



PASCO FLEA MARKET
RICH WITH SOUNDS
AND FLAVORS/4C



BASS GUITAR
VIRTUOSO IN
ENTERPRISE/3C

Nick McFarlane might be one of the strongest men you’ll ever meet.

He doesn’t have freakishly large muscles, oiled skin or bulging veins. McFarlane, however, is really strong. He uses every one of his 640 muscles the way virtuoso violinists use their strings.

He recently won the Best of the West CrossFit competition in Bend by completing an intensive workout with his partner faster than everyone else. He can do 70 pullups in a row.

“Then I fall on the floor,” McFarlane says, laughing.

Oh, yeah, he’s also really humble too.

The secret to his personal power isn’t really a secret, say fellow athletes. He simply outworks everyone else in an unrelenting, push-to-the-end drive to keep improving.

“Nick is never satisfied with his current abilities,” said Matt Mitchell, coach and co-owner at No Pain CrossFit. “He is relentless about being more well-rounded. He’s extremely humble.”

The former personal trainer and Eastern Oregon University baseball player, who sports a chiseled physique of his own, stood in the center of a voluminous workout space. In the world of CrossFit, gyms are called boxes. Most have an industrial feel with a wide expanse of floor space dotted with weights, bars, rowing machines, climbing ropes, stationary bikes and racks of weights, medicine balls and jump ropes. Pendleton’s box is no different. The former shipping warehouse has massive wooden beams and roll-up doors that open to let in the breeze. Spongy stall mats cover roughly 3,000 square feet of concrete. At one end of the space is a grid of pull-up bars called the Monster Lite rack.

“You just need open space,” said coach and co-owner Friday Bracher. “Your body is your machine.”

On Tuesday morning, McFarlane rolled out of bed and cruised to the box on Southeast Sixth Street by 5 a.m. He greeted six other men and three women who seemed unnaturally awake despite the black sky outside and the fact that most everyone else in town was still dead to the world. They warmed up quietly with rowing, squats, planks, swings and something called “good mornings” as Bracher wandered among them, checking in with each. Music played softly.

McFarlane, who is also a coach, yelled, “We go in four minutes.”

A few glanced at a whiteboard where Mitchell had written the workout routine, which changes daily and is never repeated. On the menu this morning was 100 pullups, 100 pushups, 100 situps and 100 air squats.

“Ready?” McFarlane called out.

The music volume spiked and sound poured from the speakers, its driving drumbeats seeming almost physical in its ability to grab the athletes and push them along. McFarlane jumped, grabbed a bar and performed a frantic blast of pullups. The pullups morphed seamlessly into pushups, then to situps and finally into air squats. A sheen of sweat appeared on his skin. He took a quick pull on his water bottle, chalked his hands, then started all over again. After 10 minutes and 48 seconds, he stopped, having finished the workout faster than anyone else. After breathing hard for a minute or so, he exhorted his fellow No Painians. This is classic Nick, said Bracher.

“Nick is the first to say good morning to you,” she said. “He’s the first to help you out if you’re having problems. He’s got a good spirit.”

McFarlane started coming to the box the day it opened three years ago, after his wife Brittany suggested he might like it. Nick, who’d been a three-sport athlete at Echo High School, was skeptical, but he gave it a go.

That first day, he said, they used PVC pipe instead of actual bars and weights to learn the posture and techniques.

“There were people there who had never lifted a weight in their



Nick McFarlane does a set of pushups Tuesday at the No Pain CrossFit gym in Pendleton.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Where there’s pain...

Pendleton man finds power in the CrossFit box

By KATHY ANEY ♦ East Oregonian



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

The CrossFit “box” in Pendleton is located in a former shipping warehouse with a loading dock and a bank of roll-up doors that can be opened to let in a breeze. Outside sit truck tires that are sometimes incorporated into workouts.



Staff photos by Kathy Aney

LEFT: Nick McFarlane does a set of pull-ups Tuesday at the No Pain Crossfit gym in Pendleton. RIGHT: McFarlane chalks up his hands during a workout in preparation for an elite Crossfit competition in Seattle.

life,” McFarlane said.

Despite the gentle start, he woke up the next day with an engulfing soreness.

“It might as well have been daily doubles in football,” he said.

But he was instantly addicted to the challenge. In the next six months, he worked out at No Pain three days a week. He lost 20 pounds, 15 of which crept back on as muscle. He bonded with his fellow box mates.

“When you suffer together, everyone becomes your friend,” McFarlane said with a grin.

He started entering compe-

titions. Competitions are really structured workouts with varied tasks. In one, McFarlane carried a 45-pound weight plate during a mile run. Other routines have included rope climbs, “dumbbell clusters,” power lifting, biking, rolling oversized truck tires and so forth. McFarlane’s success at the Bend competition qualified him for the elite Cascade Classic in Seattle.

McFarlane is an inspiration for others in his “box family.” One of them, Dave Stuvland, started CrossFit a little more than a year ago at age 56.

“At the time, I weighed 352

pounds,” he said. “I was sitting in my chair and wondering what I was going to do with my life.”

Someone suggested CrossFit and he tried it out of desperation. He remembers that first day clearly, partly because he got pulled over by a police officer for speeding on the way there.

“I had to wake up at 4:15 and then went flying into town,” Stuvland said. “I told the officer I didn’t want to be late for my first day of CrossFit.”

Stuvland made it and gave it his best.

“The first week, I was so sore,

I couldn’t lift my cup of coffee off my desk,” said Stuvland, who is assistant recording officer in the Umatilla County Recorder’s Office.

So far, he has lost 68 pounds and now “can chase my grandkids around the yard. I can function in life.”

He takes encouragement from his fellow box mates, such as McFarlane.

“Nick is an inspiration to me,” Stuvland said. “He’s a stud. He’s so positive to be around.”

Nick said Stuvland provides inspiration, too, plus entertaining renditions on his air guitar during workouts.

Though No Pain offers other workout times throughout the day, McFarlane said the 5 a.m. slot fits

“When you suffer together, everyone becomes your friend.”

— Nick McFarlane

best with his job as a signal main-

tainer for Union Pacific Railroad. He said the workouts are what you make of them and definitely not one-size-fits-all. Coaches stick to newbies like glue at the beginning.

When all had completed the workout on Tuesday morning, McFarlane left No Pain and went to work. He returned to the box at 5 that evening, carrying his 9-month-old daughter Maclyn. His wife Brittany arrived soon to take her and both sat down to watch. Nick greeted the three other members of his team for the Seattle event. They talked strategy as they looked at the newly released workout for the coming competition. Each person would do all the tasks on a rotating basis. The list included lifting 50-pound dumbbells, climbing rope and cycling. Two members would go, while the other two waited to jump in. They started a dry run. Soon, sweat streamed.

The team will join other qualifiers Oct. 21-22 at the Hangar 30, a 20,000-foot warehouse in Seattle. Athletes will also compete on an obstacle course in Magnuson Park near Lake Washington.

McFarlane said his competitive success is all gravy.

“It’s a stress reliever for me,” he said. “Its instilled a lot of confidence.”

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