

Arm wrestlers strut their stuff on weekend

Belleville Armwrestling Club hosts teams from across Ontario

By Agnes Ramos

The two men link hands.

For a split second, they look intensely into one another's eyes.

But then, their gaze quickly shifts to something more important – their own hands.

An immense surge of power is released from both contenders, sometimes accompanied with a terrifying grunt and, in a blink of an eye, someone is a winner and someone is a loser.

The 10th Arm Melter Armwrestling Tournament brought teams from across Ontario, as well as a team from Quebec, to Wahoo 2 Sports Bar and Grill in Belleville on Saturday.

Competing in different weight divisions, teams such as the Belleville Armwrestling Club, the Ottawa High Hookers, the Meta-Hook Armwrestling team, the Mapleton Madness and the Buckhorn Arms Armwrestling team came together for beers, bar food, rock music and some hardcore competition.

Something as familiar as arm wrestling isn't actually as simple as it sounds. There are rules, just as every other sport.

Each contender must always have their elbows always on the pads, always make contact with pegs, and always have an eye on their hands, to prevent injury.

Before any pulling can start, both contenders must show their thumb knuckles and have their shoulders

straight across and square to the table.

Arm wrestling isn't just about strength. There is training and technique involved.

Mike Gould, 46, who took home the Super Match right hand overall championship belt at the tournament, is described by his peers as "a legend."

Gould won the 1994 world championships in Sweden, the 1999 world championships in Tokyo and then went on to win 17 national championships.

But legends like Gould didn't begin their careers winning and taking home championship belts. Gould realized his love for the sport back in 1988 and has been at it ever since.

"I just always really liked the sport. But I didn't realize it was such a sanctioned, organized event. I went to an event and really liked it. I met a lot of guys and realized there was so much organization to it...and I also realized I wasn't very good at it."

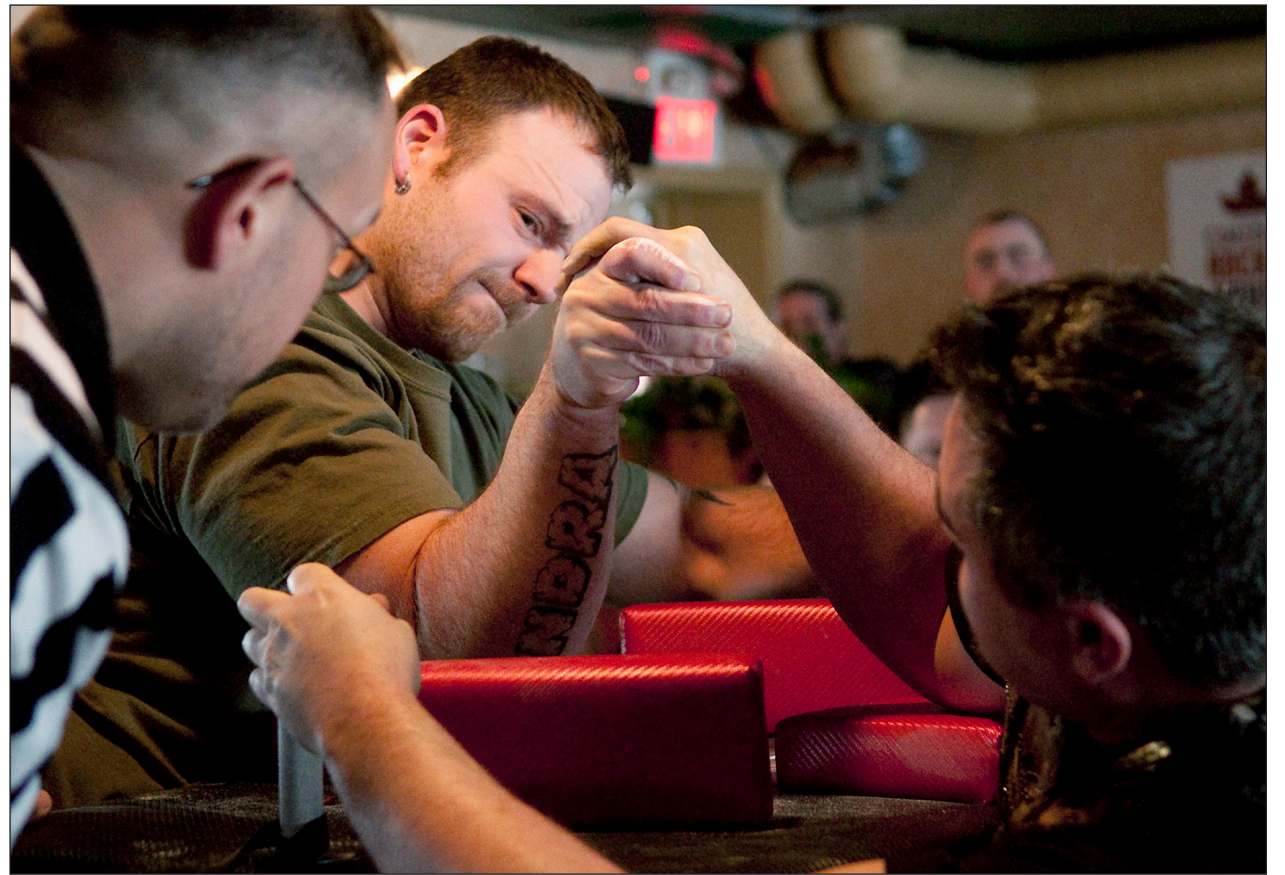
Being a champion takes a lot of time, hard work and training, he said.

"I started training with some guys and it went from there. It took a lot of time, but I slowly got better," said Gould.

Gould attributes his impressive amount of wins to the fact he's a veteran to the sport.

"I've just been at it for a long time. It takes so long to develop the strength because it's such a unique muscle group. The longer you're at it, the stronger you get," explained Gould.

Another one of the highly regarded arm wrestlers at the event was Nicola Gazzetto, 38, from the Ottawa High Hookers team. He said he loves



Andrew Scott of the Buckhorn Arms Arm Wrestling team goes head to head with Jeremy Johnston of the Belleville Armwrestling club during the men's 221-pounds-and-up weight division with the right hand.

Agnes Ramos

arm wrestling because of its universal appeal. Gazzetto explained that everyone in the world has arm-wrestled, but not every one in the world has played hockey.

Gazzetto hits the gym four times a week and has been arm wrestling for 26 years. Originally from Italy, Gazzetto has won 24 Italian championships.

So how does somebody become an arm wrestler and prove themselves against big time winners such as Gould and Gazzetto?

"You can just show up at this or any tournament, put your arm on the table and you are essentially an arm wrestler at that point," explained Gould's younger brother and event organizer, Joe Gould.

"But most people train at a club. We have a great club in Belleville – the Belleville Armwrestling club. It's been going for more than 10 years," said Joe Gould.

"Anyone serious about arm wrestling should really get involved with a club. That's when you're learning the techniques, how to build power, and how to be a champion."

Lancers women make it to finals

Loyalist women win, men lose semi-final in cross-over matches held at Loyalist

By Mihal Zada

Saturday's key volleyball matches were bittersweet for the Loyalist Lancers. For both the men's and women's teams, the games would decide whether each would move on to the finals.

Both men's and women's Redeemer Royals volleyball teams visited Loyalist from Redeemer University College for the semi-final game. The Royals are from the Ontario College Athletic Association (OCAA)'s western division.

Statistically, the Lancers had stronger teams than the Royals and a very good record at home. They were in a strong position to move up.

Still, the Lancers' men's team were not at their peak, losing three sets in a row. Their season is now over.

The women's team, however, won three sets. That moves them up to the OCAA women's volleyball championships.

The women played a strong, focused game. They kept a sturdy lead throughout.

The first set ended at 25-18 against the Royals women.

In the second set, they came out even stronger, winning 25-16. Then they swept the third set, winning the game and sending the girls off to the championship.

Assistant coach Dominique Dawes said the girls have worked really hard this season to make it as far as they have.

Leighann Bishop plays setter and is one of the team leaders. She shared Dawes' sentiment.

"I'm ecstatic," she said after the game. "I don't think anything else could explain it but that. I'm really proud of my team. We played great. And I'm glad we took it three straight."

Bishop showed an excellent attitude about making it to the finals.

"I'm just glad to be in it," Bishop mused. "Whatever happens, I'm going to be proud of my team either way."

The championship games will take place next weekend at Loyalist. Eight Ontario teams, four from the east division and four from the west, will compete for the top two spots.

The winning teams will move up to the national championships, run by the Canadian College Athletics Association. Those games will take place at the University of New Brunswick's Saint John campus on March 10-12.



Averil Luck, left, and Sherene Einarsson reach for a ball that was volleyed into the Lancers' court.

Mihal Zada

Bulls take one, lose one over weekend matches

Bulls now two points out of final playoff spot in Eastern Conference

By Adam Jackson and Janek Lowe

The Belleville Bulls achieved a .500 record for the long weekend.

With a win against Sault Ste. Marie in the shootout Saturday and a tough loss against the Peterborough Petes Monday, the Bulls' overall record for the season is 16-36-4. Good enough for last place in the eastern division.

Saturday's game against the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds started well for the Bulls with a goal from both Adam Payerl and Carter Sandlak in the first. But the momentum quickly changed with five minutes left when Greyhounds winger, Rudy Sulmonte pocketed his ninth of the season.

The Greyhounds added two more to the scoreboard in the third, thanks to defenceman Ryan Sproul and winger David Broll. The Bulls quickly answered back, though, knotting the game up at three with a big goal from Payerl, his second of the game.

Overtime was five minutes of end-to-end hockey with Greyhounds goalie Matt Murray and Bulls goalie Malcolm Subban stopping 38 and 24 shots respectively.



Belleville Bulls' Adam Payerl scores on Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds' goalie Matt Murray in the shootout at Yardmen Arena Saturday. The Bulls defeated the Greyhounds 4-3.

Janek Lowe

The game was to be decided in the shootout. With goals by both

Payerl and captain Luke Judson and two solid saves by Subban, the

Bulls managed to take the win, much to the delight of the 2,934 in atten-

dance at Yardmen Arena.

On Monday afternoon, 3,275 fans watched the Bulls take on the Peterborough Petes at the Yardmen.

The Bulls drew first blood in this highly physical game with a goal from winger Sandlak in the first period. But the Petes' winger Luke Hietkamp answered back to tie the game up near the end of the first.

The Bulls generated good scoring chances but failed to capitalize on rebounds, getting outshot 37-29. The Petes' Austin Watson scored at the top of the second and with Matt Pempel's insurance goal on an open net in the third, defeating the Bulls 3-1.

"This was a big game for us and we just didn't get the job done," said Bulls centre Brendan Gaunce in an interview after the game. "We need to score if we're going to make the playoffs."

With 12 games left in regular season play, the Bulls travel to Peterborough Thursday night where they have a 2-0 record this season.

"Every effort is huge," said Judson. "Everyone's got to come to the rink excited for the playoff race."

"We're going to put our season on the line," said Gaunce during a post-game interview. "That's the mindset that we're going to need to have to win those games."