



THE  
**CrossFit** JOURNAL

# DOCUMENTING THE CROSSFIT GAMES

Photos and text by Kieran Kesner

I began defining myself as a CrossFitter shortly after I joined CrossFit Praha in 2013, while living in Prague, Czech Republic. It was there that I learned how to squat, press and deadlift, and it was there that I first heard names such as Rich Froning and Annie Thorisdottir.

The CrossFit Games athletes became my role models, and I spent much of my time dreaming of what it would be like to someday compete at the elite level. While I might never enter the StubHub Center in Carson, California, as a professional athlete, entering the arena as a photographer is the next best thing.









At the Long Beach Marriott, the ballroom is transformed into a CrossFit gym for Games week. Suddenly the world's fittest athletes were before me, training, hanging out and relaxing in preparation for a competition that would crown one man and one woman Fittest on Earth.





I arrived at Hermosa Beach early to get a sense of how the events would be laid out and where I might position myself to capture the best images. It's one thing to see these athletes in photographs or video and another thing entirely to see them in person. Never in my life had I seen such extreme fitness. Each athlete was beautiful: strong and explosive yet equally delicate in movement.







The CrossFit Games were unlike anything I had ever documented before. The events are incredibly fast, but their action is predictable to a CrossFitter. I found myself not only reacting to the environment as I do on other shoots but also taking time before each event to understand the test. Each time, I developed a strategy and began surveying the environment to find little corners I could tuck myself into or places where I could peer just over the wall.

My goal was to try and capture the perfect moment, and while the CrossFit Games athletes provide a host of candidates during each challenge, I tried not to shoot endless frames with hopes of getting lucky. Even during fast-moving situations, I took the time to understand the workout and place myself in the athlete's shoes. I wanted to understand each competitor's approach and compose my photograph accordingly.







Documenting the Games involves finding moments I wish everyone had the opportunity to see. After the national anthem, the color guard withdrew behind the CrossFit Games banner in the Tennis Stadium, and the members of the crowd were beginning to psych themselves up for the competition. Thousands of eyes had left the color guard, but their attention to the flags did not fade. It was beautiful.

For the first time at the Games, Murph and a heavy version of DT challenged the competitors, who paid tribute to two servicemen who gave their lives for their country: Navy Lt. Michael P. Murphy and Air Force Staff Sgt. Timothy P. Davis. It's special to watch athletes compete to be named the Fittest on Earth, but it's truly moving to see the blood, sweat and tears that pour from them as they honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.









The fifth and final day was torture. The athletes had pushed their limits physically and mentally, but despite the exhaustion you could see in their eyes, each one displayed the grit, character and determination that define the Fittest on Earth.











**THE**  
**CrossFit**JOURNAL