
THE CrossFit JOURNAL SPECIAL

Light Weight?

Day 2 of the CrossFit-USA Open:
Olympian Chad Vaughn takes the platform.



By Mike Warkentin Managing Editor

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"I was just planning on starting out really light."

1 of 4

Day Two ... (continued)

That was Chad Vaughn's strategy for the 85-kg competition at the CrossFit-USA Open. Vaughn asked for a pedestrian 130 kg for his first snatch attempt and locked it out without difficulty before nailing his next five lifts for a total well over 300 kg.

Vaughn, of course, is an Olympian who finished 20th in the 77-kg class at the recent International Weightlifting Federation World Championships in Turkey, and he was the class of the lifting field in the afternoon session. Taking weights above and beyond the rest of the competitors, Vaughn was left alone on his platform to perform three consecutive snatches and three consecutive cleans after the other lifters had exhausted their attempts.

The athlete from Oklahoma is a Pan Am Games gold medalist who boasts a top competition snatch of 152 kg and a top clean and jerk of 195, and even though he didn't go near those numbers, he held the crowd silent as he moved heavy bars with relative ease.

Vaughn had a sizeable lead going into the CrossFit half of the event, where he had a very respectable showing in what was only his second real WOD.

"More than the physical aspect of an Olympic-lifting competition, for me anyway, and I think for most lifters, is the mental focus that it takes," he said. "That really wears you out more than the physical. ... After that last clean and jerk, I had a little bit of rest and I felt drained and like, 'Oh man, I'm about to go do this stuff for 10 minutes.'"



Vaughn quickly learned about the classic CrossFit recovery position after the triplet.

Vaughn's coaches had him prepared for the triplet of cleans, pull-ups and double-unders, and the Olympian showed perfect form on every single squat clean.

"They (my coaches) told me, 'Stay calm, take your time, and go a little bit slower than you think you need to,'" he said. "I figured I'd burn out really quickly on the pull-ups, so they stayed on top of me to break those up from the beginning and not burn myself out too quick. I had no idea what to expect as far as rounds. I was hoping to get at least three, so I'm pleased with getting three and a half or so."

Vaughn's impressive performance wasn't enough to hold off Josh Everett, who had a fine showing in the Oly lifts and then completed just over six rounds in the triplet to take gold. For Everett, one of the original CrossFit stars, the win marks his first victory in a major event after reaching the podium in both the 2007 and 2008 CrossFit Games.

Earlier in the day the 77-kg men preceded the 63- and 69-kg women. In the latter session, Lindsey Benson gave the crowd at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort a special moment by power-cleaning 91 kg—just over 200 lb.—before jerking it overhead. She followed the lift with a leap and a scream, and she certainly deserved a celebration after fighting through a back injury last year to notch a competition lift only 5 lb. off her clean and jerk PR. She finished with a 160-kg total that was 23 kg better than anyone else. Benson gave a few points back in the triplet to finish third behind Jasmine Dever and Michelle Benedict.

Heather Bergeron, who finished eighth at the CrossFit Games, had a disappointing day after missing all three snatches and failing to post a total.

"I don't know what happened," she said. "I felt great warming up until I got to 121 for some reason, and it just didn't feel good one time and I let it get to my head. I can do a lot more than that, but in this setting it just gets confusing and chaotic, and then if you miss you only get two minutes."

Nevertheless, Bergeron came back to clean and jerk 78 kg, and despite her disaster in the snatch, she's not done with Oly meets.

"I'd like to come back and try it again because I know now what I'm getting into and how to prepare for it," she said.

Michelle Benedict, a 2009 Games competitor, had a previous Oly meet under her belt but found the CrossFit-USAW open even more challenging than her first competition.



Lindsey Benson jerks 91 kg in one of the day's best moments.



CrossFit star Josh Everett had a solid performance on the platform and in the triplet to win the 85-kg class gold medal.

"Your body's warmed up but your adrenaline is fatigued, and adrenaline is half the workout," she said of following the lifting with a triplet. "Your body knows what it's supposed to do because you've been training, but your adrenaline has already been taken in your six lifts, so you don't have that to use in your favor in the triplet."

Benedict expected to do better but still improved on her first judged meet, where she was called for press-outs on every lift.

At press time the 94-kg men were just starting the triplet that would wrap up Day 2 of the Open, which represents a historic union of weightlifting and CrossFit. For his part, Vaughn couldn't be happier to see the two sports linking up.

"No one in America is interested in Olympic lifting, and I was just pleasantly surprised how well the CrossFit community took us in ...," he said. "They're really eager to learn from us and I'm really eager to teach them, and I'm actually learning a whole lot from them on everything."

"I'm so excited. I can't wait to see what the future is going to bring with this weightlifting and CrossFit relationship."

To watch the rest of the weekend's competition, visit live.crossfit.com.

For complete results, visit the [USAW website](http://www.usaw.org).