

International Lifting back in Melbourne



November 1956, this was the first ever international weightlifting tournament held in Melbourne. That was the 1956 Olympic Games. It took another 24 years for the second international tournament to be held again in Melbourne which was the first Oceania Championships in December 1980. That was the first international event which I organised.

Melbourne never looked back after that. 1981 we saw the establishment of the Moomba Weightlifting International which became a world event on the IWF Calendar. 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, the Moomba International became bigger and better. Then in 1985 Melbourne went further with the Australia Games.

In 1986 we hosted the Moomba International and then in the same year followed by the World Cup held at the then Glass House with 5,000 spectators turning up. In 1987 the Moomba International became bigger again, attracting international teams including Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Greece, Hungary, Italy and many others. Included in this was some countries from within the Oceania region.

In 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, we saw the Moomba International grow in to a World Cup event. In 1992 we hosted the Barcelona Challenge bringing to Melbourne all the gold and silver medallist from the Barcelona Olympic Games in a head to head competition. Then in 1993, culminating from all of these events, Melbourne hosted the World Championships at the historic Exhibition Building. After this, in 1994 I departed for the Pacific. In 2005, Melbourne hosted the Oceania and Commonwealth Championships. Then in 2006 the Commonwealth Games.



The female winners on Sinclair formula were: first place Eileen Cikamatana -AUS, 2nd place Giulia Imperio -ITA 3rd place Olivia Selemaia -NZL.



The Male winners on Sinclair formula were: first place Don Opeloge - Samoa, 2nd place Sanele Mao - Samoa, 3rd place Jack Opeloge - Samoa

Eighteen years later, weightlifting is back in Melbourne at International level. Last weekend – June 1st & 2nd – with the financial assistance of the Oceania Weightlifting Federation, Melbourne hosted the OWF Elite Invitational Tournament, with ten countries participating. The atmosphere at the Victorian Weightlifting Stadium in Hawthorn was simply electrifying.

Some of Victoria's former champions had tears in their eyes, to see Melbourne again at its best. Some of the lifts were magical. The spectators witnessed world class performances, they saw Oceania and Commonwealth records broken. The presence of Giulia Imperio from Italy attracted an enormous amount of attention. Having two lifters from Colombia also contributed to the prestige of the event. For the five Olympians – Don Opeloge, Luniarra Sipaia, Eileen Cikamatana, Kyle Bruce and Morea Baru this was the last event for them to compete in before the Paris Olympic Games. And they did not disappoint the huge crowd in attendance. **All in all, it was simply magical.**

Thanks to Andrew King for these fantastic candid shots below. The next issue will provide shots of each lifter competing.





Dika Toua



Isabel Grylls- Graham



Brenna Kean



Tessa-Job



Celine Huynh and Isabella Lowe-King.



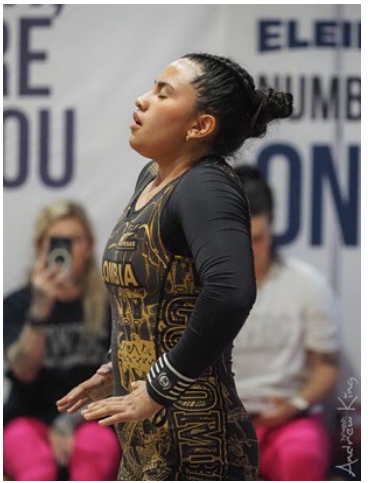
Celine with coach Jamie Nguyen



Villiani Hiram with coach Caity Haniver



Elise Schack with coach Brendan Sharpe



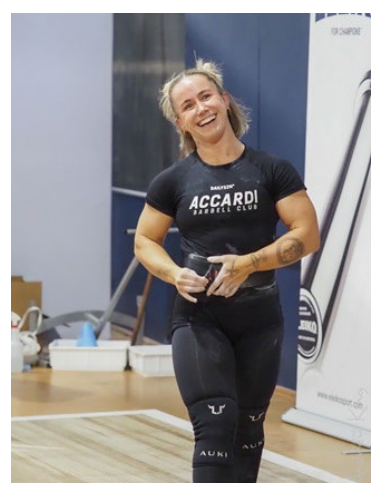
Mariana Arenas



Bonnie Grylls -Graham



Josh and Bonnie Graham



Zoe De Gersigny



Morea Baru



Oliver Leng



Scott Pavlovic



Tiago Hallen



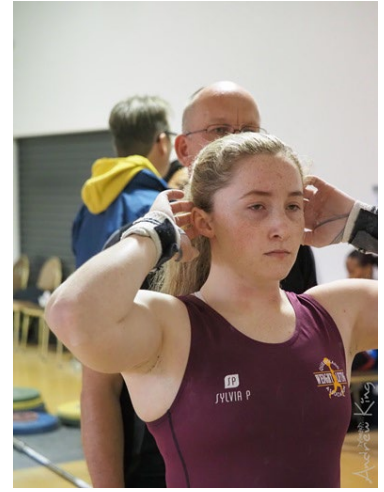
Nehemia Elder



Eileen Cikamatana



Taiaimoni Pokoti



Nya Hayman



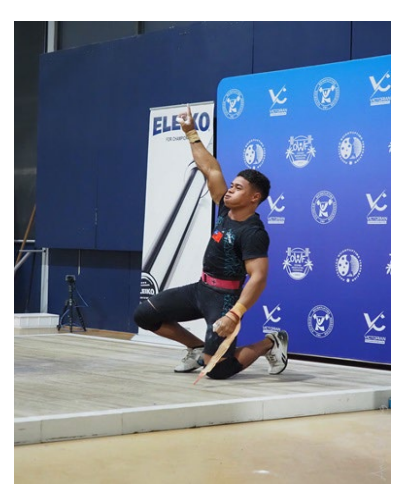
**Zoe De Gersigny with coach
Brandon Accardi**



Medea Jones



John Tafi



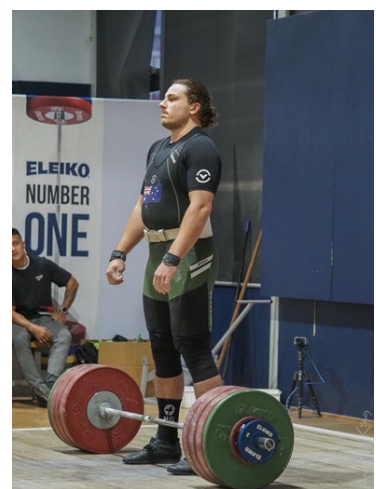
Luniarra Sipaia



Taj Marsh



Zion Tokona



Jackson Roberts-Young



Teagan Newman



Nanai Livi Maeu



Kyle Bruce



Taniela Rainibogi



Sanele Mao



Thomas Wilbur



Don Opeloge



Sam & Paul Coffa



Ryven Ewing



Michael Censori



Nevo Ioane



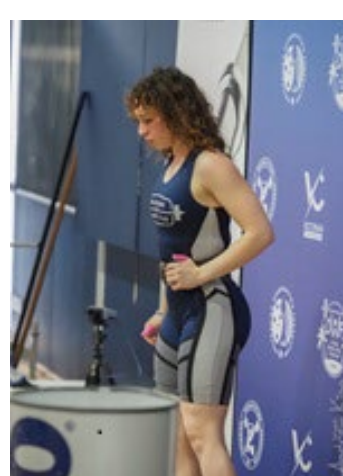
Femily Notte



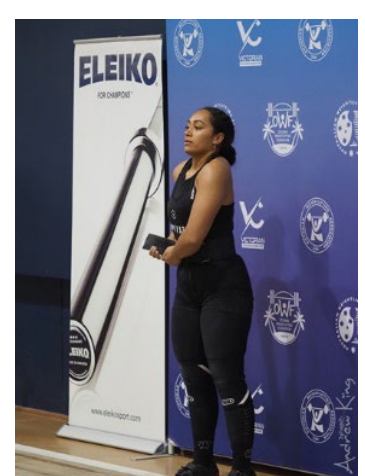
Avatu Opeloge



Seine Stowers



Ashley Kolomoisky



Ajah Lolo -Pritchard

OWF ELITE TRAINING CAMP

An OWF Elite Invitation Training Camp was organised at the Oceania Weightlifting Gym in Dromana where many top lifters attended. The highlight of course was the national team of Samoa which produced some phenomenal results. Sanele Mao almost snatched 190kg, Don Opeloge attempted 230kg clean & jerk and 180kg snatch. John Tafi cleaned 180kg plus many other brilliant training performances from the lifters who attended. The unity within the group was enormously admirable.

The first of this type of training camp – for Juniors - was held last year in Canberra at the Australian Institute of Sport. The first senior camp was held in September/October last year in Apia, Samoa. This was the third such training camp held by the OWF. And this is only the beginning. **The OWF target for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, is TEN GOLD.** This is the prediction of the top coaches who were at the training camp in Dromana. The coaches included Jerry Wallwork (Samoa), Simon Kent (New Zealand), Henry Elder (Fiji), Miles Wydall and Grant Haines (Australia). The training system used at this elite camp is the same one used last year at Junior and Senior level. That is a combination of methods used by the Samoa High Performance Centre and the Oceania Weightlifting Institute.



The training camp at the Oceania Weightlifting Institute gym in Dromana



The Oceania lifters and coaches in Dromana



Great lifts at the OWF Camp



OWF Senior Vice President Jerry Wallwork with John Tafi.