



The 2017 Phoenix rises in spite of snow!

On Sunday 10th December Stars for the Future Weightlifting Club held the 3rd International Phoenix weightlifting competition at Harrow School Sports Centre. The competition is the only international competition currently held in the UK and attracts teams from across Europe as well as teams closer to home.

This year Stars For The Future welcomed teams internationally from **Sweden, France** and **Holland** and from southern England teams from **Brunel University, Bethnal Green Weightlifting Club, North London Weightlifting Club and Harrow School**. SFTF fielded 3 teams – Phoenix, SFTF and Dragon. Each team had a mixture of male and female lifters in the youth, junior and senior categories, with different levels of competition experience from new comers to competitive lifters. This year the competition also gave the opportunity for under 13's to participate, in order to gain competition experience.

Hosting an international competition is a 'big deal' for a small club like SFTF. However, with the vision and experience of head coach and former Olympian Kazem Panjavi, it is possible, with good organisation and strong teamwork.

After a lot of hard work on Saturday, club members left Harrow School Sports Centre in the evening confident that everything was in place for the next day. However, they had not anticipated the snow storm that greeted them on Sunday morning! Fortunately the international teams had arrived on Saturday however, with terminated bus and train routes and restricted access to Harrow School, all the competitors and officials from across southern England battled through the challenging conditions and still managed to arrive mainly on time.

With everything in place, it was time for the first lifter to take the stage on our newly built platform with a beautifully designed Phoenix back drop. The venue was set up in a professional manner with 5 platforms in the warm up area and a waiting room for lifters to remain in before they were due to take their lift. Various screens were set up to ensure the competition ran smoothly and coaches and lifters had all the information they required. The competition also enabled us to try our new scoreboard software designed by head coach Kazem Panjavi. The event was broadcasted live via the SFTF Facebook page allowing supporters who were unable to attend to watch the competition and to share the competition with the weightlifting community. The club also organised catering for the competition to ensure everyone could enjoy a hot buffet on a cold day and to restore the energy levels of the lifters.

Despite the challenging conditions, the competition was a resounding success with some exceptional lifting performances, new personal records and great competitive spirit. It was

great to see so many club members participating in the competition as lifters, loaders, coaches and referees and how much everyone supported and looked after one another.

All the competitors and officials received various prizes in a Phoenix goody bag designed especially for the competition which were on sale at the venue. The club also designed T-shirts for the competition which was available to buy. The top 3 lifters in each group received a trophy along with **Eleiko** merchandise.

Following the competition, everything was packed away quickly and everyone made their way to the banquet which was held at the Rising Sun Hotel in Sudbury giving everybody a chance to relax and socialise. During the evening the awards were presented as follows:

Team placing:

1st Rosendael France, 2nd Phoenix, 3rd Landskrona Sweden, 4th Brunel University, 5th SFTF and 6th CHDC France. All 6 teams received a trophy along with either an Eleiko banner and belt for best lifter.

Nathan Buyschaert from CHDC France won *best male lifter* with **347.2873 Sinclair points** and **Deborah Alawode** from Phoenix won best female lifter with **207.2488 Sinclair points** both receiving nice trophies and belts for their outstanding performance.

The success of the competition would not have been possible without the support of the following sponsors: **Harrow School**, **Eleiko**, **Kazoly Lifting** and **Battle Oats**.

We are very proud of hosting the competition and thankful to everyone who helped and supported the event. We look forward to hosting the 4th Phoenix International weightlifting competition with more teams and for the event to be an even bigger success.

