

Ontario Games

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Revised training program may give Stewart medal

By not working as hard, Belleville's Steve Stewart says he's primed for a strong performance at the Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled.

Stewart, a leg amputee, will compete in the bench press today as the Games get underway in Thunder Bay.

This is his second trip to the Games.

Stewart, 32, exceeded the Games standard of 147.5kg with a lift of 165kg (363 pounds) at a qualifying meet last March in Cornwall.

Last year Stewart competed

but he says he may have trained too hard for the competition.

"I had a lot of injury problems last year (tendinitis)," says Stewart. "I used to always think that more is better so I was always training hard but I've found out that more isn't always better."

Stewart says he's changed his training regimen by still working out hard but not as often.

Now he trains about three days a week but each session is shorter than in previous years.

"I concentrate on more brief power movements for a shorter period of time. I've trained for the past 10 weeks with the heavy weights," he says.

Stewart was convinced to alter his training methods by fellow competitor Mitch Strickland, who recently won the world championships with a bench press of over 500 pounds.

"I've always been a hard trainer. I guess I've always been my own worst enemy. Mitch convinced me change," says Stewart.

"He convinced me to take

some time off, to have more recovery time. Actually he's been doing some long distance coaching (Strickland lives in the United States). We keep in regular touch by phone."

Stewart says he enjoys competing but the friendships that he has developed with other competitors has been a big bonus.

"Everybody is supportive. All the other athletes are eager for the other guys to do well and everyone is willing to give the other competitors some help," says Stewart.

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STEWART, Steve