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North and South

Andréa Maria Cecil trolls Reebok HQ during the Northeast Regional, while Hilary Achauer soaks up the sun in SoCal.

By Andréa Maria Cecil and Hilary Achauer

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The 2011 Reebok CrossFit Games featured 17 regional competitions going on in very different areas. Up in Canada West, the athletes competed in a hockey rink. In Northern California, the athletes competed in the rain. They had a streaker at the Australia Regional.

1 of 8



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Travis Bagent fires up the crowd at the Northeast Regional.

In the last weekend of regional competition, we sent Andréa Maria Cecil to the Northeast Regional at Reebok International world headquarters in Massachusetts and Hilary Achauer to Long Beach State in Southern California. Here's what they saw on the same weekend in June, 2,600 miles apart.

The Voice of the People

The crowd of roughly 1,000 watched as the final group of male competitors neared the finish of the infamous 100s workout on the second day of the Reebok CrossFit Games Northeast Regional.

The heat included well-known names within the CrossFit community: David Charbonneau, Dave Lipson, Austin Malleolo, Mike McKenna, Rob Orlando and Daniel Tyminski.

At about 18 minutes into the workout, event emcee Travis Bagent—34, 6'3", 265 lb.—sauntered by the competitors, microphone in hand, leaning in to hear an athlete's judge call out the rep number.

"Austin Malleolo, 10 reps left," he announced and continued his walk to the athlete just behind Malleolo.

"The race is right here, ladies and gentlemen!"

—Travis Bagent

"Daniel Tyminski, 10 reps left!" he exclaimed into the microphone. "The race is right here, ladies and gentlemen!"

The crowd erupted in a roar. With that, both athletes plowed through their last reps. Tyminski finished first with a time of 18:40. Malleolo, 18:43.

Afterward, Bagent made his way back to the athlete-entrance tent for some shade and joked, "I made that race." Then he let out a big laugh.

Bagent's self-assessment wasn't far from the truth.

“I Love Travis”

Outdoors at Reebok HQ in Canton, Mass., the competition field was flanked by a 400-meter track, a basketball court and glass buildings that almost looked like inverted obelisks. Music that included everything from dance songs to Saul Williams’ *List of Demands (Reparations)* and the Foo Fighters’ *All My Life* blared from the speakers on both sides of the screen. There, athlete standings were displayed along with current regional workouts, heat competitors and even videos of Miranda Oldroyd, Jason Khalipa and Mikko Salo doing workouts.

The athlete village included reclining outdoor chairs, a fan that blew a mist of water into the area and warm-up equipment for competitors. Over the course of the three-day event, Bagent excited spectators, motivated athletes and kept everyone informed—rep by rep.

“I love Travis,” HQ trainer, athlete and regional head judge E.C. Synkowski said with a smile and a chuckle just after Bagent told the crowd to give it up for another HQ trainer during the final women’s heat of the weekend.



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Austin Malleolo gets ready for muscle-ups at Reebok HQ.

“Put your hands together, workin’ crazy hard all weekend long, Jennifer Hunter-Marshall!” Bagent said.

That day had started with Amanda, and its muscle-ups and squat snatches separated Games contenders from the rest.

Bagent provided a play-by-play.

“And she’s up. She’s up again! She’s a beast! In Lane 4, CrossFit Providence!” he excitedly boomed into the microphone during the first affiliate heat.

Moments later: “Let’s go, Shoreline. You’ve got the hang of this now. Get up!”

But the second affiliate heat is when the action became practically nail-biting.

“We got a leader. In Lane 4—that’s CrossFit Route 1!”

But the duo of Mat Frankel and Heather Bergeron caught up.

“We have a new leader back in Lane 1! CrossFit New England!” Bagent announced.

The crowd roared.

As Bergeron expressed visible disappointment over a couple of missed muscle-ups in the final round, Bagent’s voice enveloped the 450-square-foot outdoor competition space: “CrossFit New England, CrossFit Route 1, head-to-head. CrossFit Route 1—they want a ticket to California. You can get it right here!”

The crowd yelled. Then Bergeron finished her muscle-ups.

**“CrossFit New England,
CrossFit Route 1, head to
head. CrossFit Route 1—they
want a ticket to California.
You can get it right here!”**

—Travis Bagent



After borrowing a pair of shorts from Magnum, P.I., Daniel Tyminski snatches like it's 1985.

"The race is on. Squat snatches for the male athletes!" Bagent said, speeding up his cadence, as the men from both teams headed into the final round of squat snatches.

In the end, CrossFit New England bested CrossFit Route 1 by two seconds with a time of 13:51.

"We're probably on our way downhill from that event right there," Bagent said and then laughed into microphone, rubbing his head.

An Emcee Is Groomed

Minutes into the final affiliate workout of the weekend, HQ Director of Training Dave Castro, beneath the athlete-entrance tent, told Bagent, "Travis, this is the last stretch of the day. Let's see what you got. Don't give up on me now."

The two men shook hands—in the way that only men do—and Castro gave Bagent a big smile. Bagent strutted onto the competition field.

"Look at Lane 2, CrossFit Shoreline, unbroken, no problem," he announced as a male athlete pushed out 40 dumbbell ground-to-overheads.

Aside from his jovial and grounded demeanor, Bagent's raspy voice is part of the charm. It personifies CrossFit.

But Albany CrossFit—not Shoreline—saw its first athlete cross the finish line.

"Let's give it up for Shoreline CrossFit," Bagent told the crowd. "Come on. Go, go, go! You got a chance!"

And the crowd erupted yet again.

"He's been doing good," said Castro, who arrived for the third day of the regional.

"He needs to get more familiar with the athletes," he added. "He'll get there by being around. Once he understands the athletes and their histories, that'll take him to the next level."

The next level comes soon.

Bagent will be the emcee for this year's Games, to be held July 29-31 at the Home Depot Center in Carson, Calif.

"Dave Castro groomed me to announce the Games," said Bagent, a 20-time national arm-wrestling champion and an eight-time world champion sponsored by Rogue Fitness. Bagent was also the man with the mic at the Central East Regional.

Increasingly, Castro will be stepping back from announcing.

"I'm staying in his back pocket," Castro said with a smile. "I needed to develop someone."

Emotionally Involved

By almost all accounts, Bagent was a hit at the Northeast Regional.

He only heard one complaint, he said, from a female spectator who said, "My son placed third and you didn't say anything."

He shrugged.

Aside from his jovial and grounded demeanor, Bagent's raspy voice is part of the charm. It personifies CrossFit.

"Friendly but tough," said Ben Bergeron, Northeast Regional director and co-owner of CrossFit New England.

"He brings a ton of energy," he continued. "He does a good job of informing the crowd and the athletes. He's done a phenomenal job."

He added: "And he's a CrossFitter."

As CrossFit 908 owner Tim Carroll exited the competition field after finishing the final workout of the regional, he put out his fist for a bump from Bagent.

"Good job announcing this weekend. You did an awesome job," Carroll told him.

The moment was characteristic of the three-day event, where Bagent made many moments memorable.

"The quicker you can decipher it, the quicker you can get it out to the people," said Bagent, who referred to CrossFit New England's Mel Ockerby as "The Ockerbeast" throughout the weekend. "You could be out there thinking you know what's going on and someone could say, 'Time!' and you're like, 'What?'"

"Ninety percent of people know what's going on here," he said. "But we're getting bigger. There's people watching who don't know as much about CrossFit. (They) have to be emotionally involved."

As the final men's heat of the weekend wrapped up, Bagent was out on the field, shaking hands and giving hugs to sweat-soaked competitors. That, he said, is how a CrossFit emcee should be.

"It's gotta be a guy who can give some love to the guy who's all bloody."



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Full ROM? Hell, yeah.

Bring on the “Jorts”

In true SoCal style, the scene at the Southern California Regional was big, fast and loud.

Held outdoors at Long Beach State’s Jack Rose Track in the shadow of a giant 18-story blue pyramid, the competition field was under the flight path of the Long Beach Airport, and planes flew directly overhead throughout the day as athletes put up blistering, world-record times.

The competition started off on Friday with the region’s famous June gloom, as the teams hit the rowers and handstand push-ups under cloudy skies. The event was barely underway when the first world record was set—22:55 in Event 1—by the newly opened Outlier Crossfit.

“We had practiced this enough and weren’t shocked when we set the record,” said Adam Stevenson, one of the owners and team members of Outlier.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

Never-nude syndrome affects hundreds worldwide, perhaps including Ronnie Teasdale.

Nothing could top Ronnie Teasdale and the parade of jeans shorts—the much-maligned “jorts.”

The sun came out in time for the thruster ladder. As Katie Hogan and Lindsey Valenzuela battled it out over the 190-lb. thruster, kids played nearby in the track’s long-jump sand pit. Among these potential future CrossFit champions, two sported mohawks and matching red sweatbands as they soaked in the atmosphere of athletic excellence. The hair and accessories were just a few of the many fashion statements seen on both participants and competitors.

Cesar Flores of Brick CrossFit showed his dedication by shaving the shape of a kettlebell and the word “brick” into the side of his head. Twenty-year-old competitor and original CrossFit Kid Connor Martin wore a purple weight belt, bright green knee socks and a backwards hat throughout the competition, but nothing could top Ronnie Teasdale and the parade of jeans shorts—the much-maligned “jorts”—that he wore to compete in all weekend. His flashy style peaked on the last day with a pair of jorts completely ripped up each side, Incredible Hulk-style, which flapped open and put his legs on full display during the overhead lunges.



Hilary Achauer

Affiliate T-shirts are so last year. Cesar Flores represents his box with new style.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

"Down, down. Do your dance, do your dance!"

But the vibe at SoCal wasn't all bright colors and statement-making outfits.

"We have a very tight community, and it feels like family," said CrossFit Marina's Denise Serrano, one of the organizers of the event. "I've been impressed by the number of spectators this weekend—many of them have never witnessed a CrossFit competition. A lot of the teams here are the old-school affiliates, but it's great to see so many new people coming out to support these athletes."

On Day 2 of the event, the sun came out and the crowds swelled. As the athletes and their jaw-dropping performances made headlines, the intensity was just as high off the competition field. Tight, close-knit communities are a hallmark of CrossFit, and the crowds at the SoCal Regional were an important part of the competition. CrossFit Invictus and Brick CrossFit had supporters in the hundreds cheering on their athletes, and as the Brick team finished up Workout 3, the brutal deadlifts and box jumps, the orange-clad Brick crew shouted out each of the last nine box-jump reps, urging their team on to a first-place finish for the workout.

It wasn't just the winners who got love from the SoCal crowd. With Fugazi blasting from the speakers, the entire crowd gathered to cheer on Tina Angelotti, the last woman in her heat to finish up Event 3.

"The crowds are very dedicated here," said Darren McGuire, a judge at the event. "The level of competition in this region is intense, and the crowds are responding. We all can't achieve the level of the top competitors, but they inspire us to do better."

The CrossFit Los Angeles team, the big surprise of the SoCal Regionals, best demonstrated the power of team spirit. Their squad entered the regional competition in 30th place, and going into the weekend the most they hoped for was a strong showing. The team came prepared to do work and put up strong and consistent performances, but their enthusiastic fan base set them apart. Clad in matching baby-blue V-neck CrossFit LA shirts, the CrossFit Los Angeles crew broke into a choreographed *Cupid Shuffle* dance and organized chants throughout the weekend.

This tradition came about during the Open competition. Right before the first Open workout, the tension in the gym was palpable, so to loosen everyone up, coach Kenny Kane—a stand-up comedian and hip-hop dance instructor—put on the *Cupid Shuffle* and taught everyone the dance. This dance became the warm-up for every Open workout, "and soon it was an indicator that it was 'game on,'" said CrossFit Los Angeles owner Andy Petranek.



Staff/CrossFit Journal

So you think you can dance, CrossFit LA?

Heather Scaglione dislocated her shoulder in the Amanda workout and rammed it back into joint against the pull-up rig during the first round to take second in her heat.

Knowing they would have to step it up for the last day, the team asked the organizers of the event if they could take over the P.A. before Event 6. They performed the dance on the sidelines, which inspired a third-place finish overall and secured a spot in the Games.

The final workout of the day turned out to be one of the most gutsy and dramatic performances of the weekend. Heather Scaglione dislocated her shoulder in the Amanda workout and rammed it back into joint against the pull-up rig during the first round to take second in her heat.

As she strapped her feet into the rower for the final workout, the crowd watched in disbelief as she began rowing with only one hand. The rest of the athletes surged ahead of her, but she finished the row and continued on with one-handed burpees. She got to the two-arm dumbbell ground-to-overheads, where she was faced with lifting two 35-lb. dumbbells overhead 40 times with a dislocated shoulder. As a medic crouched in front of her, she looked at the weights, took a deep breath and slowly, with gritted



Heather Scaglione knows no quit.

teeth, raised both arms overhead. Each lift took maximum effort just to raise her right arm, but she kept going, the judge shouting encouragement.

To the disbelief of the entire crowd, Heather finished the 40 ground-to-overheads and moved on to the toes-to-bars. Lauren Andrade and Jacquie Anderson, who had both finished their workout, gathered around, shouting encouragement and urging the crowd to cheer on the astonishing performance.



About the Authors

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Courtesy of Andréa Maria Cecil

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Courtesy of Hilary Achauer