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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL SPECIAL

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## Mile-High Hybrid

The story from Day 1 at the  
CrossFit-USAW Open in Colorado Springs.



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By Mike Warkentin Managing Editor

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All images S.Dy/CrossFit

Colorado Springs, Colo.—Call it a new era of sport, one featuring official Oly platforms and pull-up rigs side by side.

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## Day One ... (continued)

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The USAW-CrossFit Open kicked off this morning, pairing a judged Olympic-lifting competition with a CrossFit triplet. The order of the day: three snatches, three clean and jerks, and as many rounds as possible in 10 minutes of 6 squat cleans (55/30 kg), 12 pull-ups and 24 double-unders.

Yes, the competition forced CrossFitters into singlets, but it also brought together two sports that aren't as far apart as many would like to think.

"I think it's fantastic," said Natalie Burgener, who just returned from a 12<sup>th</sup>-place finish in the 63-kg class at the World Weightlifting Championships in Turkey. "It's kind of like joining two favorite things all in one space. It's great because it's an actual USAW-sanctioned meet, but it's geared towards the CrossFitters. It's not just geared towards the strong ones. You still have to be fit."

Natalie, a 2008 Olympian, is married to Casey Burgener, son of CrossFit Oly coach Mike Burgener, so she's had the chance to compete at the highest levels of weightlifting as well as experience the intensity of CrossFit. Overall, she was very impressed with the performance of the CrossFitters on the platforms.

"They're lifting good weight, overall I'd say very cleanly," Natalie said after the first session of the day. "There were a couple of things that overall CrossFitters need to work on. I saw a lot of power lifts instead of going all the way into a full receiving position. That's not something that they have to do but something that is going to help them increase their total."



*Five minutes after the Oly half of the event ended, athletes attacked a 10-minute CrossFit triplet requiring power, gymnastics ability and stamina.*

Still, the Olympian was happy to see many CrossFitters experiencing the strategy and planning of an Oly contest for the first time.

"I thought they chose good weight," she said, "Sometimes it looked light. A lot of times I was like, 'That was way too easy for a first attempt or way too easy for a third attempt.' But that just comes from being in the sport a little bit longer, knowing how to gauge your attempts, knowing how you respond on the platform."

In the first session, Chris Spealler responded very well to the pressure of the platform before ripping through a met-con at his signature non-stop pace to win the 62-kg class. He saw a few red lights along the way to the podium, which is something very new for a guy who spends most of his time lifting in a CrossFit box.

"I think I knew what I needed to get, but things that I would have counted for myself, things that I would have assumed were a lockout, weren't. My snatch went well, but my clean and jerk, my left elbow was a little soft. It was, 'No lift!' where I'm like, 'It's over my head. It counts,'" Spealler laughed.

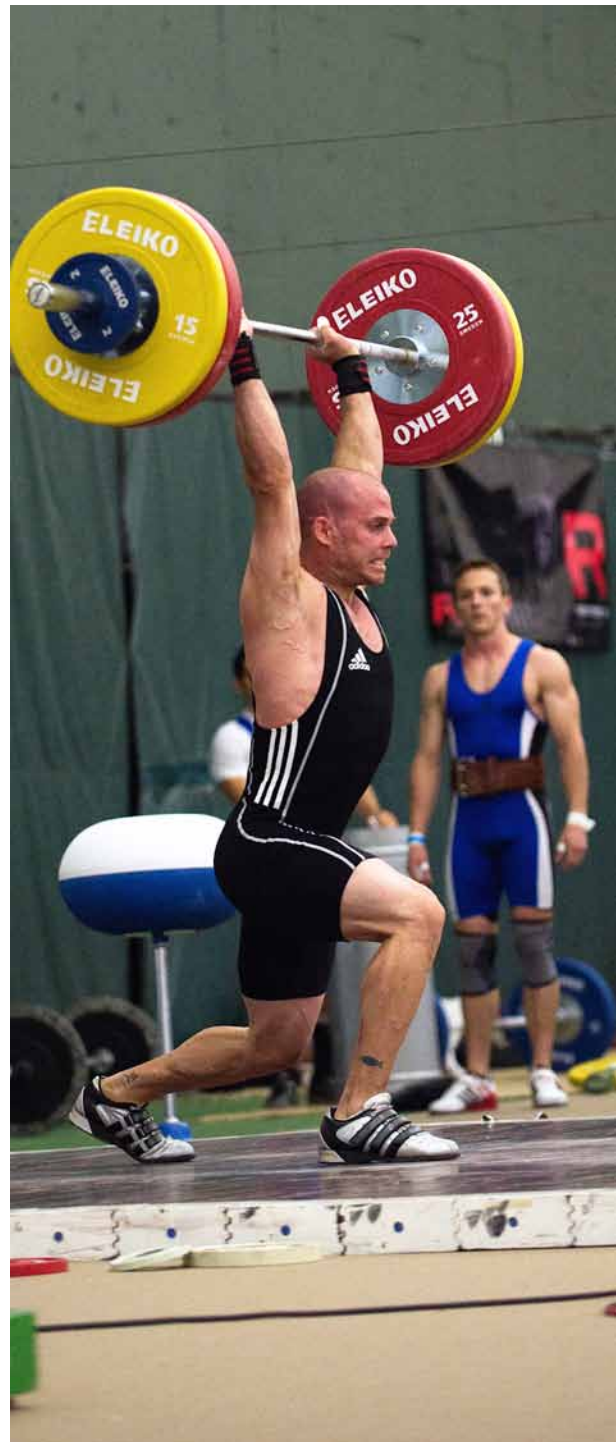
Even with a red light or two, the friendly athlete from Utah topped his class with a 91-kg snatch and a 109-kg clean and jerk. He went on to crush the triplet, scoring 359 reps—almost 50 more than any other competitor.

Spealler has competed in all four editions of the CrossFit Games and likened this hybrid contest to the inaugural event in Aromas in 2007.

"This kind of reminds me of the first Games," he said, "and I think it's going to do the same thing the Games are doing ... I think it's going to be big for both communities, maybe even more for Olympic lifting because I can see more CrossFitters dabbling in Olympic lifting than I can see Olympic lifters dabbling in CrossFit."

Elyse Umeda was another Games competitor who stepped onto the platform, and she said it was a little different to actually know the events beforehand, unlike the 2010 Games, where athletes had no idea what workouts they'd perform at the Home Depot Center.

"We knew what we were going to do," she said. "There were no secrets, but on top of that, you've got a lot of rules and regulations that are unfamiliar for a normal CrossFitter. For me that was the most nerve-wracking part ... The AMRAP was standard, and I had a lot of fun in that."



**Chris Spealler totaled 200 kg in the Oly portion of the event, then knocked out 359 reps in the triplet.**



*Elyse Umeda came close to PRs in the Oly lifts on her way to a win in the 58-kg class.*

Umeda won the 58-kg class with a 55-kg snatch and a 77-kg clean and jerk, both of which were just under her PR weights. She scored 295 reps on the triplet. She only saw one red light for an obvious miss, but proper form was on her mind all day.

"It's just a matter of constantly practicing hitting the lockout, not just getting it overhead but really getting those elbows locked out in the catch," she said.

When asked if she would recommend an Oly competition to others, Umeda was emphatic:

"That's what CrossFit's about. It's about trying new sports, trying new things, testing yourself at different sports, and for me it was a ton of fun."

To close out the day Dave Lipson and Josh Everett mounted one platform for a face-to-face Isabel: 30 snatches at 135 lb. Incredibly, the beastly strong Lipson and the powerful Everett tied with 1:06. Both will lift tomorrow—Lipson in the 105-kg class and Everett in the 85s.

To watch the rest of the weekend's competition, visit [live.crossfit.com](http://live.crossfit.com).

For complete results, visit the [USAW website](http://USAWeightlifting.com).