

Editor's Letter

Contributed by Steve Blechman
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Road to the Nationals

The battle

at the beach is about to begin. MD will be there, the weekend of November 20th and 21st, at the NPC Nationals in Ft. Lauderdale—the show that wraps up the amateur season for the whole year. This contest has given us some of the best pro bodybuilders the sport has ever seen, such as Lee Haney, Shawn Ray, Kevin Levrone—and MD's own Evan Centopani, who won the Overall in 2007. To win at the Nationals almost guarantees you a great pro career—it's that tough a competition. And the lineup this year is an impressive mix of classic shape and proportion, heavyweight mass monsters, and some of the biggest arms the sport has ever seen.

But before

we look at MD's top picks for the showdown, I'd like to draw your attention to the two amazing young pros on our cover, our new team MD athletes, Fouad Abiad and Ben Pakulski. Fouad and Ben both hail from Ontario, and both became pros by winning the Super-heavyweight and Overall titles at the CBBF Canadian Championships. Ron Harris talks with Fouad & Hoss; Abiad and Ben & Pak-Man; Pakulski about how each one got their start, their strong points—and what they each still need to work on.

Ron also

gets them to rate each other's physiques. "Amazing back and shoulders," offers Ben about Fouad. "His quads, hams and calves are at the Olympia level already," says Fouad about Ben. These rookies are making some big noise in the IFBB; both of them are forces to be reckoned with! Read "Canadian Invasion!" on page 150, for their full profiles, contest histories, and the work they're doing with Hany Rambod.

Lee Banks

may just be the best amateur heavyweight in America. If you're gonna beat him—you're gonna have to be damn good. Lee gave MD's own Mark Alvisi the fight of his life in the Heavies at the USA this year before Mark stormed the Overall. Everyone who's beaten Lee in the last few years is already a pro; Banks just needs to come into Ft. Lauderdale at his best to ace his pro card. And Lee feels good about the Nationals; he's already beaten all the other Heavies going in. Read "Bank on It!" on page 198 by Ron Harris, to find out how this "body shaper," as he calls himself, added quality mass to balance his physique, as he amped-up his training with Hany Rambod, to prepare for the Nationals.

Big Robert

Burneika will be armed and dangerous at the Nationals this year. This huge Russian diamond-in-the-rough, a gigantic bastard about the size of Jay Cutler, owns some of the biggest cannons in the sport. Inspired at the age of 14 by Arnold "Pumping Iron" on the silver screen, Robert knew in that moment he would never want to work in his dad's autobody shop; instead, his goal would be to make his body into something special. "I found that I was naturally very strong," Burneika says about the immediate results he achieved when he began lifting. Read "Lithuanian Leviathon," on page 210, to find out about this mass invasion, straight out of Mother Russia!

Young

newcomer and new Team MD athlete Seth "Ferocious" Feroce is training to win! Seth carries tons of muscle and is very complete. Some say he hasn't paid his dues; he never competed until spring of this year, but then took Light-heavyweight and Overall at the Pittsburgh Championships and Heavyweight Winner in Northern Kentucky. Is he good enough for the "fast track" to the IFBB? "It all comes down to who looks best that day on the stage," answers Seth Feroce in "Ferocious Road to the Nationals," on page 178.

Flex Wheeler looks at some of the competition at the upcoming Nationals and "critiques their physiques." In "Battle in Fort Lauderdale," on page 166, Flex gives us the 2009 NPC Nationals

Preview. New pros, coming right up!

Classic

shape and proportion; that about sums up the amazing physique of Shawn Rhoden. In "Shawn 'Flexatron' Roden's Amazing Comeback," on page 224, Flex Wheeler talks with Shawn, who decided to return to competition after seven years away, and then stormed to a Heavyweight and Overall victory at the IFBB North American. Read about "Flexatron's" triumphant return to the stage.

This month

marks the debut of George Farah's "The Pro Maker" on page 320. Farah gives a detailed breakdown of his "Pre-contest Game Plan" and talks about how to create a pro. You won't want to miss it!

And don't

miss "The Girls from Metroflex, Part II" on page 238. That's right—the girls are back in town and getting physical!

The rest of

the issue is jam-packed as usual, with the latest news, views and in-depth scientific research from the industry's top experts; everything you need to know about bodybuilding. It's all right here in the world's best hardcore resource. See you next month!