

## Local lifters muscle their way to the top

DETROIT — Four weightlifters representing the Charleston Parks & Recreation Department Weightlifting Club won national championships this past weekend at the USA Weightlifting National Schoolage Championships.

Those winners in the competition for ages 13-17 included 12-year-old Kierstyn Davis being named best lifter in her 13-year-old age division and a team championship in the girls' 14-15 age division. Davis, of Westfield, won the 13 year-old girls' 137-pound class with lifts of 105 pounds in the snatch and 132 in the clean-and-jerk. In weightlifting, lifters' ages are determined by their age on the last day of the year and Davis turns 13 in December.

"It was awesome to be able to win a national championship," Davis said. "I hope to defend my title next year in Springfield, Mo."

Mattoon's Jenny Sawyer, won her fourth consecutive National Schoolage Championship in the girls' 14-15 age division, 137-pound weight class and made lifts of 146 pounds in the snatch and 168 in the clean-and-jerk. The weights are uneven amounts in pounds because lifting is done in kilograms, as is done on the international level. Sawyer finished second in the Best Lifter standings to a 15-year-old girl from Utah in another class. She has competed in almost 10 national championships at different levels, and has represented the United States in international competition three times.

Kari Davis won the over 152 pounds class in the 14-15 division with lifts of 150 in the snatch and 187 in the clean-and-jerk. It was her first National Schoolage Championships. She lifted more than any 14- or 15-year-old girl in the meet.

Both Sawyer and Kari Davis are to be in the same age division again next year. None of the three have yet been beaten by anyone their own age in the United States. Aurora's Maria (Lizeth) Yama, coached by former club member and Eastern Illinois student Tom Kraus, represented the local club, and won the 14-15 152-pound class with lifts of 115 and 146. She lifts at Aurora West High School and is good friends with the local lifters. It was her second national championship.

In the team competition, teams are made up of either three girls or four boys. In the 14-15 division, there were seven weight classes for girls. The Charleston Parks & Recreation Weightlifting Club won three of the seven classes, and thus scored a perfect 36 points to easily win the team title over clubs from Missouri, Texas, and Team Florida, which draws from the whole state of Florida where lifting is a high school sport for both boys and girls.

Both Jenny Sawyer and Kari Davis are very strong contenders to represent the United States in the first 13-15 year old Pan American Weightlifting Championships to be held in Colorado Springs, Colo., at the United States Olympic Training Center in August. This meet was the primary qualifier for the international competition.

Sawyer said this is her primary goal. "Making this international team and attending the eight day (all expenses paid) training camp was my No. 1 goal for the year," she said. "I enjoy getting together with the other top lifters from around the country,

many of whom are good friends of mine. I also hope to win a medal for our country, our club, and for Mattoon."

Kari Davis said: "This will be my first trip to the Olympic Training Center if I make the team. It isn't everyday that someone from Westfield gets picked to represent their country like I hope to. Jenny has been to the Olympic Training Center several times, but I look forward to seeing all of the top athletes from all over South America and those who live and train at the center from all of the different sports." Coach Marty Schnorf, who coaches the local club, said that the final selection of the team won't come until late July. Another qualifier in July could change the team.

"If there was much of a chance that Jenny or Kari could be bumped off the team, we would go to the meet in Colorado in July to protect our spots," Schnorf said. "I see no need to. If I were a betting man, I would bet that Jenny and Kari will be on the team. Since I am the only coach with more than one athlete potentially on the team, I might end up being the coach of the team. That would be an honor for me, also. I have told Jenny and Kari to keep those dates free."

The final team selection is to be in late July, with the 13-15 Pan Am Championships to be held August 18-19 with a 7-9 day training camp to follow. The Pan American 13-15 year old meet is to be in Hermosillo, Mexico, next year. Jenny Sawyer competed there last year in an international competition where she won Best Lifter. She was invited specially by the Mexican Weightlifting Federation.

The local club is open to all free of charge. For information, contact the Charleston Parks & Recreation Dept.