

Recent grad wins bench press world championship

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Since graduating from the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh just two months ago, Devan Doan has been doing a lot of heavy lifting — literally and figuratively.

The May 2010 nursing graduate landed a job as a registered nurse in the emergency department at Appleton Medical Center, published a book and, in her spare time, won the gold medal at the International Powerlifting Federation's Open Bench Press World Championships in Killeen, Texas.

In her ninth appearance at the world championships, Doan bench pressed 319 pounds to realize her 10-year dream of gold. The silver medalist from the Czech Republic lifted 303 pounds.

Doan's individual accomplishment led the U.S. women's team to tie for first with Russia.

"I've been training for years with my dad, and I was just in awe of being on the podium and hearing the national anthem," she said.

At the age of 14, Doan was the youngest ever to compete in bench pressing at the world championships. This year, at 22, she was still the youngest member of the U.S. team.

"Most bench press competitors peak later in life, so I'm still pretty young in the sport," she said.

Doan and her father, Dave, who is a six-time world bench press champion, train together and coach each other at the downtown YMCA in Oshkosh.

"My dad is so proud of me," she said. "All those years of watching me and, finally, it was my day."

In her book, "Dream Big! Journey from a Childhood Dream to Reality," published by Westbow Press, Doan tells the story of her struggles, successes and lessons learned from powerlifting.

"I talk about the importance of my close family relationships to my success," she said. "I also share that what is important is all that you have lived through to reach your success. The medals are just the icing on the cake."