There was a tinge of disappointment in Brad Gillingham's voice. He wanted desperately to medal (top three places) at the World Games in Taiwan last week.
"You have to be perfect at the World Games," Minneota's powerlifter in the games said. He wasn't, and settled for fourth place.
"I was physically able to be a medalist — yet, it was a great way to finish (fourth at the World Games)," he said.
While Gillingham is an athlete so well known he's considered an international "king" of the powerlift sport, he prefers to think of himself as a guy who, "Just wants to shoot deer and watch my daughter swim."
Gillingham, arguably the best dead-lifter in the world, used his best event to pull himself into fourth place.
"I hold myself to high standards in the sport," he said, while admitting most of his competition was much younger. "I was graduating from high school when most of them were born," he said.
Because powerlifting isn't an Olympic sport, he figures The World Games is, "As close to what the Olympics looks like."
While he was in top shape physically, the travel to Taiwan took its toll on Gillingham.
"We had to fly to Chicago, then 13 hours to Tokyo; had a two hour lay-over, then three and a half hours to Taipan, spent the night in a hotel and then went on a two and a half our bus ride," he said.
It was very hot and it was difficult to get loose. "I felt terrible the first day, but then there was an 11 1/2-hour time difference," Gillingham related.
Then, on his first event, the squat he didn't go deep enough and lost points. ."That was a bad way to start," he said.
"I didn't wat to bomb out," so he stuck to it, rallied, but never did get the squat points he expected.
Bench press flights were reduced from two to one, giving him less time to recover from the squad — and this too, took it toll on the Minneota athlete.
"My training had been good on the bench. I thought I could get a 617, but had to settle for a 584 when I tweaked the shoulder by hitting the uprights. "I was scared I wouldn't make it but I did another press and I had nothing left," he said.
"Everyone here has been a World Champ or just missed being a champ," he said. So the mistakes and injured shoulder reduced his chance to win.
What pulled him into a chance for the medal was his powerlift, which was the best at the games. His second lift was his best and he rode that to powerlift championship.
"I would have had to have a world record to get the medal," he said. He did what he could, and took fourth.
"There's a lot of strategy to it," he said.
Now that it's over, Gillingham has left his desires to medal and has returned home to Minneota — and that suits him just fine.
"I'm just a country person," he said.