

Elmhurst's Marcum gets lift from national title

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By **BILL STONE** bstone@pioneerlocal.com



WEIGHTLIFTING-- Elmhurst's Ingrid Marcum took advantage of having this year's United States National Weightlifting Championships nearby at the University of Illinois at Chicago Forum.

With no extensive travel needed, she chose to work all the way up to Friday. As Marcum arrived for Saturday's competition, she strategically found a prime parking spot just across the street.

"I did have to have someone feed my meter in the middle of the session, but that's OK," Marcum said.

Holding steady, Ingrid Marcum completes her heaviest lift, a 103 kilo clean and jerk. . (Shauna Bittle/Staff Photographer)

The best payoff came during Marcum's performance in the women's 75 kilogram division for competitors who weigh no more than 165 pounds.

Marcum captured her first overall national championship in her ninth competitive season by collecting a combined total of 194 kg/427 pounds for the two categories after winning snatch (career-best 91 kg/200 pounds) and taking third in clean and jerk (103 kg/227 pounds).

Marcum, a 1993 York graduate, won the 2003 national championship in snatch and had finished second overall at the national championships in 2007 (191 kg) and 2006 (199 kg). Competing last year at 69 kg (152 pounds), one weight class lighter, she was third overall (190 kg).

"I've always wanted to be able to win a national title and to be able to do it in Chicago was pretty cool," said Marcum, who shared the victory with her family.

"I think I'm pretty easily adaptable so to be in a hotel or my own bed didn't make a real big difference. I actually had more of a commute than I normally would have just because I came out from the suburbs, but even that wasn't a real big deal. It was certainly nice to be at home, but then because I'm at home, it doesn't necessarily feel like a big meet."



Ingrid Marcum chalks her hands before a practice lift. (Shauna Bittle/Staff Photographer)

In snatch, weightlifters raise the bar above their head in one motion out of a squatting position. In clean and jerk, weightlifters first steady the bar at their chest before raising it.

Saturday's lifters had three attempts in both categories. Marcum easily snatched 88 kg and then succeeded at 91 kg after missing with her second attempt. In clean and jerk, Marcum easily lifted 103 kg to start but then missed twice at 107 kg.

Marcum competes for Windy City Weightlifting and trains at WCS Gattone Sports Performance in Buffalo Grove.

At the Windy City Qualifier May 2, Marcum lifted a then personal-best total 201 kg with a personal-best 111 kg in clean and jerk, surpassing her 110 kg from 2003. Recently she has been hampered by a torn labrum in her hip.

"I've kind of been dealing with that (injury) back and forth so the last couple of weeks of training haven't been as great so I'm still pretty pleased with how I did.

"(Winning was) a little bittersweet because in the last month I've done a much bigger total. I was a little disappointed in my own performance but still enough to take the title so that's good."

Marcum's victory also marked the first time she was among international competition. For the first time, the nationals were held in conjunction with the Pan American Championships for countries in the Western Hemisphere and the 5th Iberoamerican Championships for Spanish-speaking countries. Twenty-two nations were represented overall.

The women's 75 kg division featured Spain's Lidia Valentin and Mexico's Damaris Aguirre, who were fifth and sixth, respectively, at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. Cuba's Tamara Hernandez also made history Saturday as the first woman weightlifter from her country to compete internationally. Counting all 19 competitors, Marcum was 11th overall at 75 kg, fifth in snatch and 16th in clean and jerk.

"It was actually pretty neat to be lifting with some very high-caliber weightlifters. I've been right on the cusp of qualifying for international events so it was a good experience for me," Marcum said.

At 33, Marcum was the oldest competitor in her weight class, but she obviously continues to improve. With three championships held simultaneously, qualifying standards for this year's nationals were increased and only four women advanced in Marcum's weight class. Marcum edged Erin Wallace, 22, for the overall national title by 2 kg.

"I still don't think I've reached my peak. I think I have bigger lifts in me and I can get stronger," Marcum said.

More international interaction hopefully will be coming soon. Marcum is preparing for her next big goal, making the 2010 U.S. Winter Olympic team for the first time in bobsled, after just missing the 2006 lineup. She resumes participating in team camp at the end of the month.

Marcum gave spectators a glimpse of her bobsled talents Saturday. Her weightlifting regimen includes first stomping her feet before she approaches the bar -- a habit she acquired in 2006 from her bobsled training to get the ice out of spiked shoes just before her starts.

"All of a sudden, I was on the platform, and I was ready to do a big lift and I just stomped for the first time," Marcum said. "I'm pretty routine. It's like my steps. When I follow the same pattern each time, it just kind of gets my mind ready."