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Sawyer, Davis take sixth in national weightlifting

By the JG/T-C
sports@jg-tc.com

SCHAUMBURG - Jenny Sawyer of Mattoon and Kari Davis of Westfield both finished sixth in their weight classes at the USA Weightlifting Senior National Weightlifting Championships.

Both were representing the Charleston Parks and Recreation Department Weightlifting Club.

These national championships are the highest level meet in the U.S. The meet is open to lifters of all ages and has very high qualifying totals.

Sawyer and Davis were two of only four lifters born as late 1992 to qualify and lift in this prestigious event. No one born in 1993 or later qualified for this competition. The meet is open to lifters of all ages and there are no age categories.

Sawyer, lifting in the 63 kilogram class or 139 pounds made lifts of 64 kilos in the snatch and 85 kilos in the clean and jerk.

Her 149 kilos total was an improvement on her 145 total made at the National Junior Championships for ages 20-and-under in March.

Davis lifted in the 75-and-over kilogram class and made lifts of 77 kilos in the snatch and 95 in the clean and jerk. Both were improvements on her lifts at the Juniors where she made lifts of 74 in the snatch and 93 kilos in the clean-and-jerk while winning first place.

"I had hoped for a little more out of Kari," coach Marty Schnorf said. "I expected more out of Jenny. We need to improve on those lifts at our next meet as we build towards their competition in the Pan American Weightlifting Championships for 13-15 year olds to be held in Campeche, Mexico later this summer."

Davis now ranks No. 1 on that team and Sawyer ranks third. Sawyer's total here, which did not count in the rankings, would have advanced her to the No 2 spot on the team behind only Davis. Four girls will make the fully funded trip representing the United States. Kierstyn Davis, Kari's younger sister, ranks sixth on the team right now.

"I had hoped to lift a little more," Sawyer said. "It was very tough competition. I hope to do more at the National Schoolage Championships next month, and I hope to do even more down in Mexico in August. It was good experience to lift against women who will be on the Olympic team in 2008."

Sawyer's class was won by Natalie Woolfolk, a resident athlete at the United States Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Co.

She is the No. 2 ranked female of all classes in the U.S.

Davis said: "It was an honor to compete on the same stage with the top lifters in the U.S. I have gotten to know some of them from my trip to the OTC last year. Cheryl Haworth, who won my class, has become a friend of mine. I look forward to seeing her again when I visit the OTC this summer."

Haworth is a two-time Olympic Team member and the No. 1 ranked lifter in the U.S taking in all classes for women and is also a resident athlete at the OTC.

The next major competition for the club is the National Schoolage (17 and under) WL Championships in Springfield, Mo., in late June. This meet, unlike the Juniors and Seniors has age classes. Sawyer and both Kari and Kierstyn Davis are to compete in the 14-15 age division. Sawyer is a four-time defending champion, while Kari and Kierstyn Davis are defending champions.

Kierstyn will be in the 14-15 age division this year. last year she won in the 13-and-under division.

"It's a whole new ballgame when they compete against lifters their own age," Schnorf said. " Jenny and especially Kari will be heavy favorites then. We try to prepare them by competing against the toughest competition we can. What an honor to warm up right next to the best lifter in the United States, and have her come over and wish you good luck and even know who you are."

This meet was Webcast live across the United States and actually, through a link with the International Weightlifting Federation, Webcast live around the world.

Within the next 18 months, the club will compete in Missouri, Ohio, Mexico, Alabama, Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana, Arizona, and at the National Schoolage meet at Disney World in Orlando next year.

The weightlifting club is open to anyone in the area at charge to join. For more information, contact the Charleston Rec. Dept. or e-mail charlestonweightliftingclub@yahoo.com. The club also has a website at charlestonweightliftingclub.