

Amherst County powerlifter sets world records

Barrett Mohrmann | Posted: Monday, April 8, 2013 4:15 am

Every day, 15-year-old Jeffrey Allen awakes in his log cabin bedroom in Amherst County surrounded by dumbbells and weight plates. A few wrestling trophies sit atop his dresser, but his vast collection of medals is tucked away in boxes.

His mother, Tammy Hogan, said her son does not like to dwell on his previous accomplishments but rather what he can achieve next.

“He wins one tournament and he’s on to the next,” Hogan said.

Stepping off the wrestling mat, Allen decided to try competitive powerlifting for the first time March 23, not knowing he would be-come a world champion.

Allen and his powerlifting mentor Jeff Quarles drove about an hour north to Gordonsville for the 2013 Ironman Nationals, hosted by the 100% Raw Powerlifting Federation.

The Federation holds lifting competitions in 25 countries across the world.

A newcomer, Allen decided to attempt all of the competition’s lifts — bench press, dead lift and strict curl.

“He has a lot of God-given talent,” Quarles said. “I’ve never met anyone like him.”

Using his chest, back, and triceps muscles, a supine Allen lowered and raised to his chest a weighted barbell of 221 pounds — about 30 pounds heavier than his body weight. From a crouched position, he stood up while holding a 370-pound barbell for the dead lift.

“He beat all the men to boot,” Quarles said. “They wanted to take a picture with him.”

According to the federation’s records, no one of Allen’s age and weight had previously competed in Virginia in the bench press and dead lift. Those lifts became the state record-holders.

However, the last event was what Allen came for.

“The strict curl was the one he really wanted,” Quarles said.

Positioned upright against a wall, Allen held a barbell of 127 pounds — six pounds more than the federation’s world record for his age and weight class. At the judge’s sound, Allen carried the barbell from his knees to his neck. The world record was his.

Allen’s road to that moment was not long. Rather, it began two years ago, in his sixth-grade gym class. When it came time for the class to run the mile, Allen found himself behind all of the other students.

“I was at the end of the pack,” Allen recalled. “That made me mad.”

Hogan admitted that in his younger years, her son was not in the best of shape.

“He used to be short and husky,” she said.

Allen began training with weights and running across the wooded, 80-acre plot surrounding his 300-year-old log cabin home.

As a seventh-grader at Monelison Middle School, he became a member of the football team. However, Allen felt he truly found his place that winter on the wrestling team. Since then, he has gone on to win four Virginia wrestling championship titles for his age and weight class.

“When I get on that mat, I want to be like a predator,” Allen said. “Winning is a good feeling.”

Hogan said her son had dreams of wrestling in the Olympics. However, the International Olympic Committee announced this past year that wrestling would be dropped from the worldwide competition.

In the meantime, Allen continues to train, but not at a gym. He is still too young to drive to one.

Rather, this past October, Allen created an enclosure by wrapping a tarp across a section of their front patio.

“It’s not fancy, but it works,” Allen said.

Heating and air-conditioning units are propped up to protect him against the weather. Rectangular holes in the tarp serve as windows, with a view of ancient trees and a still pond.

On the patio, Allen trains in accordance with the powerlifting regulations. At competitions, lifters cannot use gloves, so Allen will not use them in training.

“He’s got calluses like crazy,” Hogan said.

Even then, Allen manages to cut open his hands. With a bleeding palm, Allen excuses himself to get a towel, put more talcum powder on his hands and then return to his workout.

“I wish I had his will power,” Hogan said. “I never met a kid like him.”

At times, it is easy to forget that Allen is only 15 years old.

He does not have a cellphone, does not spend time on video games or TV, and good luck getting him to eat a slice of pizza.

Whey protein powder, milk, and bananas are a different story.

“I like to put good stuff in my body,” Allen said.

With a world record already under his belt, what is next for the young hulk?

Allen hopes to travel to Las Vegas in October to compete in the international competition of the 100% Raw Powerlifting Federation.

“I’d like to break my own record at the world championships,” Allen said.

Not to mention, Allen has two more lifts for which he can seize the world records. However, Hogan said her son has a lot of money to raise to make the trip. Allen hopes he will receive sponsorships that will send him to Nevada.

“He wants to be the best,” Quarles, his powerlifting coach, said. “I know that he can definitely do it.”