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Westfield's Davis wins Pan Am weightlifting gold

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COLORADO SPRINGS -- Kari Davis of Westfield won the gold medal at the Pan American Weightlifting Championships for girls ages 13-15 last weekend.

Davis, who represents the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department Weightlifting Club, had the highest total of any female in the competition. She snatched 150 pounds and clean and jerked 176 missing a 192-pound third attempt.

The meet was held at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Davis, who has been lifting less than a year, was selected based of her first place showing in her 14 -15 age group at the National Schoolage Weightlifting Championships in Detroit. Davis also finished fifth place at the National Junior Weightlifting Championships for ages 20 and under held in Orlando, Fla. earlier this year.



Kari Davis, right, of Westfield won the gold medal at the Pan American Weightlifting Championships for girls ages 13-15. Davis, who represents the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department Weightlifting Club accepts her medal from Cheryl Haworth. Haworth set an American record in Charleston in 2001 and lifted the heaviest weight ever lifted by a female in the United States, a record she has since broken.

Only 14, she is a freshman in high school this year. She will be eligible for the meet again next year in the meet in Mexico. She is the daughter of Mark and Karen Davis of Westfield.

"It was a real exciting to be at the Olympic Training Center and see all of the top athletes from so many different sports who train at the Olympic Training Center," Davis said. "There were some of the top young boy bicyclists in the country on our floor, and many top female wrestlers my age from around the country also there for training camps. It really makes me want to come back to the OTC again and be around so many great athletes."

Marty Schnorf, who coaches the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department Weightlifting Club, said: "I was really proud to watch Kari receive her medal and then stand while the National Anthem of the United States was played. In this day and age, if that doesn't give you a lump in your throat, you need to take up something else."

Davis agreed.

"Not very many kids from Westfield or Casey get a chance like this," she said. "I was really proud to represent my town and my club and win first place for our country. I hope I can travel to Mexico and defend my title next year."

Davis is still actually at the OTC. After the competition ended Saturday, many of the top athletes were invited for a week-long, all expense paid training camp to be held at the OTC. All of the travel, room, and board are paid for the trip and the camp by USA Weightlifting and by The United States Olympic Committee. In addition to the free travel, room, and board, athletes also received USA warm-ups, lifting singlets, free T-shirts, and an Adidas gym bag, among other items. The purpose of the camp is to identify athletes who have the potential to represent our country in international competition, and to give them an opportunity to train with access to top equipment, coaching, and to train with other top lifters from around the country.

Jenny Sawyer of Mattoon had also been selected as part of the team. However, she withdrew from the team since she had missed many workouts due to softball. She is attending the camp going on through Aug. 26.

"I hate to see someone pass up a chance to represent our country in international competition," Schnorf said. "But, that's done and I will leave it at that."

The next competition for the club is to be the Illinois State Weightlifting Championships to be in Savoy, on Sept. 16. Other meets within three months will include a meet in the Chicago area, St. Joe, Mo., Birmingham, Ala., and Cincinnati, Ohio.

The club is open to both male and female. Anyone interested in joining can find out more by contacting the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department or by going to the club's website at www.charlestonweightliftingclub.com