

FORMER UCONN FOOTBALL STAR KEVIN FRIEND CROWNED FAUQUIER FAIR STRONGMAN CHAMP

A SHOW OF GRUNT FORCE

Mary Ott wins strongwoman title, Gisselquist is junior champ

By Jeff Malmgren

FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF WRITER

Kevin Friend and Andrew Sengstack carried around three sleeper sofas, two refrigerators and a pair of stoves Friday morning.

They did so as employees at the Fauquier ReStore of Habitat For Humanity, but lifting that furniture also served as their warm up for the Fauquier Fair's strongman competition that evening.

It paid off. After leaving work early, Friend placed first and Sengstack took third in the senior division of the strongman event.

"They closed the store down so we could compete against each other," Sengstack said. "That was pretty awesome."

Jesse Gisselquist, meanwhile, won the junior division while Mary Ott won the women's division.

The strongman competition featured two new events this summer — the yoke walk and the sled pull — along with the staple tire flip.

The yoke walk and sled pull replaced the Atlas stones and tractor pull events used last year. The 2014 competition also featured a feed bag relay, making the 2013 competition the last to use the long-standing event lineup of tractor pull, log carry and tire flip.

Guys like Friend and Sengstack — both former Fauquier



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTO/RANDY LITZINGER

Former Fauquier High football star Kevin Friend made the Fauquier Fair Strongman contest look like one of his workouts at the University of Connecticut, where he was a starting lineman. Some new events were thrown his way, but Friend conquered them.

High wrestlers — had some qualms with the changes because the 2015 events required extra endurance.

"It was really tiring," Friend said. "Thought it's strongman, not CrossFit."

"It was more cardio this year than it was strength," Sengstack said. In the junior class, Gisselquist

STRONGMAN/STRONG WOMAN CONTEST

■ **Women:** 1, Mary Ott. 2, Brittany Linton. 3, Jacy Crider.

■ **Junior men:** 1, Jesse Gisselquist. 2, David Jones.

■ **Senior men:** 1, Kevin Friend. 2, Dan Elmore. 3, Andrew Sengstack. 4, Josh Guevara.

won the yoke walk in 34.76 seconds, placed second in the tire flip in 47.94 and won the sled pull in 21.13.

In the women's class, Ott won the yoke walk in 51.87, won the tire flip in 38.28 and finished third in the sled pull by advancing 125 feet, 8 inches before bowing out.

Friend won all three events in the senior class. The 6-foot-6, 320-pound former University of Connecticut offensive lineman finished the yoke walk in 33.30, the tire flip in 22.75 and the sled pull in 19.06.

"Next year we need to do it by weight so Kevin's in his own" division, Sengstack said. "He's just a beast."

The discomfort of the yoke walk caused a pair of competitors to drop out of the entire competition, but Friend and Sengstack called the sled pull the toughest event.

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Mary Ott won the Fauquier Fair strongwoman competition.



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/RANDY LITZINGER

Hoisting hay bales rapidly challenges certain muscle groups as Josh Guevara found out.

Muscles-R-Us: Friend tops a Strong field

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"The stamina," Friend said. "The endurance aspect. I was trained for 10-yard sprints [in football] not [150-foot] sprints."

Friend ran the sled pull last after watching the various techniques used by all the other competitors.

Most people pulled the sled by slipping a yellow strap over each shoulder and holding the handles near their faces. Sengstack used a different approach. He wrapped a strap around each hand and stretched his arms behind his back as he pulled.

Sengstack finished in 29:16 seconds — the best time in the senior division at that point. So Friend mimicked his technique.

"If he didn't copy me, I would have won that," Sengstack said with a laugh.