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Strongmen back at the Barn

By **Brian Radewitz**
 Published: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 2:18 AM EST

COXSACKIE — The Battle at the Barn returns to Coxsackie Saturday with 40 strongman competitors trekking in from various parts of North America.

Not only do these strongmen come from different areas of the country, they come from all different walks of life. Firefighters, teachers, police officers, mechanics, students, sales people, etc. all get to let their hair down and roll up their sleeves Saturday to do what they love.

"This is a hobby for most of the guys coming to compete. They don't make a living doing this, they do it because they like to lift and carry things that most people wouldn't want to move with a forklift," stated promoter, competitor and Coxsackie resident Curtis Lake. "Besides competing in and training for Strongman these guys also work full-time jobs. One of these strongmen might work right next to you."

This is the second year that Lake has hosted a Strongman Competition in Coxsackie and he has a whole new set of obstacles waiting in the barn.

"The events will change every year, that's what makes it so fun," said Lake. "This year is a heavy show, the farmers walk goes up to 350 pounds per hand for the heavies. That's 700 pounds they're holding onto and walking with. They will be carrying an 800-pound yoke and lifting the back end of a car repeatedly."

The five events taking place Saturday are the farmer's walk, the car deadlift, the press medley, the super yoke and the keg load.

Competition is divided into five classes: Lightweight, under 200 pounds; Lightweight Open, 201-231; Heavyweight, 232-265; Heavyweight Open, above 265; and the Master's class for over-40-year-olds.

Two champions from last year's event return to defend their titles as Brett Sommerville takes on the Open Heavyweight field (265-plus) and Chase Wiley looks to fend off the Under-200 Lightweight class.

The top two in each of the four open classes qualify for the North American Strongman Championships held in the fall. The top two in the Master's class can qualify for the Hudson Valley Strongman and Master's Nationals to be held in Gardiner, hosted by Steven Engels on Sept. 11.

For the uninformed fan or casual viewer, the press medley features six different objects placed in front of competitors. The strongmen have to pick up a regular dumbbell, a dumbbell with a two-inch thick handle, a beer keg filled with sand, a steel block and two giant dumbbells and then press each one over their heads.

In the farmer's walk, competitors must pick up two oxygen cylinders — one in each hand — weighing up to 350 pounds and walk 60 feet with them.

The car deadlift is pretty self-explanatory. Each man attempts to lift the rear end of



Brett Sommerville of Port Jervis lifts the back end of a car, showcasing one of the five strongman events planned for the Battle at the Barn in Coxsackie this weekend. (Contributed photo)



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an automobile as many times as possible.

The super yoke is an implement that hangs on the athlete's shoulders and back. They lift and carry the object on their back as fast as possible for 60 feet. Depending on the weight class, the super yoke can range from 650 to 800 pounds.

With the keg load, athletes load a platform with six kegs that get progressively heavier. The lightest keg weighs in at 175 pounds, which is 25 pounds heavier than a keg filled with beer. The heaviest keg tips the scales at 350 and is filled with sand and chain.

The Barn is located at 575 Roberts Hill Road in West Coxsackie. The competition starts at 10 a.m. and there will be food, drinks and competition T-shirts for sale.

"So if you think you're strong, used to be strong, want to be strong or want to see some strong guys lifting and carrying crazy heavy objects then come down to the Barn," stated Lake.

On the net: www.battleatthebarn.net

Competitor List:

LW Under 200: Chase Wiley, Berkshire, age 18; Harv Rajwans, Quebec, Canada, 32; Kevin Dunkerton, East Meadow, 25; Michael C. Barber, Altona, 17; Greg Monfredo, East Meadow, 24; Steven Engels, Gardiner, 23; Ethan Plante, Dighton, Mass., 25; Masters LW/HW: Phil Brown, Wilmington, 45; Buddy Schweder, Bordentown, N.J., 51; Jon VanTassel, Wallkill, 41; LW Open: Cory Clark, Syracuse, 31; Jeff Holt, Rosendale, 29; Brian Worden, Liverpool, 30; Warren Rosenberg, Montreal, 37; Jefferson Kitt Jr., Westport, Conn., 35; Robert Chaisson, Seabrook, N.H., 34; Anthony Vidal, Syosset, 34; Timothy Bald, Rochester, 22; Rob Agnoli, Hackettstown, N.J., 33; HW Under 265: Craig Pfisterer, Camp Hill, Pa., 24; Nick Keough, Cheshire, Conn., 23; Andrew Mangan, Warwick, R.I., 22; Christopher Busch, Smithfield, R.I., 22; HW Open: Todd Huestis, Ticonderoga, 32; Brett Sommerville, Port Jervis, 28; Justin Czaplicki, Meriden, Conn., 27; Robert Bathe, Plymouth, Minn., 18; Domingo Pabon, Bronx, 25; Kevin Cassidy, Nyack, 27.

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