from 1,500 just three years ago. But the ripple effect—the jobs, innovation, technology, small businesses and hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue not generated directly by CrossFit Inc.—is much tougher to tally than reps.



“I’M NOT TRYING TO MAKE MONEY; I’M TRYING TO GROW A COMMUNITY.”

—GREG GLASSMAN



Courtesy of Rogue



Courtesy of Rogue

NO WAY TO RUN A BUSINESS

“Trying to make money is no way to run a business,” Glassman told the audience at the State Policy Network 20th Annual Meeting in Florida in November 2012. “Money is essential to run a business, but it’s not why you run a business; it’s not what makes a business grow. Businesses grow on dreams.”

Glassman estimates that the total CrossFit economic ecosystem is worth close to a billion dollars. That number includes the total financial take of all the trainers at all the affiliate gyms around the world.

“And our chunk of this is about 24 degrees of 360, or about \$50 million,” he continued, and that small percentage kept by CrossFit Inc. will only grow smaller as the CrossFit community grows.

“This slice of the pie that’s within our control is narrowing, and by design, because the circle is growing,” Glassman said. “We call this the ‘least-rents model.’”

How is the pie expanding? Through independent companies that bolster the value of the CrossFit brand but don’t directly bolster CrossFit Inc.’s bottom line.

Equipment manufacturers and suppliers, such as Rogue and Again Faster; software developers who help athletes monitor their progress; business mentors who help gym owners overcome initial hurdles; and sponsorship partners, such as Reebok, all benefit by helping CrossFit athletes.

“I’m not trying to make money; I’m trying to grow a community,” Glassman said. “I understand now that what we’re chasing is value. I have a real problem with any business activity that isn’t about value creation.”



Glassman is thrilled companies like Rogue (above) are profiting from CrossFit's growth.

Courtesy of Rogue

BEGINNING IN HENNIGER'S GARAGE, ROGUE GREW FROM ONE EMPLOYEE TO THREE IN 2007. ROGUE NOW EMPLOYS 220 PEOPLE IN THREE FACILITIES.



ROGUE

Though each CrossFit athlete begins his or her journey by identifying and correcting deficits within, many soon look outward and find themselves building new gyms, seeking more knowledge, buying better equipment and finding new ways to track their own progress both as athletes and entrepreneurs.

Bill Henniger knows an opportunity when he sees one, and he saw one in 2006.

He took his Level 1 Certificate Course in Santa Cruz, Calif., that year. It was one of the last three-day seminars at Glassman's original CrossFit gym. By the end of the weekend, he knew what he had to do.

"I couldn't decide where to open an affiliate, so I bought two: one for CrossFit Toledo, which was my garage, and one for CrossFit Columbus," Henniger said.

"I was buying equipment for my garage and realized that the niche was disconnected; CrossFit athletes were buying from different places all around the country," he said. "The

equipment wasn't perfect, but it kinda worked. When I launched my gym in Columbus, I put an e-commerce store on the website.

"At first, we were just drop-shipping everything. But some of the vendors weren't good at fulfilling orders, so we'd warehouse some items. I had a manufacturing background, and when I met Ian McLean we decided to try making the metal rings," Henniger said. "They worked."

Working for General Motors Co., travelling once a month to Michigan to complete his MBA, opening a new gym in Columbus, and coaching free workouts in a park: this was Bill Henniger's life in early 2007.

Then he started manufacturing.

In 2008, Rogue went to the CrossFit Games at the Ranch in Aromas, Calif., as a vendor. The company also sponsored Caity Matter—now Bill's spouse—and two other athletes for the competition.



Rogue had an auspicious start. Its first sponsored athlete, Caity Matter, won the Games in 2008 (top right).



"We took some shoes, our new rings and some jump ropes," he said. "CrossFit bought some bars from us, and Caity won the Games."

It was a good trip for Rogue.

"In 2009, I asked Jimi (Letchford) and Dave (Castro) if we could be the official Games supplier, and they agreed," says Henniger. "We've provided every single piece of equipment since."

Beginning in Henniger's garage, Rogue grew from one employee to three in 2007. During 2009, that number rose to 15, then surged to 40 when the company got more involved in manufacturing in 2010.

Rogue now employs 220 people in three facilities in Columbus, Ohio. Ten more Rogue employees work between Europe and Canada. Close to the epicenter of CrossFit in spirit, if not location, Rogue shipped nearly 80,000 lb. of product to 17 different Regional venues this year. And that kind of demand creates a ripple of its own, says Henniger.

"Look at the brands we touch—like Hi-Temp, Concept2, RopesAsRx, Dynamax ... it goes way out there," he says. "Hi-Temp has 50 or 60 guys making bumpers. There are 10 guys in Logan, Ohio, sewing straps for our rings and making sandbags. The company that makes our cardboard boxes employs another 10 to 15," he says.

"The landlords in Columbus, the restaurants in the area, they know Rogue. I can't fathom how many other jobs we're creating, but in the auto industry it's estimated that every autoworker creates seven other jobs, and I think that's pretty accurate for us, too," Henniger says. "If we have 200 people, we're building jobs for 1,400 others: the guys making the steel, driving it around, painting ... We have a company that employs six people just to make Rogue stickers."



Courtesy of Again Faster

“I’D FOUND MY PURPOSE IN LIFE. ALL I WANTED SINCE TAKING MY L1 WAS TO BE PART OF CROSSFIT.”

—JON GILSON

Again Faster has moved beyond Gilson assembling pull-up bars by himself; it now distributes equipment in six continents.

GRASSROOTS GROWTH

In 2005, a bank teller in Boston read an article in *Mens’ Journal* that described Murph, one of the earliest CrossFit Hero workouts. Thinking that no workout could be all that tough, he found CrossFit Boston online. Though he couldn’t afford the tuition, he planned to take the proffered free class, learn all he could and take that knowledge back to Gold’s Gym, where he worked out.

The bank teller’s name was Jon Gilson, and that first visit to CrossFit Boston planted the seed for Again Faster, Gilson’s multinational fitness-equipment supplier that generates tens of millions in annual revenue.

Like Rogue, CrossFit Inc. doesn’t own or operate Again Faster. Gilson launched the company to meet the equipment needs of the growing CrossFit community.

After completing his Level 1 Seminar in 2006, Gilson started training clients Sundays in a Boston park.

“We had to invent our first product—the Again Faster portable pull-up bar—because we had 15 people out there and we couldn’t do pull-ups,” he explains.

“I called Lynne Pitts—who was moderating the forums on CrossFit.com at the time—and said, ‘I think other people might need this.’ She said, ‘Sure, we’re all good capitalists.’ So I posted about the pull-up bar, Gilson remembers. “I was selling them for \$100, and they had \$60 in parts and took four hours of work each.”

Within months of taking his Level 1, Gilson was a member of the Level 1 Seminar Staff. He’d also taken over as general manager of CrossFit Boston, he was working full time at the bank, and he had begun producing CrossFit-related videos with his roommate, Pat Cummings. Gilson was also writing a popular blog about CrossFit and building pull-up bars at night.

“I’d found my purpose in life. All I wanted since taking my L1 was to be part of CrossFit,” Gilson says. “The dream came true at that point.”

Gilson was suddenly on the CrossFit fast track but still kept one foot in the banking world until a phone call in mid-2006.

Fitness gear-maker PowerMax Equipment was in Boston to set up an indoor track-and-field event. They needed help unloading a truck, and when they were unable to locate the owner of CrossFit Boston for a hand, they called Gilson.

“They offered to give me a kettlebell and a barbell for helping,” Gilson says. “I said, ‘I don’t want any of that; just make me a dealer.’” They did.

Within that same month, PowerMax signed up two other dealers: Eddie Lugo at GarageGym was one. The other was Rogue.



“WE HAVE ROGUE AND AGAIN FASTER BARS AT CONCEPT2 HEADQUARTERS NOW.”

—GREG HAMMOND

SUPPLYING THE SUPPLIERS

Concept2 isn't a new rowing company, but it found new direction through CrossFit.

“It's the greatest, most fun community to work with,” says Greg Hammond of Concept2. “The excitement that the CrossFitters have for the rowers is much different than what the on-the-water-rowers have for it.”

In 1981, Peter and Dick Driessigacker were both training for the Olympics as rowers. They had been making composite oars since 1975 and were now looking for a way to continue their own training during the winter. They bolted an old bike to the floor, put a sliding seat on a frame and added plastic cards to the front wheel for drag. This was the Concept2 Model A rower, or ergometer.

“The employees would show up at their barn in the morning and feed the cows, stoke the fire, and then go upstairs

and make oars,” Hammond says. “They couldn't give the Model A machine away, but some of the guys started using them at lunchtime.”

Twenty years later, Concept2 met CrossFit.

“One of our reps, Tracy, was at a trade show, and Greg Glassman came up out of the blue,” Hammond recalls. “He said, ‘You don't know me, but I'm sure you'll hear from me.’”

Soon after, Glassman did call. He needed someone to provide rowing instruction for aspiring Navy SEALs during their Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL training, or BUD/S School.

“I was in the Air Guard for eight years, and I jumped up and said, ‘I'll go!’” Hammond says.

That was 2006. When he arrived to teach, Hammond was invited to try his first CrossFit workout.

“I got wrecked, just wrecked. I came home and went straight to CrossFit.com and started doing it. I got my friends to do it,” Hammond remembers. “Vermont eventually got its first affiliate, and I still drive 45 minutes each way twice per week to train there. We have Rogue and Again Faster bars at Concept2 headquarters now.”

Concept2 is the world's largest indoor-erg company, and it sells the most popular rowing oar in the world. Of its 50 employees, 30 do CrossFit.

“It's changed Concept2,” Hammond says. “One of the founders' wives said that the company's never been so close as it has become since we started working out together.”



Concept2: from humble beginnings to the CrossFit Games.

CROSSFIT'S ONLINE PRESENCE

Though CrossFit.com has been online for little more than a decade, dozens of other website providers, app developers, programmers, statisticians, graphic artists and other online professionals depend on CrossFit for their livelihood.

CrossFit Kinnick was an early affiliate, and it's famous for spawning multi-year Games athlete Jeremy Kinnick and BeyondTheWhiteboard.com. The latter is an online logbook for tracking workouts.

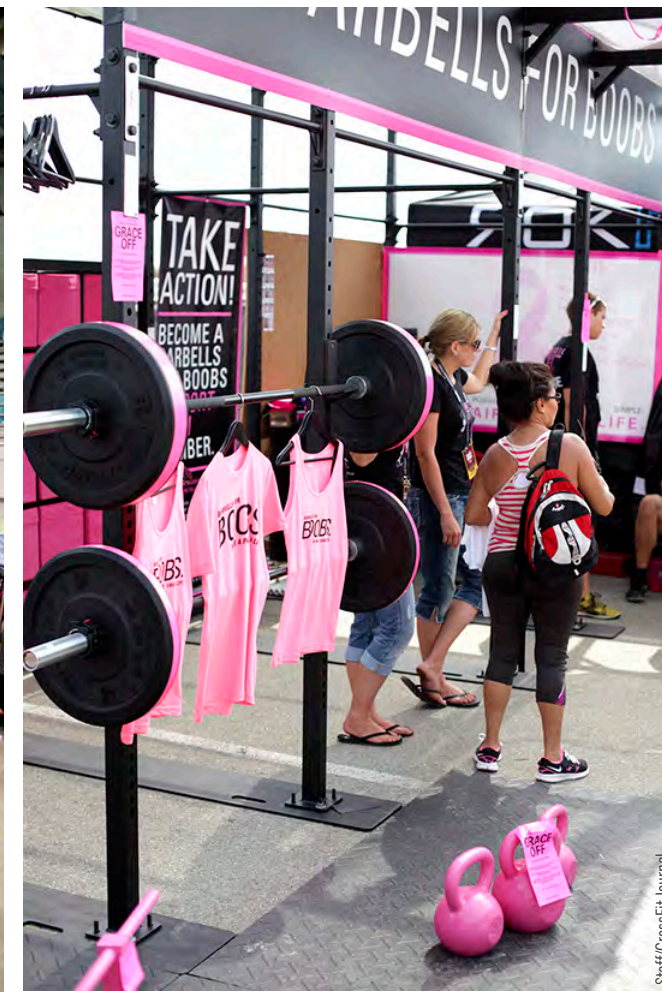
"We launched a beta version in 2007," says Moe Naqvi, BeyondTheWhiteboard.com's co-founder. "We were all just working out in Kinnick's garage. We thought, 'It would be cool to track these workouts' and posted on the CrossFit Message Board that we had this website. We didn't want to spam anybody. To date that's been all of our marketing. And we've grown every month since."

"EVERY TIME I TALK TO COACH (GLASSMAN), I TELL HIM WE GROW WITH CROSSFIT."

—MOE NAQVI

In its first year, BeyondTheWhiteboard.com had a million workout results posted. They expect to soon hit a pace of one million workouts posted every three months.

"People are working out more. Every time I talk to Coach (Glassman), I tell him we grow with CrossFit. Every time CrossFit adds 10 affiliates, we're going to get one or two," Naqvi says.



Walk around vendor village at Regional competitions or the CrossFit Games and you'll see rows of businesses that exist because of CrossFit.

Naqvi believes the company's growth follows the models of value and excellence espoused by Glassman.

"We link to *CrossFit Journal* articles. We link to (seminar) pages—we make it easy for people to learn more," Naqvi says. "Why? Because if you know more about CrossFit, our site becomes better for you. The more you know, the more you'll CrossFit, and the more you'll respect what we've done here."

CHASING THE RIPPLE

Like Rogue, Again Faster grew quickly from providing a small selection of products. It became a multimillion-dollar business in 2010, tripled in size in 2011, and increased 70 percent again in 2012, according to Gilson.

"What was me screwing together pull-up bars by myself became a global company. We're distributing on six continents, and it's all because of Greg's pursuit-of-excellence idea," Gilson says.

In 2013, Gilson went to the CrossFit Games Africa Regional event in South Africa.

"There are 17 affiliates in the whole country," Gilson explains. "It doesn't make sense to go there as a business move, but it makes a hell of a lot of sense to go there in the pursuit of excellence."

Gilson does notice those on the fringe: business-minded folks who recognize the potential to profit.

"We're seeing the formation of business that's here because of the ripple and not the rock thrown," he says. "They're here for the money. That's not why I'm here. Take it all away, and I'm going to get up tomorrow and do hand-stand push-ups because I wouldn't know what else to do. I'd challenge the consumer to put their money in places that feed back into this movement. What the fuck are you doing with your money?"

Rogue's Henniger says the CrossFit community takes care of its own.

"That's the way things go: if you're fishing and catching a lot of fish, people start standing next to you," Henniger says. "When you see companies that are value-added, that's great. Rob Orlando came up with the Hybrid stone molds, which has a niche—something cool we didn't

think of ourselves. We put in a large order so he could get started. We do a lot with Louie Simmons; we make it the way he wants it. We work with Oly coaches, too."

AS CROSSFIT'S PERCENTAGE
SHARE OF THE GROWING
GLOBAL CROSSFIT-RELATED
ECONOMIC PIE DECREASES,
ITS CORE VALUES BECOME
EVER MORE TRANSPARENT.

He adds: "CrossFit is really good at sniffing out people who are just in it for the money. If you're genuine, you're supported. If you're just trying to extract money from the community, you're found out quickly. I haven't seen those companies thrive."

BeyondTheWhiteBoard.com's Naqvi takes his lead from the community and Glassman's principles as well.

"Every gym is a research-and-development place," he says. "People work stuff out, and it works its way up. If you stop that independence, you stop that evolution."

He continues: "That's why Coach is against giving 'best practices' to affiliates. When he says it, they do it, and CrossFit will stop evolving. To push CrossFit forward, he can't sell equipment, because then you'll stop seeing equipment evolve."

THE REAL RIPPLE

"I'll tell you what the real ripple effect of CrossFit is: it changes peoples' bodies first, and then their minds," Gilson

says. "They can harness that change into the knowledge that 'if I try harder, the world will reward me. If I pursue excellence and virtuosity, the sky is the limit.'"

"It's self-propagating. If you were going to design a pathogen, a virus, you couldn't do any better. Religion, language—they don't matter. I can communicate with Carlos in Guatemala because we have the same love for what Greg's created. Simultaneously, he's layered on top of it an economic system that is incredibly egalitarian.

"I've made a gorgeous living that supports me, 25 employees and their families, and it's because there's this open-source economic system layered on top of this effective fitness program that transcends language. Anyone can say, 'Me, too,'" Gilson argues.

As CrossFit's percentage of the growing global CrossFit-related economic pie decreases, its core values become ever more transparent.

"It shows that CrossFit's more about helping other people make money—and growing the community—than making money for itself," says Naqvi.

By focusing on its core values and allowing others on the periphery to leverage their own expertise in new, unique and profitable ways, CrossFit presents a powerful, consistent brand and message that have made the company a big fish in the fitness pond. As the ripple effect pushes the boundaries outward, hundreds now seek their fortune as providers to the CrossFit brand and its athletes. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Cooper is a writer for CrossFit. He owns CrossFit Catalyst in Sault Sainte Marie, Ont.

"CROSSFIT IS REALLY GOOD
AT SNIFFING OUT PEOPLE
WHO ARE JUST IN IT FOR THE
MONEY. IF YOU'RE GENUINE,
YOU'RE SUPPORTED."

—BILL HENNIGER

Like successful affiliates, the best CrossFit-related businesses value hard work and community above profit.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

One Baby at a Time

CrossFit's partnership with Infant Swimming Resource gives very young children the skills to avoid drowning.

By Andréa Maria Cecil

September 2013



All photos: Dave Re/CrossFit Journal

It was one of his first calls as a police officer: a female child underwater.

When first responders arrived, they determined it was too late. They couldn't save her. So the officer, who later became the chief of the Miami Police Department, reached down into the water and held the baby's lifeless hand until her little body was pulled out.

Sharing the story reduced the man to tears.

When Greg Glassman retold it, it wasn't much different. Watery eyes. Red face. Broken voice.

"It's the worst thing that can happen to people," Glassman said.

The Founder and CEO of CrossFit Inc. is the father of six.

Not One More Child Drowns

Via a partnership with [Infant Swimming Resource \(ISR\)](#), CrossFit Inc. hopes to prevent such tragedies. The 47-year-old ISR program, which was founded in Florida by [Dr. Harvey Barnett](#), aims to prevent pediatric drowning through instruction to children as young as 6 months.

On the night of Sept. 20, Glassman and CrossFit HQ employees were among those at Hotel Paradox in Santa Cruz, Calif., to witness one woman's efforts in teaching local children how to save themselves when they fall in water.

One by one, children as young as 7 months to about 5 years entered the shallow end of the hotel pool. Some went in on their own, and others were handed off by mothers or fathers. JoAnn Barnett was waiting in the water. The ISR president and CEO held them, softly spoke into their ears and released them into the water to demonstrate their life-saving skills.

Little Estella Eve Maynard, 8 months, cried as she floated. The child had spent four weeks in the Santa Cruz ISR program.

The beginning of Estella's time with Barnett was the most difficult for her father to watch.

"Obviously it's your kid, and they're in there, and they're trying as hard as they can, and they're struggling," said Gray "The Bully" Maynard, Estella's father and a lightweight UFC fighter.

As time went on, he continued, he could see the situation was under control. And despite Estella's tears, he watched her progress.

"My kid's 8 months old and she can float," Maynard explained. "Anything good takes a little bit of pain and suffering, I guess."

He added: "I feel confident. I do. It just kind of alleviates a worry."

The ISR program is based on calculated and carefully supervised exposure to water, which can cause some tears



A few tears during training are a small price to pay for a child who can save herself from drowning.

at first. In classes, students are taught to hold their breath underwater, float on their backs, return to the back float from other positions, make their way to the edge of the pool and flip over to grab the edge—safety. They are also taught to do this in clothing to mimic common accident conditions.

But while Maynard and his wife were quick to put their child into the ISR program, Patrick Dimick wasn't so sure about things. A sergeant with the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, he had seen a child no older than 3 dead from drowning.

"That's the only one I had to go to, and it was one too many," Dimick said.

When he watched ISR videos showing how children learn to swim and float, he envisioned his two boys in that process, and it made him uncomfortable. Still, he sent them through the program.

"The first week was ... hard," he said. "You want to jump in and comfort them."

Now, however, Dimick feels "fantastic" about how much his sons—4-year-old Mason and 2-year-old Ethan—have learned.

"I feel much better about (them) being around a pool," he explained. "It really reduces the anxiety."

There's no more worrying about the boys when they go over to a friend's house with a pool, Dimick added.

"We can rest a bit easier knowing they have these skills."



JoAnn Barnett of ISR poses with Santa Cruz children whose parents can rest easy when the kids are around water.

A Simple Goal

CrossFit's relationship with ISR started in 2010, when Glassman proposed a partnership. He had already seen the program's effects on his own children, though it wasn't an enjoyable experience.

"I kept wanting to quit. It was horrific. There's nothing fun about it," he said of watching his children thrash about in the water. "But after five weeks, your kid floats."

His children would beg him not to make them go. When he didn't oblige, they wailed during the car ride to the pool.

At the first session, he witnessed what it would be like to watch one of his children drown as she sank with all her clothes on before the instructor elevated her to the pool's surface. Today, he's more than comfortable when his 6- and 7-year-old are in the backyard pool.

"Three-fourths of the Earth is covered by water, and we're about functional capacity," Glassman explained. "The standing on land is floating in water."

Three children die every day as a result of drowning, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Those who are 1 to 4 years old have the highest drowning rates, according to the CDC. Drowning is the second leading cause of death as well as the leading cause of injury death among children in that age group.

"If drowning were a virus or a disease, we would subsume (it in) the federal budget to fix the fuckin' thing," Glassman said. "It dwarfs everything."

The goal is not only to have a formal CrossFit ISR program in CrossFit's birthplace of Santa Cruz, but also to bring the program to Fort Hood, where there was a recent drowning, said Greg Amundson, director of the ISR Initiative and owner of CrossFit Amundson in Santa Cruz.

For JoAnn Barnett, the partnership with CrossFit represents "the highlight" of her career.

"The support of the CrossFit community, the kindness, the assistance in getting the message out," she said, "there's no way to quantify it."

Through scholarships that began in 2010, CrossFit has helped ISR reach more than 4,000 children who otherwise would not have been taught these life-saving skills.

"It's huge," said Barnett, who lives in Florida. "I really did come just to thank the CrossFit community."

For his part, Glassman said "nothing will deter" him from supporting ISR and its mission.

"It's one little baby at a time that won't sink," he said, "that's it."



Additional reading

ISRCrossFit.com

About the Author

Andréa Maria Cecil is a *CrossFit Journal* staff writer and editor.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Learning to Win

Jeff Tincher explains how the CrossFit Competitors Course helped him put Lindy Wall on a path to the CrossFit Games.

By Jeff Tincher

September 2013



All: Staff/CrossFit Journal

What do most competitive CrossFit athletes have in common? They are all well developed in the 10 general physical skills, from cardiorespiratory endurance to strength, speed and agility. They are well-rounded athletes. They all practice constantly varied functional movements at high intensity in different time domains. They possess mental toughness that comes with doing multiple events over the course of a two- or three-day competition.

1 of 7

But successful athletes all have something else in common: a game plan.

Developing a game plan for such a new and evolving sport can be challenging—especially for the novice competitor. How to get started? What to do? How often to train?

Successful athletes all have something in common: a game plan.

One of the easiest ways to get started is attending workshops and summits given by local coaches to learn from experts while refining skills in a variety of areas. More serious athletes will seek out a personal coach—local or remote—in hopes of developing into a CrossFit Games athlete. As competitor for over five years and a coach for almost eight, I am always trying to look for new tools and means to stay competitive and develop my athletes.

One of the newest and most comprehensive tools I've found is the CrossFit Competitors Course taught by Chris Spealler, Matt Chan and Eric O'Connor.

Competition and the Classroom

The CrossFit Competitors Course (CCC) prepares you for all aspects of a competition. Everything an athlete and coach must know is covered, including some tricks of the trade that Spealler, Chan and O'Connor have picked up from their competition experience, which includes many trips to the CrossFit Games between them.

The course is developed for athletes and coaches alike and is set up to give participants the feel of a competition weekend, with multiple workouts programmed on both days. A very interactive course, it addresses multiple topics, including assessing athletes, goal setting, nutrition, program development, programming, and practice of higher skilled gymnastic and weightlifting movements. The course also teaches how to break down a programming plan into macro-, meso- and microcycles and how to assess athletes using a unique tool called “the Spider Web.”



Eric O'Connor (top) and Chris Spealler (bottom) have extensive competition experience dating back to the early days of the CrossFit Games.

The Spider Web that Chan, Spealler and O'Connor developed to analyze an athlete is a visual tool that's simple in design and yet comprehensive. The Spider Web serves as a guide to identify strengths and weaknesses of athletes and provides a starting place for programming. The Web has eight parts: metabolic conditioning in various modalities, mobility and flexibility, stamina (is it muscle fatigue or wind that causes an athlete to break?), Olympic lifting, cardiorespiratory endurance, high-skill gymnastics, high-volume gymnastics, and strength. Each section is then put on a rating scale of 1 (weakness) to 10 (strength).

Using a fictional athlete (Matt O'Spealler), participants design a program for him based on his benchmark recordings, fitness and athletic background, goals, and nutrition and sleep habits. The class is divided into small groups in which everyone collaborates and develops a path for Matt O'Spealler to follow. After the group breakout,

the ideas and actions plans are presented. As with the rest of the weekend, this programming exercise is interactive, with no real right or wrong answers but lots of feedback from Chan, Spealler and O'Connor.

I came home from the course with a collection of benchmark statistics from past Games competitors, as well as a survey of the competitors' nutrition habits over the training season, during competitions and after a workout. The benchmarks included all major lifts, gymnastics movements, monostructural elements from multiple domains, and the times of several classic CrossFit benchmarks such as Fran, Filthy Fifty, Nate and Fight Gone Bad. These benchmarks provide a good starting point for athlete assessment and analysis and allow you to gauge where you or your athlete stacks up against CrossFit Games competitors. I was ready and eager to implement and test my new tools.



In 2013, Matt Chan tied Chris Spealler's record of six consecutive individual appearances in the CrossFit Games.



Lindy Wall finished second in the ZigZag Sprint event and showed impressive agility and speed over a short distance.

The Battle Test

I have been coaching Lindy Wall remotely since August 2012. When Lindy came to me, she had been doing CrossFit for two years and had just finished seventh at the 2012 Central East Regional. She had only one goal in mind: qualifying for the CrossFit Games in 2013. Her main weakness is well documented: Lindy has two fractures in the L5 vertebrae, spina bifida (which creates a third separation in L5) and scoliosis. Given these challenges, we are always cautious with her back and do a wide variety of accessory work to strengthen it.

I started by assessing her strengths and weaknesses using the Spider Web and comparing her numbers to the benchmark statistics from the Competitors Course.

Next came nutrition education, implementation and logging. Our approach was measuring and weighing food. Although the concept is not easy to grasp right away, once Lindy got the hang of it, it became easier to make adjustments because of the collected data.



Wall finished 39th in the Sprint Chipper and Legless events, indicating areas where she can improve.

I have been weighing and measuring my food since 2008, and Chan does the same thing. What Chan has been doing differently is experimenting with his activity level based on training volume or stage of competition season.

When figuring out the baseline Zone-block prescription, we generally use 0.7 (on a scale of 0.1-1.0) as the activity-level coefficient. This is the coefficient I have been using since 2008. The formula to figure out a block prescription is lean body mass multiplied by an activity level of 0.7. The result is divided by 7 (the number of grams in a block of protein). The resulting number determines the blocks you eat per day. This works great for the average CrossFit athlete doing one workout per day.

Most competitors, like Chan, train more than the average CrossFit athlete, and workout volume is much higher.

Chan raised his coefficient to 0.85 or, in some cases, such as the CrossFit Games, up to 0.9. This increased his block prescription to compensate for the increase in work.

My food intake stayed the same even though I was doing more work, which made me regress.

For the last few years, I increased my own training to try and keep up with the rest of the competitors, but I did not



As a smaller athlete, Spealler has always been excellent in gymnastics events, and he's worked very hard to increase his strength to be competitive when the loads get heavy.

increase my block prescription. My food intake stayed the same even though I was doing more work, which made me regress.

When this idea was presented at the CCC, it made sense to me, and I was angry with myself for not thinking of it. After the course, I started playing with my activity factor and increased my food prescription, and I have seen gains in the last five months I haven't seen in the last few years.

I started Lindy on a baseline block prescription and began collecting data. During the weeks leading up to Regionals, we tweaked and played with the activity level until we found a place where the performance peaked and she was satisfied with the food intake. We used an activity level of 0.9, and her performance has taken off.

During the Open, Lindy did each workout only once while maintaining her training plan for the Regional. She placed ninth in her region in the Open and earned a trip to the next round, so it was time to implement the other tools from the Competitors Course.

After the Regional events were announced, we did a mock weekend test and practiced all the movements in a whole variety of ways, but we never repeated the weekend. Event 1 (Jackie) and Event 2 (the 3RM overhead squat) were the only two tested a few times. An equipment list was made and packed for the events (long socks, tape, jump ropes, a variety of shoes, two different styles of weightlifting belts, etc.). Lindy's mom was assigned as her "transportation assistant" to get her to and from the venue during down time in between athlete briefings and events.

A week out, we developed a meal plan for the entire weekend based on the events and the posted timeline. The food was bought, prepared, weighed and measured, and put in containers marked with the date and time of consumption. We also implemented post-workout active recovery and a post-workout meal immediately following the event.

**A week out, we developed
a meal plan for the entire
weekend based on the events
and the posted timeline.**

Appointments with athlete services at the Regional were made in advance and scheduled to be right after her post-WOD meal. After the appointment, Lindy's mom was ready to take her back to the hotel to decompress, relax and mentally prepare for the next event.

With all this preparation, Lindy got stronger as we got deeper into the weekend. She earned a tie for first in Event 4 and won events 6 and 7, qualifying for the CrossFit Games with a third-place overall finish. Her time in Event 6 was 17 seconds off the record, and her time in Event 7 was 7 seconds off the record. Watching all the work and preparation pay off over the weekend brought an incredible sense of gratification, joy and relief.



Chan has finished as high as second in the CrossFit Games (2012) and was 21st in 2013.



28th overall. Her best placing was second in the ZigZag Sprint event, in which she battled Michelle Crawford in the final and lost by 0.2 seconds.

As expected, some weaknesses were discovered: 39s in the Sprint Chipper and Legless events stand out as Lindy's lowest finishes at the Games. We'll analyze her overall performance and then hammer her weaknesses, and we'll be training to get stronger and fitter while working around Lindy's back issue.

The fitness of the CrossFit Games athletes continues to improve every year, and the competition gets tougher. As a coach or athlete, you need to be prepared and have as many tools as possible. In 2013, we learned that it's important to have a game plan whether you want to make it to Carson or just represent your box in a local throwdown.



The Next Step

The CrossFit Games brought a variety of challenges for athletes, including Lindy. Regionals allowed us to target specific movements because the workouts were known, but that was not the case with the Games. We were back to the unknown and unknowable for which the Games are so famous. However, we felt more confident and prepared to break down, analyze and game plan events based on solid knowledge of Lindy's strengths and weaknesses, and I knew that great rest, recovery and nutrition strategies were already in place, which eliminated a lot of planning. The Games force you to deal with so many unknowns that it's important to control as many variables as you can.

When we arrived at the Games, we set a goal of making the top 30 cut and getting to participate in all events. That goal was accomplished: Lindy notched seven finishes between 20th and 30th, making the cut and eventually finishing

About the Author

Jeff Tincher competed in the 2008 and 2009 CrossFit Games, and he was the Mid Atlantic Regional Director in 2009 and 2011. With his wife Maggie, he is the owner of CrossFit Fairfax and CrossFit Reston. He has been a member of CrossFit's Level 1 Seminar Staff since 2008, and he has been a board member of the CrossFit Risk Retention Group since 2011. He serves as a firefighter with Fairfax County Fire and Rescue.

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Battle on the Home Front

Identical names lead one Emily Beers to befriend another and learn a soldier's story of rape in the military.

By Emily Beers

September 2013

All Photos courtesy of Emily Beers



It's a crisp morning on the Fort Wainwright military base in Alaska.

Emily Beers makes her way to the gym for an early morning workout to get her mind off some of the recent stresses in her life.

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At 24, she has been a member of the military since she was 17. Being a soldier was what she wanted to do since watching the tragic 9/11 terrorist attacks while she was a sophomore in high school in Pennsylvania. Two weeks after she graduated, she ran off to boot camp to start her dream career.

In the last eight years, Beers, now a staff sergeant, has developed a great reputation. She has maintained top marks in her pharmacy program, and each year when performance review comes around, she gets a flawless report.

In 2009, she was deployed to Iraq, where she worked as a pharmacy specialist at a hospital in Baghdad. Life in a war zone wasn't easy. For Beers, it meant dealing with trauma patients who had been blown apart.

She readily accepted the challenges the military threw at her. Fighting for her country is what she eagerly signed up for as a teenager. She was prepared for military life; the training she received allowed her to handle the stress.

What her training didn't prepare her for, however, was getting raped by a colleague on her base.

Today, she still blames herself for how the incident unfolded.

While her abuser wasn't a good friend, he was co-worker, an acquaintance whom she occasionally talked to at work. She trusted him—not necessarily because he seemed so trustworthy, but because she didn't have a reason not to. He hadn't done anything to raise her awareness.

She blamed herself for not being able to physically prevent a 200-plus-lb. man from holding her down.

Beers arrives at the gym and heads to the treadmills. She's trying not to think about her abuser, trying not to blame herself for freezing up when she was attacked.

Beers is a member of the U.S. military. She's a tough soldier, she survived deployment to a war zone, and she considers herself both mentally and physically strong.

Yet she didn't do anything when she was attacked. She was so scared she couldn't move. Her mind left her body. She froze.

When it was over, she walked home in a daze and lay down. That's when she started to cry. She stayed there for three or four hours, holding her puppy—an English bulldog named Nellie—crying and blaming herself. The 5-foot-3 former gymnast blamed herself for freezing in the moment. She blamed herself for not being able to physically prevent a 200-plus-lb. man from holding her down. Why didn't she scream? Punch? Yell?

Beers tries to push these thoughts away and focus on the treadmill. Just forget about it and run.

She's on the second floor of the gym, where the treadmills face the facility's front entrance; she can see who is coming and going. All of a sudden, she sees him—her abuser—walk into the gym.

Her heart starts to race and her breathing instantly elevates. She feels her body get hot. She's having an anxiety attack. She stops running and stands there for a moment to wait and see where he goes. He walks into the locker room.

Beers makes her escape and quietly leaves the gym. It's time to carry on with her morning.

A Military "Crisis"

The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) officially recognizes sexual assault as a huge black hole for the military. The DOD's lengthy 2012 two-volume annual report on sexual assault in the military not only acknowledges the problem but also suggests that its true extent is not known.

Full reports: [Volume 1](#) [Volume 2](#)

In Volume 1 of the report, the DOD states its ultimate goal as being "to establish a military culture free of sexual assault."

One of the major obstacles to overcome is that sexual assault often goes unreported.

The official numbers the DOD released are as follows: 6.1 percent of active-duty women and 1.2 percent of active-duty men said they experienced a form of unwanted sexual contact within the last year. In real numbers, there were 3,374 reports of sexual assault involving service members in 2012.

However, the report is also quick to point out that because of underreporting, these numbers are probably not equal

to the real number of assaults committed: "Due to the underreporting of this crime in both military and civilian society, reports to authorities do not necessarily equate to the actual prevalence (occurrence) of sexual assault. In fact, the Department estimates that about 11 percent of the sexual assaults that occur each year are reported to a DOD authority."

More recently, in a May 15, 2013, news release, an Army general referred to sexual assault within the military as a "crisis."

"We're losing the confidence of the women who serve that we can solve this problem. That's a crisis," Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey was quoted as saying in "[Dempsey: Sexual Assault Constitutes Crisis in the Military](#)."

DOD spokeswoman Cynthia O. Smith, in an email to the *CrossFit Journal*, said one of the major things that needs to change is military culture.

"We need cultural change where every service member is treated with dignity and respect, where all allegations of inappropriate behavior are treated with seriousness, where victims' privacy is protected, where bystanders are motivated to intervene, and where offenders know that they will be held accountable by strong and effective systems of justice," Smith wrote.

Pressing for Change

Jessica Kenyon is a vocal advocate for change. The 32-year-old was part of the military in 2005 and 2006 and left after being raped on two different occasions by colleagues.

"Sexual assault is a power move, used to intimidate, not about the sex or pleasure."

—Jessica Kenyon

Today, she owns and runs a nonprofit called Benefiting Veterans and is the founder of Militarysexualtrauma.org. She helps victims like Beers, offering them support and



After surviving a war zone, Beers was assaulted on her own base on U.S. soil.

advice, and she's publicly involved in putting pressure on the government for change: she speaks at conferences, talks to the press and writes papers for scientific review. She also consults to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which handles veterans' benefits.

Kenyon blames sexism and hyper masculinity as two major reasons sexual assault in the military is so prevalent.

"Rape and sexual assault is a power move, used to intimidate, not about the sex or pleasure," Kenyon said.

To combat sexist notions, Kenyon believes a drastic change in military thinking must occur.

"There are many, many things that need to be done, but an overall culture shift will go a long way to making justice occur and to deter further crimes," she said.

On top of a cultural change, many believe legal change is also necessary. New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D) is an advocate pushing for legal change in the way the military reports, investigates and prosecutes sexual-assault cases. Gillibrand believes one of the major problems is the way the system works.

Currently, when someone wants to report sexual assault or rape, the victim goes to his or her commander, whose job it is to decide whether the claim is legitimate. The commander then decides whether the case gets pursued or dropped. Often little to nothing comes of the report.

Of the 3,374 reports of sexual assault in 2012, the Department of Defense's annual report states that 302

subjects proceeded to trial. Of those, 238 subjects were convicted.

Of those convicted, the report says, "Most convicted service members received at least four kinds of punishment: confinement, reduction in rank, fines or forfeitures, and a discharge (enlisted) or dismissal (officers) from service."

Gillibrand isn't satisfied with these numbers or consequences, and she puts at least part of the blame on the legal system.

"Enough is enough. It's time to change this system that has been held over since George Washington. It is simply not working today for the men and women who are serving," Gillibrand told CNN.

Gillibrand sponsored a bill earlier this year—the Military Justice Improvement Act of 2013—that, if passed, would change the decision-making process entirely. Instead of giving military commanders the power, decision of reporting, investigating and prosecution would be put into the hands of independent military attorneys. This would also mean victims would report directly to a trained military prosecutor as opposed to their commander.

The hope is that this legal change will lead to more victims coming forward and reporting the crime as well as more cases getting prosecuted.

In Beers' case, she reported the crime but didn't receive justice.

In Beers' Words

After the incident, Beers stayed quiet.

"I didn't say anything because I was scared. And he was very threatening. I didn't feel safe, so I just kept my mouth shut and went about my life as best I could," she said.

But soon another female came forward, revealing to their commander that the same man had raped her, as well. This other woman had heard a rumor that the same thing had happened to Beers. When Beers' commander caught wind of this, he approached Beers to inquire.

Beers said when her commander met with her, she broke down and admitted she had been raped.

For a moment, Beers was thankful her commander approached her because she thought it might lead to both justice and professional help for her. But it didn't.

"That's basically all that happened," Beers said. "I worked so hard to be a good soldier for my unit, and I was, and then when I needed them most I didn't get any help. It's like I didn't matter as a person," she said.

She continued: "They don't want to deal with the fact that it happened under their command. I don't even think they know how to deal with the victims. They made me feel like I was the problem and should just keep my mouth shut. At one point, I was sat down and told by somebody that I just needed to get over it. ... And this meant I was just going to have to get over having to see him all the time."

"I worked so hard to be a good soldier for my unit, and I was, and then when I needed them most I didn't get any help."

—Emily Beers

She added: "But even if it was only for five minutes out of a week that I saw him, it would devastate me."

Beers couldn't carry on living this way, so she spoke up to her commander.

"I was vocal and said I didn't feel safe being on the same base and wanted to switch to a new base," she said.

The demand didn't help her situation. She was then diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and was encouraged to medically retire.

"They basically told me to retire or I wasn't going to be promoted. Every year you get rated on your performance, and up until that year I was rated perfectly," she said.

"I excelled in the military," she continued. "And being in the medical field you have to be good. You have to be good at physical training. You have to shoot well at the range. You have to be a well-rounded soldier."

This time around, Beers received a poorer rating than usual.

"I was missing too much work to go to the doctor, and I wasn't sleeping well. And they put the blame on me, not on the situation I was in," she explained.

Feeling like she had no other option, Beers took her commander's advice and medically retired with an honorable discharge. She returned to Pennsylvania, where she enrolled in college to become a nurse. Beers still receives educational benefits and a small amount of money as disability pay for her PTSD diagnosis.

"As a student, it's better than nothing for me right now," she said.

And what about her abuser?

As far as Beers knows, he's still with the military. It's as if nothing happened. If the DOD's figures on unreported assaults are correct, many other abusers go similarly unpunished.

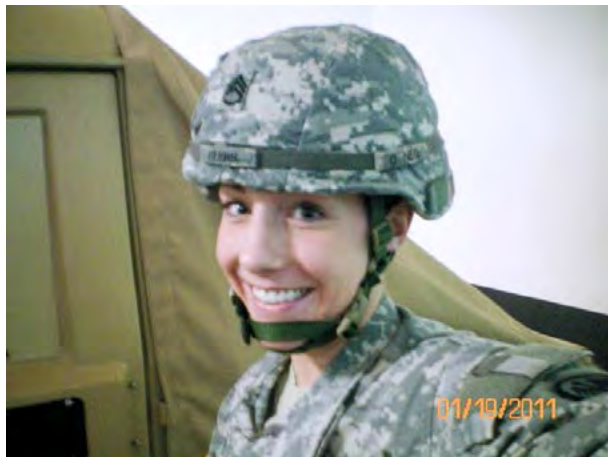
"There are so many people who have raped or assaulted another service member, and if the commander of your unit doesn't want to pursue the case or go to court, it just gets dropped," Beers said. "And if you want to go to civilian court, it costs a lot of money. And I don't make money as a student."

She added: "It would take years for me to fight the system and change my situation."

In the Words of Beers' Father

When his 17-year-old-daughter told him that she was running off to become a soldier, John Beers wasn't surprised.

"Her brother at that time was a Marine, and Emmy just really needed to do something for herself. I backed her," he said.



Emmy's superiors told her to "soldier up" and forget about the assault.

"And I said to her, 'Hey, if that's what you want to do, that's what you want to do,'" he added.

"Ever since Em was a little girl, she always planned things herself. She always set her own path, and I was behind her. No doubt about it."

John trusted his daughter was in good hands in the military. Even when she was sent to Iraq in 2009, he wasn't all that worried.

"I really wasn't scared because I knew the job she was doing was that of a pharmacy tech, and I knew she'd be well protected," he said.

He assumed she'd also be protected and supported by the military on her home base in Alaska. He didn't expect the news he received one day in 2011.

Emily never directly told her father she had been raped.

"Em's got a good relationship with my wife, Audrey, and she'll tell Audrey things that she doesn't want to tell me," John said. "I don't remember a whole lot about Audrey telling me. I know I was at home. And Audrey is really direct. She doesn't mix up her words. She told me that Em had been raped, and then the anger started overtaking the whole thing, so I don't remember the details."

He continued: "I was angry. I was very angry. I was angry that she wasn't protected and I didn't really know what was going on. She was in Fairbanks, Alaska, which from here in Pennsylvania is a half a world away, and so it wasn't an easy thing to deal with."

What John did do to deal with the situation was fly to Alaska to visit his daughter. He made a point of meeting with Emily's major.

"I had a very frank discussion with her major about how I felt about the military not protecting her at all, and not doing the right thing. I told him, 'I might be 14 hours away from Fairbanks, Alaska, but I'm only three hours away from Washington, D.C., and don't think I won't,'" John said of his attempt to threaten with legal action.

All John received from the military was lip service.

"He said to me, 'I'll do what I can to look out for her. She's a good soldier.' I found out later that Emily's major told her, 'You need to soldier up,'" he said.

John added: "They basically wanted Emily to buckle up and be a soldier and move ahead. Their way of dealing with it is just to move on and forget about it."

John wasn't ready to move on and forget about it. He approached Congress, as promised.

Eventually, he was able to meet with Republican Congressman Charles W. Dent in Pennsylvania. Dent essentially told John that a member of Congress is powerless to do anything about it. And that was that.

"I was really disheartened about that," he said.

It's been especially hard for John because he's been a long-time supporter of the military.

"I'm very patriotic. I would have been in Vietnam but I wasn't drafted. My father and son were both in the military," he said. "But in retrospect, knowing what I know now, I would never have advised Emily to pursue a career in the military. Never."

Two years later, John still struggles with what his daughter went through and continues to go through.

One of the hardest things for him was seeing how devastated Emily was when she made the decision to leave the military.

"She wanted so much to get into the officer's program and make a career of it. She was absolutely crushed," he said.

"The innocence is lost. They robbed her. And that's horrible."

—John Beers

"I don't know that you can ever go back to being your old self once you've been physically abused and raped the way she was. I really don't think you can. But she is tough, and she's building a new path for herself and trying to build her image around that and generate a new life. But her old self? No. The innocence is lost. They robbed her. And that's horrible," he said.

"And as a parent, you don't get over it. You don't. They didn't just lose a soldier in Emily. They lost someone who was dedicated and excellent at what she did. Emily wanted



"It would take years for me to fight the system and change my situation." —Emily Beers

to excel. They didn't just lose a 9-to-5 employee. She was at the top of her class in pharmacy tech. She got the highest GPA when she was there," he said.

He added: "But she grew to understand that the United States Army had no interest in her future, no interest in dealing with something that was awful and wrong. They were going to just let her to continue to exist. They didn't deserve to have her."

Living With Scars

Emily agrees with her dad that it's tough to go back to being her old self.

She still has nightmares and anxiety at inopportune times.

"Just the other day, I was sitting in chemistry class and someone slammed the door and it scared me," she said. "I wouldn't expect someone slamming a door to scare me still."



Emily doesn't regret her time in the Army but can't understand why it abandoned her when she needed help.

And the thought of being in a relationship seems daunting.

"Even now, it's hard for me to date people. I haven't really dated anyone," she said. "If I had never been raped, who knows? I could be married now and have a family, and now I question whether I am ever going to be OK with dating someone."

But what affected her more than going to war in Iraq, more than being raped even, was the fact that nobody backed her up, the fact that nobody in the military supported her. Despite feelings of abandonment, Emily doesn't regret her eight years of military service.

"I'm thankful that I served my country ... I learned so much from it all. It was hard to go through, but I think I grew as a person," she said. "The military taught me a lot of good things. A lot of bad things happened to me, too, but that can happen in life in general, and I don't want to live my life based on those bad things."

But one thing she does wish is that she had been more informed when she was 17.

"You expect the military to be there for you at the worst point, and I still don't understand why they don't see me as the victim and that the man needed to be punished. It's just hard. They turned their back on me when I needed someone the most," she said. "I felt all alone."

This is one of the reasons she wants to tell her story: so others can learn what she learned too late.



About the Author

*Emily Beers is a **CrossFit Journal** staff writer and editor. She competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games on CrossFit Vancouver's team, and she finished third at the Canada West Regional in 2012. In 2013, she finished second in the Open in Canada West.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Three Days in Haiti, Part 2: Small Loans, Big Results

One year ago, Julie Roberts funded five microcredit loans to five struggling families in McDonald, Haiti. This April, Roberts took four CrossFit athletes with her to check on the seeds she planted in the village.

By Emily Beers

September 2013



Carey Peterson

In a concrete-walled church in the small, rural Haitian village of McDonald, 250 or so people gather to listen to Gabriel Nixon, the unofficial village leader.

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He has gathered his community this evening to introduce the North American guests visiting McDonald for three days. Julie Roberts, the president of Community Builders Group (CBG), has been to the village many times before. Some of the villagers know her because she has been funding various projects in McDonald—projects that have directly benefitted some of them. But most of the villagers have never spoken to her, and they certainly have never met her four CrossFit friends from Canada and the United States, who have tagged along this time.

Children point and shout, “Blanc! Blanc!”—slang for “white person”—as they stare curiously at the five white people sitting in the front row of their church.

Before Nixon introduces the visitors, he takes the microphone and launches into a boisterous speech. His

self-assured voice commands immediate respect. It inspires.

“We can have a better life. We can,” Nixon says in his native tongue, while someone translates into English for the North American guests.

“If we have good ideas and we work together, we can. We can. We can,” he continues, almost turning it into a chant.

Nixon hands the microphone to Roberts, who cautiously steps up and addresses the crowd. A woman translates into Creole, the Haitian language that sounds like a mix between French and an African dialect.

Roberts explains what CBG has been doing in McDonald and what’s planned for the future. Roberts’ nonprofit group funded a pharmacy in McDonald and a handful of latrines



Emily Beers

Haiti is still recovering from the earthquake that devastated the country in 2010.

for families in the area, and it continues to provide nurses and medical treatment to McDonald and neighboring villages. And in the last year, CBG got involved in pay-it-forward (PIF) microcredit lending.

Roberts doesn't want to take credit for what CBG has done to help the village. She is here to give credit, and to give thanks, to the people of McDonald.

"I learn more from you every time I come here," Roberts tells them. "In Canada, we're much more individual. People don't help their neighbors. In Haiti, you have stronger communities and you help each other."



Emily Beers

Despite the lack of resources, a sense of community prevails in Haiti.

She also makes it clear she doesn't want to barge in to Haiti and instate her own North American-style plan. She wants Nixon and the people of McDonald to steer her ideas and, ultimately, her money in a way that will help them. That's the way it has always been since she arrived in the Caribbean country in 2010, and that's the way she believes it has to be to lift it out of poverty.

Seven or eight minutes into her speech, Roberts notices people growing restless and unfocused. A buzz has come over the church. She looks behind her and sees men delivering sandwiches and juice—a meal she generously funded—for everyone at the meeting.

The sandwiches arrive in two big garbage bins and look as if they've been touched by about a dozen hands. Food, especially of the free variety, is a rare novelty in McDonald.

Two women begin to hand out the sandwiches. People graciously accept the fresh buns. Inside is a substance unknown to the North Americans—like a salty refried-bean paste. The lucky ones get a raw piece of onion or a tomato in their sandwich.

Word in the village begins to spread; rumor on the gravel streets outside is that sandwiches are being handed out. Suddenly a few dozen people are gathering around the church hoping to get lucky and receive a free dinner.

Nixon tries to keep order. People listen to him. Soon, they disperse with their sandwiches in hand and things simmer down. He breathes a sigh of relief.

"I was worried about giving away food," he says to Roberts.

Such an act sometimes leads to chaos in the form of a minor riot. But everyone is relatively calm and under control on this night.

"Tonight was good. I'm very, very happy," Nixon says in heavily accented English, thanking Roberts and her friends for coming to the town-hall meeting.

Roberts, too, is happy. Something has changed since she was last in Haiti.

"People seem more hopeful now than they used to be," she says.

She's eager to check on the status of the PIF microcredit loans she issued last year. She hopes they're succeeding and contributing to the positive vibe in the village.



Simply pouring aid dollars into Haiti has not solved the country's problems.

Microcredit Vs. Big Bucks

After the 7.0-magnitude earthquake in 2010 that flattened Port-au-Prince, the world was forced to take notice of Haiti.

The question was—and to a large part still is—what are the best ways to help the country get on its feet?

Traditional foreign aid—where developed countries and private donors pour massive amounts of cash into impoverished nations—hasn't turned out to be the answer the world was hoping for. Most often, even after years of receiving aid money, recipient countries continue to be poor and their governments continue to be corrupt.

"The influx of massive amounts of foreign aid can have deleterious effects on the governments of the receiving countries, and can end up doing more harm than good," Farah Abuzeid wrote in "[Foreign Aid and the 'Big Push' Theory: Lessons From Sub-Saharan Africa](#)," published in the *Stanford Journal of International Relations* in the fall of 2009. Abuzeid is a Stanford graduate who currently works as a business analyst.

Similarly, in 2006, four years prior to the devastating earthquake in Haiti, the National Academy of Public Administration—a nonprofit organization for public governance—published a paper called "Why Foreign Aid to Haiti Failed." That paper, too, blames government policy as an integral reason why aid money failed to pull Haiti out of poverty.

The bottom line is whether you're a believer in foreign aid or not, it has proven to have its shortfalls, and seldom does simply dumping money into a country solve all its problems. Evidence of this can be found in Haiti's estimated 50 percent literacy rate and the fact that two-thirds of its population are reported to be either unemployed or underemployed.

Microcredit loans, on the other hand, have a different way of helping developing countries. They are designed not only to support and develop entrepreneurship and combat poverty, but also to empower women to become

entrepreneurs. While microcredit loans have become more popular in recent years in developing countries around the world, it was Roberts' CBG that created the PIF version of microcredit lending.

CBG launched PIF loans in Africa—the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Tanzania—in the 1990s and has had much success in those countries.

In short, it looks like this: Roberts finds a family with a small-business idea. Usually, ideas are simple things such as raising and breeding a couple of pigs or buying a sewing machine to start sewing and selling clothes. She gives the impoverished family—usually the female of the house—between US\$50 and \$200 to fund start-up costs. Then it's up to them to turn their business into something profitable.

Once the family makes its return on investment, it must pay the small loan forward to another family with another business idea. That family then begins to build a new business. Once the original recipients pay their loan forward, profits they make from that point on are theirs to keep.

It's a simple concept but Roberts believes in it wholeheartedly. When she arrived in Haiti, she saw how closely connected the people of McDonald are to one another, how loyal they are, and how much they rely on and help each other on a day-to-day basis. She thought the PIF concept would be a perfect fit in Haiti.

She had pitched the idea to Nixon a year ago. He agreed PIF loans were a great idea. What he especially liked was their entrepreneurial nature and how they would hold his people accountable.



Nixon (left) and Kane Morgan, an athlete who also works with Community Builders Group.



Carey Peterson

About half of Haiti's children will not learn to read, and according to the World Food Programme, 24 to 40 percent of children under 5 suffer from malnutrition.

Microcredit: Criticism and Success

Microcredit lending, which has become more popular and widespread in the last 10 to 15 years, has received much praise on a global level. Mohammad Yunus, an economist who developed the concept of microcredit and microfinance, and the Grameen Bank won a joint Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for their contribution to poverty reduction through microcredit.

However, not all experts agree that microcredit lending is going to reduce poverty or even empower women.

In *"The Miracle of Microfinance? Evidence From a Randomized Evaluation,"* published this spring, authors Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster and Cynthia Kinnan assessed data from a series of studies on microcredit lending. They concluded that microcredit lending might need to be re-thought, as it "may not be the 'miracle' that it is sometimes claimed to be."

Essentially, they argue that women aren't as likely to become as empowered by microcredit loans as advocates claim, and they say loan recipients oftentimes don't even use their loans to grow their businesses. In the end, the authors don't believe microcredit is as good at increasing overall welfare or profit as some say it is.

Despite their grim findings, they also admit that it's hard to form a widespread conclusion about microcredit because there are so many variables involved.

The authors put it this way: "Even representative data about microfinance clients and non-clients cannot identify the causal effect of microfinance access, because clients are self-selected and therefore not comparable to non-clients. Microfinance organizations also purposely choose some villages and not others."

It's hard to find "representative data" from which to draw widespread conclusions, but there are independent cases

where microcredit is certainly working. And McDonald, Haiti, is one of them.

Still, even Roberts admits that it's not a perfect system. Businesses must be managed properly, good mentorship is necessary for success, and sometimes these things fail. On the flip side, it's a system that she's seen work on the ground floor in both Africa and Haiti.

On top of watching businesses turn profits and pay loans forward time and time again, Roberts has witnessed real women benefit from her loans.

"I definitely would say it empowers women: 95 percent of our recipients are women, and they wouldn't have any form of work without it as it's hard for them to get jobs that are paid by the day," Roberts said.

In many cases, Roberts has witnessed women gain the ability to support their kids directly from their new

business, and in some cases it has empowered these women to leave bad relationships.

Because of this tangible success, even if some studies tell her otherwise, Roberts will continue to believe in microcredit.

Preaching to the Choir

Nixon comes over for a visit to talk business while sitting around a plastic table in Roberts' McDonald home—a three-bedroom concrete house with tap water and electricity that only works from time to time.

Although it's 7 p.m. and the sun is already down, Roberts and her friends aren't used to the heat they experienced that day, and they're drenched in sweat. It's dark in the kitchen; the only light is from a kerosene lamp.

"How are the PIF loans going?" Roberts asks Nixon.



Emily Beers

Purchased with a PIF loan, a pig and her piglets can make it possible for a McDonald woman to provide for her children.

"Good, good. Last year, you gave money for five families to start businesses. This year, there are now 24 new businesses in McDonald," Nixon says in a matter-of-fact way.

Roberts' eyes light up.

"Twenty-four! That's amazing, Gabriel," she says. "So they're working well?"

"Yes," Nixon says, explaining that all five of the first micro-credit loans Roberts funded have been paid forward to other families with small-business ideas.

The pigs she funded had piglets, and they're now a litter of six. That family now has a sustainable business and is able to feed the children. The woman selling used clothes paid her loan forward, as well. Today she receives shipments of used clothing that arrive in big containers from the United States. Sometimes she mends them first, and other times she just re-sells them for a profit. The women who started buying wholesale goat and chicken meat are successfully re-selling it at a profit. And plans are in the making to fund some fishing projects.

Roberts asks Nixon what direction he wants to go.

"We have hope in these projects. We need to continue with the PIF loans," he says.

"The problem we have in Haiti is we need to start ... we need to start with little money. Just little money. And we need to start now," he says.

He pauses, trying to think about how to articulate himself in English.

"If we want to have a better life in Haiti, we need to have good ideas. People need to have their own ideas and then we can make money from the good ideas. We need to teach people how they can work, how they can work hard," he explains. "You can't just receive, receive, receive."

He speaks confidently about his beliefs. Yet, there's an element in his voice that seems like he's trying to convince Roberts and her CrossFit friends to buy into the idea that people should earn things the hard way.



Carey Peterson

Roberts' backyard in Haiti.

What Nixon doesn't know, though, is he's preaching to the choir.

Talk to CrossFit athletes about their most rewarding achievement and you'll hear about first pull-ups, first muscle-ups and PR deadlifts. Their answers represent a time when they conquered something difficult, a moment that represents their hard work paying off. It's a moment that had to be earned the hard way over a long period of effort. It's a moment of pure satisfaction.

In Kenya, where CrossFit is funding humanitarian efforts in the area around Mombasa, Kenya, villagers are required to contribute 10 percent of the cost of projects including the building of cisterns, schoolhouses and desks. CrossFit Inc. and its affiliates provide the rest, but the village has invested in itself and has a large stake in the success of the projects.

Foreign-aid critics often point to government corruption and bad public policy as reasons why pouring money into poor countries hasn't worked. However, the reason Nixon doesn't want Roberts handing him an easy US\$20,000 has to do with human psychology.

He doesn't pretend to be an expert on the topic, but he grew up in Haiti, and he understands his people.

"Each person needs to think about one thing they can do to make life better," Nixon says. He doesn't expect it to be easy, and he doesn't even want it to be. He believes if his people keep chugging along, little by little, it can have a contagious effect and spread to the rest of the country.

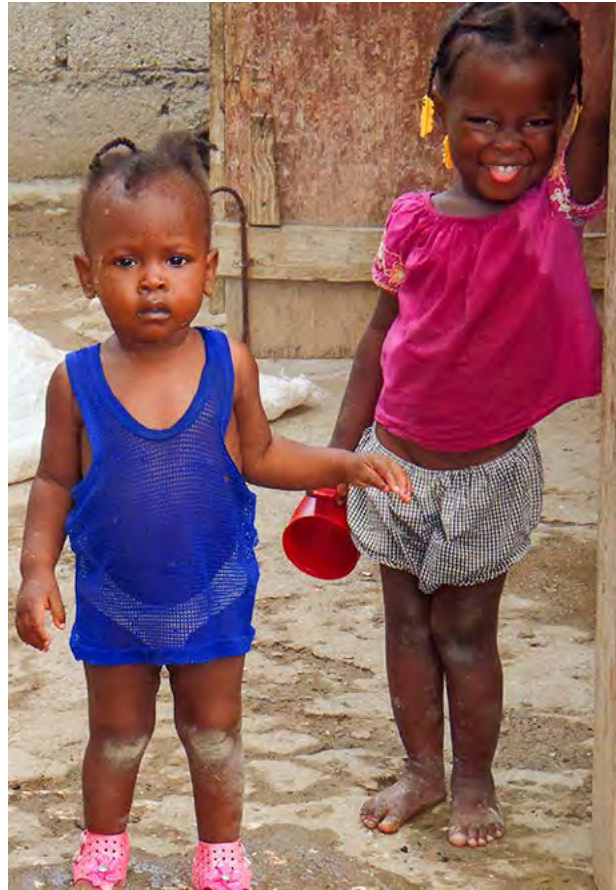
"We will work little bit, little bit, little bit, until one day we have a better life," he says.

Entrepreneurial Children

It's 8:30 a.m. on a Tuesday. It's breakfast time at the little schoolhouse in McDonald.

Like most buildings there, the school is an open-concept concrete building. There is no electricity, the windows are simply openings in the walls without bars or glass or even screens, and the floor is dirt. There are no doors between the four rooms where children are taught, and the openings are so large where one room becomes another that it looks more like one giant room than four smaller ones.

Students sit on chairs, but there aren't enough chairs for everyone; some are relegated to the floor. There are no desks. There's a chalkboard at the front of each room.



Emily Beers

If they're lucky, these kids will go to school at age 5, where, in addition to learning how to read and write, they'll get a much-needed breakfast of cornmeal gruel.

One by one, 50 or so children line up with an empty container waiting to be fed their breakfast. Some bring a metal bowl, others a plastic plate or a pot lid that acts as a plate, others yet have an old yogurt container. Sometimes two or three children share a bowl.

They wait patiently as a yellow cornmeal-like paste called "gruel" is scooped from a giant cauldron and plopped onto their container.

Women from the town spent two hours stirring the mealy, salty food before it was brought to the schoolhouse that morning. By the time the children get to eat it, various leaves and weeds have fallen into their breakfast, blown in by the wind.

But nobody complains. They are, after all, the lucky children in the town: They're learning how to read and write.



Carey Peterson

Learning how to be entrepreneurs and generate income might help the younger generation improve living conditions in Haiti.

To Nixon, the director of the school who also subs in as a teacher when needed, one of the most important things he's trying to teach the children, most of them aged 5 to 12, is how to be entrepreneurs.

This is something they're never too young to learn, he says.

This school year, Nixon started a small business at the school, a business the students run.

"Every Friday, I asked my students to bring me a little bit of money, if they can—just one little gourde," he says.

One gourde is equivalent to one U.S. penny.

"We did this every Friday, and now we found we raised \$450 Haitian dollars (US\$50)," he says with a grin.

With that money, Nixon's students started a business: they set up a small concession stand where they sell "bonbons" (candy).

"So now I say to them if you ever have a gourde to buy a little bonbon, buy it from the school to grow your business," Nixon says. "And it's working. They're learning. Two of the

students are responsible for the sale of the bonbons, and they must give me a report every Friday."

He takes Roberts to the classroom where the bonbons business is kept.

"At the end of the year, we count the money, and then we start a bigger and better business with the money we make," Nixon says.

He has high hopes for his students. And not just when it comes to their candy business. He has high hopes the education and the lessons they're learning will help Haiti out of poverty.

"We encourage all the children to come to school and to stay here. We tell them this place is best for them. But sometimes it's not easy for them," he says.

Near Nixon, students are eating their breakfast—the same gruel they eat every school day of the year. They're laughing, smiling, enjoying the temporary reprieve from reading and math lessons.



Carey Peterson

Beaches in rural McDonald are far different than the sandy strips found in front of resorts in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

And for just a moment Roberts forgets where she is. She doesn't see the dirt floor below her feet. She forgets the fact that these children don't have paper and pens, proper nutrition or fresh drinking water. They just look like ordinary schoolchildren enjoying the innocence of childhood, ordinary kids socializing at school with their peers.

And in that moment, Roberts understands why she's in Haiti: she can see a better future. She believes in the potential of these children.

"There's a lot of despair here. I know these kids will never have the opportunities my kids have. Some of them won't even make it to adulthood. They'll die from a preventable disease," she says. "But there's hope, too. You can see that with the spontaneous PIF project they started at the school selling their candy. There's hope for them if there's economic development. And if they grow the PIF concept, it could be a ticket to a better future."

Roberts adds: "That's why I keep coming back here."

Part 3 will take an in-depth look at more of Roberts' efforts in Haiti.



About the Author

*Emily Beers is a **CrossFit Journal** staff writer and editor. She competed in the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games on CrossFit Vancouver's team, and she finished third at the Canada West Regional in 2012. In 2013, she finished second in the Open in Canada West.*

THE CrossFit JOURNAL

Roadkill Fitness: Surviving and Thriving Through Variance

Motorcycle nomad Pat Sherwood is forced to embrace his weaknesses and finds he's still got strengths.

By Pat Sherwood

September 2013



Ian Wittenber

I'm not a talented Olympic lifter, and that doesn't bother me. I would get my ass kicked by Lindsey Valenzuela, Elisabeth Akinwale or Camille Leblanc-Bazinet using the same loading. I practice the snatch and the clean and jerk because of the positive adaptations they provide to my overall fitness.

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Ian Wittenber

On those days when he can get to an affiliate, Sherwood joins the group for the workout of the day.

With that in mind, I try to do 30 squat snatches a week just to keep my “skills” sharp. A few months ago I began this little ritual with 135 lb. Each week I would stay at the same weight or, if I felt froggy, bump it up 5 lb. These sessions are like a rushed heavy day for me. I don’t time them (just as I wouldn’t time a heavy day), but I move with a purpose and try to minimize my rest. The key to neurologically demanding lifts is practice.

The heaviest I recently worked up to was 30 snatches with 165 lb. I was ecstatic!

But given that we were about to begin a 100-day motorcycle journey through 16 countries, the only gear I decided to pack was a pair of wrist wraps and a jump rope. I was prepared for my precious squat snatch to go to shit.

That hasn’t been the case, though. As I write this—35 days into our expedition—we’ve only been able to touch a barbell about twice every seven to 10 days, which is way less than I’m used to. The overwhelming majority of our workouts have been with body weight or very light weights. Burpees, air squats, handstand push-ups, hollow

rocks, broad jumps, running, and doing Cindy when we can find something to hang from have occupied the lion’s share of our programming.

At the Zion National Park in Utah, we marked out the distance and did Death by 10-Meter Sprints. It was hot and the level of suffering was high. In the same parking lot, we used parking-space lines as broad-jump goals. Once you landed on the line, we did air squats until our legs shook. With literally zero gear, we crushed ourselves.

When we’ve rolled into a country or city with an affiliate, we usually join a class. Whatever the WOD is, we do it. For better or worse, most have been light workouts. We have yet to pop in on a heavy day or Oly day. It’s not uncommon to do 150 burpees on our own one day, then hit an affiliate the next day only to find 90 to 100 more burpees in the workout. Oh well—we’re happy just to work out with some fellow CrossFit athletes.

At CrossFit 52 Hermosillo in Sonora, Mexico, we joined the 7-p.m. class for a team WOD. We made new friends who spoke a different language, and through broken

Spanish and hand gestures we completed the WOD. We had a frigging blast. A language barrier was a new form of variance for us.

After a day of riding in the freezing-cold rain, we pulled into the parking lot of Distrito CrossFit in Guadalajara, Mexico. To add insult to injury, the box is at about 3,000 feet of elevation and the WOD was a version of The Seven. Shit! That's one of the most painful WODs in the world, and it's the last thing we wanted to do. So, we took off our wet clothes, put on some shorts, took a sip of water and proceeded to get demolished by the workout and basically everyone in the class.

In Cholula, Puebla, Mexico, at CrossFit 72700, we finished another all-day ride in the cold rain and immediately did Helen at 2,150 meters, aka 7,050 feet of elevation.

Sinaloa, Mexico, is best known for the infamous cartel with the same name. With that in mind, we decided camping outdoors was unwise. We stayed in a hotel that had a pair of 30-lb. dumbbells and wound up creating something awful. We hit a 10-minute AMRAP of 5 dumbbell burpees and 5 dumbbell thrusters. It was brutal, and we didn't get kidnapped by the cartel. I call that a win-win.

In Mazatlan, Mexico, you would pour sweat standing in the shade. We waited until the sun went down and found a park that had monkey bars. Cindy was performed at night in the mud and grass of the park. Twenty minutes and 21 rounds later, we felt like champions for getting in another workout when all we wanted to do was seek out air conditioning.

This next one was so bad that I hope someone tries it: while at a hotel gym in Guadalajara, I maxed out the treadmill incline and set the speed to 3 mph. I then brought a set of 50-lb. dumbbells and put them next to the treadmill. For 60 minutes, I walked on the treadmill (no hands!) but hopped off every 6 minutes for 10 dumbbell thrusters. So I got in 3 miles of uphill walking and 100 dumbbell thrusters. I nearly died after that one. Variance, indeed.

The few times I have been able to hit my own workout at an odd time between an affiliate's classes, I have tried to touch a heavy barbell simply to keep my training balanced.

What I've discovered has surprised me: I've felt great with heavy loads even though 90 percent of what we are doing has been body weight or light. Heavy loads for sets of 3 or 5? Done deal: no change in my numbers.



Pat Sherwood

At CrossFit 502 in Guatemala, Sherwood found out his squat snatch had not abandoned him during weeks of body-weight training.

Recently, I got to do my 30-squat-snatches workout in Guatemala City, Guatemala. As I warmed up, I was talking to myself, preparing myself for a disappointing session: "Just do 30 at whatever weight feels heavy given how sporadic lifting has been. If 135 feels heavy, that's OK," I told myself. Long story short, I used 165 lb. and felt amazing. This has happened both times I've been able to lift heavy.

My theory is that my normal training before this trip might have been slightly biased to barbell work. If that's the case, it's probably doing me more good than I realize to focus on running, body-weight WODs and WODs with light weights.

CrossFit has always professed that embracing the things you are not good at will improve your overall fitness in such a dramatic way that it's tough to explain. I knew this already. So why am I shocked? Maybe because I'm not giving the advice to someone else this time; I'm living it.



About the Author

Pat Sherwood works for CrossFit as a flowmaster and member of the Media Team. He's done just under 200 seminars all around the globe for CrossFit HQ and competed in the 2009 CrossFit Games. He hates HSPU and loves ice cream.