

Total Fortification 2019 was a testament to the powerlifting spirit in Manitoba. Our volunteers came out in record numbers for a local meet, and our lifters pushed themselves to their limits and beyond. We came together to create a community event, to support each other, and to showcase our strength.

The Fort Rouge Leisure Centre doors opened 8:30 am Saturday morning, and that's when we started our set-up. Weigh-ins were scheduled for 9am and lifting at 11am. But first, we had to unload the MPA trailer, set up 3 warm-up platforms, the competition platform, the warm-up area, the audience area, and all of the scoretable computers and referee light system. All this while the athletes registered and determined their rack heights, the referees ran the equipment check and weigh-ins, and the athletes warmed up for squats. Normally we set everything up the night before, so a 2.5 hour set-up was quite a feat to manage. But we did it!

Thanks to the volunteers who signed up early, we were able to organize the set-up ahead of time and then execute on game day. I would especially like to thank Mat Bowen for putting up with my endless questions and for being electronics supervisor and technical controller on meet day, as well as David Gurvey, my co-meet director, for rounding up miscellaneous equipment and cheerfully taking on anything I asked of him despite also planning to compete.

To our volunteers. You. Are. The. Best. Our experienced volunteers took charge of their specific jobs and put the newbies to work as needed. New volunteers! I was blown away by your enthusiasm and day-long focus. I hope to see you compete in the near future. I promise to loudly cheer on each one of you. Spotters and loaders – no one appreciates how hard you work, and many of you helped set up and/or tear down as well. You guys rock. Scoretable – so consistent and calm, great work! Michelle – awesome announcing, as usual!

Referees – you are so professional, I didn't even spend a second thought worrying about you. Well done. Congratulations to Shannon Mutch for completing her MPA referee practical exam with flying colours.

On to the lifting!

Total Fortification was named in honour of the many lifters who wanted to achieve specific totals to qualify for CPU Nationals in Winnipeg this March. This was a large leap for many of you, and some of you did not quite manage it. Know that if we could have cheered any louder to help you lift the weights, we definitely would have. At the same time, we had several brand new lifters, and many regulars just trying to lift more, or better, than last time.

Flight A – Women's Junior and Open lifters

This flight was filled with exciting attempts at personal bests, provincial records, and qualifying totals. Vicki Bui set a bench press record for the 57kg Junior class, as well as a Junior and Open record for deadlift, and a Jr record for total, 334.5kg. Nanxi Huang came all the way from Ontario to set PRs in all her lifts, and earned a 307.5kg total in the 63kg Junior class. Sophia Morberg Berry finished with a personal best 200kg total in the 72kg Junior class. Ana Goodrick lifted a 172.5kg total in her first meet as a 57kg Open lifter. Jennifer Grace-Cruz, Leanne Florence, and Jiness Gyselinck finished 1,2,3 for the

72kg Open class, which Jennifer won handily at 372.5kg, also earning her Best Female Open Lifter. Jocelyn Blake made a comeback after two years away with a first place finish in the 84kg class at 389.5kg, breaking a provincial squat record with 167kg. Valarie Adamson came in second with a 9 for 9 meet and 325kg total (excellent finish for a first meet!) and Jessica Antony came in third, hitting a meet PR squat and a 295kg total. Lindsay Kula finished with a strong 410kg in the 84+kg class, and Zena Van Rooyen gave us the only equipped open women's total with PR's in squat and deadlift and total, with 307.5kg in the 72kg class.

Flight B – Mens' Sub-Junior, Junior and Masters lifters

This flight had the most diverse make-up, with lifters from 16 to 70 years old hoisting the iron. Michelle Kymanick and Carrie Blanchard competed in the M1 84+kg class. Michelle won with 371.5kg, breaking the deadlift record with an amazing 194kg pull. Carrie came in second with a solid 267.5kg total. Gail-Ann Breese competed as the sole M2 72kg, with a 282.5kg total, breaking provincial records in the squat, deadlift and total. Our amazing M4 Susan Haywood competed in the 84kg equipped class and earned a 250kg total, easily qualifying for Nationals and setting all the provincial records in her class. David Gurvey (co-meet director) competed in the M2 74kg class and hit a 160kg squat PR and 117.5kg bench press PR for a 472.5kg total PR, all PRs were also provincial records! Brent Morgan competed in his first meet and earned a solid 390kg in the M1 120kg class. David Anonsen competed in his second meet, pressing 142.5kg in the M2 83kg class, 5kg more than his best only one month ago at the Total Acceleration BP Only meet.

Andy Allden was our only male Sub-Junior, finishing with a 452.5kg total, exactly the qualifying total for Nationals. Jayms Kornelson was our only 66kg Junior lifter, and lifted an impressive 518.5kg, which included a 181kg provincial record squat. Josh McCorriston finished with PRs in BP, deadlift and total with a 452.5kg total in the 74kg Junior class. The three competitors in the 83kg Junior class were Karlos Abellanosa (1st place by a large margin with 595kg), Aaron Caissie (2nd place with 522.5kg) and Andrew Black (3rd place with 475kg). Kelvin Lai was the sole 93kg Junior, lifting 600kg, with PRs across the board.

Flight C – Men's Open lifters

This flight was short, but mighty, with lifters in the men's 66kg to 120+kg Open categories. Longtime lifter Dennis Ng totalled 475kg in the 66kg Open class to beat Jordan Smith's 440kg. Josh Japson went 8/9 only missing his last deadlift and totalled 570kg and Victor Aguilar-Barajas lifted 467.5kg in the 74kg Open class. The 83kg class was dominated by Ryanel Aguilar with a 640kg total, followed by Adrian Theroux with 572.5kg, Mark Dacanay at 532.5kg, and Mark Herrera at 492.5kg. Devan Normandin and Mikal Thrones competed in the 93kg Open class. Devan unfortunately did not make a good squat, but still continued on with bench press and deadlift. Mikal Thrones lifted 640kg, which included a PR squat, deadlift and total. Finally, Guy Page showed us who was really the strongest with an amazing 9 for 9 day, ending with 817.5kg in the equipped 120+kg Open class.

Best Junior lifter – male Karlos Abellanosa

Best Junior lifter – female Vicki Bui

Best Master's lifter – male David Gurvey

Best Master's lifter – female Michelle Kymanick

Best Open lifter – male Ryenel Aguilar

Best Open lifter – female Jennifer Grace-Cruz

Congratulations to all the lifters! You put on a tremendous show and should be proud of yourselves.

You really have to love a sport that embraces new members and veterans with the same enthusiasm, and has them cheer each other on and compete side by side. Powerlifting is the best sport ever. Don't @ me. Janet Loesel Sitar, co-meet director.