

2009 Australian Senior Championships

Saturday July 18 brought with it the 2009 Australian Senior Championships. HWC was well represented, with a total of 11 Hawthorn lifters competing for Victoria. When compared with the amount of athletes from NSW (7) and Queensland (5), it certainly shows where the Hawthorn Club finds itself among Australian Weightlifting at this time. With World and Commonwealth Championships qualification on the line, the competition was sure to be exciting and it certainly didn't disappoint.

The first session of three for the day was the men's 56Kg-85Kg categories. Lifting from Hawthorn was: Vannara Be, Daniel Koum, Francois Etoundi and David Sarkisian. The day did not start well, with Francois unfortunately not making his bodyweight category (69Kg) and after weighing 69.30Kg was allowed to lift as a guest in the 77Kg category. Francois would go on to Snatch 125Kg and secured 3 out of 3 Clean & Jerks for a solid 155Kg finish, celebrating with his usual back-flip. Vannara, having lost a sizeable amount of bodyweight to make 56Kg, could not recreate his form of the National Club Championships where he achieved the 'Senior International' standard. Snatching 98Kg, Vannara made a very gutsy Clean on 125Kg but was unable to complete the Jerk, meaning he would have to be content with his fourth National Championship. Like Vannara, Daniel had lost a huge chunk of bodyweight to make 62Kg, and after Snatching 110Kg did an easy 138Kg to once again achieve the 'Senior Elite' standard. This ensured Daniel's qualification to the World Championships and secured his second National title. David was the last HWC lifter of the session and made a fantastic Snatch on 132Kg and after Clean & Jerking 162Kg, David attempted to qualify for the World Championships but unfortunately could not Clean 168Kg. David would however win his second National title, and his first since 2002, as well as qualifying for the Commonwealth Championships.

The second session of the day was for all the female bodyweight categories. Hawthorn had a total of four lifters in this session, being Socheata Be, Seen Lee, Jacquie White and Belinda Van Tienen. Socheata, lifting in the 53Kg category, pulled off three Snatches to finish with 67Kg and after Clean and Jerking 79Kg, qualified for the Junior Commonwealth Championships and in the process won her first Senior National title. Jacquie White started off well with an 82Kg Snatch and could unfortunately not complete 84Kg. After missing her first two Clean & Jerks, Jacquie was thankfully able to successfully lift 100Kg, which not only gave her a total, but also qualified her for the Commonwealth Championships. Also lifting in the 63Kg category, Seen Lee, still a bit below her best, managed a 190Kg total with lifts of 85Kg and 105Kg. This would give Seen her fifth National Championship, also ending Jacquie's impressive unbeaten run at the National level since 2002. Belinda was the last HWC lifter in the women's session and started off somewhat shakily missing 86Kg in Snatch. Belinda would correct this though, completing 86Kg and narrowly missing 89Kg. Following an easy Clean & Jerk on 108Kg, Belinda had a crack at World Championships qualification with a 115Kg Clean and Jerk. Well over her best, Belinda managed a great Clean but was unable to complete the Jerk, meaning she would have to be content with Commonwealth Championships qualification.

The final session of the day was the men's 94Kg-105+Kg categories. HWC was represented by Simplicie Ribouem, Matthew Falcone and Corran Hocking. Simplicie, lifting in the heavier 94Kg category than his usual 85Kg, looked very strong at this new bodyweight and Snatched 152Kg, only just missing 160Kg. Simplicie would start his Clean & Jerks with an easy 185Kg and after missing the Jerk on 195Kg, upped the bar to a huge

205Kg-just 5Kg shy of the Commonwealth record. Simplicie Cleaned this weight, but 'bailed' from the Jerk-nonetheless an impressive Clean. Matthew Falcone was one of two HWC 'supers' and started off by Snatching 137Kg, unfortunately unable to complete 143Kg. Locked in a tight battle with Queensland's Craig Wegert, Matt Jerked 171Kg and with some clever weight calls from club coaches Yurik Sarkisian and Anthony Dove, did not have to complete his last Clean & Jerk to beat Craig, but Matt still gave it a go anyway. Corran completed his usual mammoth Snatch weight, this time being 175Kg, only 7Kg off his own Commonwealth record. Corran would unfortunately not register a Clean & Jerk, twice completing 197Kg but not to the satisfaction of the majority of the referees. However, having qualified for the World Championships at the National Club Championships earlier this year, Corran did not necessarily have to register a total in order to qualify for any events. This meant Matthew Falcone collected his first Senior National title, in only his second year as a senior.

Congratulations go to all the HWC lifters, as even qualifying for the National Championships is an achievement that only a few in the country could manage. Particular mention goes to all those who collected National titles, as well as those who registered qualifying totals for the Commonwealth and World Championships. Special mention again goes to Seen Lee and Simplicie Ribouem for being the best Female and Male lifters respectively based on the Sinclair formula. Overall, the Victorian Women's team (all HWC athletes) won the Women's team title and the almost entirely HWC based men's team (Matthew Williams was the only non-HWC team member) took out the Men's team shield. Special thanks go to the club and Victorian coaches of the day, Yurik Sarkisian and Anthony Dove, as well as all those who helped out with competition preparation, the running of the competition and the gym pack-up/clean-up. We now look forward to the Junior Nationals to be held in 9 weeks in Tasmania where not only will our Juniors be lifting, but also some Seniors who may be invited will have another shot at World Championships qualification.

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