

DECADE OF DOMINANCE

The CrossFit Games celebrate 10 years as the ultimate proving grounds for the world's fittest athletes.

BY GREG GLASSMAN, HILARY ACHAUER, ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL AND MIKE WARKENTIN
STATS BY CHAD SCHROEDER

Aromas, 2008: Redefining the term "fitness competition" for all time.



Carson, 2014: Rich Froning Jr. on his way to a record fourth consecutive CrossFit Games victory.





In 2016, we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the CrossFit Games. On the pages that follow, you'll find the stories and images that explain how the Games grew from a small gathering of athletes in 2007 into an event that fills stadiums and can be watched live on ESPN. We've also provided a host of detailed stats and records that showcase the amazing accomplishments of CrossFit Games athletes.

In 2013, CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman provided the introduction to the "2013 Reebok CrossFit Games Program," and his words are reproduced below as a defining description of the Sport of Fitness.

A BETTER BEAUTIFUL

The first year of the CrossFit Games was 2007. Sure, we started in Dave Castro's mom's backyard, but it felt like Woodstock and

looked like a prison yard—just a tougher workout, a tougher crowd, and coed. Wonderfully coed.

This is not just the first major sport spawned from a peanut roaster, but a moment in physical culture, a rather audacious crowning by CrossFit Inc. of the Fittest Man and Woman on Earth from, of all things, a list of friends competing over a weekend. Our beloved Games had an auspicious beginning even if only a score of us recognized the import of what was unfolding.

It's as easy as this: If fitness can be defined and measured, then it can be tested, and we can, in turn, find the fittest. There's an inevitability to the Games that arises directly from our intellectual DNA.

Roll the clock forward a few years and we're driven from Monterey County (by its now-regretful fathers), in a stadium and on TV, and Reebok has traded the NFL for the Games. The CrossFit Games quickly became a global put-up-or-shut-up challenge that leaves

our critics and competitors gloriously silent during Games season lest they find themselves "honorary invitees" and thrust into the arena. The Games make bragging on the net dangerous. Each athlete is showcasing an approach—a successful one at that. Internet trash talk is now off center stage.

In this, our seventh year, I call your attention to the bodies. Yes, the flesh—the men, the women, the spectators and the competitors. It's not our usual intellectual focus, but I can no longer pretend not to notice. Everyone is an athlete, but many, maybe even most, are simply beautiful. This menagerie of "Franken-fitters," stadia quite literally full of them, embodies a functional aesthetic that is uniquely ours. Their bodies and our appreciation of them are a direct challenge to a host of pathological aesthetics, whether it's the 16-year-old heroin-chic anorexia of the fashion world or the grotesqueness of bodybuilding and drug-induced hypertrophy.

These athletes and spectators wear the look of enormous work

capacity across broad time and modal domains. Theirs is the look of true performance. This is what happens when form, as it should and will, follows function.

What we've made, what you'll see all around you this weekend, is a better beautiful.

Greg Glassman
Founder and CEO
CrossFit Inc.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2007

“It was the first time we got together.”

If he had to choose just one moment, it would be the barbecue on July 1, 2007.

“After Day 2, everyone just hung out at The Ranch, and we grilled hamburgers and hotdogs,” Chris Spealler said.

It was the first edition of the CrossFit Games. Anyone in the world was invited to compete in three events spread over two days at a ranch in Aromas, California, about 30 miles southeast of CrossFit’s birthplace in the Santa Cruz area. About 60 athletes showed up—some representing one of the nearly 250 affiliates in existence—to test their fitness in three events: CrossFit Total, a workout chosen by the hopper method and an off-trail run.

After the winners were crowned, people such as Dave Castro, Nicole Carroll and CrossFit Founder Greg Glassman hung out, ate some grub and drank some beer.

“(It was) probably one of the coolest experiences,” Spealler said of his most-cherished Games memory. “It was all the grassroots CrossFit (people).”

Members of the community that was born and bred online finally met face to face. From behind computer screens around North America came the people from the Message Board, the people from CrossFit.com. There was a lot of “oh, you’re Speal” and “so that’s Josh Everett.”

“It was the first time we got together in that sense,” Speal said. “It was just, like, it was so cool.”

The cookout marked the beginning of a movement.

“No one knew what it was going to be. Now it happens on this huge level,” Spealler said.

The Ranch in Aromas still belongs to Castro’s parents, and he’s

known today as Director of the CrossFit Games. Carroll has since become Director of Certification and Training. Glassman, CEO of CrossFit Inc., oversees a company with many thousands of affiliated gyms around the world. In the spirit of the 2007 Games, many people still know him simply as “Coach.”

The inaugural Games weren’t quite a family reunion “because that’s kind of cheesy,” but there was definitely a family feel, Spealler noted.

“Out of everything—especially now as it’s evolved—I think it’s important we don’t lose that,” he said. “That is, ultimately, what it’s about or what it should be about.”

Keeping perspective amidst the Games and competition “hubbub” is essential, said Spealler, who competed in every edition of the Games from 2007 to 2012, as well as in 2014. The Games find the Fittest on Earth, but they’re also a community event that showcases the joy of competition on display in every CrossFit affiliate in the world. Focusing only on the winners misses the point of the tradition set with that dusty barbecue in 2007.

“Who’s the fittest, who’s the best?—that’s when people start losing perspective on what drives the community,” said Spealler, who was honored with the Spirit of the Games Award in 2010. “(It’s about) people who just show up every day and bust their butt. It’s knowing what drives the community and celebrating when you have the best of the best throwing down.”

WINNERS:

Men: James FitzGerald (Canada)
Women: Jolie Gentry (now Jolie Gentry Macias) (USA)
Team: CrossFit Santa Cruz (USA)



Aromas, 2007: Chris Spealler views the barbecue after the competition as a reminder that the CrossFit Games are a celebration of the community.



Aromas, 2007: Jolie Gentry finishes first or second in all three events to win the inaugural edition of the Games.



CROSSFIT GAMES: 2008

“There’s no fucking way you can sit and watch.”

“What do you mean you aren’t competing?” Jamie Budding asked. “Do you want in?”

“Oh, God. I kinda do,” Brett Marshall replied, verbally wringing his hands.

After finishing second in the 2007 CrossFit Games, Marshall planned to be a spectator in 2008, but when he went to collect his pass at The Ranch, he was offered a spot in the competition.

Completely unprepared, Marshall took to the dusty hills of Aromas for a walk. His wife ultimately made the decision for him.

“There’s no fucking way you can sit and watch,” she said.

And then, in the spirit of the Games at Aromas, Budding found Dave Castro, who OK’d Marshall on the spot and rammed him into the heat list.

Despite a lack of prep, Marshall performed well throughout the competition and qualified for the final heat of the last event: 30 squat clean and jerks for time at 155 lb.

In warm-up, overall leader Chris Spealler just sat with his signature headphones on. Marshall asked him if he was going to try any lifts.

“Nope. I’m saving every rep for the event,” Spealler replied.

Marshall himself was nervous and had been doing a lot of reps. As a smaller athlete, he was hoping an efficient jerk would get him through the lifting.

Marshall said he saw a “giant of a man” in the warm-up area, someone he didn’t know. He looked strong but not necessarily fit. The guy bent over, yanked the bar to his shoulders and drove it overhead with a powerful press that looked effortless despite an absence of refined technique.

“Are you gonna jerk any of these?” Marshall asked incredulously. The giant just laughed and lifted some more.

In the event, Marshall said he hit a wall around Rep 15 and had some time to listen to the announcer’s call of the race between overall leader Spealler and Josh Everett. Suddenly, there was chaos behind him, and Marshall turned around to see the behemoth from the warm-up area jumping in the air and chest-bumping friends.

Jason Khalipa won the 2008 CrossFit Games by finishing the final event 40 seconds faster than anyone else.

Almost no one saw it happen, but within minutes everyone suddenly knew Khalipa’s name.

* * *

“Once that buzzer went off, I did 30, I raised my arms and won,” recalled Khalipa, who admitted he didn’t know what weightlifting shoes were for in 2008.

And while he considered himself “amateur” compared to the rest of the field, Khalipa proved he had the relentless drive and endless pain tolerance to simply do more work faster than anyone else.

“He goes balls to the wall all the time,” Marshall said of Khalipa.

“I heard different people discuss along the way, ‘Oh, Khalipa’s going to burn out, and you can’t sustain this, and you have to periodize your programming, and you have to do all these things,’ and I’m just so happy to see him continue to get better.”

Indeed, the burly NorCal athlete has proven that 2008 was no flash in the pan. Khalipa competed as an individual in every edition of the CrossFit Games from 2008 to 2014, finishing no lower than 16th (2010), taking fifth twice, and finishing on the podium in 2013 and 2014. In 2015, he finished 10th with the NorCal CrossFit team.

“As far as I can tell,” Marshall said, “the guy is ready to compete at any time and has been that way since 2008, when he fucking won.”

WINNERS:

Men: Jason Khalipa (USA)

Women: Caity Matter (now Caity Henniger) (USA)

Team: CrossFit Oakland (USA)

Staff/CrossFit Journal

Aromas, 2008: Runner-up in 2007, firefighter Brett Marshall completes 30 clean and jerks for time.



Aromas, 2008: The Sport of Fitness is quickly building momentum, with about 300 athletes competing at the second edition of the Games.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2009

“The best feeling ever.”

All she had to do to win was finish the workout. She didn't even have to do well.

But Tanya Wagner was a mess.

The 27-year-old had never done so many muscle-ups. And the workout called for 10 of them in the middle of a hefty chipper that also included cleans, toes-to-bars, box jumps, push presses, double-unders, thrusters, pulls-ups, burpees and walking lunges with a bumper plate overhead.

“I knew that was my biggest workout going in,” Wagner said. “I just knew I had to get through it, but I didn't know if I could.”

Spectators at the 2009 CrossFit Games were unaware of her tribulations.

“You got this,” they kept telling her.

“Nobody knew that I didn't have muscle-ups very well,” she said.

Leading up to the final test of the two-day competition, the schoolteacher from Souderton, Pennsylvania, watched in the warm-up area as a previously unknown athlete from Iceland tried to learn how to do a muscle-up for the first time before the event began.

“Annie Thorisdottir was practicing like mad on the rings because she had never done that ever,” Wagner recounted. “I had to get outta there. I couldn't watch that.”

Seeing someone else fail at a movement she was already distressed over only worsened her nerves.

Interestingly, Thorisdottir was the only athlete who had a chance to beat Wagner for the overall title.

“I didn't even know (the movements for) the rest of the workout,” Wagner said. “My mind was just in such a bad state.”

She added: “I wanted to just cry. I probably did cry ... because I didn't know if I could do it.”

Once she finished 30 20-inch box jumps, it was time for her moment of truth.

She struggled and had 30 missed attempts.

“The whole thing was a mess,” Wagner said.

Nicole Carroll, today Director of Certification and Training, tried to help Wagner at the time as an impromptu coach. Prior to the event, Carroll had worked with Jeff Tucker of CrossFit Gymnastics to give Thorisdottir some tips in the warm-up area as well. Famously, Thorisdottir actually got her first muscle-up in front of a roaring crowd that afternoon.

“(Nicole) just kept telling me to just wait ... walk away from the rings,” Wagner remembered. “Every time I failed, I wanted to jump back up again.”

Finally, she locked out the last of 10 muscle-ups.

“That was the best feeling ever,” she said. “That last muscle-up. That was it.”

After a medley of other movements, all that remained was 300 feet of walking lunges with a 25-lb. plate overhead.

“It just felt like a mile of plate lunges,” Wagner said. “Still, to this day, whenever I lunge, I think about that weekend.”

WINNERS:

Men: Mikko Salo (Finland)
Women: Tanya Wagner (USA)
Team: Northwest CrossFit (USA)

Aromas, 2009: Tanya Wagner works through 10 muscle-ups as part of the final chipper event.



Dave Brewer/CrossFit Journal



Aromas, 2009: Even with significant upgrades to The Ranch, it was clear that a new venue would be needed in 2010.



Carson, 2010: The Games go big with stadium seating and events under the lights.

Staff/CrossFit Journal

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2010

“The professionalization of the sport.”

For three years, it took Josh Everett 20 minutes to go to the bathroom.

“(Being) an athlete at The Ranch was a little difficult,” said Everett, who competed at the CrossFit Games as an individual from 2007 through 2009.

With the Games at a ranch in Aromas, California, heeding the call of nature meant snaking his way through dense groups of spectators to finally arrive at the Port-O-Potty. And toilet paper wasn’t guaranteed.

“You had to go through the crowd to get anywhere,” Everett remembered.

Although things changed somewhat in 2009 as the Games started to grow and evolve, the competition still had the same backyard-barbecue feel, Everett said.

“It was out at The Ranch, out in the dirt,” he said.

The competition’s fourth year, however, was remarkably different. That year, 2010, the Games moved to the then-Home Depot Center in Carson, California. The venue is home to the LA Galaxy, a fact that allowed soccer star Landon Donovan to get into a low-key but very entertaining verbal altercation with a wandering Pat Sherwood of CrossFit Media.

At the venue, Games competitors had a dedicated area in the loading dock where they could relax and warm up, and a more predictable heat schedule helped them plan when to rest and refuel. The bathrooms were no longer portable, and toilet paper was plentiful.

“The athletes could really focus on the competition and be a part of the crowd as much they wanted to,” Everett said.

Instead of competing, he was a spectator that year.

“It was really exciting to me,” he said. “For me, that kind of legitimized the competition. I always thought, even in 2007, it was a legitimate competition and took it very seriously, but I think the perception of being in a stadium like that and all the things ... that went along with (that created) the professionalization of the sport.”

Things had gone to the next level, and that was perhaps never more obvious than when a pair of fighter jets roared low over the stadium to open the proceedings under the bright lights of the tennis court on Friday, July 16. With turbofan thunder still echoing, “Go!” was called and Camille Leblanc-Bazinet punctuated the special moment by opening Amanda with an unbroken set of 9 kipping muscle-ups. CrossFit Games champ Tanya Wagner had struggled through 10 muscle-ups in 2009, and the crowd was awestruck to see Leblanc-Bazinet go unbroken and announce that CrossFit athletes had moved to the next level.

Overall, the concept of the CrossFit Games was becoming more refined, Everett added: “I think (organizers) started to get more dialed in on what they wanted the CrossFit Games to be and how they wanted the events to (run).”

Gone were the days of driving stakes into the ground with sledgehammers, as at the 2009 Games, but organizers still found suitable challenges for the world’s fittest, including an event that had athletes scaling the walls of the tennis court and carrying sandbags up and down the stairs of the venue.

Despite the change of location, the spirit of the Games remained the same.

“(It’s) still fitness and who can do the most work fastest. That part hasn’t changed,” Everett said.

WINNERS:

- Men: Graham Holmberg (USA)
- Women: Kristan Clever (USA)
- Team: CrossFit Fort Vancouver (USA)
- Masters Men: Brian Curley (USA)
- Masters Women: Laurie Carver (USA)



Carson, 2010: In a few years, the venue would actually require additional seating to handle the demand for tickets.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2011

“It’s just quintessential CrossFit.”

She pushed with all her might. It didn’t budge.

Really, she couldn’t be that surprised. It weighed at least 160 lb. more than she did.

As Annie Sakamoto recounted the story while sitting on a wooden plyo box outside CrossFit Santa Cruz Central, her affiliate in Soquel, California, she rolled her eyes and lightheartedly let out an exasperated grunt.

It was the seventh of 10 events at the CrossFit Games in 2011: 3 rounds for time of 30 double-unders and 10 95-lb. overhead squats, then 3 rounds for time of 10 handstand push-ups and a 40-foot sled push. The “dog sled” was loaded up with 275 lb. Sakamoto, 5 feet and 116 lb. at the time, was competing at the Games for the first time as an individual.

A CrossFit legend, Sakamoto, together with Nicole Carroll and Eva Twardokens, inspired legions of women through a CrossFit.com video in which the trio did the workout Nasty Girls at Coach Glassman’s original box in Santa Cruz. So when the sled remained stubborn, it was no surprise that Sakamoto heard the spectators inside the then-Home Depot Center erupt and urge her forward.

She gave the sled another push. It started to give.

“That was definitely one time I could sense the crowd and really felt like they gave me a charge to keep going,” said Sakamoto, who finished ninth that year and was the recipient of the Spirit of the Games Award.

But her showdown with the sled wasn’t her only difficulty at the 2011 Games. The other came a day earlier. Its name was Killer Kage.

“I struggled so hard with it,” Sakamoto said.

The event called for 3 rounds for time of 7 155-lb. front squats, 700 m on a Wattbike and a 100-foot monkey-bar traverse.

The monkey bars were “just far enough apart” to make reaching them a tall order, she said.

Then came the front squats—at nearly 40 lb. above her body weight. As Sakamoto struggled to clean the barbell for a set, other athletes gathered around.

“All the other girls were done,” she remembered. “I was struggling really hard.”

Sam Briggs and Becca Voigt were among the competitors who surrounded Sakamoto and encouraged her to keep working.

“Jenny Labaw is, like, yelling,” Sakamoto said, referencing the photo that captured the moment. “It’s just quintessential CrossFit.”

Sakamoto only beat three other women and took 32nd place in the event—but she created a classic CrossFit moment by refusing to quit.

Despite her difficulties that year, it’s the Games of which she’s most fond. And not because it started with a swim in the ocean she loves or because the community recognized her as a truly inspirational athlete, though those, too, are cherished memories.

The very reason Annie likes the 2010 Games is because they were hard.

“It’s funny how that kind of stuff can stick with you as a good memory rather than a bad memory.”

WINNERS:

- Men: Rich Froning (USA)
- Women: Annie Thorisdottir (Iceland)
- Team: CrossFit New England (USA)
- Masters Men 45-49: Scott DeTore (USA)
- Masters Women 45-49: Susan Habbe (USA)
- Masters Men 50-54: Gord Mackinnon (Canada)
- Masters Women 50-54: Mary Beth Litsheim (now Mary Beth Litsheim-Prodromides) (USA)
- Masters Men 55-59: Steve Anderson (USA)
- Masters Women 55-59: Shelley Noyce (USA)
- Masters Men 60+: Greg Walker (USA)
- Masters Women 60+: Betsy Finley (USA)



Carson, 2011: Annie Sakamoto, one of the athletes in the famous “Nasty Girls” video, leans into the dog sled.

Carson, 2011: First seen in 2010, rope climbs return to the competition, punishing athletes who did not learn from the past.

Carson, 2011: Like a night game at Wrigley Field, evening events under the lights have a special magic to them.





Camp Pendleton, 2012: In the endurance test that preceded the obstacle-course event, Julie Foucher beat all the women and 37 of the men.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2012

“There was so much camaraderie out there.”

What Julie Foucher remembers is what Jason Khalipa might prefer to forget: the opening event of the CrossFit Games in 2012.

While athletes thought the competition would open on Friday, the surprise swim-bike-run endurance test at Camp Pendleton was set for Wednesday and unexpectedly announced on Monday.

Athletes who thought they might be doing Fran or Grace in the friendly confines of the then-Home Depot Center were suddenly faced with a 700-m ocean swim, an 8-km bike ride across undulating terrain and soft sand, and an 11.3-km run through steep hills while negotiating 427 m of elevation gain. All male and female athletes would compete at once.

When the announcement was made at a special athletes' dinner in Manhattan Beach, the expression on Khalipa's face could only be described as utter shock.

“That's a long run. That's a gnarly run. This is gonna be a, woo,” he started telling Rory McKernan shortly after Games Director Dave Castro announced the event. “You know what I like about the CrossFit Games is that every year I come here—this is my fifth CrossFit Games—it's just a ball check.”

Khalipa laughed as he continued: “It's like, ‘Are you gonna step up and finish these events and get through it?’ And, uh, that's what we're here for, so you gotta just step up your game and make it happen.”

Remembering the event almost a year later, Khalipa described the Pendleton test as “very challenging.”

“The most grueling experience I've ever been through,” he said.

Foucher, meanwhile, pointed to the first Pendleton event as being among her favorites of any Games in which she's competed. She thinks of running alongside Christy Phillips (now Adkins), one of the first people she met in the CrossFit world. Foucher, who first qualified for the Games in 2010, had spent some time training with Phillips.

“I can't explain how awesome it was,” she said.

Phillips first caught up to Foucher with a pack of other athletes. With the harsh terrain dictating periods of brutal uphill walking, she could be heard yelling, “OK, guys, let's run for 15 seconds.”

“I kind of joined that group of people, and eventually people dropped off and it was just me and Christy,” Foucher said.

The two women pushed each other to keep moving through the grueling terrain as they tried to keep pace with one another.

But it was Foucher who eventually pulled away, finishing before all 42 women and all but eight of the 45 men who competed. She went on to place second overall.

“I think it's cool to be able to do events where men and women are competing together,” she said. “It's not the same kind of pressure. There was so much camaraderie out there. We were all just sort of supporting each other.”

WINNERS:

- Men: Rich Froning (USA)
- Women: Annie Thorisdottir (Iceland)
- Team: Hack's Pack Ute (USA)
- Masters Men 45-49: Gene LaMonica (USA)
- Masters Women 45-49: Lisa Mikkelsen (USA)
- Masters Men 50-54: Gord Mackinnon (Canada)
- Masters Women 50-54: Susan Habbe (USA)
- Masters Men 55-59: Tim Anderson (USA)
- Masters Women 55-59: Marnel King (USA)
- Masters Men 60+: Scott Olson (USA)
- Masters Women 60+: Mary Schwing (USA)



Carson, 2012: Far from the dusty, three-event competition of 2007, the Games are still a celebration where the community comes together.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2013

“I don’t know how to describe that feeling with the crowd.”

Val Voboril wasn’t sure where she stood going into the event that would close out Saturday at the CrossFit Games in 2013.

She avoids looking at the leaderboard during competitions, but even so, Voboril knew the competition had not started well for her. She placed 19th, 23rd and 23rd on the three events on Wednesday.

Voboril performed better on Friday and Saturday, taking two thirds, but the mother and full-time schoolteacher, competing at her fourth Games, needed to do well on Saturday’s final event, 2007.

This event marked the first repeat workout in Games history, and it was a flashback to the inaugural competition in 2007. That year at The Ranch in Aromas, a rusty peanut roaster borrowed from the Castros’ neighbors determined the elements of the event. The movements and reps—a 1,000-m row followed by five rounds of 25 pull-ups and 7 push jerks (135 lb./85 lb.)—were pulled out of the hopper. CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman had written about the hopper in 2002 in “What Is Fitness?” in which he stated that the fittest athletes should be able to outperform their peers on any physical challenges randomly drawn from a hopper.

After 2007 was announced in 2013, Voboril’s first reaction was simple: “Gosh, that’s a lot of pull-ups,” she remembered thinking.

“(When) I wasn’t so pleased with my results (on Wednesday), it was like, ‘Take a deep breath, learn from my mistakes,’” she said. “Tomorrow is a new day.”

The final heat of 2007 kicked off Saturday night in the Tennis Stadium, and all eyes were on Sam Briggs and Camille Leblanc-Bazinet. That was a mistake. Described by Games commentator Pat Sherwood as a “gray mist,” Voboril has a reputation for sneaking into the lead when nobody is watching.

And that’s exactly what she did.

The event kicked off and Voboril was the last in her heat to finish the 1,000-m row.

“I (looked) to my left, and everybody was off, and then I remember doing my last paddle stroke and looking to my right and going, ‘Nobody is on the rower,’” she said.

“I remember thinking to just row but not worry about going fast and keep everything else unbroken,” Voboril said.

She did the first set of 25 pull-ups unbroken and slowly began

to overtake the women around her. The workout was the same as in 2007, but Voboril had something the women at the first Games did not: a stadium full of screaming fans.

“I don’t know how to describe that feeling with the crowd, the way everyone (was) cheering,” Voboril said. “I literally closed my eyes and fed off that energy to make it through all those reps.”

More sets of 25 unbroken pull-ups and the gray mist crept into first place. In her final set of pull-ups, Voboril did 24 in a row, dropping for a short rest before she finished the work.

Voboril finished in 9:48.4. In 2007, the top finisher—Jolie Gentry, that year’s Games champion—finished in 16:22.

“As a long-time CrossFitter who followed OGs like Jolie Gentry, it was a rush and an honor to perform the original Hopper (event),” Voboril said.

“It was fun coming from behind and slowly but surely catching up and pushing for that finish. I felt like the turtle that beat the hare,” she said.

Voboril’s big win was enough to launch her into third place in the overall standings heading into the final day of competition, and she used fifth- and fourth-place finishes in the final two events to allow her to hold her daughter in her arms as she waved from the podium.

“I’m not having fun if I’m worried about the numbers,” she said. “If I want to be successful, I just have to go and give it my 100 percent.”

WINNERS:

- Men: Rich Froning (USA)
- Women: Sam Briggs (U.K.)
- Team: Hack’s Pack Ute (USA)
- Masters Men 40-44: Michael Moseley (USA)
- Masters Women 40-44: Amanda Allen (Australia)
- Masters Men 45-49: Ron Ortiz (USA)
- Masters Women 45-49: Lisa Mikkelsen (USA)
- Masters Men 50-54: Craig Howard (USA)
- Masters Women 50-54: Colleen Fahey (USA)
- Masters Men 55-59: Hilmar Hardarson (Iceland)
- Masters Women 55-59: Gabriele Schlicht (USA)
- Masters Men 60+: Scott Olson (USA)
- Masters Women 60+: Sharon Lapkoff (USA)

Carson, 2013: A model of consistency, Val Voboril follows up fifth in 2012 with a podium finish in 2013. She was fifth again in 2014.



Carson, 2013: Not an empty seat in the house, including in the temporary bleachers erected around the stadium.





Carson, 2014: Rich Froning becomes a legend in the Sport of Fitness with an unprecedented streak of four victories.

Will Duncan/CrossFit Journal

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2014

“We’ll never see someone as dominant as Rich Froning again.”

He was going to lose.

After an unprecedented three consecutive years at the top of the CrossFit Games podium, the indomitable Rich Froning Jr. became an underdog.

On the second day of competition at the 2014 Reebok CrossFit Games, he recorded his worst-ever finish in a Games event: 37th. He followed it up with a 15th-place finish and a 27th-place finish in the next two events. The next day he ended up 13th on one event and 15th on another.

“This is what it looks like for Rich to lose,” CrossFit Inc. Founder and CEO Greg Glassman observed at the time.

Prior to this fifth appearance at the Games, Froning had announced he would step away from individual competition. In an interview with Games analyst and commentator Pat Sherwood earlier that year, Froning had said, “It needs to end on a victory. It doesn’t have to end on a victory, but it needs to.”

As cameras broadcasted the then-27-year-old repeatedly walking—hands on his head—during the last leg of Friday morning’s Triple 3, what he needed seemed out of reach. There was collective disbelief. Even shock.

Upon finishing, Froning immediately exited the event area and proceeded directly toward the athlete tent. He was visibly upset and stone-faced as he hurried along to the ice baths—a stark contrast to his typically relaxed demeanor.

“I just turned into a wuss,” he said, explaining he felt dizzy during the run.

“I haven’t been runnin’ enough,” he added.

That evening, Froning won his heat of 21-15-9 Complex, the day’s fourth and final event, with an uncharacteristic move that saw him set the pace early and never relinquish. Onlookers wondered if it was too little too late. Two days of competition—packed with seven events, some of them unknown—remained.

But as Froning sat in the tunnel beneath the StubHub Center to watch the final men’s heat, he appeared calm.

“I’m not used to being in that third heat,” he said, looking at the TV while those ranked higher than him on the Leaderboard tackled deadlifts, cleans, snatches and ever-more-difficult versions of pull-ups.

Froning saw the clock tick past his 4:16.63, the time to beat.

“Got it.”

He stood up, nodded confidently, winked and walked away. Although the ending is known, what might not be obvious is how Froning arrived at it: acceptance.

Through his poor performances, Froning said he kept telling himself, “If it’s not meant to be, then it’s not meant to be, and it’s someone else’s time.”

On Friday night, when asked if he’d return if he didn’t win, he shook his head.

“My decision is final.”

When Sunday rolled around, Froning seemed to find his stride. He started the day with a win in Midline March and Thick ‘N’ Quick. Then it came to the final event, which would be announced seconds before it began.

With 1 minute remaining before its start, Director of the Games Dave Castro announced the closing challenge.

“Your final event for the 2014 Reebok CrossFit Games is Grace, 30 clean and jerks for time,” he said, his voice resounding through the speakers in the stadium.

With 30 seconds remaining, Castro spoke again.

“This is the CrossFit Games. You’re not gonna end on Grace. You’re gonna end on Double Grace.”

Froning nodded. Acceptance.

When the beep sounded, he calmly approached the bar. With textbook form, he moved through the reps, looking tired but not winded.

After rep No. 40, he stopped to tighten the right side of his barbell. With 5 reps remaining for the defending champ, his judge’s hand went up: 56, 57, 58, 59.

He jerked the barbell for the final time, let it fall behind him and casually walked across the finish line to win the event and the Games.

It wasn’t until after he had clinched the title that he revealed he had been sick earlier in the week with headaches and stomach pains.

An unexpected dark horse was Fittest on Earth. Again. And the streak, Castro recently noted, will remain unrivaled.

“We’ll never see someone as dominant as Rich Froning again.”

WINNERS:

Men: Rich Froning (USA)
Women: Camille Leblanc-Bazinet (Canada)
Team: CrossFit Invictus (USA)
Masters Men 40-44: Shawn Ramirez (USA)
Masters Women 40-44: Amanda Allen (Australia)
Masters Men 45-49: Jerry Hill (USA)
Masters Women 45-49: Kim Holway (USA)
Masters Men 50-54: Will Powell (USA)
Masters Women 50-54: Mary Beth Litsheim
(now Mary Beth Litsheim-Prodrromides) (USA)
Masters Men 55-59: Steve Hamming (USA)
Masters Women 55-59: Susan Clarke (Canada)
Masters Men 60+: Scott Olson (USA)
Masters Women 60+: Karen Wattier (USA)



Carson, 2014: The Push Pull event goes down under the lights, with Josh Bridges and Michele Letendre taking first place.

CROSSFIT GAMES: 2015

“I’m going to be competing for the rest of my life.”

In the CrossFit Games’ inaugural year, about 70 athletes of all ages showed up to compete. The next year, the competition grew to roughly 300 athletes.

There was no qualification process for either the 2007 or 2008 Games. If you wanted the title “Fittest on Earth,” all you had to do was get to a dusty family ranch in Aromas, California, and prove your mettle over the course of two days.

“It was very grassroots, Woodstock-type feel to it,” remembered Becca Voigt, an eight-time Games athlete who first competed in the Games in 2008. “Everyone became friends by the end of the weekend. The stakes are not nearly as high as they are now.”

Eight years later—at the ninth edition of the Games—80 individual athletes, 40 teams, teenagers in two divisions and masters athletes in five divisions competed before a crowd of thousands at the StubHub Center outside Los Angeles. Individual athletes completed 13 events over four days. The prize purse exceeded \$2 million, with money going to the top 20 finishers, as well as the top 3 in each event.

“The competition itself has grown exponentially in that time. The gap between the top and the bottom has definitely (expanded), and it’s a lot harder to get to the top, that’s for sure,” Voigt said.

The now-35-year-old finished third at the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games after winning the Southern California Regional that year. The next year, she finished 10th at the Games. In 2013, she placed 11th, and she finished in 24th in 2014—the same year organizers honored her with the Spirit of the Games Award.

“That was probably one of the most highlighted parts of my career when it comes to CrossFit. I’ve stood on that podium, I’ve been in third at the Games, and that really takes second fiddle to the Spirit of the Games Award,” Voigt said.

She explained: “I know the community I joined in 2006, and to be able to showcase that and to be able to show people in the sport that’s what I embody—that was definitely one of my shining moments at the CrossFit Games.”

In 2015, Voigt recorded her lowest Games finish: 31st. It was her least-favorite year.

“(It) was a tough year, I’m not gonna lie,” said Voigt, who in 2014 opened an affiliate, CrossFit Training Yard, in Toluca Lake, California.

The Games, she noted, are becoming “more serious.” In 2015 especially, Voigt said she felt “a lot more isolated on the competition floor.”

As the talent improves, so, too, must their tasks, she said in an interview before the California Regional in 2016.

“Dave (Castro) and his staff (have) to step it up. ... and it goes forward with this regional. This regional appears to be the hardest one yet.”

In 2016, Voigt finished sixth in the Open in the Southern California Region and second at the California Regional, becoming the only person to qualify for nine consecutive CrossFit Games.

Voigt said she has no intention of retiring from competition.

“This is my life. I’m going to be competing for the rest of my life,” she explained. “To stop completely doesn’t really make sense to my brain. ... There’s no reason to stop unless I’m stopped by something else.”

WINNERS:

- Men: Ben Smith (USA)
- Women: Katrin Tanja Davidsdottir (Iceland)
- Team: CrossFit Mayhem Freedom (USA)
- Teenage Boys 14-15: Angelo Diccico (USA)
- Teenage Girls 14-15: Sydney Sullivan (USA)
- Teenage Boys 16-17: Nicholas Paladino (USA)
- Teenage Girls 16-17: Isabella Vallejo (Australia)
- Masters Men 40-44: Shawn Ramirez (USA)
- Masters Women 40-44: Janet Black (USA)
- Masters Men 45-49: Matthew Swift (Australia)
- Masters Women 45-49: Kylie Massi (Australia)
- Masters Men 50-54: Joe Ames (USA)
- Masters Women 50-54: Cindy Kelley (USA)
- Masters Men 55-59: Will Powell (USA)
- Masters Women 55-59: Susan Clarke (Canada)
- Masters Men 60+: Steve Pollini (USA)
- Masters Women 60+: Rosalie Glenn (USA)



Carson, 2015: A competitor since 2008, Becca Voigt finishes 31st in her eighth trip to the Games.

Hermosa Beach, 2015: For the fourth year in a row, athletes prepare to swim in the first event of the CrossFit Games.

CROSSFIT GAMES PRIZE MONEY (U.S. DOLLARS)

2007—\$500 (winner) - \$1,000 (total purse)
2008—\$1,500 - \$3,000
2009—\$5,000 - \$10,000
2010—\$25,000 - \$50,000
2011—\$250,000 - \$1 million
2012—\$250,000 - \$1 million
2013—\$275,000 - \$1.4 million
2014—\$275,000 - \$1.75 million
2015—\$275,000 - \$2 million
2016—\$275,000 - \$2.2 million
2017—TBA - \$2.4 million
2018—TBA - \$2.6 million
2019—TBA - \$2.8 million
2020—TBA - \$3 million

2016 PRIZE MONEY

Individuals (Male and Female)

1st: \$275,000
2nd: \$90,000
3rd: \$60,000
4th: \$40,000

A total of \$215,000 will be awarded to finishers from fifth to 20th.

Teams

1st: \$70,000
2nd: \$45,000
3rd: \$25,000
4th: \$20,000
5th: \$15,000

Masters (Male and Female)

1st: \$10,000
2nd: \$5,000
3rd: \$3,000

Career Prize Money Leaders

INDIVIDUALS

Rich Froning—\$1,092,514
Annie Thorisdottir—\$596,500
Ben Smith—\$384,015
Samantha Briggs—\$344,057
Camille Leblanc-Bazinet—\$318,029
Katrin Tanja Davidsdottir—\$289,000
Mathew Fraser—\$197,015
Jason Khalipa—\$140,500
Josh Bridges—\$107,029
Julie Foucher—\$107,029



2016 Reebok CrossFit Games Quick Facts

- Title sponsor: Reebok
- The CrossFit Games will be held at the StubHub Center in Carson, California, for the seventh consecutive year after being held at The Ranch in Aromas, California, from 2007 to 2009.
- Fans from around the world will be able to keep up through constant coverage and live streaming of the events.
- Rogue Fitness shipped 35 tractor trailers of gear containing over 500 tons (1 million lb.) of equipment. The load contains 50,000 lb. of barbells, 150,000 lb. of bumper plates and 300,000 lb. of rig components. Over 100,000 pieces of hardware are required to link 25,000 ft. of rig uprights, crossmembers and pull-up bars.
- Youngest individual male athlete: Samuel Kwant (20)
- Youngest individual female athlete: Madeline Sturt (19)
- Oldest individual male athlete: Josh Bridges (33)
- Oldest individual female athlete: Rebecca Voigt (35)
- Average age of male individual athletes: 25.6
- Average age of female individual athletes: 27.7
- Tallest individual male: Spencer Hendel (6'2")
- Tallest individual female: Rebecca Voigt (5'9")
- Shortest individual male: Josh Bridges (5'5")
- Shortest individual female: Sheila Barden (5'0")
- Average height of all individual males: 5'10"
- Average height of all individual females: 5'5"
- Heaviest individual male: Spencer Hendel (215 lb.)
- Heaviest individual female: Emily Abbott (164 lb.)
- Lightest individual male: Logan Collins (167 lb.)
- Lightest individual females: Kristi Eramo, Thuridur Erla Helgadóttir, Tia-Clair Toomey, Alethea Boon (128 lb.)
- Average weight of all individual males: 194.4 lb.
- Average weight of all individual females: 143.0 lb.
- Oldest male masters competitor: Clarke Holland (64)
- Oldest female masters competitor: Mary Schwing (64)
- Number of first-time male individual athletes: 16
- Number of first-time female individual athletes: 12 (lowest number in Open era)
- Number of individual male qualifiers: 40
- Number of individual female qualifiers: 40
- Individual with nine consecutive Games appearances: Rebecca Voigt
- Individual with eight consecutive Games appearances: Ben Smith
- Individuals with seven consecutive Games appearances: Camille LeBlanc-Bazinet (also: Jason Khalipa, 2008-2014)
- Individuals with seven non-consecutive Games appearances: Annie Thorisdóttir, Stacie Tovar, Christy Adkins (also: Chris Spealler, 2007-2012, 2014)
- Individuals with six consecutive Games appearances: Michele Letendre, Rob Forte, Lucas Parker (also: Neal Maddox, 2010-2015; Matt Chan, 2008-2013).
- Individuals with six non-consecutive Games appearances: Spencer Hendel (also: Graham Holmberg, 2009-2013, 2015; and Pat Burke, 2008-2012, 2014).
- Total past individual Games appearances in men's field: 80
- Total past individual Games appearances in women's field: 63
- Most CrossFit Games events contested: Rebecca Voigt (81), Ben Smith (76), Camille Leblanc-Bazinet (72) and Jason Khalipa (71)
- Most CrossFit Games individual podium appearances: Rich Froning (5), Annie Thorisdóttir (4), Jason Khalipa (3) and Ben Smith (3)
- Most CrossFit Games top-five finishes: Rich Froning and Jason Khalipa (5), and four others with four each
- Most CrossFit Games top-10 finishes: Jason Khalipa (6), Rich Froning (5), Ben Smith (5) and Dan Bailey (5)
- Most CrossFit Games event wins: Rich Froning (16), Annie Thorisdóttir (12), Sam Briggs (7), Josh Bridges (7), and three others with six each
- Most CrossFit Games events in the top five: Rich Froning (35), Annie Thorisdóttir (31) and Jason Khalipa (30)
- Most CrossFit Games events in the top 10: Rich Froning (45), Ben Smith (41), Jason Khalipa (40), Annie Thorisdóttir (40) and Camille Leblanc-Bazinet (40)
- Number of teams competing: 40
- Only two teams have competed in eight consecutive Games: CrossFit Fort Vancouver and CrossFit Invictus both qualified in 2016
- Adam Neiffer of CrossFit Fort Vancouver and Nuno Costa of CrossFit Invictus will be making their eighth consecutive Games appearances as team members
- CrossFit affiliates to qualify an individual male, individual female, team and master at the same Games: Front Range CrossFit (2010) and CrossFit Active Artarmon (2015)
- CrossFit affiliates to qualify an individual male, individual female and team at the same Games: CrossFit Invictus (2014, 2016).
- Lynne Knapman is the only athlete to qualify for every single masters competition at the CrossFit Games since inception in 2010—seven consecutive years
- Number of masters qualifiers (all age divisions): 200
- Total number of competitors (barring withdrawals before the event): 560 athletes (80 individuals, 240 team members, 200 masters, 40 teens)
- Number of competitive divisions: 17
- Masters divisions (male and female): 40-44, 45-49, 50-54, 55-59 and 60+
- Teen divisions (male and female): 14-15, 16-17
- A total of 10 countries are represented by individuals
- A total of 8 countries are represented by teams
- A total of 12 countries are represented by masters
- A total of 8 countries are represented by teens
- A total of 19 countries are represented across all divisions



CrossFit Games Quick History

- CrossFit introduced the Sport of Fitness to the world in 2007 when around 70 athletes gathered in Aromas, California, at a ranch for the inaugural CrossFit Games. CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman believed the fittest athletes should be able to handle any and every task, so one event was chosen at random. The only way to win: do more work faster than anyone else.
- From 2007 to 2008, the Games went from 70 athletes to approximately 300.
- In 2009, the Games marked the global explosion of CrossFit with regional qualifiers held in the U.S., Canada, South America, Europe, Iceland, Asia, Australia and Africa, as well as online.
- 2009 also featured 100 teams competing in the Affiliate Cup. There was a team competition in 2007 and 2008, but it was made up of the combined scores of individual athletes. Teams competed together for the first time in 2009.
- In 2010, the event grew too big for The Ranch and moved to the Home Depot Center (now StubHub Center) in Carson, California.
- For the first time in history, the 2010 Games featured male and female masters competitions, with athletes aged 50 and older.
- In 2011, the masters competition was expanded to four male and four female divisions.
- In 2011, an off-site event tested athletes in the waves at the Santa Monica Pier—a first for the Games.
- The 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games were streamed on ESPN3.com and telecast on ESPN2 in a series of episodes that aired after the event.
- In 2012, the Central East Regional featured two former CrossFit Games champions competing in the same regional for the first time. Rich Froning and Graham Holmberg also competed against 2011 Open winner Dan Bailey in an event that was streamed live on ESPN3.com.
- In 2012, Froning and Annie Thorisdottir became the first repeat champions of the CrossFit Games.
- At the Games in 2012, all events were streamed live on Games.CrossFit.com, and each day six hours of content was produced for ESPN3.com. After the Games, 17 shows were produced and aired on ESPN, ESPN2 and Canada's TSN.
- In 2013, the 40-44 Masters Division was added to the competition, and the events were held earlier in Games week.
- In 2013, the CrossFit Games repeated a workout for the first time: the triplet that opened the 2007 competition.
- In 2013, all CrossFit Games heats and events were shown on ESPN3 (or on Games.CrossFit.com for international viewers). This was also the first year events were held in the soccer stadium.
- In 2014, more than half of the individual events took place in the soccer stadium to accommodate more fans.
- In 2014, Froning won the CrossFit Games for the fourth time and announced he would not compete as an individual in 2015.
- Select events from the 2014 Reebok CrossFit Games were broadcast live on ESPN platforms on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and all events were broadcast live on ESPN3 on all competition days (or on Games.CrossFit.com for international viewers).
- In 2015, CrossFit Games coverage on ESPN and ESPN2 increased to 16.5 hours, with team events featured for the first time in addition to individual competition. ESPN broadcast a total of six hours live on Friday and Saturday, and ESPN2 aired three-and-a-half hours of live competition on Sunday. All heats of all events were streamed live on ESPN3 and YouTube.
- Four teen divisions (boys and girls 14-15 and 16-17) were added in 2015.

Spirit of the Games Award Winners

2007—Kallista Papas and Ronnie Boose
 2008—No winner named
 2009—Jason Khalipa
 2010—Chris Spealler
 2011—Annie Sakamoto
 2012—Deborah Cordner Carson
 2013—Kristan Clever
 2014—Rebecca Voigt
 2015—Dan Bailey

Additional Resources

[History of the CrossFit Games](#)
[2011 Reebok CrossFit Games website](#)
[2010 CrossFit Games website](#)
[2009 CrossFit Games website](#)
[2008 CrossFit Games website](#)