

THE 2000 WDFPF EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Why Ireland, Why Galway, Why Me? An Organisers Perspective From Start to Finish

As you are no doubt aware the European Drug Free Powerlifting and Single Lift Championships were held here in Galway, Ireland on 10th & 11th June 2000. The event was hosted jointly by the Irish Drug-Free Powerlifting Association (IDFPA) and Galway City Gym (GCG).

Galway; at the very Western tip of Europe, on the Atlantic coast, may have seemed a “farout” destination for a European Championships, but it’s Ireland’s fourth largest city and one that attracts very many tourists throughout the year from the UK, Continental Europe and the US and it is served by a small regional airport, a regular bus and train service from Dublin and is also relatively close to Shannon Airport.

While Dublin may have been a more obvious and accessible choice of venue accomodation, halls and other services are more expensive in that city but the main reason it was not selected was that I am from Galway and as I was to be the Meet Director for the European’s I was only prepared to host the event in a familiar environment where I knew I could draw on the expertise of Galway City Gym members and have the use of the gym facilities and equipment.

At the World Single Lift Championships in Antwerp, both Andrew Cominos and Wim Backelant discussed with me the possibility of hosting a WDFPF event in Ireland as it was time the Irish, who had been competing successfully for many years at WDFPF events, actually held an event in Ireland, which Andrew and Wim felt would be an attractive destination for the competitors. So I came home from Antwerp full of enthusiasm with “pie in the sky” plans to host an event sometime in the future, not dreaming it would be the next major event on the European Calendar. I had a certain amount of organizing sporting events since I was heavily involved with a very active Judo club for many years but a powerlifting event would be a new challenge.

On my return I mentioned the possibility of hosting an event to my training partner at the time who informed me he was a close friend of The Irish Minister for Sport and would be surely able to use his influence to get me a substantial grant to host an event here, especially as we were a Drug-Free organization with strict testing regulations. The reputation of Irish sport had just been tarnished by the ban of Irish swimmer Michelle Smith and the Department of Sport had announced the set-up of a task force for the drug-testing of athletes from all sports. We felt the time was right to apply for a grant and I was confident that something would come of it before I actually made a commitment to host the event because I didn’t think it would be possible to run such a competition without substantial financial aid from some source. However, my training partner moved away from Galway at this point and was out of the country a lot. Everytime I managed to contact him by phone he kept telling me it looked like good news about the grant but could never confirm anything. By January both Andrew and Wim were understandably anxious for me to commit to running the event and as I was still hopeful about securing a grant I told them I was prepared to go ahead and host the Europeans in Galway. Unfortunately the grant never came through, nor did an explanation as to why the application was unsuccessful.

At this stage it was time to involve Galway City Gym in the organization of the event. Tom McCaffrey, the gym manager, nearly had a heart attack when I told him what our next project would be.

At this stage it was a bit late to withdraw our offer to host the event so Tony came on board and we decided we would do our best to host a memorable event for all the competitors. I was still confident of getting a grant but as time passed it became to look more and more unlikely. Tony and I approached the directors of the gym and asked them for a financial contribution towards the competition in the event that the grant did not come through. They agreed to give us £1000 towards the event so that was something to start with. We then started pestering the members for sponsorship. It got to the stage where certain members ran the other way when they saw me coming. We targeted certain businesses too which had gym connections. However, this sponsorship appeal was not as successful as we had hoped but it did bring in some funds, plus offers of assistance in other ways. Our search for a major corporate sponsor proved fruitless also. Additionally, we had a promise of substantial financial aid which was withdrawn before the event.

At this stage I began to get a little disillusioned with the whole project as I saw it costing me, personally, a lot of money to host. I was giving my time and was putting a lot of effort into it and I didn't relish the thought of me being seriously out of pocket as well. It was not as if I was gambling and if a profit was made I was not going to be the beneficiary. No, any profits made were going to the IDFPA and GCG.

Around this time Phil Lindsey sent me an e-mail and asked if we would like him and his platform crew to come over. Initially I had planned to get them over but with our funds so low I didn't think our budget would allow us the luxury of having them over. However; I had a meeting with Tony about it and, despite my protests about not being able to afford them, he managed to convince me that they were a necessity rather than a luxury and that I was not to be concerned about our expenditure at that stage as it would seriously affect our earlier decision to host a good event and that we shouldn't worry about the cost until it was over. Tony, as always, was right.

From the start we had planned on getting the trailer of equipment over from England so we did not need to worry about the weights and equipment for the platform. We had enough in the gym for the warm up area.. However; the transport of the trailer proved to be a problem as there appeared to be nobody driving over who had the facility to take the trailer over on the ferry. We checked out several options but none seemed to be viable. With three weeks to go we still did not know if we could get the trailer over so it was time to make a decision. After Tony spoke with Andrew Cominos on the phone he decided it would be possible for us to host the event without the trailer. Tony was definitely the hero of the hour as he had the platform weights calibrated, boring holes in them and filling them with lead, painting them, making the lights etc. etc. He was not to be seen in the gym most of the time as he was involved with one project after another for the competition, while the other gym staff had to work extra shifts to cover for him. We had to arrange for drivers to pick up the equipment, order new scales etc. and we were supposed to be getting a new Eleiko bar for the event (with the view to Galway City Gym buying it after the event) but there was no sign of that coming so Wim Backelant offered to bring his bar, along with some weights and anything else I required, from Belgium. The bar duly arrived- the day after the competition.

I had spoken to the caterer who usually works at the venue during college term and she told me she was interested in catering the event. However; I hadn't spoken to her in six weeks and had mislaid her number, The weekend before I had still not found it so I had to practically send out a search party for her, but with three days to go I got a message to her and she told me she would look after it, so I didn't have to spend the night before making sandwiches.

With all this happening I was in the office juggling my real work and making arrangements for the competition. I was in the office more evenings than I was in the gym, unusual for me, and I took the week before the event off work to tie up the last minute details but my week's holiday was actually spent in the office, day and night, trying to escape having to do office work. Poor Andrew, Wim and Judy Gedney wrere getting daily, or more realistically hourly, e-mails from me in these weeks with one query after another.

I'm sure they were regretting the fact that the event had been sanctioned in Galway. They kept telling me to relax, that everything would be okay on the day but at that stage I was convinced that nothing would be right, as in the run-up to the event, Murphy's Law was in operation, with everything that could go wrong, just doing that. With one week to go a major crisis occurred which could have ended up cancelling the whole event. The issue was insurance. Tony had told me we could get an endorsement on the gym's insurance for the event but when we went into the insurance company to arrange this he was told that it was not possible, that they were not prepared to insure the competition. I got on the phone and started ringing around but grew more and more worried as company after company turned me down and said that Powerlifting was not a sport they were prepared to cover. One even told me I'd have to go to a broker with a Lloyds connection in the UK. I tried a broker I knew but he could come up with nothing. Another company told me they would cover the organization of the meet but not the activity itself. I knew we wouldn't be allowed to set foot in the venue if we did not have the correct insurance coverage. Finally, when I was practically in tears, I got a phone call from Brian Forbes who informed me that there was a company in Dublin that was waiting for my call. I got in touch with them and they told me that they would inform me the next day if they were willing to cover us and the next morning, after another sleepless night, I was much relieved to hear that they were indeed prepared to insure us.

In the days running up to the event things began to come together. I kept expecting the next crisis to arise and after the insurance one I was ready for anything, Tony was busy preparing the equipment and my office looked like a bomb had hit it, with paper and boxes all over the floor and work piling up on my desk. My biggest fear was that the Belgians would miss one of their ferries and not only would I be down twenty competitors but would be missing Wim, my Technical Director and Head Referee, Fabrice, the other Belgian referee plus the bar and equipment promised. That would have been a disaster.

On Friday Tony had a team together to move the equipment from the gym to the venue. We got there at lunchtime, it was late when we left and it looked better than I had imagined it could. I had met Phil Lindsey and his crew that morning and was delighted, and relieved, that they had arrived safely. Floating between the office, hall, gym, airport, hotels, the bank and the city I met several of the athletes as they called into the venue. My mobile phone was hopping. I was particularly relieved when Wim rang to say he had arrived. That night I met some of the referees to go over the schedule for the morning.

On Saturday I was the first to arrive in the hall which was soon a hive of activity with the weigh-in and equipment check taking place. With the computer set up and my friend Marisa ready and willing to mark the scoresheets and Ann O'Brien volunteering to do the timing etc. we were ready to go more or less on schedule. I was doing the announcing and had to get over my shyness of public speaking very quickly. Phil Lindsey teased me quite a bit about my Irish accent but he managed to put the right weights on the bar most of the time!!!- well maybe I did give him the wrong information on occasion. We ran the first two powerlifting flights before lunch and the remaining flights after. It was a very long day and was practically 9 p.m. when we finally left the hall. Day one was over without any disasters from an organizational point of view; so one down and one to go.

Sunday went smoothly too. I couldn't believe my luck. The Single Lifts were held on Sunday and they were over by 5 p.m. Everyone seemed happy, but no-one more than me. Tony, also, was very relieved and proud of what we had achieved. We had a celebration dinner that night and although the turnout wasn't as high as expected or hoped for I think that those who were there enjoyed it and it was the perfect end to a memorable weekend.

While for most the event was over on Sunday, for some there was still work to be done as the hall had to be cleared and left in perfect condition and that took almost as long as it took to set it up in the first place. Or maybe we were just exhausted and it took us longer than it should have. At least then the activities of the Gasway City Gym could get back to normal since there were no weights, bars, racks or benches

available for the members over the weekend.

Although the entries at this event were not as high as at some other European Championships the quality was certainly there. There were representatives from England, Scotland, Belgium, France, Italy, Cyprus and Ireland. Several lifters broke World and European records and deserve a mention- Phil Gray, Mark Lane, Mike Leadbetter, Peter Fisher, Brigitte Guyot, Denis Lawlor, Sebastian Bogers, Steve Young, Neil Abery, Rick Meldon, Ohran Bilican, Noel Dieu, John West, Sererine Malotteau, Ian Tudor, Filip Van Nijlen, Dominique Launay, Josette Bouillon, Derek Cope and Brian Mitchell.

Special Awards went to the following lifters:

Female Lifter of the Meet- Dominique Launay (France)

Best Raw Powerlifter- Mark Lane (Ireland)

Best Equipped Powerlifter- Audley Baker (England)

Best Deadlifter (both Equipped and Unequipped)- Peter Whitehead (Scotland)

Best Equipped Bench Press- Wim Backelant (Belgium)

Best Unequipped Bench Press- Mike Joseph (England)

If there had been an award for the most active lifter it would have gone to Hamish Davidson from Scotland who lifted in every category - Equipped and Unequipped.

To conclude this article I would like to thank some people.

To all the competitors who took part in the event. I appreciated the fact that you entered and spent time and money travelling all the way to Galway to compete. I hope you performed as well as you expected and that you were pleased with the competition and your stay in Galway. I look forward to meeting you again at WDFPF sanctioned events in the future, and having more time to spend with you then.

Andrew Cominos, WDFPF President. Although Andrew was unavoidably unable to attend he was definitely with us in spirit and had been my source of information daily in the months running up to the event. Thanks Andrew, I appreciated your advice along every step of the way.

Wim Backelant, WDFPF Vice-President. Wim was my very able, right hand man all weekend and my source of encouragement in the run-up to the event. Thanks Wim, I hope I can pay you back somehow someday. This event would not have been possible without you.

Referees- Daniel Rochat, Fabrice Deschamps, Les Pilling, Jack Teague, Wim, Mark Lacey and Mark Lane. Thank you guys so much for all your help. You all did a great job. I know that referees were in short supply and you all had to work very hard over the two days but I very much appreciated it, as did the lifters. I wish I could have rewarded you for your time and effort but this time it was just not possible. If there is ever anything I can do for you, do not hesitate to ask.

Phil Lindsey and the Platform Crew- What can I say?- you worked endlessly and kept the lifters safe and happy. We couldn't ask for more. And Phil, thanks for giving me a hard time and keeping me on my toes.

To IDFPFA members Eddie and Ann O'Brien, Mark Lane, Mark Lacey, John West, Brian Forbes and Tony Pierce; thanks for your help on the day and in the run-up to the meet. You all know the contribution you made to it.

There are several people in Galway City Gym I want to thank; too many to list but some deserve a special mention- the directors for their financial support, the sponsors who gave both money and other items, the staff; Rhoda Myles, Alva McManus, Susan Mitchell, Declan Bennett who all helped out in one way or another both before and after the event. Declan McGrath, Ken and Shane Heaney who represented the gym in the competition but also helped out with the organization. Tony Hopkins and Alan McCaffrey who were marshalls on the day and all those who helped setting up the hall and moving equipment.

I also want to thank Marisa Ocon who saw me through every crisis and who worked endlessly at the event from start to finish learning a lot about powerlifting and bench shirts over the weekend.

Finally I want to thank Tony McCaffrey. His contribution was tremendous yet he remained very much in the background. So Tony, thanks a million, we all appreciated what you did for the event and its success is very much due to you.

The run-up to the event may have been complicated and troublesome but at the end of the day, when everything ran smoothly, it was all worthwhile. The next day, as we cleared the hall, I kept telling Tony to keep everything because we will need them next time. While he wanted to strangle me at the time I know he believes, just as I do, that the next time it will be much easier and routine. I'm motivated to run an International event again in Galway so if you didn't get to Galway this time hopefully you will have another opportunity in the future and if you did compete I hope you will be keen to return. The only obstacle would be money, so if anyone out there, or anyone you know, is prepared to sponsor an event in Ireland in the future do not hesitate to let me know and we can put the wheels in motion.

Anita Mahoney
Meet Director

Unequipped Power	Nat	Age	Wt	Squat	Bench	Deadlift	Total
Kimberley Rawling	Eng	T2	90	92.5	40	130	262.5
Simon Lewis	Eng	O	75	160	122.5	197.5	475
Carl Granfelt	Fin	O	75	162.5	112.5	197.5	472.5
Phil Gray	Eng	T3	90	175	122.5	232.5**	530
William Andrews	Eng	J	90	150	100	-	-
Mark Lane	Ire	O	90	200	135	277.5	612.5
Eddie O'Brien	Ire	O	90	192.5	142.5	227.5	652.5
Paul Stewart	Eng	O	90	175	112.5	220	507.5
Michael Leadbetter	Eng	M2	100	190	142.5	280.5	612.5
Chris Ward	Eng	M2	100	170	140	270	580
Peter Fisher	Eng	O	110	241**	155	250	645
Adrian Rawling	Eng	T3	125	180	100	215	495
Hamish Davidson	Sco	M2	125	225	167.5	275	667.5

** World Record (subject to ratification)

World Records were set in the Deadlift with fourth attempts by Mark Lane: 281 kg. and Michael Leadbetter: 282.5 kg.

Equipped Power

Brigitte Guyot	Fra	M2	58.5	92.5*	52.5	147.5	292.5
Dennis Lawlor	Ire	T2	60	135*	50	152.5*	337.5
Dean Gilsenan	Eng	O	67.5	177.5	92.5	220	490
Patrick Breton	Fra	M1	75	200	115	250	565
George Troullis	Cyp	O	75	225	135	260	620
Dean Mikosz	Eng	O	75	255	147.5	200	602.5
Sebastian Bogers	Bel	T1	82.5	215**	130	260**	605
David Briggs	Eng	M5	82.5	160	115	200	475
Steve Young	Eng	M1	82.5	225.5	130	268**	620
Neil Abery	Eng	J	82.5	260*	140	237.5*	637.5
David Kemp-Taylor	Eng	J	82.5	180	100	210	490
William Shaw	Sco	J	82.5	175	105	205	485
Rick Meldon	Ire	O	82.5	265	142.5	240*	647.5
Declan McGrath	Ire	O	82.5	230	130	240	600
Mark Macey	Eng	O	82.5	232.5	100	220	552.5
Ohran Bilican	Bel	J	90	240	180*	240*	660
Gary King	Eng	J	90	190	150	190	530
Terry Jex	Eng	M1	90	275	160	280	715
Derek Roast	Eng	O	90	235	165	285	685
Ken Heaney	Ire	O	90	222.5	182.5	250	655
Mark Lacey	Ire	O	90	210	150	230	590
Les Pilling	Eng	M2/O	100	300	185	300	785
Noel Dieu	Bel	M6	100	200**	145	250**	595**
Brian Mitchell	Eng	M2	110	225	152.5	260	637.5
John West	Ire	M4/O	110	255*	155	265	675
Alan Nicol	Eng	M3	125	260	150	260	650

Hamish Davidson	Sco	M2	125	250	160	265	675
Audley Baker	Eng	O	145	360	220	340	920
Fabrice Deschamps	Bel	O	145+	270	135	225	630

* European Record **World Record

A World Record Bench Press was set by Noel Dieu on his fourth attempt with 150 kg.

Single Lifts

Equipped Squat

Dean Mikosz 75/O	Eng	250
Declan McGrath 82.5/O	Ire	225
Mark Macey 82.5/O	Eng	220
Ohran Bilican 90/J	Bel	260
Filip Van Nijlen 125/J	Bel	250
Audley Baker 145/O	Eng	340
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	245

Unequipped Squat

David Gallagher 75/O	Eng	160
Paul Golding 82.5/O	Eng	190
Declan McGrath 82.5/O	Ire	190
Les Pilling 100/M2	Eng	265
Peter Fisher 110/O	Eng	235
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	225

Equipped Deadlift

Shayne Heaney 75/O	Ire	200
Steve Young 82.5/M1	Eng	252.5
David Taylor 82.5/J	Eng	205
Declan McGrath 82.5/O	Ire	230
Ken Heaney 90/O	Ire	267.5
Peter Whitehead 100/O	Sco	285
Derek Cope 110/M1,O	Eng	272.5**
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	250
Audley Baker 145/O	Eng	300

Unequipped Deadlift

Brigitte Guyot 63/M2	Fra	145
Maureen Sage 63/M5	Eng	90

David Gallagher 75/O	Eng	190
Patrick Valfrey 82.5/O	Fra	190
Ken Gilbert 82.5/M5	Eng	220
Alex Dick 90/O	Sco	225
Peter Whitehead 100/O	Sco	295
Les Pilling 100/M2	Eng	285
Derek Cope 110/M1,O	Eng	270**
Brian Mitchell 110/M2	Eng	250**
Filip Van Nijlen 125/J	Bel	240**
Alan Nicol 125/M3	Eng	265
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	265

Equipped Bench Press

Dominique Launay 63/M2	Fra	77.5**
Josette Bouillon 63/M4	Bel	52.5**
Vincent Eldin 67.5/O	Fra	150
John Condon 75/T3	Ire	97.5
Mike Joseph 75/O	Eng	162.5
Dean Mikosz 75/O	Eng	147.5
Shayne Heaney 75/O	Ire	140
Philip Martens 82.5/J	Bel	125
Giovanni Tigrato 82.5/M1	Bel	155
Philippe Cuypers 82.5/O	Bel	145
Patrick Valfrey 82.5/O	Fra	145
Josee Bourgaux 82.5/O	Bel	125
Ohran Bilican 90/J	Bel	187.5**

Filip Van Nijlen 125/T3	Bel	200
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	170
Audley Baker 145/O	Eng	190
Wim Backelant 145+/O	Bel	240

Unequipped Bench Press

Glenis Tudor 55.5/M2	Eng	42.5
Maureen Sage 63/M5	Eng	37.5
Severine Malloteau 63/T1	Bel	52.5**
Sharon Ward 70/M1	Eng	60
Laura Doran 90/O	Eng	77.5

Mike Joseph 75/O	Eng	160
Shayne Heaney 75/O	Ire	127.5
David Gallagher 75/O	Eng	90
Danny Noens 90/J	Bel	145
John Schrixx 90/M6	Bel	112.5
Eddie O'Brien 90/O	Ire	135
Dave Franklin 100/O	Eng	170
Les Pilling 100/M2	Eng	170
Brian Mitchell 110/M2	Eng	155
Ian Tudor 110/M3,O	Eng	190**
Filip Van Nijlen 125/T3	Bel	200**
Glyn Edwards 125/J	Eng	170
Rosario Manascaleo 125/O	Ita	177.5
Hamish Davidson 125/M2	Sco	162.5
Audley Baker 145/O	Eng	160

** Severine Malloteau bettered her World Record with a fourth lift of 55 kg.

DRUG TEST RESULTS

The following lifters were selected for sampling at the European Championships;

Dave Franklin (Eng)
Wim Backelant (Bel)
Ohran Bilican (Bel)
Peter Whitehead (Sco)
Filip Van Nijlen (Bel)
Sebastian Bogers (Bel)

The results of all tests were negative.