ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIPS 2014 Sat/Sun 22ND /23RD FEBUARY

 AT HARRY MITCHELL LEISURE CENTRE BIRMINGHAM

 Commonwealth Games Qualifier

There were 92 athletes ready to have a go at Commonwealth Games Qualification and a chance to compete in Glasgow in the summer. All were split into 9 groups over the 2 days.

The competition started on Saturday morning at 10 with the 48kg and 53kg classes combined. The Northern Region had 3 lifters in this group, 1 in the 48kg class and 2 in the 53kg class. In the 48kg class was Anastasia Michaelas. She had 1 other lifter against her, Nicola Hobbs. In the 53kg class was Jo McManus and Shireen Amir, who had a very busy class with 4 other lifters. Anastasia was first on the platform with 39kg. She got a good lift, as was her second lift with 42kg but failed her third with 45kg. Her opponent Nicola managed a good lift with 46kg. In the clean and jerk Anastasia opened with 50kg then a good lift with 53kg and a final lift with 55kg. Nicola managed 58kg so a silver for Anastasia.

In the 53kg class Jo had some work to do as this class was very competitive for the bronze position. Jo Calvino totalled 150kg to qualify for the Games. In silver spot was Noorin Gulam, also from London but from a different club, finishing with a 130kg total. Amir opened on the snatch with 48kg but it took her all 3 attempts to get a good lift but she managed it. Next weight was 49kg for Jo to get going. She got a good opening lift now 2kg above Sorcha Gavin. Sorcha went to 50kg for her second good lift and then Jo added another 2kg for her second good lift. Sorcha missed the 52kg on her third giving Jo an opportunity to extend her lead with 54kg which she did. Amir started the clean and jerks with 57kg, Sorcha with 58kg and Jo with 59kg, all good lifts. Next on the bar for Amir was 61kg but she failed both attempts, but got a total and finished 5th overall. The next weight on the bar was 62kg for both Jo and Sorcha. Jo was first out but failed the clean. Sorcha got a good lift which put some pressure on Jo to get the good lift she needed to secure a bronze position. Jo managed a good lift and put the pressure back to Sorcha who went to 67kg to try take the bronze but after a good clean she failed the jerk and Jo won the bronze .

The next group was the male 62kg class and 69kg class combined and in this group the Northern Region had 3 in the 62kg class and just 1 in the 69kg class. First was the 62kg class and Jonathan Turpin with 80kg but he failed the lift overhead and had to take the same weight again. He got a good lift and then jumped to 88kg but failed the lift. Also in the 62kg class was Nicholas Muhanza with 90kg which was a good opening lift. Also with 90kg was Nam Ahmadi who got a good lift and the bar moved to 92kg for Louis Hampton-Jones. He also opened with a good lift. Next weight on the bar was 95kg for Nicholas to take his second attempt and a good lift. Nam also took 95kg but failed to get the lift and then moved up. Louis then took 96kg for his second good lift. Nam then came out with 97kg but again failed the lift. Nicolas unfortunately hurt himself while snatching the 95kg and had to pull out of the competition. Louis took the bar to 99kg for his third successful lift, then the bar went up 1kg to 100kg for Jaswant Shergill and Christos Michaelas. Both opened with good lifts and then moved to 105kg and again both got good lifts. The competition between these two athletes was very close especially when both were weighing the same. On the third attempts Jaswant moved to 107kg and got the lift. Christos then moved up 1kg to 108kg but just missed the lift giving Jaswant a 2kg advantage going into the clean and jerk. With Nicholas retiring injured Louis took the first weight of 111kg and got a good opening lift. The bar then went to 115kg for Nam to take his first attempt which he sadly failed. Also with 115kg Jon went out for his first lift but failed the jerk. Louis was then next out for the same weight but he failed the jerk. It was Nam who then got a good lift with 115kg, then Jon came out for his second attempt but failed the clean. He had 2 minutes to get it together and take a breath before his third attempt, but after a tough clean he failed the jerk backwards. Louis also failed the jerk with 115kg and then the bar went up to 120kg for Christos’s first, a good lift. The bar went up 1kg to 121kg for Nam to try get the bronze position but he failed the jerk. The bar went to 125kg for Christos’s second good attempt, then up 2kg for Jaswants first good lift with 127kg. Christos then took a 7kg jump to 132kg for his third attempt and to put pressure on Jaswant and got a good lift. This meant Jaswant now needed 133kg to take the lead back, after a tough clean his jerk was ruled out for a press out, his third attempt however was a better clean and then a good jerk gave him the lead and the title along with the Commonwealth Games qualifying total with 240kg. Christos finished with 237kg in silver position and Louis in bronze with 210kg.

In the 69kg class the Northern Region had just one lifter in this very competitive class. Rob Davies opened with 83kg but failed the lift. He then jumped to 86kg for his second attempt and got a good lift. His third with 89kg was also a good lift. In the clean and jerk Rob took 112kg for his first attempt but failed the lift he then jumped to 115kg but again failed the lift. He had to stay on the same weight for his third lift and to stay in the competition but failed the jerk unfortunately not giving him a total.

The next group number 3 on the platform is the 58kg ladies. In this group the northern Region had 2 lifters in Michelle Davies and Emma Watson. Emma was out first for her first good lift with 35kg. She got another good lift with 38kg and 3 from 3 finishing with 41kg. Michelle had to wait a bit before her first lift with 47kg then another good lift with 50kg but missed her third lift with 53kg. They had a tough class as Zoe Smith took the lead with 3 very good lifts with 82kg, 86kg and then 90kg. In the clean and jerk Emma got a good lift with 45kg but unfortunately Emma missed her jerk with 48kg and then jumped to 50kg but had the lift disallowed by the referees giving her a 86kg total and 7th position. Michelle came out for her first lift with 66kg but missed the clean, then on her second attempt had the jerk ruled out by the referees, but she made good on the third giving her a total of 116kg and 5th place. Zoe opened with 106kg then another good lift with 112kg and then a third with 116kg and a very good position, qualifying for the Commonwealth Games.

In the last group of the day was a very large 77kg class of 16 lifters with 2 from the Northern region being Shaun Clegg and Owen Lockwood. Owen was right in the thick of it being mid-table. His first attempt was after a long wait but was a good lift with 94kg. His second attempt was just as long a wait but he did good with 97kg. Again he had to wait 8 lifts before his third with 100kg but just missed the lift. After an even longer wait Shaun was out with 127kg after Adam Matussi had got 124kg on his first. Adam then went to 128kg for his next good lift and again with 130kg to put the pressure on Shaun, but Shaun was ready and got a good lift with his second lift of 132kg, his last lift was just short on the pull with 136kg.

Owen first clean and jerk was unfortunately a miss on the jerk but he made good on his second with the same wait. He then needed 128kg to try and qualify for the British Seniors in May but unfortunately he missed the jerk after a strong clean but another very long wait. He finished with a very respectable 220kg total and in 9th position. Adam put 153kg on the bar for his first attempt but failed the jerk after a good clean. He failed his second lift the same way but made good on his third under pressure and got a good total of 283kg. Shaun then opened with 155kg but missed the jerk as it was ruled out by the referees. He made good on his second attempt and won the competition but he wanted more and jumped up to 165kg. After a tough clean though he missed the jerk but finished with a total of 287kg. This qualified Shaun and Adam for the Commonwealth Games.

Sunday morning was the beginning of another day for more of the best athletes in England to try and qualify for the Commonwealth Games. There were 5 more groups starting with the ladies 63kg class and the 69kg class. In the 63kg there was Sarah Davies from the Northern region. She was in a very competitive class with Emily Godley, last year`s English Champion. After the lighter lifters got through their respective lifts, Sarah opened with 80kg then moved to 83kg which was the opening weight for Emily, but Emily missed the lift. Sarah then took the 83kg but she failed the lift as did Emily on her second attempt putting pressure on herself. Sarah went for 83kg for her third which she got a good lift and put even more pressure on Emily but she took the bar to 84kg for her third and handled the pressure very well as she got a good lift and a 1kg lead.

In the clean and jerk and after the other girls had lifted their respected weights the bar was taken to 103kg for Sarah to open with her first good lift. The bar then went up 1kg to 104kg for Emily to take the lead back. Sarah went to 107kg but after a tough clean she missed the jerk. Emily also took the same weight and managed a good lift. Sarah then had a better clean and a successful jerk to put the pressure back on Emily who moved the bar to 110kg but failed the clean and made a 191kg total to take the title from Sarah, who managed a 190kg total, giving both Commonwealth Games qualification.

In the 69kg class there was just 2 lifters but one was from the Northern region in Rebekah Tiler. She had Sarah Stanhope from the central region who only managed her second lift with 45kg. Rebekah opened with 82kg she then moved to 87kg but failed the lift overhead. She took the same weight but this time failed the lift in front of her. After Sarah finished with her opening lift with 57kg Rebekah started with 107kg to secure the title and the qualifying standard for the Commonwealth Games. She then moved the bar to 112kg for her second good lift and then moved to 116kg but after a very easy clean she just pushed the bar forward and got the jerk ruled out by the referees.

There were no athletes form the Northern region in the 85kg class but there were 10 lifters from all over England. Taking the title and a qualification standard was Bradley Burrows with a 135kg snatch and 160kg in the clean and jerk.

In group 7 were the ladies 75kg class and the 75+ classes. Here the Northern region had 4 athletes, 2 in each class. In the 75kg class was Emma Coplin who opened with 42kg but missed her first attempt and again with the same weight on her second, but made good on her third. Next was Lauren English with 45kg for her first good lift and then a second good lift with 48kg but she failed with her third weight of 51kg. Evelyn Stevenson then opened with 65kg but failed to get any of her snatches and could not carry on in the competition. Lauren opened with 55kg on the clean and jerk as did Emma. Both managed a good lift and both moved to 60kg for their second lifts, but Emma failed her attempt where Lauren got a successful lift. Emma went to 62kg for her third lift but again failed the lift. Lauren moved the bar to 63kg for her third successful lift both getting a total, Emma with 97kg and Lauren with 111kg.

In the 75+ class there was Jennifer Stott and Amelia Lonsbrough. Jennifer opened her account with 40kg but failed both her second and third lifts with 43kg. The bar went up and got to 55kg for Amelia to get one on the board. She then went to 60kg for her second lift and then went to 65kg for her third lift but failed. Also in this class was Mercy Brown, who opened with 85kg, then went to 90kg on her second but was just short on the pull and failed the lift, then failed with 91kg. In the clean and jerk Jennifer opened with 60kg then another good lift with 63kg and again a good lift with 66kg giving her a total of 106kg and 6th position. The bar went up to 70kg for Amelia to get started. She then went to 75kg but failed the jerk. She took the same weight again and got a good lift to finish with a 135kg total and 4th place. Mercy finished the group with 3 very good lifts with 106kg on her first, 112 on her second and a very good 116kg on her third to finish with a 201kg total, She was the second of the ladies to break the 200kg mark, with a further 3 other ladies breaking the 190kg marker, something that has never been seen before in this country, showing the quality of the female athletes we have today.

Group 8 was next for the 94kg male class. There were no lifters from the Northern region but this was a very good class to watch even though there were 4 lifters that bombed out including the very popular Sonny Webster who finished with a 140kg snatch. Owen Boxall got his first with 135kg, but then failed with 140kg. The bar went up to 145kg for Sonny but he failed the lift and went up 1kg, but the bar stayed with 145kg for Owen’s third attempt which was his best as he made easy work of it. Sonny had to get his next lift but he failed at 146kg. The first weight on the bar in the clean and jerk took 3 attempts to be successful and as the bar rose there were many fails and many bombing out the bar eventually reached 175kg for Owen’s first good lift. He then went to 180kg for his second attempt but failed the jerk. He then took 2 minutes to get his mind set and went out to have another go and managed a good lift to give him a very good total of 325kg. Sonny then had to go to 181kg to try get on the board after a tough clean he missed the jerk. He then needed to go to 186kg to try to beat Owens total but again after a tough clean he missed the jerk and unfortunately did the same on his third to not make a total.

In the final and 9th group were the 105kg class and 105+kg classes. Here the Northern region had 2 athletes, one in each class. In the 105kg class was Joseph Walton, who listed himself from the Empire club but is from Leeds. He opened with a fail on 130kg, got it on his second lift, then went to 135kg but failed this weight. In the lead was in form Ben Watson who started with 145kg, then went to 150kg and then got a new best with 155kg to get 3 from 3. In the clean and jerk Joseph started with 160kg but it took him 3 attempts to get a successful lift and a total. Ben started with 170kg for an easy lift he then went to 177kg for his second good lift and then his third and 6 from 6 good lifts. He finished with 180kg and another new best and qualification for the Commonwealth Games.

The 105+ class had the other Northern lifter which was Sean Clarke-Torrance. He started with 120kg but missed the lift. He then jumped 5kg to 125kg which a good lift as was his third with 128kg. Jon Hannah finished the group snatching with 135kg and 140kg but missed his last with 145kg. Sean started his clean and jerks with 157kg, which he needed to qualify for the British Seniors in May. He needed all 3 of his attempts to get the weight, but finished with a 285kg total, giving him British Seniors qualification and a bronze position. Jon moved the bar to 180kg for his first lift and then to 190kg but missed both lifts on the jerks and finished with a total of 320kg.

Over the 2 days of lifting there were a total of 13 athletes who reached the qualifying totals for the Commonwealth Games and 3 were from the Northern region: Rebekah Tiler, Sarah Davies and Shaun Clegg, so well done to them. Christos Michaelas just missed out by 3kg but I’m sure he will reach the required standard at the British Seniors in May.

A big well done to the loaders over the 2 days and all the officials, who worked in many areas to keep the competition going smoothly. A well done to all the athletes who reached the qualification standard and wish them the best of luck on their road to the Commonwealth Games.

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