

### **Report by Andrew Cominos:**

This was the first divisional championship in the West Midlands for about 10 years, reviving the fortunes of the BDFPA in an area where quite a lot of UK powerlifting is based. The event was run in 'GymNation' in Gloucester, and had a good entry and terrific atmosphere. There were loads of novice/first-time competitors, including no fewer than 8 Junior/Teen lifters.

**POWERLIFTING:** First away was 14-year old Hussain Patel, son of meet organizer Rasheed. After a dodgy start, making only his opening squat, he went on to get three good benches and dead lifts. At 75 kgs. junior lifter Ryan Connelly was one of three Equipped lifters at this event – though only just – as his “equipment” was limited to knee wraps. This 22 year old is a great prospect, who barring accidents, will top the 500 mark before long. Andy Smallwood was one of several stylish and well-focused lifters from HM forces who were at this comp. His “flat-back” dead lifting was a joy to behold. Newcomer Tony Smith overcame his nerves and amassed a 490 total at 82.5 with plenty of room to spare, as did Junior Esson who put up 450 in the 90 kg class. This class was well contested. Malek Moradi, an Iranian-born lifter, is one of several strong newcomers under Rasheed’s watchful eye who will go on to do great things once they get the hang of competition. Malek did a respectable 500 for 3rd place. Runner-up spot went to Carl Chant, who put up a gutsy performance on his way to 520. Class winner was army lifter Selby Spicer, who got 9 out of 9 in superb style to finish on 567.5, a quality performance. Army team-mates Mark Doree and Neil Thomas (both lifting Equipped) contested the 100 kg class – with Mark getting 8 from 9 to finish on a good 530. Neil overcame a shaky start on the squat and bench to succeed on all 3 dead lifts. On a good day his total would probably be nearer 700 than 600. Lifting at 100 (unequipped) Stuart Robathan was outstanding, even though lifting well within his means. His 270 dead lift looked like a warm-up. He deservedly won the ‘best lifter’ (powerlifting) trophy. Fellow Coventry club members Jon Payne (Junior) and Dean Allison(T3) made inspired championship debuts at this competition, lifting like “old hands”. Both got 8 from 9 attempts. Dean actually had to work for his T3 win against local lifter Sean Grant, who was leading him by 10 kgs. at the sub-total stage. The former’s superior dead lifting gave him the title by a 30 kg. margin at the finish.

**Single Event SQUAT:** Three powerlifters came back again, with Ryan Connelly and Andy Smallwood both notching up a bit more than in the 3-lift competition. M4 lifter Tom Cox had a fantastic day – after loading all morning he went on to take part (equipped) in all the Single events, without missing a trick! All his lifts were confident and solid, including his third squat with 180. Finally, at 145 Junior lifter Abu Bham gave an indication of his serious untapped potential – when he got 3 easy lifts to finish on 150 with loads to spare.

**Single Event BENCH PRESS:** Eleven lifters in this section. Only one woman lifter, but a great performance from Lateefa Taylor (Rasheed’s “other half”) at 63 kgs. Three good lifts to finish on a British record with 62.5. T2 lifter Gareth Capper got 3 from 3, lifting confidently to a solid 65 kgs. Also at 75, newcomer Martin Fishley made all attempts to finish on a terrific 125. Organizer Rasheed Patel made a clean sweep at 82.5, establishing British Single Event records with 135 (U/E) and 140 (E), before coming a close cropper with 150. Also lifting equipped, Tom Cox (M4) continued on his winning streak and got all attempts to 130. At 100 Steve Barnett and John Nelson both put up a good first showing – with the former notching up a fine 140, whilst Nelson at only 20 years of age got all three to finish on 145. Abu Bham (also 20) made his opener on 145 but came unstuck twice on 155.

**Single Event DEAD LIFT:** Ten entries for the Dead Lift, with Lateefa Taylor kicking off on a terrific 160 for a British record that nearly brought the house down. Youngsters Hussain Patel and Gareth Capper both also got 3 from 3, and both finished on 135. Ryan Connelly repeated his earlier success on 200, which was enough to win him ‘best lifter’ in this section. He had a try at 230, but it looked “nailed”. Could it have gone earlier, when Ryan was “fresh”? We’ll never know, but it will certainly be passed sometime soon. Rasheed made 225 on his 2nd, only to sustain a fairly serious bicep tendon injury for his trouble. Apparently it will be a few months before he will be in a position to compete again. Hard luck Rasheed. Meanwhile Tom Cox crowned his day’s lifting with 3 successes to finish on 190, and Steve Barnett made a great 225. Big junior Abu Bham rounded off the day with 220 and came very close indeed with 250.

Altogether a great day. Thanks to everyone who helped to put on the competition, and to Rasheed Patel for getting the West Midlands back on the map!