

# More gold for Sarah

Intell. Oct. 15/94 p.17

The price for a room was outrageous.

You had to buy drinking water.

And the coffee was awful.

But Belleville's Sarah Thompson had "a marvellous" two weeks in Mirabella, Spain.

And why not.

After all she did bring home a gold medal from the World Cup International Blind Powerlifting championships.



ADY VOS  
Intelligencer Sports Editor

Competing in the Masters Division Thompson, a mere 77 years of age, had a combined lift of 522 pounds (squat, bench, press) to win her gold. She

also teamed with a female competitor from Edmonton to take gold as the top duo plus her Masters team also won the top prize. Not a bad haul as far as medals go.

Collecting medals is what Thompson has been doing for the past decade.

First locally, then regionally then provincially Thompson began winning powerlifting medals.

As the medal count grew so did her reputation. Canadian, North American and international triumphs soon followed.

There aren't that many blind masters aged powerlifters out there but Thompson isn't only beating them she's taken on the able bodied athletes half her age and come out on top as well.

She's become somewhat of a legend in the world of powerlifting.

But even she wasn't prepared for the adulation she received while in Spain with husband Harold.

"They called me the Queen of Canada," she says.

Thompson was besieged by competing athletes as well as the media wherever she went. They weren't quite used to watching a grandmother hoisting huge weights over her head.

Television, press and radio interviews were plentiful.

"I was really floored with the appreciation shown by everyone. The people from Kuwait hugged and kissed--I didn't think they'd ever let go of me," says Thompson.

"The minute people realize you are from Canada they bend over backwards for you," said Thompson. It wasn't quite the same reception for the Americans she says.

Thompson hoped on setting some new world records at the meet but there was no drug testing at the competition so all records would be unofficial.

"I had planned on three world records but when they announced no drug tests I decided I wasn't going to kill myself for nothing so I let up a bit. A lot of the athletes were pretty angry about not being able to set a record."

Although the competition lasted just two days the Thompson's made a two week holiday out of the trip to mingle with the locals and other athletes. That's usually the best part of a competition says Thompson.

Powerlifting has taken Thompson all over Canada, the United States, Australia and Europe but winning gold medals is just one reason she keeps on going--meeting people and making friends is the other.

"It's a tremendous experience," she says.

Intell. Oct 15/94 p.17