

ALOHA STATE GAMES

Army officer repeats as fitness champion

No one comes close to Hong in strength, endurance

By Mike Tynn
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Michael Jordan is considered by many to be the best athlete in the world, perhaps the best of all time, but if Sir Michael were to be matched up with Sonki Hong in a multi-discipline physical fitness contest the smart money would be on Hong.

Hong, the reigning world champion in the STREND Fitness Challenge, easily defended his title in the Kapiolani Health STREND Fitness Challenge, part of the Aloha State Games, yesterday morning at the Tripler Army Hospital softball field and track. The event consists of six disciplines designed to test STRENGTH and ENDURANCE.

"I don't think there's anyone who can touch Sonki," said Ed Bugarin, founder of the event, which has become popular in Europe, especially in Germany.

In scoring a STREND factor of 6.9859, well ahead of the 4.1701 of runner-up Joshua Wiggins, Hong, a 28-year-old Army intelligence officer, did the following:

- Bench pressed 152.5 pounds (115 percent of his body weight) 29 times;

- Chinned (palms out, wide grip) himself 21 times with an extra 20 pound (15 percent of body weight) tied around his waist;

- Shoulder pressed (behind



Hong: Short of own record



Clifton: More than in shape

neck) 80 pounds (60 percent of his body weight) 28 times;

- Chinned (palms in, close grip) himself 15 times while anchored down with an extra 20 pounds;

- Performed 31 parallel bar dips with 33.5 pounds (25 percent of bodyweight) around his waist;

- Ran three miles in 17 minutes, 45 seconds.

"I'll be getting out of the Army in two weeks and I guess I've been partying too much," Hong said. He fell short of his world record score of 7.235 set last year. Hong's weight is up to 134 pounds, six more than last year, and he said that may have been a factor.

There were 34 men and six women in the competition. Kay Clifton, a 32-year-old aerobics and yoga instructor, edged Jennifer Thompson-Tuzon in the women's competition, 2.5050 to 2.4380. Clifton benchpressed 60 pounds 22 times, chinned herself three times, did 20 repeti-

tions with 30 pounds in the shoulder press, performed nine reverse chins, and nine dips. She finished with 25:09 in the run. The women do not have extra weights strapped to them.

The competitors went from one discipline to the next every three minutes, meaning they got only about two minutes rest between each activity (after exerting themselves for about a minute).

Hong said he devotes around eight hours a week to fitness activities. "I go for quality more than quantity," said Hong, a former all-state prep wrestler from Indiana who ranked first physically in his West Point graduating class. "I try to be efficient in everything I do."

Hong plans to compete in the European Open STREND Challenge next month before beginning a job with a management consultant firm in San Francisco. He hopes he'll be able to return to Honolulu in October to defend his world championship.

Unlike Hong, who can't remember not being fit, Clifton, who now carries 104 pounds on a 5-foot-1 frame, scaled 152 pounds just four years ago.

"I got out of the shower one day, looked at myself in the mirror, and said I'm too young to be like this," Clifton said. She said she averages 22 hours a week in fitness activities.