It’s 6:17 am on Sunday, September 12. I load up the car and drive up to Iron Image Barbell Club in Selkirk, MB. It’s been a full 11 months since our last meet here in Manitoba, so I don’t know what to expect of the day. Still, I’m excited to meet new lifters, see veterans again, and be immersed in this sport we all love so much.

I walk through the venue, putting up the last of the signs as the first of the lifters trickle in with their coaches. The platform area looks great, all thanks to the work of Wanda Bosek, Doug Wilcox, Mikal Thrones, Josh McCorriston, Mat Bowen, Brianna Lane, Kyle Humniski, Mat Evans, Madeline Livingstone, and Tom Pachal the night before.

Athletes check in and proceed to weigh-ins, which as always, is a bit chaotic. Our volunteers start to arrive – the most critical pieces to this puzzle. We have Lara Roska and Trish Roche at the check-in table. Ryan Kitson and Ryan Los at the computer table and Brianna Lane on the mic as our announcer. Our platform crew consists of Melodie Sitar, Melissa Perry, Josh McCorriston, Dave Slater, and our most-travelled volunteers from Swan River, Manitoba: Melissa and Danny Suchoplas. Melissa and Danny are recent migrants from the Alberta Powerlifting Union. Welcome to MPA and thank you for making the long drive down here to help us out!

Of course, we also couldn’t run a meet without our referees in blue. Mat Bowen, Amanda Burg, Janet Loesel Sitar, Brock and Susan Haywood, and I are all scheduled to referee both sessions. A long day to go. Here we go!

In the morning session we have three lifters competing in Unequipped Bench Only, and 11 Subjuniors and Juniors and 6 Masters in Unequipped 3-Lift. We see great lifting all around, and many Provincial Records fall.

In the Womens 57 kg Junior class, Kristen Babiuk bests the Bench Only record with a 73 kg bench press. Junior 63 kg Alexi Runki also takes the bench record in her class with a 60.5 kg successful 3rd attempt. Gillian Howie, one of our first-time competitors of the day, sets a new deadlift record in the Master 1 52 kg class with 102.5 kg. Brenda Billings has a great day on the platform, setting records across the board for the Master 2 84+ kg class: 115 kg squat, 50 kg bench, 115 kg deadlift, and a 267.5 kg total.

In the Mens 83 kg Sub-junior class, Alex Mackid takes the squat record with 175 kg, and the bench record with 115 kg. Patrick Encarnacion in the 59 kg Junior class sets a few new records: a 146 kg squat, 167 kg deadlift, and a 395.5 kg total. Travis Mattice has a stellar day on the platform, setting three Provincial records: 200 kg squat, 173 kg bench press, and 588 kg total. The 173 kg bench press attempt also bests the National record! David Hrynkow in the 66 kg Master 2 also improves the bench record to 98 kg.

Our Best Bench Only Lifter is Ryan Kolesar, who bench pressed 127.5 kg, earning himself 72.56 GL Points. Jake Diaz is our Best Junior Lifter, totalling 530 kg and claiming 78.48 GL Points. Travis Mattice is our best Master, totalling 588 kg and 82.37 GL Points.

After a quick awards ceremony, we move right on to our Session 2. We have 25 lifters in the Open 3-Lift and one lifter in the Equipped Bench Only. A new platform crew takes their place: Emmanuel Valete, Gail-Ann Breese, Mikal Thrones, Wanda Bosek, Melissa Perry and Mat Bowen. At the computer table we have Tiffany Lepla and Patrick Encarnacion, and Brianna Lane continues to announce into Session 2.

As the IPF has retired the 72 kg Womens weight class and replaced it with the 69 kg and 76 kg weight classes, the best lifts in both classes today become our new Provincial records. Jennifer Cruz sets the 69 kg bar with a 117.5 kg squat, 65 kg bench, 150 kg deadlift, and 332.5 kg total. Aricelle Mateo has a 9 for 9 day in the 76 kg class, setting the records at 165 kg for squat, 85 kg for bench, 165 kg for deadlift, and 415 kg for the total.

In the Mens Equipped 66 kg, Jayms Kornelsen improves the bench record to 136 kg. In the 83 kg class, Riley Bertrand takes the deadlift record with 290.5 kg, and the total record with 700.5 kg. Alex Clayton in the 105 kg class improves his own squat and total records to 285 kg and 762.5 kg respectively.

We award the Best Open Female Lifter award to Aricelle Mateo, who totalled 415 kg and 85.29 GL Points. The Best Open Male Lifter is Riley Bertrand, who totalled 700.5 kg, resulting in 97.12 GL Points. All Best Lifters of the day receive loot from our generous sponsors Popeyes Winnipeg, A7 Canada and Inner Strength Products.

Thank you to our other sponsors Devine Shirt Company, Maples Insurance, and of course, our presenting sponsors, Iron Image Barbell Club. Thank you Tom Pachal and Mat Evans for lending your beautiful gym to host our meet and the able hands of your staff to help make it happen. With enough room to social distance but also the homey vibes of a gym community, It was the perfect setting for our first meet back this year!

Thank you to Registered Massage Therapist Makayla Deamel who eased some aches in the warm up room and was our designated medical volunteer for the day, and to Vanessa Raposo who offered photo and video packages to immortalize our lifters’ best moments.

Another big thank you to all our volunteers, both those who help time and time again, and the many new faces who learned their roles on the spot. We could not hold a meet without you all.

Finally, my deepest gratitude to everyone for doing their part in keeping each other safe without complaint. Though tedious, all the paperwork and screening and hand-sanitizing are how we can continue to step on the platform and build our sport here in Manitoba. It’s been a long wait to return to play, but with such measures in place, we hope to continue to put meets on safely.

Our next local meet will be sometime in December, venue and date TBA.

Yours in sport,

Thea Olalia

MPA Vice President