

---

# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

---

## 2013: Beloved Suffering

Dave Castro, Nicole Carroll and a host of athletes and affiliate owners recall the workouts that made an impression in the year that was.

By Hilary Achauer

December 2013



*Dave Castro performs the Hotshots 19 workout alongside CrossFit Games podium finishers Lindsey Valenzuela (center) and Rich Froning (right).*

Early in 2013, CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman and Dave Castro, Director of the CrossFit Games, sat outside a Starbucks in Carlsbad, Calif., brainstorming about the last workout of the 2013 Open.

The meeting over coffee resulted in [Open Workout 13.5](#), which was performed by more than 120,000 athletes. Castro revealed the combination of thrusters and pull-ups at a live event in Santa Cruz, Calif., in front of close to 2,000 spectators, and the announcement was simultaneously broadcast online to a global audience.

"That morning in Carlsbad, creating that workout with (Glassman), and that evening of announcing it are part of the reasons this is one of the most memorable workouts of the year for me," Castro said.

CrossFit athletes do hundreds of workouts a year. Most fade into a haze of sweat, pain and euphoria once the reps are finished and the time runs out. But not all are so easily forgotten.

As 2013 comes to a close, we asked people throughout the CrossFit world—from Games athletes to affiliate owners to CrossFit Inc. staff—about their favorite workout of 2013, whether it was a workout they did, programmed or just watched someone else suffer through.

### Open Evolution

Castro and the CrossFit Games team had already decided on the first four Open workouts when he and Glassman met at Starbucks. Castro just needed one more.

"I had already told (Glassman) about the other Open workouts, and that this final one needed to leave a stamp on the community, and that it needed to have thrusters and pull-ups," Castro said.

---

**"Four minutes seemed to be a good number to settle on where most good athletes would complete one and then be rewarded with the ability to do another Fran."**

**—Dave Castro**

---

"We both agreed we wanted it to be unique and very similar to Fran in its layout and in its dose," he said, referring to the classic 21-15-9 workout of thrusters and pull-ups.

In 2012, the Open included a workout where the athlete was "rewarded" with the opportunity to increase the load and continue with more work once he or she completed a number of reps at a given weight.



Dave Re

***Dave Castro sports a tux for the announcement of Workout 13.5 in Santa Cruz, Calif.***

"We decided to do the same, but instead of increasing the loading, we decided that if you finished X amount of work, you were given the ability to do more work. What became important for us then at this junction was to make that work accomplished equivalent to Fran," Castro said.

They played with time domains, eventually deciding on four minutes as the first time cutoff.

"Four minutes seemed to be a good number to settle on where most good athletes would complete one and then be rewarded with the ability to do another Fran," Castro said.

Then Castro and Glassman played with the rep schemes, finally deciding three rounds of 15 was enough work that at some point the athlete might have to break up the thrusters or pull-ups.

"This one was never tested," Castro said. "We didn't need to. After having programmed for these events for years, you generally learn that you also have a good sense of what's possible from these guys. I played it out over and over in my head, and I was confident that the best guys could get to eight minutes (six rounds), but the best of the best would get to 12 minutes (nine rounds). I thought maybe someone would get to 16 minutes (12 rounds)."



In the end, nobody managed to live up to Castro's expectations, and many found the workout was much harder than it looked on paper. The top score for the women was Lindsay Bourdon, who got eight rounds plus 15 thrusters and one chest-to-bar pull-up. Josh Bridges had the top male score, with eight rounds plus 14 thrusters.

"The next phase of this—and the thing that made it one of the most memorable events of the year for me—was the approach of and then the actual announcement of the event live in Santa Cruz," Castro said.

"Calling the workout on the live stream was proving to be a challenge. I had to think of a way to describe it accurately and in a concise manner that was actually entertaining and had a cliff-hanger aspect to it," he said.

"The announcement went fine for me, minus the sweat that was pouring from my face. It wasn't the tuxedo ... it was the lighting that we experimented with. It was right above us, blaring down, creating so much heat."

While he was up there under the lights, Castro remembered where the workout was conceived and how a conversation over coffee resulted in thousands of people struggling to do enough work in four minutes to earn the privilege to keep suffering for four minutes more.

### Testing and Execution

Rob Orlando, who runs the CrossFit Strongman Trainer Course, was also part of the early stages of a Games-related event for 2013.

Orlando was wrapping up a vacation in Hawaii with his wife. Just before he was about to head home, he got a call from Castro.

"I had spent four days drinking booze and eating way too much food in Kauai ... (Castro) called me 36 hours prior to leaving for the airport to return home and asked me to stop in Aromas to test the (workout)," Orlando said.

When Castro calls with an opportunity like that, it's hard to say no.



Nicole Bedard

**Rob Orlando (squatting) tested out an early version of Event 6 of the Regionals, and the challenge was one of his favorite workouts of 2013.**

Orlando diverted his flight, flew overnight and landed in San Francisco, Calif. He met Castro, drove to Aromas (the site of the first CrossFit Games in 2007) and tested the event.

The event Castro wanted Orlando to run through was Event 6 of the Regionals: 100 double-unders, 50 handstand push-ups, 40 toes-to-bars, 30 lifts from shoulders to overhead, three lifts with a 160-lb. axle, and 90 feet of walking lunges with the same axle in the front-rack position.

"I was the very first to do (the workout)," Orlando said. "The version that I tested was slightly different than what appeared at the Regionals, but it followed the same format. I tested it with a 10-minute time cap, and I used 185 lb. for both the overheads and the lunges.

"I was a guinea pig—and I loved it," Orlando said.

"It was not the ideal scenario, but it speaks to the power of the CrossFit way of life," Orlando said. "With no preparation, little sleep and horrible nutrition—too much great food and wine—I was still able to post up a decent score on a very difficult workout."

### Back from the Breaks

Miranda Oldroyd, Level 1 Seminar Staff member and part of the CrossFit Games Media team, will never forget her experience with the first event at the 2013 Northern California Regional. The event was Jackie, a benchmark featuring a 1,000-m row, 50 45-lb. thrusters and 30 pull-ups.

---

**"To go out and win the first workout of Regionals after the year I had had was beyond amazing. It is a moment I will truly never forget."**

**—Miranda Oldroyd**

---

"This workout will be on my list of all-time highs probably forever for multiple reasons," Oldroyd said.



Thomas Campielli

***Miranda Oldroyd celebrating her first-place finish in Jackie, the first event of the 2013 Northern California Regional.***



Thomas Campielli

***After breaking her neck in 2012, Oldroyd wasn't sure if she'd be able to compete in 2013.***



"I had a hell of a year after the car accident with my injuries. When someone tells you that you have a broken neck, you start to wonder what that's going to mean for your competitive CrossFit career," she said.

In late June 2012, Oldroyd was in an accident in Laguna Hills, Calif. She was misdiagnosed only with whiplash but later found out a cervical vertebrae was broken in two places. While she was moving and training shortly after the accident, she was in pain and couldn't do a lot. When the breaks were discovered after she worked as a reporter at the CrossFit Games, she had spinal-fusion surgery.

"For months I was extremely limited in how I could train—so much so that when the Open started I was wondering if I would even qualify for Regionals. Qualifying and getting to compete with the women of NorCal after all that had happened was already emotional enough. Then, to go out and win the first workout of Regionals after the year I had had was beyond amazing. It is a moment I will truly never forget," she said.

Oldroyd's time of 6:13 put her in a tie with Deborah Corder Carson and Rebecca Voigt for the seventh best time across all regions.

Jackie was also Castro's favorite Regionals event.

"This is a benchmark, and contrary to what a lot of people thought, it was a great race and spectacle to watch," Castro said. "I really wanted to see sub-five (minutes). We will soon, though."

Jason Khalipa had the top male score worldwide, with a time of 5:04, and Elisabeth Akinwale earned the top female spot, finishing in 5:59.

### Twisted Idea of Fun

One of the Games events came about almost by accident. It was born of a challenge thrown out to Nicole Carroll, CrossFit's Director of Certification and Training.

The challenge was to row 1 million meters.

"This became my WOD, or obsession if you will," Carroll said. And the challenge ended up being her favorite workout—or grueling slog—of 2013.

"The genesis of the challenge was my fiancé, Brian Chontosh, and his twisted idea of fun," Carroll said.

Chontosh, a Marine who won the Navy Cross in Iraq and can be seen in classic CrossFit videos such as [Tosh Does Grace](#), threw out the challenge in February.



**Jason Khalipa named the Burden Run at the Games as his favorite workout of 2013, even though he said flipping the Pig across the field was the hardest part of the entire competition.**

"He finally goaded me into full participation in early March," she said. Eleven people started the challenge with Carroll, and only six finished.

---

**"I felt responsible for getting everyone into (the half-marathon row), so I figured it would only be right for me to do it too."**

**—Nicole Carroll**

---

"It consumed much of my efforts for the year," Carroll said. "I think this challenge not only committed me to a lengthy term level of effort but was also in a modality that was not necessarily in the wheelhouse of a short lightweight. Mentally and emotionally, it required dedication in spite of boredom, discomfort, fatigue, distraction."



Courtesy CrossFit South Philly

***For CrossFit athletes, the most memorable workouts are often those that push their mental and physical boundaries.***

Based on her average split times, Carroll estimated she spent roughly 75 hours (about three days) strapped into the rower.

"It seems like it absorbed so much more of my life than just that," she said.

A few months into the challenge, Carroll and Castro were discussing possibilities for Games events, and Castro told Carroll he was thinking of including a workout inspired by the rowing challenge.

Castro and Tony Budding, former director of Games media, were originally thinking of a 15,000-meter row, but Carroll chimed in with the half-marathon idea. The second event of the Games ended up being a 21,097-m row, equivalent to 13.1 miles.

"This is why I did the demo for that workout," Carroll said, "I felt responsible for getting everyone into it, so I figured it would only be right for me to do it too."

### **Beasts of Burden**

Orlando's second favorite workout of 2013 included an element he had a hand in designing. The Pig, a flippable metal frame that made an appearance in the Burden Run at the Games, was Orlando's creation.

"The Pig was special because it was something that I sketched for close to a year," Orlando said.

"I finally got brave enough to have it built by a local fabricator, and after some preliminary testing, I posted a video to Facebook. Rogue contacted me and said they wanted to build it. While I was in Germany at Reebok CrossFit Nurnberg for a seminar, I received a phone call from (Rogue owner) Bill Henniger letting me know that Dave (Castro) loved the Pig and that it would most likely be in the Games."

Orlando said he never saw or performed the Burden Run workout prior to the Games, but he knew the Pig was going to make an appearance.

"Seeing it on the main stage and being used by the best athletes in our sport was a massive thrill," Orlando said.

"I was able to make a contribution to CrossFit. Any time I can be a part of creating something that benefits our amazing community, I consider it an honor and privilege," he said.

Orlando wasn't the only one who loved the Burden Run. It was Jason Khalipa's favorite workout of 2013 as well.





Alicia Anthony Baldwin

*Although she struggled with the Burden Run, Alessandra Pichelli said she enjoyed the unexpected challenges: carrying the log and flipping the Pig.*

Khalipa placed second overall at the 2013 Games and won the Burden Run event.

"It was programmed well, judging was very streamlined, and I performed well at it," Khalipa said. "The movements were an awesome complement to each other and I truly felt like it tested all-around fitness."

---

**"After 50 yards it felt like  
a one-rep-max deadlift  
every time."**

**—Jason Khalipa  
on the Pig**

---



Alicia Anthony Baldwin

*Scott Panchik working his way through Legless.*

Khalipa said flipping the Pig was the hardest part of that event and of the entire Games.

"After 50 yards it felt like a one-rep-max deadlift every time," he said.

Alessandra Pichelli, who placed fourth overall at the 2013 Games, earned 11th place in the Burden Run (one of her worst finishes), but it was still her favorite workout of 2013.

"It was definitely one of the hardest workouts of the Games," Pichelli said, "as you could tell by all of the athletes collapsing after crossing the finish line. It is always fun to face new challenges, and the Burden Run had the most surprising/new elements of any (event) during the Games season."

Pichelli said the lessons she learned from the event have stuck with her throughout the year.

"I have learned my lessons from the sections I lost time in and have been working on those weaknesses in the offseason. I hope I can show off my improvements in a similar workout during the 2014 season," Pichelli said.

Scott Panchik, who placed fourth overall at the Games, said his favorite workout of 2013 was Legless. Competitors had to complete 27 thrusters at 95/65 lb. before performing four legless rope climbs. Thruster reps were reduced by six in each of the three subsequent rounds, and the climbs were reduced by one ascent in each round. Castro said Legless was also on the list of his favorites because he's wanted to put legless rope climbs in the Games for years.

For Panchik, his surroundings played a big part in his experience.

"It was under the lights in the tennis stadium, and people were going nuts," Panchik said about the event, which was the last event on Friday.

"Fireworks were going off and I remember looking left and looking right and feeling so blessed to be where I was doing what I love," he said.

### Outside the Games

Not everyone's favorite workout of 2013 was Games related. Wil Vicinus, owner and head trainer at CrossFit South Philly/Fearless Athletics in Philadelphia, Pa., said his favorite workout is one they do every year.

The workout is called Fearless. It consists of four rounds for time of 10 box jumps (30/24 in.), 10 burpees, 10 chest-to-bar pull-ups, 10 ball slams (30/20 lb.), 10 wall-ball shots to a 10-ft. target (20/14 lb.), 10 thrusters (115/75 lb.), and 10 power snatches (115/75 lb.).

"We do this (workout) annually, typically in May or June, to celebrate our anniversary as a registered CrossFit affiliate," Vicinus said.

Members created Fearless as part of a contest that challenged them to come up with a workout that captured the spirit of the affiliate.

"The workout represents the progression of an athlete starting as a beginner with simpler movements (box jumps and burpees), learning to generate power and master new movements (pull-ups, ball slams, wall-ball shots), starting to work with barbells (thrusters) and finally taking on the challenge of mastering technical movements (power snatch)," Vicinus said.

"What we like most about this workout is that it's all about our community of athletes—it was created by them as a way for them to celebrate their shared journey together," he said.



Courtesy CrossFit South Philly

*Members of CrossFit South Philly/Fearless Athletics created the workout Fearless to celebrate the progression of a CrossFit athlete.*



Alicia Anthony Baldwin



***Matt Lodin (kneeling) said his favorite workout is one that terrifies him but also lets him know how far he's come each year.***

Matt Lodin, a member of CrossFit's Level 1 Seminar Staff, also has a favorite workout he does every year. Like many CrossFit athletes, his definition of "favorite" is unusual.

The workout is as many rounds as possible in 20 minutes of Fran (21-15-9 thrusters and pull-ups), Elizabeth (21-15-9 cleans and ring dips), Diane (21-15-9 deadlifts and

handstand push-ups) and 30 muscle-ups. Athletes use one barbell, changing their own weights.

"This is a workout programmed by Bryan Boorstein, owner of CrossFit Pacific Beach, as a once-a-year benchmark," Lodin said.

"It is a behemoth of a workout and it gives me the chills just looking at it," he said.

"Every year I can't imagine improving on my score from the last year, and every year there is a significant improvement. The feeling of validation and satisfaction I get from improving my score every year makes this my favorite workout of the year. Every time, it reaffirms for me that what we do in this CrossFit program is truly improving my fitness and continues improving it year after year. The goal for 2014: finish the muscle-ups!" Lodin said.

### **Honoring Others**

For some CrossFit athletes, the meaning behind a workout is just as important as the workout itself.

---

**"It is a behemoth of a workout  
and it gives me the chills just  
looking at it."**

**—Matt Lodin  
on his favorite workout of 2013**

---

On June 30, 2013, 19 members of the Granite Mountain Interagency Hotshot Crew, based in Prescott, Ariz., died fighting a fire. To commemorate those who gave their lives, CrossFit held a memorial workout at Captain CrossFit in Prescott on Aug. 31, 2013. The workout was called Hotshots 19 and consisted of six rounds for time of 30 squats, 19 135-lb. power cleans, 7 strict pull-ups and a 400-meter run.

Lindsey Valenzuela took part in the memorial workout, and it was her favorite of the year "because of the impact it had on lifting the spirits of the Prescott CrossFit community and the families who lost loved ones in that tragic fire," she said.

"We had a very emotional prayer led by Dan Bailey with the families of the fallen firefighters immediately before the WOD. It brought most, if not all, in the circle to tears. It

was an honor to work out in the memory of those 19 men," Valenzuela said.

"Hotshots 19 is a Hero workout that meant so much to the community and the families of the firefighters who lost their lives," Castro said. "For me, it was memorable because I also did it side by side with the likes of (Rich) Froning, Bailey and Valenzuela."

Wayne Kim, owner of CrossFit by Overload in Murietta, Calif., was not in Arizona for the Hotshots 19 tribute, but his affiliate performed the workout on the same day as the event.

"We were with Greg (Glassman) in Montana (at the Affiliate Gathering) when he informed us about the workout and showed us the short film. It was very touching. We have several firefighters at our box that knew some of the fallen guys. Very sad," Kim said.

"We did (Hotshots 19) at our facility and opened it up to others in the community. It was an emotional story," he said.

### An Everyday Challenge

Sometimes the most memorable workouts take place on an ordinary day and don't seem like anything special at the time.

George Ryan, who runs the CrossFit Striking Trainer Course, said his most memorable workout happened on a November afternoon.

"I had very little time," Ryan said, "so I did some range-of-motion exercises and ran a mile in seven minutes for a warm-up. I then gave myself three minutes to rest, and I hit a workout called Striking Alex. It's three rounds for time of a 400-meter run, 15 ring dips and 15 four-strike punching combinations on the heavy bag," he said.

"The logistical issue I had was that my rings are set up in my backyard on my patio cover, and my heavy bag is in my garage, which is located at the front of my house. I had to sprint around the side of my house to get to my garage after completing my ring dips. What made this more fun is that my dog, Snoopy, thought I wanted him to chase me, so he barked at me as I sprinted to the front of the house," Ryan said.

Mike Burgener, leader of the CrossFit Weightlifting Trainer Course, said his favorite workout is one he made up when he was training a Navy SEAL candidate.



**Lindsey Valenzuela finished second at the CrossFit Games but considers the Hotshots 19 event her favorite test of 2013.**





Scott Wallace

**George Ryan (kicking) said his most memorable workout took place in and around his garage in the company of a dog named Snoopy.**

"We call our favorite workout The Hillary Clinton," Burgener said. A political conservative, Burgener came up with the name because he hates the workout so much. Burgener's liberal wife calls the workout The George Bush.

The workout consists of three rounds of a one-mile run in a 10-lb. weight vest over the steep hills surrounding Mike's Gym in Bonsall, Calif., 25 pull-ups, another weighted one-mile run and 25 ball slams.

"It's very evil! We can scale it down for the Geezers with an 800-meter hill run. It's still evil," Burgener said, referring to his group of 60-plus-year-old friends who work out together three times a week.

### Your Favorite?

Workouts become memorable when they elicit an emotional reaction, whether it's chill-inducing fear or heart-swelling triumph. The venue doesn't seem to matter. The Games figured prominently in many people's minds, but just as important were those workouts done at the gym with friends or even at home alone.

What matters is the feeling as you complete that last rep after having done something very challenging.

Think back on 2013. What was your favorite workout—and why? Post responses to comments.



### About the Author

Hilary Achauer is an award-winning freelance writer and editor specializing in health and wellness content. In addition to writing articles, online content, blogs and newsletters, Hilary is an editor and writer for the **CrossFit Journal** and contributes to the CrossFit Games site. An amateur boxer-turned-CrossFit athlete, Hilary lives in San Diego with her husband and two small children and trains at CrossFit Pacific Beach. To contact her, visit [hilaryachauer.com](http://hilaryachauer.com).