

Phil Heath Wins 2008 Ironman Pro!

Contributed by Dave Palumbo
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1) PHIL
HEATH

After skipping the 2007 Mr. Olympia and spending the year packing on 20lbs of

hard, dense, muscle. Phil Heath stormed onto the Los Angeles Convention Center stage with all cylinders firing and he dominated this lineup from start to finish. Looking reminiscent of a young Shawn Ray, Heath has stepped his muscle mass and conditioning up about 10 notches since last season. Look for the man they call "The Gift" to give the frontrunners- Dexter Jackson, Melvin Anthony, and Kai Greene-- a run for their money at the Arnold Classic in 2 weeks.

2) GUSTAVO BADELL

With his lost muscle mass from the 2007 Olympia restored, Gustavo Badell showed up to do battle in the City of Angels. While Badell packed more muscle per square inch than any other competitor in the show, his conditioning and structure paled in comparison to Heath. If Gustavo can bring a tighter package to the Arnold Classic in less than 2 week's time, Heath could very well find himself in big trouble. According to Flex Wheeler, "Heath's got all the tools to be a great future champion; however, Gustavo's got what it takes now!"

3) MOE ELMOUSSAWI

Moe has got to be considered the "Most Improved Bodybuilder" of the entire show. After never having placed top-5 in any IFBB Pro Show, Elmoussawi (who now lives in New Zealand) produced one of the most conditioned packages of the evening. No one's glutes were more striated or biceps were more rounded; and, as a result, he was awarded with 3rd place and the first Mr. Olympia qualification of his career. If this guy adds another 10lbs to his frame, people better watch out!

4) SILVIO SAMUEL

Silvio Samuel has to be considered the most consistent bodybuilder currently on the circuit. After 8 consecutive top-7 finishes in 2007 (and a win at the Europa Super Show), Samuel has reemerged in 2008 with more muscle, a better presentation, and his usual superb conditioning. While Samuel never threatened Heath or Badell for the top 2 spots, he did challenge Elmoussawi for 3rd. In the end it appeared that the judges chose Moe's more polished presentation over Silvio's slightly awkward posing style. If Silvio can tighten up his posing over the next 2 weeks, don't be surprised if he gets his revenge and displaces "Mighty" Moe!

5) JOHNNY O. JACKSON

While this wasn't the Johnny Jackson who won the Atlantic City Pro Show last year, the monstrous upper body that we've grown to expect from this self-proclaimed "Strongest Man in Bodybuilding" showed up with flying colors. If Johnny can drop another 5lbs or so in the next 2 weeks (prior to the Arnold), he should be able to deliver the crisp, polished, physique that'll move him past several of the guys that beat him tonight. While Jackson's legs may not be up to snuff with his upper body, it still proved to be enough to snag the 5th and final Olympia qualification.

NOTE: Lonnie Teper, on his 29th (or was that 49th) birthday, did his usual phenomenal job in MCing the show!

2008 IRONMAN PRO CONTEST PHOTO GALLERY