

By Lorraine McClellan
staff writer

A Farmington Hills weight trainer is now holder of the title "Mr. Oakland-Macomb."

Along with the title, Lonnie Bates, who works out in Weight Station, took three trophies and a plaque for placing first "overall" in the competition, for "most symmetrical" which concerns body shape and "best legs" judged on size, shape and development.

The 25-year-old, who said he was "not big in sports" while he was a student at Harrison High School, was lured to weight lifting while he was attending Central Michigan University and for a time was president of that school's Weight Club. But competition didn't start for him until last summer and with only two competitions behind him, earned his first title in Mt.

Mr. Oakland-Macomb Vying for the title takes discipline

Clemens early this month.

He called the win "a good first step leading to bigger and better contests."

Bates is his own manager-trainer, as most of the competitors are in body-building.

"You learn by trial and error. You learn by listening to others and by listening to your own body and responding to it. This would include sleeping, how much and when, or knowing whether it was best for you to train at 7 a.m. or 7 p.m.," Bates said.

WEIGHT STATION manager Dave Cox said about 60-65 persons can be found working out in the building on Eight Mile and Grand River on almost any given evening, but only a handful are interested in competition.

"Most of them are here to keep in shape. And most of them don't have the discipline to do what Lonnie did to get

ready for competition. They might think they want a title but they aren't willing to make the sacrifice," he said.

What Bates did to prepare was to go on what Cox called "a grueling diet."

The diet consists of high protein, no fat, no salt, no refined sugars. A few days before the contest Bates drained his entire body of any liquid.

Bates called the training both hard and expensive.

"It's expensive in both time and money," he said. "I run around doing my own shopping, instead of running out for a burger, and I do my own cooking. I don't put this on my mother because she wouldn't deal with it."

Add to that the regularity of sleeping and working out consistently for a period of eight to ten weeks before the contest.

Yet Bates says the competitions are consistently gaining in popularity and

the number of entries keeps growing. "Because we are all our own coach and set our own standards we're all on our own and have to be ready because you never know who is going to show up," he said.

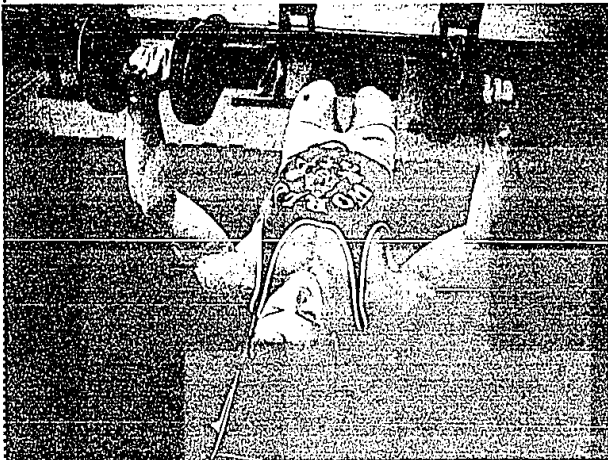
WHEN BATES isn't working out in Weight Station he is working in Slim & Tan on Orchard Lake Road, south of 15 Mile Road, answering the phone and taking appointments.

It's an interim summer job for him between graduation from Central this spring and a move to California's Los Angeles area, his fall where he will seek employment with his degree in biology.

He will be leaving with four friends, none of them weight trainers, and his trophies will go with him.

"They are huge and I love 'em," he said.

Workouts in The Weight Station five or six evenings a week are mandatory for competition preparation where body-builders pick and choose from a variety of equipment to use.



The Harrison High School graduate said it wasn't until he got to Central Michigan University that he got interested in weight training, and then it was only because he was trying to find a way to stay fit.



Staff photos by Randy Borst

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