



## Salo, Wagner Win 2009 CrossFit Games

A Finnish firefighter and a Pennsylvania phys. ed. teacher are the World's Fittest Man and Woman.

Mike Warkentin



Mikko Salo and Tanya Wagner are the 2009 CrossFit Games champions.

Both athletes showed an incredible amount of skill and tenacity during the two-day event that included virtually every CrossFit movement. Muscle-ups, double-unders, handstand push-ups, Olympic lifts and a vicious trail run were but a few of the challenges the athletes faced, and Salo and Wagner proved they were the class of an elite international field.

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A Finnish firefighter and rescue diver, Salo served notice to the CrossFit community early on when he nearly beat legend Chris Spealler on the trail run that opened the individual competition. If the Finn was unknown before the event, his duel with Speal immediately raised his profile.

Over the next two days, Salo kept notching consistent performances that earned him the victory.

"I'm happy. I'm really happy now," Salo said after his win. "It has been a very, very hard couple of days."

The title came down to four athletes in the final heat: Salo, Tommy Hackenbruck, Steve Willis and Moe Kelsey all had a shot at the win. Sadly, James (OPT) FitzGerald was forced to withdraw from the competition before the chipper due to injury.

### The Final WOD

**15 barbells cleans (100/155 lb.)**

**30 toes to bar**

**30 box jumps (20/24 inches)**

**15 muscle-ups**

**30 push presses (25/40 lb.)**

**30 double-unders**

**15 thrusters (95/135 lb.)**

**30 pull-ups**

**30 burpees**

**Overhead walking lunges (25/45 lb.)**

Hackenbruck took the early lead. Salo managed a few doubles on the muscle-ups but was passed by Jason Khalipa on the way to the thrusters. The two headed to the pull-ups neck in neck, but Salo pulled away on the burpees, taking a large lead into the lunges.

The huge crowd roared as he crossed the line in 19:46 with a bright red bumper held overhead, winning both the WOD and the overall title.

"It was cruel," Salo said of the last workout. "But I kept thinking, 'Next rep. Next rep. Next rep—and the end will be coming.'"

Salo was uncertain about how the WOD would play out given that he had learned how to do double-unders earlier in the afternoon.

After Salo's win, Pat Barber was clear about who did the training: "He's my athlete."

"There are amazing people here," Salo said of the fellow athletes who coached him on the new movement.

The man from Pori, Finland, is proud to be bringing the CrossFit Games title back to Europe.

"I'm very proud," he said. "CrossFit is going to be very important to grow in Europe. It's coming like a storm to Europe now, and I hope this helps it."

Tommy Hackenbruck, who got to the Games via the Last Chance Qualifier, was second, and Moe Kelsey was third.

On the female side, Tanya Wagner of Pennsylvania improved on her second-place finish last year by taking the 2009 crown—but it didn't come easy.







The theme of this year's games was "Unknown and Unknowable," and Annie Thorisdottir from Iceland certainly provided both the unknown element and a challenge for Wagner. After only two months of CrossFit training, the 19-year-old Thorisdottir emerged as the only competitor with a chance to wrest the overall title away from Wagner in the final WOD.

But could Thorisdottir do muscle-ups?

After the final WOD was announced, CrossFit Director of Training Nicole Carroll and CrossFit Gymnastics Coach Jeff Tucker were teaching Thorisdottir how to perform the movement in the warm-up area. Thorisdottir is a phenomenal athlete, but no one knew if she could get 10 muscle-ups during the WOD.

It turned out she could get a muscle-up—but only one. The crowd roared as she struggled through it, but the teen could go no further than that.

Wagner had difficulty on the muscle-ups but was tenacious and kicked her way through them.

"After three, I just didn't want to try," she said. "I was like, 'Wow these are hard.' I just knew I could get one at a time, but it's so hard when you watch everybody else pass you.... I absolutely was just scared doing all of them, and the last two felt so good to be done."

Wagner completed the rest of the WOD and finished in 29:34.4, claiming the overall title with a consistent performance across the board. All told, Wagner only finished out of the top 10 in one event, proving she is truly the master of all 10 CrossFit fitness domains.

"This is a dream," she said. "Last year was so awesome, but it was a different feeling than it is this year. This year is just awesome."

Wagner didn't take any confidence from going into the final workout as the lead.



### Salo's Overall Performance

WOD 1: 2<sup>nd</sup>  
WOD 2: 17<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 3: 9<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 4: 32<sup>nd</sup>  
WOD 5: 4<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 6: 11<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 7: 2<sup>nd</sup>  
WOD 8: 1<sup>st</sup>

### Wagner's Overall Performance

WOD 1: 11<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 2: 6<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 3: 8<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 4: 9<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 5: 5<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 6: 2<sup>nd</sup>  
WOD 7: 6<sup>th</sup>  
WOD 8: 7<sup>th</sup>

"I hate going into something being first. I hate that," she said. "I like to catch up. So it's just fun to know that I was able to hold on to that. You don't even know. From workout two and three today, beforehand I (didn't think) there was any way I was getting through either one of them. I'm just so happy!"

Charity Vale, who finished the WOD in a brilliant 18:24, was second, and Carey Kepler was third.

At the ceremony after the competition, Jolie Gentry was given the Military/LEO Award, and Jason Khalipa was given the Spirit of the Games Award after finishing almost last in the run but then clawing his way back to fifth. Aside from his poor placing in the first WOD, Khalipa scored first in two events and finished second in the last three.



### About the Author

*Mike Warkentin is the staff writer for the CrossFit Journal. His WOD at the [2009 CrossFit Games](#): write 10,000 words for time.*

### Top 10 Men

1. Mikko Salo
2. Tommy Hackenbruck
3. Moe Kelsey
4. Steve Willis
5. Jason Khalipa
6. Peter Egyed
7. Blair Morrison
8. Patrick Burke
9. David Millar
10. D.J. Wickham

### Top 10 Women

1. Tanya Wagner
2. Charity Vale
3. Carey Kepler
4. Kristan Clever
5. Lindsey Smith
6. Christy Phillips
7. Jolie Gentry
8. Jenny Olson
9. Crystal McReynolds
10. Stacey Kroon