

2018 Granite State Open

24th Annual



BODYBUILDING ~ FIGURE ~ BIKINI ~ PHYSIQUE ~ FITBODY AND COUPLES COMPETITIONS

~ INBF Sanction / WNBF Pro Qualifier ~

The GSO is a spinoff of the Original New Hampshire Bodybuilding Competitions, which started in 1969. Ms. Turtle competed in these events, and took over as the producer with "The NH's", in 1991 and then added the Granite State Open title in 1995. Through four sanctions and the best affiliations in the industry, this drug free competition is the pinnacle of natural bodybuilding and more in the region. This year, we are thrilled to honor athletes travelling in from West Virginia, NYC, all major New England areas and of course all of New Hampshire. With every Division well represented, the GSO added a fun category this season, reviving "Couples". There were over 124 roles for the judges to rank, with top five awards in each class, medallions to all entrants, stuffed totes and gift baskets for the Overall Winners and Pro Cards earned by 9 new Champions. What another Fine show it was! The audience and many peers enjoyed the Best Posers in the Bodybuilding arena and the Beautiful Bikini Team from Fitness Asylum won the chased after Team award with their multileveled group.

And the Superlatives go to: Novice, Masters and Open competitors in each Division. As always, the GSO eagerly invites athletes of all level to participate, and it is so special to see the young new natural men take the stage in bodybuilding. This season was highlighted by a 17-year-old local who hit the stage with precision posing, a complete level of muscular development and an audience following that hammered the rafters. Chase Coviello has a great road ahead as he works within his dream to be a Natural Bodybuilder. We are so pleased he shared his first chapter with us and look forward to his return.

Another bright new novice came the furthest distance to take first in the Men's physique, Congratulations to James Mull, we look forward to your success as well. Also shocking the Novice ranks was Kim Lenfest, a newcomer who donned a firm and full well rounded muscular frame in the Figure class. This group was highly competitive, as was the entire Division, and each of the ladies performed strikingly. Like their counterpart, the Bikini gals were amazing, and a huge Novice group with a variety of shapes and sizes put the officials through a process of comparisons that stretched the girls to an endurance level. They all were fabulous and taking the class was Margaret Barrios. Kudos to Jessica Johnson on the Fit Body Novice win!

While competitive experience determines a Novice category, so does age quantify the Masters 40 plus Divisions. These mature individuals filled every division, many crossing over to the Novice or Open based on their track record. The Men's Bodybuilding brought a Utica gentleman to the stage and throughout the day, Akmir Carter reigned with mass, separation and completeness. It is in seeing a competitor with fresh eyes from one division to the next, that this panel of officials exceeds. And the sheer density of Carters body gave him the 40 plus win, as well as the Open Heavyweight, and on to the Overall Mr. GSO title. Taking the 50 plus Masters Class was South Berwick Alumnus Mark Wood. His sheer striations, textured conditioning and fun-loving posing routine make "Woody" a bright star at the GSO. Going into the Open Men's weight classes, Akmir Carter came up against Lightweight LeRoy Hopkins III, and Middleweight Juan De La Cruz.

All three men were at the top of their game and each offered a different package. It was amazing to see the taper on De La Cruz from all sides, his leg separation and overall shape was phenomenal. Hopkins smaller frame and full development, coupled with a fine stage presence kept catching the judge's eyes. In the end, there can be only one, and the sportsmanship of all three athletes was well recognized when Mr. Carter took the title.

Matching the Double header win, was the female Bodybuilder, Nicole Katz. She came into the Masters with some hesitation on stage, and quickly gained ground with hard poses and a creative flare. Going on to the open, she kept her pump going and again edged out ladies with similar amount of muscle density, some with more separation and others with not as much conditioning. It takes an entire package, and Katz brought it to the GSO. We are happy to know that Women's Bodybuilding is alive and well in the INBF/WNBF. Please consider Bodybuilding in your future training plans, we welcome you!

The figure women are just as much a fighting package, and recognized as not quite as developed and at a different level of conditioning. The GSO turnout brought incredible quality. Cara Volpicelli readily took the Masters with tone and shape, stepping into second to Shauna Koehler in the open. Ms Koehler's symmetry, complete balance and stage precision is top notch. Not only did she take the Figure, she collaborated with another team mate and created a couples routine as bikini gals, winning our inaugural couple to the theme of "Friends". We encourage ALL OF YOU to brainstorm a mix and match couples' idea and bring it to the 25th Anniversary event October 2019.

Taking the Lead in Fit Body was Melissa Gentile, a toned and taught, shapely and well-balanced woman who posed just right to win the Division. The Men's Physique had a lighter turnout, but significantly the most enthusiasm. Congratulations to Warren Ory for his stylish and handsome hard work to win the open title.

And then, there was Bikini. How I gess about growing up near Hampton Beach and seeing bathing beauties all my life, having worked with Beauty pageants and been among the sports changes for so long. Folks, that is nothing compared to the intensity these women bring by the boatload to the competitive world. The sheer amount of prep with pomp and circumstance is amazing. Talk about transformations. I savored the grace and beauty, the long legs and bright smiles, the tight conformation and brilliant stage turns, the adaptability to heels, pivots, strolls, shoulder shimmies and ab silhouettes. So much minor detail adds up to an amazing package. The judges had their work cut out for them, as comparisons were significant, critical and objective. Special Congratulations to the Bikini Pro card Champions of Ms. Masters Jennifer Smith and Open athlete Brittny DeMatteo.

THE GSO 2018 is wrapped up, and the success stories are never ending. We savored the comradery of friends and athletes from Florida to Maine, we extinguished bumps in the day with grace and understanding, we collaborated as friends and athletes and loved ones and competitors to create a once in a lifetime experience. EVERY single person involved in this 24th ANNUAL GSO has my heartfelt appreciation. The parents, loved ones, expeditors, coaches, officials, foodies, vendors, DHS staff and management, the volunteers and Turtle Team, the sponsors and purveyors, the MC and Tabulator, the door team and concierges, the runners and photographers, the sound and stage team, the newbies and the oldies...everyone!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!, THANK YOU ALL!

After decades, there is no specific formulary to create a great show. Folks forever ask, how was it? The answers range from topics of physical setting and stage design to the people who participated. We always are aware of the need for quality, and sometimes matters occur beyond our control. The best part is that we always rally and the athletes are taken care of to the best of our ability. For it is they who are putting forth the effort that creates the experience that is the show. We are always so overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of spirit from our attendees, as they arrive with a blind faith to strut their best on stage. Most newcomers are very nervous and full of queries, and by the time they depart, are offering accolades and appreciation for all the help they received throughout the show weekend. We love hearing "I will be back next year." And so, it evolves, we see our experienced athletes take a more confident and excited role, lending support to others and asking for guidance as needed. The volunteers do their best to offer timing, cues, stage direction and backstage expertise. The photographers are catching every moment. The house roars and the sound blares. With a pulse that ebbs and flows with who is on stage, the officials, keep their eyes focused and score non stop to the quarter turns, stage walks, mandatory poses and routines, all day long.

The gifts of companionship, team work, alliances with new and old friends, healthy competitiveness and integrity embroil the day. The fabric of the GSO is brindled with long distance and local sponsors and vendors, offering tastes, samples, information, services and products that all participants have a chance to learn about. It is these natural athletes from every stage in life, these kind supporters and enthusiastic audience that create a one of a kind Granite State Open. Please consider yourself invited to next years 25th Anniversary celebration, always on Halloween weekend.



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