

AAU Powerlifting to Include Feats of Strength and Weightlifting as Part of Strength Sports Portfolio

A number of changes have been implemented since Summer 2012 that align all Amateur Athletic Union strength-related sports under the AAU Powerlifting portfolio; this move will streamline AAU strength sports activities under a single Board of Directors, and new regional and state directors have been appointed to promote these sports around the United States.

AAU Feats of Strength (FOS), which incorporates more than a dozen speed-strength competitive events, has become an official part of the AAU Powerlifting portfolio. Feats of Strength events may be contested in stand-alone competition, in conjunction with a powerlifting or weightlifting competition, or in a “combine” format. In April 2012, AAU held its first National FOS event in conjunction with the AAU Single Lift Nationals, and the first AAU Feats of Strength World Championship was held in October 2012 in conjunction with the AAU Single Lift Powerlifting World Championship in Las Vegas. Future national and international FOS meets are planned, and world and national records have been established which will be available on the AAU website. Additionally, a FOS Multi-Sport Combine will be held for the first time at the 2013 Junior Olympic Games in Detroit, allowing all attending athletes to compete in a series of speed-strength events. FOS is comprised of events for both indoor and outdoor venues and uses age, weight and sex appropriate weights and equipment.

AAU Weightlifting has also become part of the AAU Powerlifting portfolio. For decades, AAU was the main governing body for Olympic weightlifting, but in the recent past, the only AAU-sanctioned weightlifting event conducted was at the annual Junior Olympic Games; with the sport of weightlifting joining forces with Powerlifting, it is anticipated that additional AAU-sanctioned weightlifting competitions, at local through international levels, will be hosted around the country, providing competition for athletes of all ages.

“This is a superb opportunity for AAU Powerlifting to expand both membership and the number of annual events,” says James Parker, AAU Director for Sports. “It’s really an exciting time to be involved in the strength sports, as AAU leads the way in multiple disciplines.”

“These changes,” says Steve Wood, National Sport Chairman for AAU Powerlifting, “Will ensure consistency in strength sport programs and meets, and may potentially attract a broader base of athletes to participate. These changes also give meet directors more flexibility when hosting competitions to ensure athletes of all ages and disciplines have a chance to compete.”

New AAU regional and state directors have been appointed to conduct powerlifting, weightlifting and feats of strength meets. These include:

Bill Weinstock, of Sierra Madre, California, Co-founder of the Feats of Strength concept, has been appointed Vice Chairman. Weinstock is an AAU world champion lifter and judge, a masters national champion in Track and Field, and the perfect candidate to lead FOS.

John Crofton of Shreveport, Louisiana, is the new District Director in Louisiana. Crofton has spent years teaching youth the disciplines of powerlifting and weightlifting, and his nationally-known Jets Powerlifting and Weightlifting team has earned numerous national and world team championships in both disciplines. John is an AAU National Powerlifting Referee and will be adding meet director to his resume in 2013.

Aaron Thesing is the new Wisconsin District Director. Thesing is a recent college graduate who has competed internationally in powerlifting since he was a teen; he also began refereeing powerlifting as a teenager, and now is an AAU National Referee. Thesing plans to work with powerlifting and weightlifting meet directors in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Patrick McDonnell, of Frisco, Texas, is the new District Director in the Dallas area. McDonnell is an AAU world powerlifting champion and national referee who brings extensive organizational and creative skills as a senior executive in the technology industry; he plans to host AAU events in Texas in 2013.

Keith Ward returns as AAU Powerlifting Hawaii District Director after a short absence. A former weightlifter and AAU world champion powerlifter, Keith has coached numerous youth and adult lifters to AAU national and world titles since 1996, and as a meet director, he has presided over numerous local and state events in Hawaii, as well as the AAU Raw Nationals.

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