

First Competition Review

Isaac Mallinson



A short interview with Isaac Mallinson looking back on what it's like to enter a powerlifting competition for the first time.

So how long have you been lifting for?

I've been powerlifting for about 6 months, I joined a new gym and there were a lot of powerlifters there. Then I just thought do you know what? I'll give it a go; it gives me something to aim for.

Did you have any other sporting background before powerlifting?

I've played football since I was about ten years old but I never really got to a level where all of my hard work showed. I played hockey as well, swimming, a bit of basketball, did all of that but nothing compares to powerlifting or weightlifting really.

How did you prepare yourself for your first competition?

I was being coached by Joe Sherwood up at Parkhead but he got picked for the Europeans so he had to stop coaching me. For the last 3 or 4 months I've basically been coaching myself blind. So I've been going to Google and been getting advice from other lifters. I've been working with lots of volume, just trying to keep good technique.

What was the advice that you found online?

Basically I was looking on websites like Juggernaut and they kind of led me up to the competition by saying - make sure that you just work your volume, learn your commands, longer pauses on your bench, what to expect on the day (like that the atmosphere will be different), everything like that. It was maybe a twelve week build up sort of thing.

How would you describe the atmosphere on the day?

It's brilliant. Lifting at a competition is so much easier because you've got other people lifting, you've got spectators and referees all cheering you on. When you start to grind a rep you've got people cheering you, you're not there on your own so the atmosphere is absolutely amazing.

Now that you've competed how do you compare lifting in the gym and lifting in competition?

I think it's very different, obviously when you're in the gym driving out reps can be more difficult but I think that the hard work that you build up then shows on the day. You've got the atmosphere, you're fresh, you've had a deload, everything feels really good. When you're going in for a competition it's a lot easier I'd say.

Did you have a handler on the day?

Yeah I did. My training partner that was competing in the 105s on the Sunday came to help. As I said, I didn't have a coach so he came down on the Saturday to give a hand. My Dad is not really into Powerlifting but he came down to watch so that's why my training partner helped.

And did you manage to speak to many other lifters at the competition?

Yeah I spoke to loads. Like Dan Sherman and James Duff, obviously they have been in the sport for years and talking to people like that really does help you.

Did your performance on the day go as planned?

I think yes and no. My aim was to get a 350kg total for my first comp. I wanted 9 out of 9 lifts, and I went 7 for 9 which got me a 350 total. Yeah I missed my command on bench but at the end of the day I came away with a certificate and a trophy and a lot more knowledge so it was really good.

Was getting your trophy the best part of the day?

I'd say the last attempts on all of the lifts and getting to grind out some RPE 9s was the best bit. Obviously when you come to collect your certificate, all the hard work that you've put in before does show.

Did the competition match your expectations beforehand?

I'd say it was a lot better. It's not the same when you're sat in the audience watching, but as soon as you get your lifting gear on with the other lifters, talking about their experiences like I did with yourself and Dan Sherman and those lot, the atmosphere just shoots through the roof. I can't really describe how I felt but, it was great. I'd watched the Powerlifting World Championships before but the Ashington meet was my first actual live competition.

Do you think that you'll compete again?

Yeah I'm aiming to compete in November again up in Ashington at the Novice Competition. I'll hopefully do really well in that, hopefully get another 1st, 2nd, or 3rd finish. Then I'd like to go to the British the year after and hopefully just keep improving. My aim is eventually in a few years, touch wood, to get to the World Championships, and I'll get there hopefully.

Did you cut weight before your first competition?

No, my body usually sticks around 65-66kgs, I can't remember what I weighed-in at but it was fairly close. I'm not the sort of lifter that has to ram on loads of weight to get into the groove or go on a massive cut to make weight. Obviously I think I'm strongest competing in the 66s and my body sits around that.

Do you have any other message that you'd like to share?

I think I'd just like to say that if anybody is thinking about getting into powerlifting they should do it! There are obviously some people that have really high totals. If people are scared of going to competition with no experience or very little experience, it doesn't matter. Everyone is there to give out advice. Everyone has got to start somewhere. Maybe some people can go into their first competition and lift massive weights because they've been training for years or they just have the genes, but you won't get shown up no matter what you lift. Everybody is there to support you and you'll probably lift more than you expect because of the atmosphere and everyone around you helping you.

