

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

EUROPEAN MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS HEINSHEIM

Mr Les Simonton [USA Board Member] and myself were invited to attend the European Masters Championships by Mr Bill Barton [Chairman of EM] as a goodwill gesture. The Championships were hosted in a small village with a population of 1500. On arrival I was greeted by the Competition Organizers with a bottle of wine, a basket of their local produce and one big welcome smile. This was the beginning of the best Masters Championships I have attended. With a start list of over 600 lifters to lift in the 8 days, sessions were long and very tiring. Except for the normal hic cups in the beginning, it was a very well run championship with everyone doing their duties to ensure all ran to time. The whole village turned out in full force to support with pride these championships. The ladies in the village got together each day, shared ingredients to prepare an array of at least 30 home cooked cakes, [served with a smile]. The men cleared tables; served behind the bar, made sure the venues was clean for the following day and were always on hand to assist where they could. The biggest task the village undertook was to ensure everyone had a great experience. With live entertainment provided every night, the chance to socialize and talk enabled me to learn so much more than I have at other championships. It also gave the opportunity to form friendship, respecting, understanding and appreciating our cultural differences. It was humbling when asked to assist with coaching, 6 new records were achieved. Between official duties, there was time to sit, relax and enjoy some great masters lifting. Andrew Seaber of Great Britain proved age wasn't a barrier; snatching 100kg, clean & jerking 113, cat M5, bw 69. The greatest applause went to the meet director when he became the second lifter to do the magic 100 snatch. There was lots of wine and dancing that night. The closing dinner was a chance to mingle and say goodbye. The Russians were not allowing me to escape their vodka shots. Much clapping as Les and I swallowed. I managed to slip outside after 1. There, the workers from the meet were in a circle enjoying their customary sharing of a cigar. Wanting to display how much they had enjoyed having me I passed the cigar and put in the centre, where there was no way I could leave without having a puff. Language, political beliefs, religion were set aside as all Masters became part of the weightlifting family. Les and I feel very fortunate to have been part of these championships. We will both take what we have learned and share it with others, in our home countries as well as abroad. I am looking forward to the continuing growth of Masters Weightlifting.

Coral Quinell