
THE CrossFit JOURNAL

VIRTUOSITY

Virtuosity 6: Every Rep a Victory

Jillian Sharp competes in the CrossFit Games Open and finds herself surrounded by support.

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March 2015



Jillian Sharp

The Open at CrossFit Fayetteville in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

I stood paralyzed underneath the pull-up rack. Beads of sweat trickled down my face, and my heart raced relentlessly. I attempted to calm myself: "The worst that can happen is falling on my face and scoring zero reps."

I know CrossFit is the best thing that has ever happened to me, not only for my health, but also for the friends and the go-getter confidence it instilled in me. However, in that moment, nothing could allay my fear. I feared failure.

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I feared humiliation. I was undoubtedly overwhelmed, and nothing could stop the adrenaline from accelerating through my body—until my coach shook me by my shoulders back to reality.

She reminded me that during the Open in 2014, I could not even squat a barbell. She reminded me that just a year ago, I vowed I would never have the ability to do the Open workouts. She reminded me of how far I had come and how much confidence I had gained from the sport. She pointed to the supporters around me.

For me, the Open was never about winning. It's more a competition for myself. The Open truly is for anyone who's willing to attempt a challenge. The beauty of CrossFit is it entitles you to a guaranteed, built-in support network while you attempt and achieve. You are never alone.

In that moment, I realized failure and humiliation do not exist in CrossFit. The Open is designed to eliminate that repulsive ideology our culture has created for physical fitness. At that point in time, I was not only united with the others in my box competing or cheering, but I was also united with hundreds of thousands of athletes from around the world who were performing in the same movements and striving for the same goals. I realized that

by signing up for the Open, I had set myself up for 100 percent success.

In Workout 15.2, I achieved six reps. Six. The world may see failure, but CrossFit athletes see that as success. CrossFit is about growth—growth in our abilities, growth in our self-esteem, growth in our community.

Never in my life have I been surrounded by such encouragement. The Open demonstrates what sets CrossFit apart from any other sport. It demonstrates that any person of any fitness level can strive after goals and achieve within the world's greatest support system and alongside the world's greatest athletes.

When I felt like I could not begin, I was told the opposite. When I felt like giving up, I heard people I had never met chanting my name. I was challenged, pushed, supported and encouraged in a way I had never experienced. After 15.2, when the thought crossed my mind that I had failed, athletes approached me in congratulation.

This is our way of life. This is my box. This is the Open. And this is CrossFit.

Corrects to state CrossFit Fayetteville is in Arkansas.



Submission Guidelines

To be considered for publication, authors must satisfy the following:

1. Articles must be original, unpublished works. Authors of selected submissions will be supplied with legal documents to be filled out prior to publication.
2. Articles must be submitted in Word documents attached to an email. Documents should not contain bolding, italics or other formatting. Please submit in Arial font.
3. Articles can be 500 words maximum.
4. Each article must be accompanied by at least one high-resolution photograph to illustrate the story. The photo can feature the coach, the affiliate, the community—anything that illustrates the article. Photo guidelines are as follows:

- A. Photos must be original and owned by the person submitting. Photos taken by others may be submitted provided the owner has given permission.
- B. Photos must be in focus, well lit and free of watermarks. Minimum file size is 1 MB. Please review your camera's settings to ensure you are shooting high-resolution images. Cell-phone photos and thumbnails are not accepted.
- C. Photos must be attached to the email as JPEG files. Do not embed files in Word documents. Photo file names should list both the name of the subject and the name of the photographer in this format: SubjectName-PhotographerName.jpg. Examples: JohnSmith-JaneDoe.jpg or CrossFitAnyTown-JimJohnson.jpg.

Virtuosity@crossfit.com is open for submissions. Tell us why you train where you train, and do it uncommonly well.