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Weightlifter proves you don't have to be a man to be a strongman - Want more photos?

Telegraph, The (Nashua, NH) - Thursday, January 22, 2009

*Author: COURTNEY MacKAY Staff Writer*To view the gallery of photos related to this article: [CLICK HERE](#).

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NASHUA - Though the testosterone was dominating the atmosphere at the Setting the Record Straight strongman competition at **Harbor Homes** on Saturday, a lone female competitor, Maureen Jeanson, showed no sign of giving up.

Jeanson, of Rochester, pressed a 100-pound "log" over her head, lifted a 350-pound bar from off the floor, and lobbed a 130-pound ball, or stone, over a fixed-height bar eight times in a minute. And, despite it being Jeanson's first-ever strongman competition, she wasn't quite happy with her results.

"I was a little disappointed," said Jeanson, who's been weight lifting for five years. "I was nervous."

The Setting the Record Straight strongman contest is a power-lifting competition sanctioned by the North American Strongman Inc. Seven lifters, including Jeanson, attempted to break state records in three competitions: the log press, deadlift and Stone of Strength.

The event was also a fundraiser for Veterans F.I.R.S.T., a program developed by **Harbor Homes** to support homeless veterans as they work to become self sufficient and integrate back into the community.

Four of Jeanson's five children were cheering her on from the audience Saturday, until her son, Tony Staiti, decided to sign up last minute, replacing a no-show competitor.

Staiti, 18, and also new to the strongman scene, sported a T-shirt that said, "My mom can beat up your dad." Competing side by side with his mom was something that was enjoyable for the both of them.

"She did awesome," he said.

Jeanson has been more than inspirational to other women. After losing almost 100 pounds through healthy eating and exercise, she began mentoring others on her Web site, <http://yourfitnessjourney.com>, and teaching the importance of losing weight, the right way.

"It's the way people should lose weight," she said. "Eating right and exercise."

Jeanson said that competitive power lifting is a sport women shouldn't be afraid to try.

"It's not just for boys, and women should be comfortable with that," Jeanson said. "Men should be comfortable, too."

The other competitors - including three experienced strongman competitors - were supportive, giving her advice to make sure that she was using the right lifting techniques in order to avoid injury.

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"She did great for her first show," said John Duncan, competitor and personal trainer. "We like to see a variety of classes in sport."

Jim Pierce, chairman of the North American Strongman Inc. for New Hampshire, said that the event, even with a small attendance, was an overall success. Saturday's competition raised more than \$400 for Veterans F.I.R.S.T.

As far as Jeanson's performance, Pierce said he was impressed.

"For someone who hasn't done it before, she did very good," he said.

With her first competition behind her, Jeanson is looking toward the future with a positive attitude and plans on buying some strongman equipment for her home. Both Jeanson and Staiti plan on entering future Strongman competitions and are determined to show better performances next time around.

Memo: Courtney MacKay can be reached at 594-5833 or cmackay@nashuatelegraph.com.

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