

# World's brawny brutes will compete in province

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DIEPPE - They are the brawny brutes that put their oversized muscles to the test around the world by demonstrating the art of flipping cars, flinging anvils, pulling airplanes and tossing kegs high into the sky.



Adam Huras/Telegraph-Journal

Canadian strongmen Michael Saunders and Christian Savoie are shown in Dieppe on Wednesday. They were promoting the World's Strongest Man competition. Photo: Adam Huras/Telegraph-Journal

And now their fight for the world title is coming to Canada and New Brunswick for the first time.

Canadian strongman champion Christian Savoie - and his 6-foot-4, 320-pound frame - helped announce here Wednesday that the World's Strongest Man competition will take place across the province in September.

The competition is set to be staggered over four days beginning Sept. 29 in Fredericton, before heading to Saint John and Dieppe, while concluding in Shippagan - home of the annual Strong Men of New Brunswick festival.

"It's important to have it here in Canada," said Savoie, who in his spare time is a professional butcher residing in Sherbrooke, Que. "It's an honour to represent our country on home soil."

Savoie can also deadlift more than 800 pounds and currently holds the title of North America's Strongest Man. He has qualified for the World's Strongest Man competition for the third time.

The strong man competition had identified Canada as a place where it wanted to showcase its competition, previously travelling the world to places such as Zambia, Iceland, Malaysia, Morocco, China and the United States.

Canada is now the 13th country to hold the World's Strongest Man competition.

New Brunswick was then ruled the ideal setting.

"The question we're getting is 'Why did we choose New Brunswick?' Well we like the people, the culture, the bilingual aspect as well and also how welcoming all the cities have been," said Sébastien Théberge, spokesman for the event.

The strongman competition in New Brunswick will be the equivalent to the world semifinal with competitors vying for a spot in the world final in November in Finland.

It will include four hours of events in each of the four locations and include an amateur strong man competition for local applicants. The events will also include live music and cultural celebrations.

The main events will feature competitors from roughly 14 nations and will be broadcast to 58 countries.

"It's a fantastic event for the province of New Brunswick to be seen and heard with visuals of the province being viewed around the world," Théberge said.

The strongman competition began in 1977 and combines a series of unique tests of strength to determine the winner of the supreme title.

The challenges include carrying anvils, lifting giant logs and pulling trucks for long distances.

"The question we get a lot is 'What can you lift?' Well we lift so many things so many ways," said Mike Saunders, a strong man who placed sixth in Canada last year.

"We can pull a 30,000-pound truck, we can pick up a 400-pound rock, we can press 350 pounds over our head, but in the gym what people can relate to is the bench press.

"For us in the gym, 500 pounds is about right."

The events will also include a New Brunswick flavour with strongmen potentially lifting anchors to highlight the province's shipbuilding heritage, Théberge said.

"We're still open to ideas on how to tie in the culture," he said.

Tickets will go on sale in August. Details on the events will also come out in the next few weeks.