

Aurora powerlifter sets the bar high with deadlift world record



By Jake Courtepatte

Just one year into joining the male-dominated world of powerlifting, Aurora's Maresa Lee is making a name for herself on the international stage.

She squashed her previous deadlift personal best (PB) by six pounds at the World Powerlifting Congress Championship in Idaho Falls, Idaho earlier this month, at the same time setting a new junior women's world record of 325 lbs.

"Usually with powerlifting you get three attempts," explained Lee. "But if after the third attempt you have the potential to hit a world record, the judges could give you a fourth attempt."

After matching her PB of 319 lbs. in her third attempt, Lee was granted the bonus lift, where she decided to try to set the new mark.

"Usually when I compete I try to stay conservative because you're being judged by three judges on form and technique as well. I'm more worried about getting the lift than the weight itself."

Her coach convinced her to go for it, reminding Lee that the extra attempt wouldn't affect her already PB. She then lifted her way into the record books.

"I went into it expecting not to get it," said Lee. "Deadlifts are at end of the day, I was pretty tired, because you've already been using all your potential for squats and bench?so after the third attempt, I said 'okay I'd be happy with this' but I'm glad I went for it."

Despite only joining the sport a year ago, to Lee, a large part of finding success is in the mental game.

"You have to walk in with a purpose, you can't doubt yourself. You have to tell yourself you're going to complete the lift."

Her record-setting lift, combined with a squat of 292 lbs. and a bench press of 137 lbs., were enough to earn her a gold medal in the junior 90-kg division.

The relative newcomer admits to not being the most knowledgeable about the specifics of the proper training regime for the sport, and credits her trainers for putting together a program that she follows.

"It's specifically geared towards my strengths and weaknesses. In the days leading up to the competition, you slowly work up to your PB, and sort of train your muscles in a way to save strength towards the end."

Focusing on school for now as a gerontology student at George Brown College, Lee plans to continue training in the winter months and perhaps return to competition in April.