



2006 National High School Power Clean Championships

A novel event is strengthening our young athletes' pursuit of power

Those in the sport of weightlifting know Val Balison as one of our most accomplished athletes, a former American record holder who competed in several world championships. This year, he showed he is still a great competitor when he won his age group in the National Masters Championships despite a pulled hamstring. Balison's lifelong passion for his sport inspired him

to host the Second Annual National High School Power Clean Championships in Las Vegas on May 20.

"The reason I initially decided to hold this competition was to help our student-athletes set high goals in the clean, which I believe should be a basic exercise in all high school weight training programs," says Balison, a teacher at Bonanza High School, where the competition was held. "Also, some athletes will continue their



Athletes from Bingham High School in South Jordan, Utah, wore appropriate mottos their T-shirts.

sports career in college and others won't. The students who don't go on to college sports can still compete in Olympic-style lifting meets and, who knows – maybe one day we will have an Olympic gold medalist who lifted in our contest!"



Mountain View High School in Mesa, Arizona, had enthusiastic athletes who brought home the team trophy for the second straight year.

Although the name of the competition is "power clean," competitors could also perform the split clean and squat clean styles. There were eight bodyweight classes; each athlete was given three attempts and had to receive the approval of at least two of the three judges for a lift to count. The major rules were that the athletes could not touch their elbows to their knees or fail to lift the weight to the chest in one motion, which are unsafe techniques that Val did not want to encourage.

Last year's inaugural competition attracted 90 competitors, and this year that number increased to 125. The meet also attracted three major sponsors: McDonald's, KB Home and Bigger Faster Stronger. Balison put the entire funding from the sponsors towards purchasing T-shirts for all the competitors and great trophies for the top five athletes in each bodyweight division, as well as team trophies. As for the competition, Balison says the 2006 event featured a much higher overall quality of lifting, not just in weight but also in technique. "We had six national records broken this year, and coaches who attended this meet saw that this contest was topnotch. It was great to see the excitement on the athletes'



2006 National Power Clean Team Champions, in order of finish: Mountain View, Las Vegas, Valley, Bonanza and Coronado.



Meet Announcer
Russell Leet

Meet Director
Val Balison

faces when they got their trophies.”

The team championship this year, as last year, was won by Mountain View High School, which entered 42 athletes who looked sharp in weightlifting shoes and one-piece uniforms. Head Football Coach Tom Joseph had his team from Mesa, Arizona, well-prepared, with many showing exception technique in the squat style of lifting.

The enthusiastic fans in the bleachers saw many great battles come down to a final lift, such as in the 187-pound bodyweight class. This exciting contest ended as a dual when a 310-pound clean by Josh Shill of Mountain View High School edged out the 305 pounds by Brock Ward from Bingham High School.

Pound for pound, the 300-pound clean by 169.5-pound Chris Basch of Las Vegas High School was impressive, as was the 235-pound clean by 136.5-pound Gabriel Love-Hough from Las

Vegas High School. Two athletes who won their bodyweight classes, Xavier Cleveland (heavyweight class) from Las Vegas and Marcus Cook (207-pound class) from Winton Woods High School, tied for the heavier cleans at 325. Marcus’ school is in Ohio, so he made quite a journey to be a part of this exciting event.

Balison is already making plans for next year. “Last year I had Casey Burgener, our National Super Heavyweight Champion and 2006 Pan American Championships Gold Medalist, give an exhibition in the snatch and clean and jerk. Unfortunately he couldn’t make it this year because of an international contest,

but I hope to have him back next year; or I’ll fly in another national-level lifter to give an exhibition. It would be great if we could put a coaching course together with this program. I would also like to have a women’s competition. I truly believe that the National Power Clean Championships is going to explode with a high number of competitors and the level of lifting.”

Balison wishes every young athlete could experience the elation felt by this year’s competitors. “Some athletes decide not to compete because they are afraid that they might not do very well at a national event. But the athletes that take part find that this National Power Clean Championships helps them rise to new levels; and even if they don’t win, they find new strength inside themselves to make themselves better athletes.” **BFS**

Head Referee Stan Miyahira.



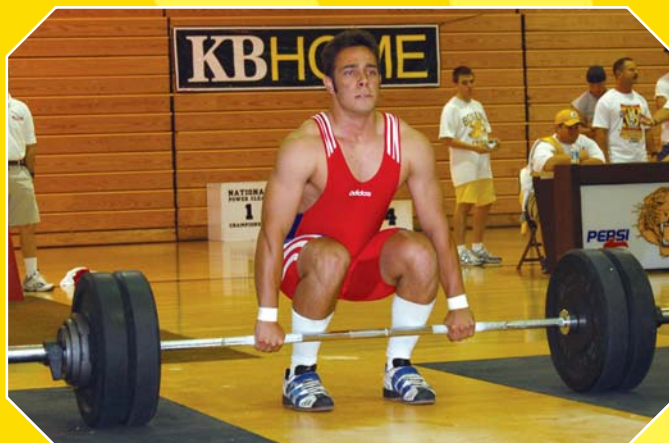
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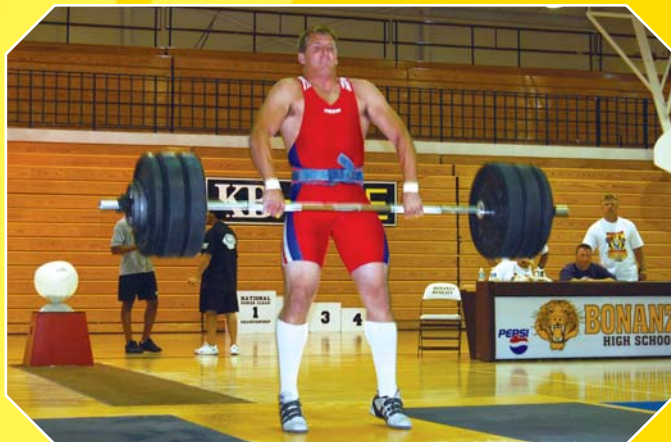
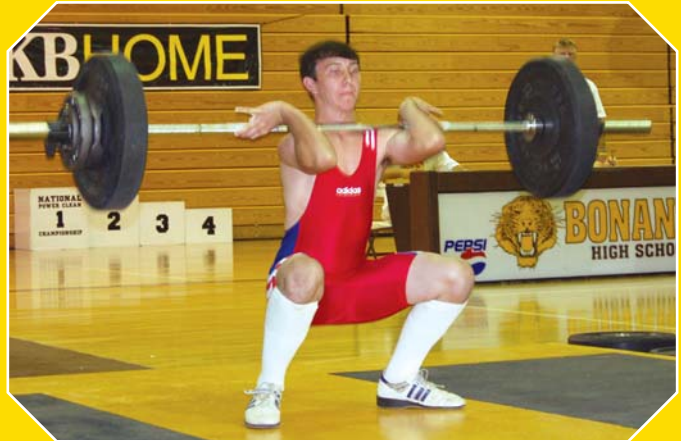
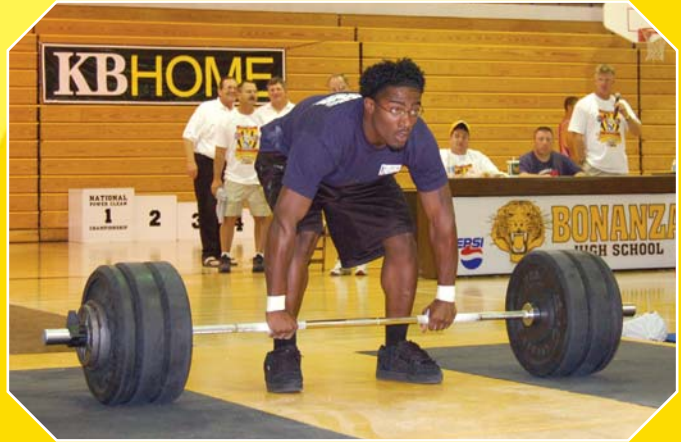
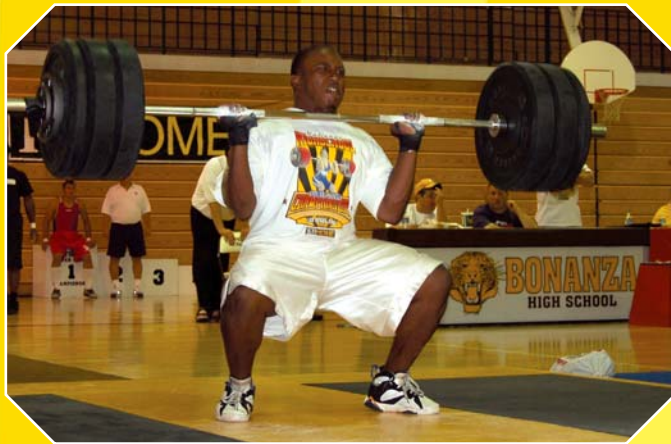


Two platforms were used for the bodyweight classes with a large number of entries.



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