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The natural way

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The natural way

During the early 1990s, Furman health and exercise science professor Tony Caterisano, math professor Lisa Markus and athletic grounds supervisor Danny Crain decided to take their hobby to a new level.

The threesome, who enjoyed lifting weights, decided to begin competing in meets sponsored by the U.S. Powerlifting Federation. But although they had some initial success, they were not impressed with the meets or their fellow competitors.

Caterisano says that the tournaments were poorly run and that the judges seemed to favor hometown participants. He also believed that many of the competitors were using performance-enhancing drugs.

"We were losing to people simply because they were willing to juice up on drugs and we were not. They weren't training any harder and they weren't naturally any stronger," he says.

After a few meets the Furman trio stopped entering competitions. Markus soon moved away, and for a time interest lagged. Then, in 1997, Caterisano received a flyer promoting a meet to be held in Greenville by the World Natural Powerlifting Federation.

Founded in 1992, the Atlanta, Ga.-based group had established itself as one of the fastest growing powerlifting organizations in the country by appealing to drug-free competitors. (Unlike other powerlifting associations, the WNPF tests nearly all contestants for drugs.) The group was popular with weight trainers in Florida, the Northeast and Midwest but relatively unknown in South Carolina.

Anxious to re-enter competitive weight lifting and curious about the WNPF,

Furman powerlifters make mark on national and world scenes

Caterisano says he "scraped together" a team that consisted of Crain and students Jeff Noblin '98, Tyron Berrian '99 and Rico Perkins '00. They captured the team title.

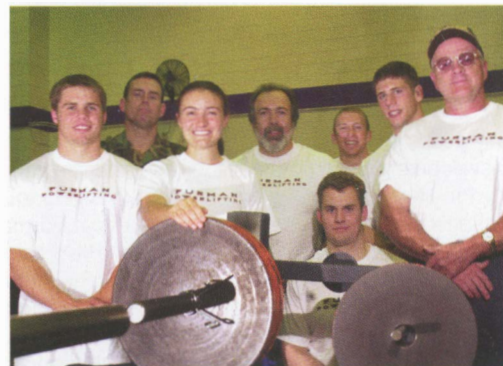
Impressed by the way the tournament was run and by its strict stand on drugs, Caterisano soon formed a powerlifting club at Furman and began entering more meets.

Since then Furman has hosted several WNPF meets, including the world championships last October and a national meet in March, and become a force in "natural" powerlifting circles. The club captured the 2002 WNPF National Team Championship, which is determined by a squad's performance in all lifts.

Along the way, health and exercise science graduate student Beau Greer (who competes at 148 pounds) and psychology major Jason Pagan '02 (180 pounds) have set world WNPF records for their weight divisions. Pagan was even featured in the "Faces in the Crowd" section of *Sports Illustrated* in December for his world record bench press of 457.5 pounds. Caterisano, Crain, HES professor Tim Patrick '85, Kristy Palmer '03, and Kevin Blackmon '05 and Justin Jones '05 have set state and American records in their divisions.

The world meet, held at the Physical Activities Center in October, attracted hundreds of spectators and over 200 powerlifters representing seven countries. Caterisano, who organized and competed in the tournament, says Furman proved a popular site because of its ample warm-up space, spacious locker rooms, good parking and spectator-friendly seating.

Furman's emergence on the powerlifting scene has also helped to spur interest



Preparing for a workout, members of Furman's standout 2001-2002 powerlifting team include, standing from left, Jason Pagan '02; Sgt. Michael Moore of military science; Kristy Palmer '03; Tony Caterisano of health and exercise science; graduate student Beau Greer; Justin Jones '05; and grounds supervisor Danny Crain. Seated: Kevin Blackmon '05.

in the sport on campus. This year the group has 16 members, including staff, faculty and students.

"Part of the reason we are so popular is the sport's flexibility," says Caterisano. "The athletes can set workouts around their schedules. I just guide them and make sure that their workouts are sound."

And Furman's reputation in powerlifting circles is reaching prospective students. Caterisano has fielded inquiries from several high school lifters who want to continue competing in college.

As for the next big meet, the team plans to participate in the WNPF Bench Press and Deadlift World Championship, which will be held in Lancaster, Pa., in August.

— John Roberts

Horticultural symposium to be held June 14-15

Furman will bring six of the nation's leading horticulturalists to campus when the university hosts its first horticultural symposium June 14-15.

Titled "Landscapes for Living and Learning," the symposium will feature presentations by some of the biggest names in gardening and landscape design. Among the featured speakers are *Southern Living* editor John Floyd, who will address the topic "Southern Gardeners Today," and Marc Cathey, president emeritus of the American Horticultural Society and National

Public Radio personality, who will speak on "Smart Gardening and the Global Climate."

Other speakers and their topics: Kurt Bluemel, one of the world's leading experts on ornamental grasses, "Designing Mazes With Ornamental Grasses"; Rosalind Creasy, author of *The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping*, "Edible Theme Gardens: A New Look at Vegetable Gardening"; Katy Moss Warner, former director of the Disney Horticultural Environmental Initiative at the Walt Disney

World Resort in Florida, "Jump, Smell, Touch: The Unique Character of Children's Gardens"; and PlantAmerica founder Richard C. Webel, managing partner of Innocenti & Webel Landscape Architecture, which designed the landscaping for the Furman campus, "Emerging Communities of Shared Knowledge: Using Technology in Gardening."

For more information on the horticultural symposium, visit www.furman.edu/hortsym or call (864) 294-2186.