

Team Taranis: Canada's Team

With Iceland Annie the fittest woman on Earth, Emily Beers talks about the international flavor of the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games.

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All images: Staff/CrossFit Journal

Palms sweating, heart beating. I look over at a teammate.

"I'm nervous," she says.

"I know. Me too," I reply.



Sara Stamm Bergland of Team Taranis does Fran in the team final at the CrossFit Games.

No, we aren't about to compete. In fact, we're sitting in the stands with an afternoon beer in hand. We are about to watch our fellow Canada West team—Team Taranis—in the Sunday afternoon team final of the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games.

I look up at the screen. Next to five of the six teams are little American-flag icons. Needless to say, it's not hard not to feel pride for my country when I see one maple leaf amidst the stars and stripes.

Surrounded by others from my own affiliate—CrossFit Vancouver—as well as Canadians from CrossFit Whistler, CrossFit Kitsilano and Fitness Town, cheering for Taranis felt a bit like cheering for Canada in the hockey gold-medal game at the Olympics.

As much as my team would have loved to have qualified for the final day of competition, the next 30 minutes is about Taranis. It is about their six athletes—Rachel (Rocky) Siemens, Myriam (Burrito) Barreda, Sara

(Flash Dance) Stamm Bergland, Dan (Boom) Atkinson, Tyson (Tuna) Takasaki and Andrew (Focker) Roodbol.

As the event begins, CrossFit New England steals the early lead, a lead they continue to increase as the event wears on. But Taranis has their moments of brilliance: Siemens absolutely blasts through Isabel, and Roodbol's Diane performance puts Taranis in second place heading into the final leg, Karen.

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Taranis vs. Elizabeth.



Tyson Takasaki gives it everything on Grace.

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Siemens and Stamm Bergland agree that they could feel the Canadian energy, which helped them push that much harder to get to the podium.

“You could feel the energy from the people here from Canada West. It’s a special bond we all share as Canadians. We wanted CrossFit Vancouver to be here with us today, too. We all just want to see a Canadian flag up there, no matter who it is,” said Siemens.

Stamm Bergland adds: “I have been getting texts and Facebook messages all weekend long from people saying they’re watching, they’re cheering ... it’s amazing, all this support.”

Takasaki said being a part of Team Taranis at the Games offered him some kind of redemption after missing out on qualifying for the Games as an individual by one point at the Canada West Regional.

“To be honest, I was kind of crushed after missing out qualifying as an individual, but I got rebounded by this team Training with them for the past couple months has been great. It has brought us closer and closer, and the whole thing has been an awesome experience,” he said.

Although Takasaki, Stamm Bergland and Siemens all said that they entered the final event hoping to take the title, they’re thrilled with their podium finish.

“Originally, we came here hoping to make it to the final event on Sunday. Our goal was just to get to Sunday,” said Siemens. “So coming third is like a cherry on top of the weekend,” she said.

It certainly was a cherry on top for our little section of Canadian CrossFitters, who immediately started handing out high fives to any Canadian in the area.

“So awesome. We were third. We medaled,” said one of my CrossFit Vancouver teammates.

Watching Taranis today really did make us feel like we placed third.

At the 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games, Emily Beers competed on CrossFit Vancouver’s affiliate team, which placed 19th.