

The 16-17 year old division capped off an exciting three day run at the 2012 Youth National Championships.

Deanna Zheng got things rolling in the 48kg class, putting together a six for six performance, as she muscled her way to a 82kg total and first place. In the 53kg class, Shelby Koren was the definition of the “calm before the storm”. With every grip of the bar, Shelby would drop to her knees. Taking her time, she used almost every second of the clock. Then, in an instant, the powerful Florida native would crank up the intensity as she would power up the weight with ease. Shelby blew through the 53kg division with a 132kg total.

There was a moment in the 58kg division where Natalie (Hope) Stockel was in trouble. Hope had missed her first two attempts at 66 kilos in the snatch, and was on the verge of being out of medal contention before the halfway point of the session. However, Hope was able to come through when she needed to and put up the 66 in her final attempt. After getting three white lights on her first C&J attempt, it was all academic from there, and Hope cruised to the top of the podium and an impressive 147 kg. total.

Alexis LiCalsi’s trip to the top of the 63kg podium was a fairly smooth one. She made all but one attempt, and was always one or two kilos ahead of her closest competitor as she totaled 155 kilos for the win. In the 69kg class, Christy Cox held a slim 2 kilo lead after the snatch session. Staying steady and effective, Christy hit all three of her C&Js while her closest competitor, Kendall Grant, missed her last two, with a weight that would have put her in first place. Cox’s effectiveness paid off in the end with a 137 total and first place.

The star of stars in the 16-17 year old division was Marissa Klingseis. Already the Youth American Record holder in all three categories, and over 100% of the Youth World Qualifying Total, Klingseis had to wait patiently in the back as the rest of her 75+ competitors needed to finish their lifts before she got a chance to step to the stage. Even a missed week of training before the Youth National Championships didn’t slow Melissa down, as she was able to do what she seemingly does every time she comes to the platform, and that’s set youth records. After a slight hiccup in the snatch derailed her plans to break that record, she bounced back in the C&J to move the record to 117 kg. and finished the competition with an easy 207; 42 kilos better than the rest.

In the 56kg boy’s division, it was Blake Kaplan who was able to put together a 150kg total, which was strong enough for a first place finish. Team Metro Elite’s Patrick Forrester’s poise earned him a first place finish in the 62kg category, when he pulled his last C&J off the platform with one second on the clock. (add first name) Paul’s 3kg advantage on both the snatch and C&J helped him to a 6kg win and a 195 total. Luis Verdiales and George Hanna represented Team Florida Volusia County well by finishing first and second in the 69kg class. Both came away with a 90kg snatch, after Hanna missed two attempts at the 94kg that would have put him ahead going into the C&J. In the C&J, Verdiales was able to put up 125 and 130kgs successfully to accumulate a nice 220 kg. total. In the end, Hanna just was not able to run Verdiales down and came away with a 210 total and the silver medal. The 77kg title was picked up by Nathan Damron. Nathan put together a performance that saw him go five for six and just missing his last attempt. In all, Nathan was able to total 233 kg. Ian Howerton was also able to go five

for six on his way to winning the 85kg category. His only miss came on a 108kg snatch on his third attempt. Howerton was able to quickly put his miss behind him and go three for three in the C&J, topping off at 145 to end the competition with a 250 total.

Going in to the 94kg competition it looked like a one horse race with Taylor Jakubsen's starting attempts by far succeeding what any other competitors even attempted. But as sports go, it is all about the performance on the platform and not on the paper. Taylor almost lost his opportunity for a dominant victory when he missed his first two snatch attempts at 125kgs, nearly leaving the door wide open to the rest of the field. Needing to complete his third attempt to avoid bombing out, Taylor seemingly fed off the crowd to get the three white lights he desperately needed to keep his gold medal hopes alive. From there, Taylor connected his first C&J attempt at 146 to take home the gold, but capped off his performance with a 155 C&J to finish with a 280 total.

Similarly, Paul Morganroth only needed to hit on his opening attempts to claim the 105kg class. His 122kg snatch was 16 kilos higher than anyone else's highest attempt and his opening 145 C&J was similarly 15 kilos higher than the next best attempt. Instead of settling, he put up 151kg on the C&J to total 273. In contrast to what happened in the 85 kg. and 94 kg. classes, in the 105+ class the champion was not determined until the last lift. Michael Johnson jumped out to a 9 kilo lead in the snatch portion, only to watch Benjamin Simonds chip away at his lead in the C&J. Johnson was able to hit 140 on his second attempt but missed at 145 on his third attempt. Simonds was able to hit 145 on his opener but still trailed by five kilos. Seemingly not wanting to just take the win on body weight, Simonds asked for 150. After missing his second attempt, Simonds needed his very last lift to claim first place. As the last lifter of the competition stepped to the platform, Simonds was able to end the competition with a bang, nailing the 150 and claiming the 105+ crown.