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# THE CrossFit JOURNAL

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## It Takes a Barbell

Community-building events like the CrossFit Regina Spring Fling give athletes of all abilities a chance to experience the amazing camaraderie of intense competition.

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By Mike Warkentin

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Dan Fleischhaker/CrossFit Regina

No one from the CrossFit Regina Spring Fling is going to compete in the CrossFit Games—but every one of them is going to be fit. And that's a great thing.

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### Come One, Come All

Only one week before the best athletes in Canada converged on Calgary to battle for a total of 12 spots in the CrossFit Games, CrossFit Regina held a grassroots event designed to build community and give athletes of all levels a chance to experience the thrill of CrossFit competition. Even on May Long Weekend, which traditionally finds Canadians leaving the city for an epic three-day bender in cottage country, 57 athletes signed up to compete in the three-WOD challenge.

Coming from Regina, Saskatoon and nearby Winnipeg, Man., 30 women and 27 men registered for the event, which was the first community competition of the year and the second of its kind in the province of Saskatchewan. Athletes were given three divisions to choose from: Division 1 was for firebreathing athletes and featured standard load and rep schemes, while Division 2 and Division 3 found athletes using lighter weights and in some cases modified movements.

According to Robin Maier, who owns the host affiliate with her husband Aaron, the event was designed to encourage participation, and she admits she had to coax a few athletes who were nervous about stepping out of a regular class and into a judged workout fueled by friends, family and fans. The coaxing worked and the community responded: Maier got even more entries than she had hoped for.

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**“The No. 1 thing is to build community.”**

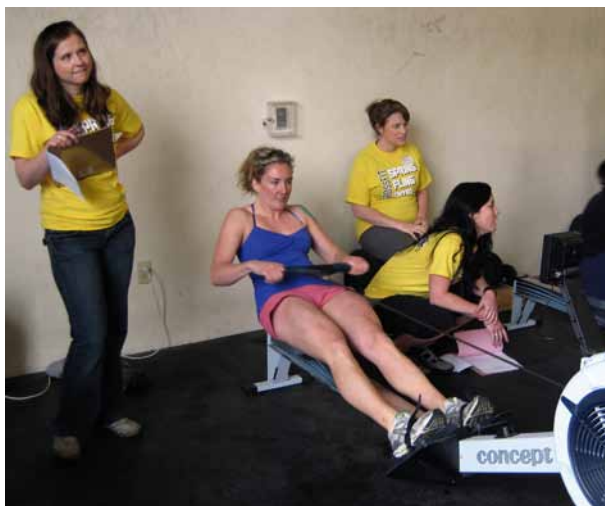
**—Robin Maier**

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Dan Fleischhaker/CrossFit Regina

*Fifty-seven athletes from two provinces made the CrossFit Regina Spring Fling a special event despite near-constant rain.*



Staff/CrossFit Journal

*CrossFitting Canadians who chose not to go drinking on May Long Weekend.*



Dan Fleischhaker/CrossFit Regina

*Double-unders were only used in one short tie-breaker WOD, but athletes were challenged by running, box jumps, ring dips, squats, rowing, snatches and all the other standard CrossFit movements.*

"The No. 1 thing is to build community," she explained. "I have 200 members, and eight went to sectionals. And that's about four percent. So this is for the other 96 percent. They train hard too. ... It's important to give people the chance to do this. They don't have to, but it's important to give them the opportunity."

She continued: "The reason you do (CrossFit) is to be healthy and fit and to live longer. This gives you a chance to use it in a different way. It's just a big confidence booster, and it gives them new goals."

Brian Desjarlais, 61, might not need a boost in confidence after setting a bench press record of 407 lb. in the 82.5-kg class at a Drug-Free powerlifting meet a few years ago, but he entered the competition anyway and ended up winning Division 3. It didn't hurt that one workout featured a bottom-up 1RM squat followed by a max set of push-ups. Desjarlais managed a squat of 275 lb. and an impressive 50 push-ups.

"I was plenty strong enough, but my overall conditioning and endurance were lacking, and this helps with everything," he said of CrossFit. "Anyone who wants to work out here will push themselves further than they would go in a gym. Even when you're just working out, people are always encouraging you. Like my daughter, she'll come in and yell at me to get a few more reps and tell me age is no excuse."

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Brian's daughter, Ange Desjarlais, is no slouch herself. The police officer finished 30<sup>th</sup> at the Canada Regional.

For 27-year-old Mandy Gullickson, the Spring Fling might be a stepping stone to sectionals and regionals next year.

"It's awesome and inspiring ...," she said of CrossFit competition. "I've never been in a community like this. No matter what you're doing, everyone is always encouraging you. People are at first hesitant to try it if they're not used to competition, but I think they surprise themselves—'Hey, I can compete and do well!'"

Jason Trinh, 25, is a member of CrossFit Saskatoon who competed in the sectionals and decided to make the four-hour trip to Regina with a pack of athletes from the box.

"I came to motivate people in my gym to sign up and get them into the spirit of this so they can see how much fun it is," he explained. "The community aspect of CrossFit competitions is a big influence on me."

And that's really the point of events like the Spring Fling: community. The CrossFit Games showcase the elite in a grueling test of epic proportions. But CrossFit was first and foremost created to make people fitter and healthier. And just like Major League Baseball is supported by a network of professional leagues, college and high-school teams, and grassroots programs, the CrossFit Games are built on a community of athletes who are chasing heavier weights, faster times and—ultimately—fitness.

Grassroots-level competitions are just another extension of the whiteboard that drives athletes onward, and each meeting of the tribes builds the communities that will produce both top athletes and healthier people.

And that's why it isn't important who won the Spring Fling. The community won.



Robin Maier/CrossFit Regina

### About the Author

*Mike Warkentin is the managing editor of the CrossFit Journal.*