

# TOUGH,

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pits fitness buffs against each other in a series of physical tests.

Dent's particular challenges included a modified tug-of-war that saw her have to drag her opponent across a playing field, carrying increasingly heavy stone balls through a pool and, finally, flip increasingly heavy tires down a track before hoisting them over wooden posts.

"The whole (tug-of-war) fight was longer than what was aired on TV and, at one point, I felt like I was just pulling her for an eternity and not moving," she said.

The first test made carrying the stones more taxing, but it was because she could still feel her legs "wrecked" from the first event.

Dent was eliminated just before making it to the final challenge, which would have included wrestling her opponent. She simply couldn't leverage the last tire over the post.

"My body just stopped working when I got to the third tire. It was the strangest thing and really frustrating because I knew I could take my

opponent if I got to the (wrestling) pit – but it wasn't meant to be," Dent said.

She said the biggest difference between *Broken Skull Challenge* and other competitions she's entered was the lack of a coach standing by to offer advice. Contestants were also given only a few minutes to strategize after learning what they will need to do to advance.

"Mentally, it was very different than anything I have ever done. Physically? The first challenge may have been the hardest thing I have ever done in competition ... and that's saying a lot," she said.

While she didn't have a personal coach on-hand, Dent said Austin himself made for an admirable stand-in.

"When the cameras weren't rolling he was that calm reassuring voice saying to all of us, 'You guys can do this,' and you really did feel like he was rooting for you," she said.

Dent's adventure alongside "Stone Cold" Steve Austin make her story attention-getting, but the path that led her to

the show is just as noteworthy.

When her best friends were graduating from McNary High School, Dent was already the mother to 2-year-old twin boys, Isaac and Noah.

"I was raising them and married to a Marine who was deployed," Dent said.

She'd gotten pregnant at 16 and two more sons, Eli and Joey, arrived before she put a new focus on her fitness.

"When I started working out I had four boys under 8 years of age. My youngest was 9 months old, so while I wouldn't say that was an obstacle, it definitely wasn't convenient," she said. "I couldn't workout at a gym, so we slowly collected bits and pieces of used equipment so I could do CrossFit on my own. I read a lot and watched a lot of videos to help me understand how to essentially be my own coach and properly move my body."

The more she learned about CrossFit the more she enjoyed the challenges of whole-body workouts rather than focusing on one aspect each day. And her

"I needed to break down some barriers within myself."

— Natalie Dent



Natalie Dent with her sons.

Submitted

new routines changed not only her body, but her view of herself and what she could expect others to think of her.

"I experienced so many challenges early on that shaped how I viewed myself and how society viewed me. I was a high school dropout, a pregnant teen, a young mom. There is such a huge stigma that goes along with that and I guess I needed to break down some

barriers within myself and in society. I didn't want that to define me anymore," Dent said. "I began this journey into CrossFit while my boys were young and impressionable. Now, I see them pushing themselves in everything they do. I would like to think that by watching me train and being by my side at competitions that they've absorbed lessons that I didn't fully realize I was teaching them."

# TAX,

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However, because the revenue generated would become a dedicated parks fund it could be considered a "tax," "user tax" or "fee" within the boundaries widely accepted. That squishiness is problematic in determining which term to use for the parks surcharge being discussed.

In his 2013 study, Henchman points out that "taxes fund general benefits to everyone while fees fund particularized benefits to the fee-payer." By those measures, the proposed parks fee resembles a tax since it would be charged to all residents' households on their utility bills – not just park users – and the benefits of parks are felt throughout the city in terms of higher property values, reduced crime and 240 acres of public green spaces. At the same time, a fee designation is also appropriate since the funds would be used to recoup the costs of maintenance and improvements within the park system.

So, would the added charge be a fee or a tax? The answer may depend on how paying it makes you feel.

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