

STEWART, Steve

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# Change of attitude

## Steve Stewart still competing despite loss of leg

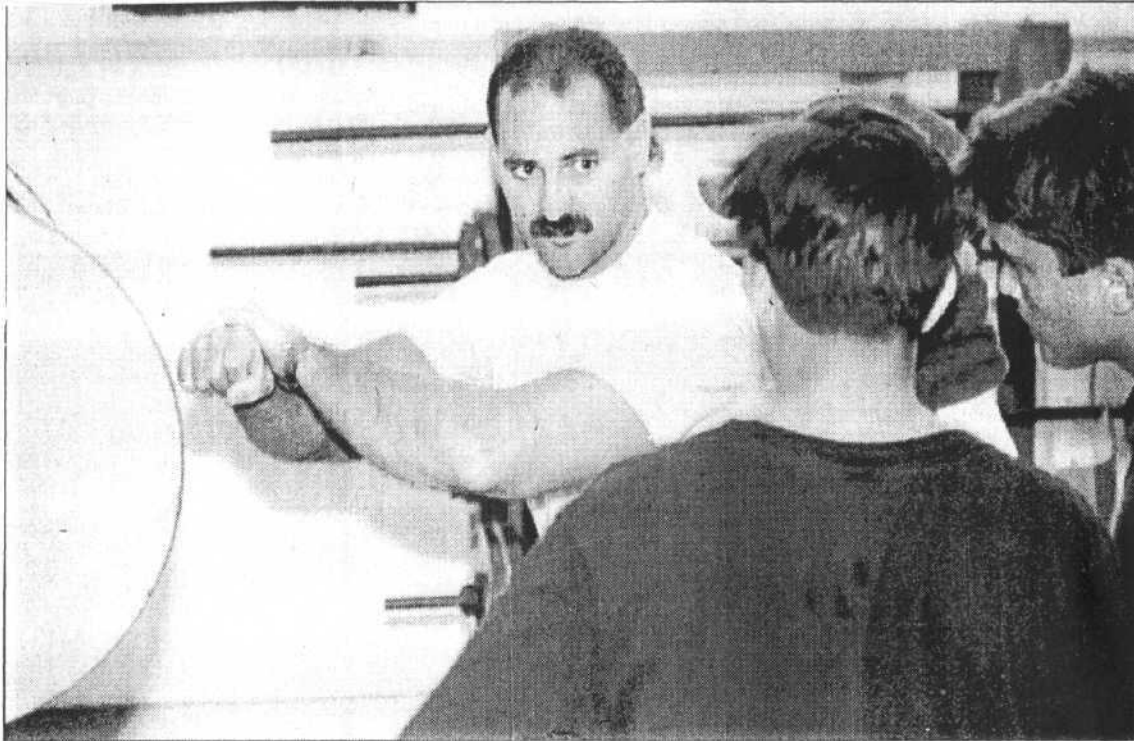


Photo by Ady Vos

Steve Stewart instructs youngsters during a weightlifting seminar this week

By Ady Vos

The Intelligencer

Next month Steve Stewart will come to an anniversary he would just as soon forget.

However forgetting August of 1989 is something Stewart will never be able to do.

It's been almost two years since Stewart was involved in a serious car accident. The accident initially threatened his life; Stewart survived, but his right leg did not. It was amputated below the knee while his left leg, also seriously injured in the accident, will never be the same.

Still, despite being disabled for the rest of his life, Stewart does have some cause for celebration.

Today and tomorrow he'll be competing in the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled in Hamilton.

"I never thought I'd even walk again," Stewart, 29, said earlier this week while instructing students during a weight training session at a local football clinic.

Stewart will compete in power lifting at the Games and considering his bench press of 330-pounds at the regional Games in Cornwall recently, he'll give the other competitors a good run for first place.

"But I'm not in it for the glory," says Stewart. "Far from it. I just get a high being around these athletes. They just have so much courage--especially the wheelchair guys. Just being able to compete, physically and mentally is an accomplishment. Some friends of mine came with me to the Games in Cornwall and they were just blown away by the commitment and courage of these guys," Stewart says.

There was a time when Stewart wasn't satisfied just to be a competitor. He was a star high school football player plus an

award winning bodybuilder. He also participated, and did well, in other sports.

His August 1989 accident, and subsequent loss of his leg, has made him realize that just participating can be enough.

He credits his dedication to bodybuilding, beginning in 1981, to his being alive today.

"I've been looking for justification why I didn't die that night. I think being fit saved my life," says Stewart.

Indeed, his progress has been nothing short of remarkable.

Because he feels his excellent physical condition contributed largely to his surviving the accident, Stewart has no qualms about a rehabilitative program

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