

Powerlifting club holds test day



The Highland Powerlifting Club held a test day March 23, and invited members of the public to come out and see what the sport is all about. New member Lisa Coyne shows good form while doing a squat with a heavy set of weights.

By Brian Lockhart

The sport is just as the name implies.

Powerlifting is a competitive sport where strength, conditioning and technique combine to produce results based just how much dead weight a person can lift.

The Highland Powerlifting club held a test day Saturday (March 23) at the Athlete Institute at ACTS Fitness to invite those who are curious about the sport to come out and give it a try.

Of course, one isn't just handed a barbell with 200 pounds of weights to see how they do. This is a sport that takes a lot of training and conditioning to work up to a competitive level.

While several people attending the test day have been competing for a while, several others were relatively new to the sport.

"This is not a competition, but you will be able to test yourself," club co-founder Charles Banfield told the attendees prior to getting down to business. "Once you get through warming up, you can go for a test. You go when ever you are ready."

In competition, Banfield said there is generally "30 minutes between lifts."

Those lifts include the bench press, the squat and the dead lift.

The dead lift requires a competitor to pick up and hold a barbell right from the floor. In other words, that part of the competition is literally picking up a dead weight.

In the squat, the bar is lifted from shoulder height and the competitor has to squat and bring the barbell back up to shoulder height again.

The bench press has a lifter on their back lowering the bar to the chest and back up again.

For Lisa Coyne, one of two women who attended the test day, power lifting is more about physical conditioning than competition.

"I'm very new at this," she said. "I started in October. I've been here about six times and it's awesome. This sport gives you strength and confidence. I haven't felt this good in 20 years."

Training with a lot of weight requires a big measure of safety to avoid injury.

"You train at a level you're comfortable with," Coyne said. "They always have a spotter. They really focus on form."

Size is not required to do powerlifting.

"It's all relative to your body strength," explained Banfield. "We work out here every Saturday and Sunday. There's a bunch of us getting ready for a competition. For today, we've invited others to come out and see what they can do."

While some members of the club were warming up and doing some repetitive squats, others went in full at it after a warm-up and had the bar loaded up to their maximum lift capability.

While lifting, spotters hover very close, just in case something goes wrong or someone has difficulty managing a weight.

Some members of the club can dead lift up to 550 pounds.

The majority of the members are men, but there are also women who take part in the sport on a competitive level.

"It's all relative," Banfield said. "You work up to it and train your body."