

## Woman of Power

### Meet UW-La Crosse's resident strongwoman

Posted: Wednesday May 2, 2007 12:14PM; Updated: Wednesday May 2, 2007 12:15PM

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By Nicki Jhabvala

Of the 53 teams and more than 500 participants in the 2007 Pontiac ACIS Basketball National Championships in Chapel Hill, N.C., it may be safe to assume that most of them did not have nearly the "practice" regimen of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's **Amanda Wilfer**.

Most probably took shots in the gym, had team practices, competed with other IM squads on their campuses -- the usual.

Try pulling a Hummer. Or lifting 250-pound stones.

Amanda Wilfer is a Strongwoman.

After joining the powerlifting team at UW-L about a year and a half ago, through which she qualified for nationals, she grabbed the attention of a Strongman enthusiast, who later convinced her to try it out.

"I was like, "Strongman? What is that?" and he said, 'You know, World's Strongest Man, like they do on TV,'" Wilfer explained. "I didn't know people actually did that as amateurs."

A couple of training sessions later, Wilfer won her first competition, beating out her opponents in all but one event. Since her triumphant beginning, Wilfer competed in five more events, including the nationals in Boston.

"Every contest is different, the promoters can do any event they want," she said. "I've done lots of tire flips, Farmer's walks (walking with massive weights in each hand), Atlas stones, I pulled a Hummer for one, sandbag carries, log presses -- lots of different things."

As a powerlifter in addition to a Strongwoman competitor, Wilfer spends four days a week in the gym for dead lifts, squats and training sessions with fellow Strongwomen.

But the fun days -- for both Wilfer and those watching -- are sessions with her Amish neighbors, who volunteer to cut down trees from their pasture to help her practice her "fingle fingering." (That's



University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Amanda Wilfer is known to pull Hummers, flip tires and lift 250-pound stones as part of her training routine.

Bryan Rinnert/ 3Sight.com

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strongman terminology for pole flipping).

"Before nationals I had never done it, and it was a contest that was going to be at nationals," she said. "So, I was out in the pouring rain with some Amish guy."

Even with her success as a Strongwoman, Wilfer was willing to miss her seventh competition for a shot at the ACIS Championship.

UW-L, whose team name is "Old School," won the regionals on its own turf March 4 for a free ride to UNC for the nationals. And it seemed Old School was well on its way to becoming the new champ, but the Lady Sparks of Texas A&M -- Commerce got in the way in the quarterfinals.

Regretting the decision to skip out on another Strongwoman win? "No, this is kind of a one-time opportunity," she said. "There are plenty of Strongwoman competitions."

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