

SPORTS

Marks taking shape

Selkirk bodybuilder wins novice bantam title

By Mark T. Buss

Selkirk's Neil Marks may be a newcomer to the provincial bodybuilding scene but he is quickly making a name for himself.

Taking part in his first ever bodybuilding competition, the 34-year-old Mandak welder was biceps and shoulders above the competition at the Manitoba Amateur Body Building Association novice championships March 29 at Pantages Playhouse in Winnipeg finishing first in the bantam category (136-145 pounds).

Not only did he take spot, Marks – to his surprise – was a unanimous victor scoring first place ballots from all five judges.

"I was very nervous but for my first competition I guess I did pretty good," Marks said of the selection process where winners are announced in reverse order, from last to first place. "When they called all the other guys and I was the last one there, I had a big grin on my face."

The competition was held in two phases. Competitors performed a series of mandatory poses at 9 a.m. and relaxed the remainder of the day en route to a one minute posing routine to music and more mandatory poses at 5:30 p.m. Entrants then hit the stage all together for a one-minute head to head pose-down.

Never on the stage in this capacity before, Marks said he began to feel off the energy of the audience.

"You're not allowed to look to the side and see what the other

posers are doing so I judged my progress on the audience," he said. "I would do a pose and they would get louder and louder and I just tried to build on that."

Marks said he began lifting weights about 10 years ago using the same reasoning as the old Charles Atlas comic book ads – to improve his physical appearance and boost his confidence.

"I was small and I didn't like being small," Marks said. "I used to weigh 120 pounds in high school but I normally weigh in around 170 pounds now."

Training in Winnipeg with Darren Mehling of Team GOTS – Goal Oriented Training Solutions – Marks hits the weights a minimum of four hours, five days a week while doing cardio every day.

He said the greatest advancement he made was getting a personal trainer to monitor his internal and external progress.

"It makes a tremendous difference and given me a whole different perspective on life," Marks said. "I tried to do it on my own when I lived in Alberta but as the date for the contest I wanted to enter grew closer, I burned myself out because I knew nothing about proper nutrition."

Eating seven small but power-packed meals in a day and drinking tons of water, Marks said as the MABBA contest closed in he lowered his fluid intake, dropped his body fat down to three per cent and weight to 142.6 pounds.

"You really dry out for system to the point where you're just muscle

and skin," he said. "I started as a light-weight and dropped to the bantam-weight class, and conquered it."

Mehling said Marks' body showed the typical gains made when he worked on his own but it was his mental approach to bodybuilding – a common fault with weightlifters – that kept him from reaching his potential.

"The biggest change for most bodybuilders is not physical, it's mental," Mehling said. "I've known a lot of guys who went on stage and placed well... but they weren't really winners. Bodybuilding is a personal quest, a journey. You have to be able to do the work and Neil was more than willing. He never questioned why he was doing so much. He asked me what I wanted him to do and he did it."

Marks now plans on keeping things moving until the 2008 Kaizen Provincial Championships to be held May 31 at Pantages with pre-posing at 9 a.m. and the finals at 5:30 p.m.

Mehling believes despite the increased numbers and experience of competitors sure to be on hand for the provincials, his new prize pupil should make some serious noise in four weeks as he has continued to improve his physique since the novice competition.

"When you go into a competition you test yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually... it all gets culminated in that one moment on stage," Mehling said. "Now Neil has a taste for that, the



Photo by Colleen Machen

Neil Marks' MABBA victory was a unanimous decision.

success on the stage, and he knows it's all worth it."

"You never know who's going to

show up at these competitions but if he works hard and does his best, he's already won."

Landmark CINEMAS Friday, May 2 to Thursday, May 8
www.landmarkcinemas.com

Garry Theatre PH: 482-3912
225 Manitoba Ave., Selkirk •

Iron Man
Evenings at 6:45 pm & 9:15 pm
Sat & Sun matinee 1:00 pm & 3:30 pm
Run Time 126 min.
PG with a warning of frightening scenes, not recommended for children, violence

FAMILY Affordable
\$5.00 Adult/Youth \$3.00 Child/Senior \$3.00 Tues. & Mats

Your Tundra Specialist

Call Wayne Philpott
338-7985
wphilpott@mcphillipstoyota.ca

McPhillips TOYOTA 2425 McPhillips Street
Winnipeg, MB
Ph. (204) 338-7985
Toll Free 1-800-665-0087

DEADWOOD HISTORIC WEST
May 25-30
Incl. Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse & Much More

Atlantic Canada & Newfoundland
Sept. 14-28 Great Canadian Experience of East Coast

MARITIMES & NEW ENGLAND FALL FOLIAGE
Sept. 20 (21 days) • Fly Option Sept. 22 (16 days)

Hawaii Cruise & Stay Jan 27, 2009 Escorted
JOIN US ON AN EXPLORATION OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

Best of Branson (9 days) Nov. 16

Wisconsin Dells Sept 21 (6 days) Excellent Value!

Branson, Nashville & Pigeon Forge
Oct. 26 - 14 days COUNTRY MUSIC DREAM VACATION
Groups and Singles Welcome! Call for Details.

EMBASSY TOURS 757-9383 or 1-800-723-8051

Selkirk Youth Hockey Association
Annual General Meeting

May 8th, 2008
7:00 pm

Elections
Positions Available
Smitty's Family Restaurant

All welcome to attend