



Quest for the Cup

The Affiliate Cup Opens the 2009 CrossFit Games

Mike Warkentin



"Our workouts are competitive events. The strength and value of CrossFit lies entirely within our domination of other athletes. This is a truth derived through competition, not debate."

That message was printed on a sign hung on the west side of the Stadium at The Ranch in Aromas, California, site of the 2009 CrossFit Games.

The sign doubled as a target for wall-ball shots because CrossFit is about functionality, after all.

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Quest for the Cup ... (continued)

With 97 teams in attendance, Games Director Dave Castro opened the proceedings on a misty and cool morning by introducing the movement standards and describing the workouts.

"The top 5 teams will advance to Sunday, and the rest of you can start drinking," Castro said to an outburst of laughter before fielding questions about the WODs.

Many of the athletes in attendance looked anxious, perhaps because of the hill looming over the proceedings. CrossFitters are all familiar with The Hill at The Ranch, but you can't appreciate its grade until you trudge uphill sucking serious wind.

"No wonder they looked so tired in the videos," Garth Huckabay of CrossFit Fire said on Thursday night after an uphill trek to get the lay of the land.

Castro cut off the question period off at 8:30, setting the athletes loose to prepare for their WODs. Each two-hour block contained three heats and a half-hour break, with each team scheduled to compete once per block.

By 9 a.m., Rage Against the Machine was pumping through the speakers, fans were screaming their support, and the 18-by-24-foot JumboTron was filled with CrossFitters ripping into their WODs with reckless abandon only reserved for competitions.

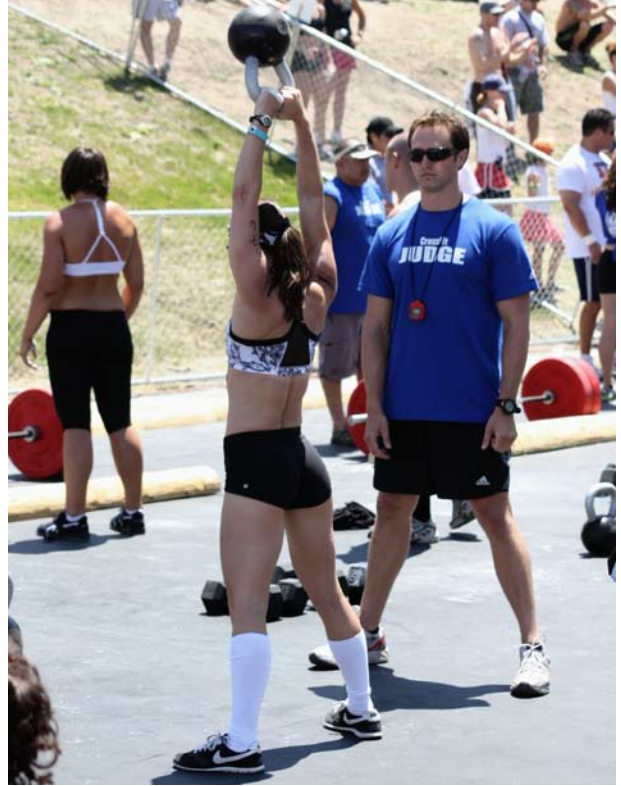
Right from the word "go" it was apparent that the wall-ball shots at the Stadium were going to be challenging for some competitors. With Adrian (Boz) Bozman overseeing the proceedings, judges strictly enforced standards that required wood on the 10-foot target to be visible below the ball.

When the first heat of the morning ended, three teams were listed DNF. More were added to that number throughout the day as the wall-ball shots and deadlifts separated the elite from the also-rans.

"The wall ball is pretty high," Bozman said between heats. "The bottom of the target is 10 feet, which is usually the middle of the target for most people, so it's a little higher than a lot of folks are used to, especially some of the women. It's been eating some people up."

The North Pad was a dense sea of pull-up stations and squat racks, and many competitors struggled just to jerk their barbells overhead to attempt a 3RM OHS.





Torn hands made their appearance within minutes, and spectators were caught wincing as athletes twisted their shoulders to unholy angles as they attempted to keep the barbell in the frontal plane. Dozens of reps were lost on the ground or disallowed because of range of motion violations, and judges were similarly strict on the pull-up bars. Other competitors set new PRs by pushing themselves well beyond where they thought their limits might have been.

On The Hill athletes started at a sprint before hitting the first steep climb and slowing to a purposeful stride or laboured jog. After a trek along a ridge, the competitors struggled to keep it together on the steep downhill run, some careening close to the scorers' tent as they raced for the finish line in a dusty cloud.

When the dust settled after the final heat of the third rotation, Northwest CrossFit was in first place with a low score of 19. Because Northwest is five points ahead of second-place CrossFit Central, the team from Washington State is all but assured of the overall Affiliate Cup title on Sunday, even if it places last of the five teams in the final WOD. If Northwest doesn't finish the workout, the title is up for grabs.

CrossFit NorCal finished third, Crossfit Invictus was fourth, and Oregon CrossFit rounded out the teams that will be competing on Sunday.

Paul Zavaglia, Zak Middleton, Alek Vlaski, Lindsey Dion, Amanda Barelli and Laura Asbell are all but assured of the overall title, but they aren't opening the trophy case yet.

"I don't want to think about it," Vlaski said of the unannounced final WOD. "We're just going to do the workout. We've done all the exercises, we know how to do them. I think we should be OK, but if they just create a crazy workout and we can't do it, well, we'll try our best and try and complete it.

"I will die before I don't finish it."



Stadium WOD

30 wall-ball shots (14/20 lb.)

Row 300 meters

30 box jumps (24 inches)

30 kettlebell swings (16/24 kg)

30 dumbbell push press (25/40 lb.)

30 deadlifts (135/225 lb.)

Hill WOD

2500 meter relay

North Pad WOD

For a total score:

Overhead squat, 3 reps

Max total pull-ups (3 rounds)

About the Author

Mike Warkentin is the staff writer for the CrossFit Journal. He is covering the CrossFit Games live from The Ranch along with a team of video crews and still photographers. Visit the [2009 CrossFit Games](http://journal.crossfit.com) website for continually updated multimedia coverage from July 10 to 12