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Cardio contest pits firefighters against farm ladies

By Dara Chadwick

Anyone who exercises regularly knows that the workout routine can all too easily become just that – routine. So when Barbara Lundy, owner of Jamestown Fitness, wanted to motivate her members to shake up their workouts, she launched a cardio contest designed to get a little competitive spirit going in the gym.

And competitive it got, Lundy

said.

Thirteen teams of three signed on to challenge each other to complete more workouts.

The concept was simple: For every 15 minutes that a participant put in on any cardio machine – treadmill, elliptical, bike, etc. – he or she received one point. Participants also received one point for every 15 minutes of resistance or strength training that they did. To discourage people from getting too crazy with their workouts, Lundy decided to limit the points to one per day for strength training and four per day for cardio, for a per-day max of five points per person.

Right away, the team known as “Earth, Wind & Jamestown Fire” – which included Jamestown firefighters Kyle Tiexiera, Evan Katz and Gary Largess – emerged as a team to beat.

But another team was emerging as well. That was the fierce team known as the “Lady Grangers,” which included Jessie Dutra, Nonie O’Farrell and Martha Neale.

“It was pretty close at all times,” Lundy said.

Close indeed, said Tiexiera.

“They were ahead of us right off the bat,” he said. “We slowly clawed our way up and pretty much had to go every day.”

Originally, Tiexiera said, “Earth, Wind & Jamestown Fire” looked forward to competing against a second firefighter team called “Let Me Stand Next to Your Jamestown Fire.”

“We saw the sign up and we talked about competing,” he said. “It was a chance to participate in something fun.”

Tiexiera, 20, said the contest definitely challenged him to

change his regular workout.

“I still lifted the same amount,” he said. “But on a normal day, I’d do 15 to 20 minutes of cardio. It definitely made me work out a lot more. It was pretty time-consuming.”

That boost in workout time was the point of the whole contest, Lundy said.

“Everybody that’s on a team will tell you they worked out harder than they would have if they weren’t a team,” she said.

Jessie Dutra of the “Lady Grangers” said she was definitely motivated to work out more because of the contest.

“It helped me make a commitment before going into the holidays,” she said.

As winners of the 2009 cardio contest, “Earth, Wind & Jamestown Fire” won a gift certificate to Trattoria Simpatico, Lundy said. The second and third place teams received t-shirts.

What was most fun to watch, she added, was how much the teams got into choosing their names.

“We had the Gray Ghosts, who were all over 80,” she said. “Then we had the J-Lous, the Muscle Maids, the Thigh Masters, Candace’s Curmudgeons, Mighty Moms, Three’s Company, the Fill-ins, the Last Ones and Liz, Liz, Liz.”

This is the second time Lundy has held the contest, but it’s such fun for participants that she plans to do it again next year, she said.

And Jessie Dutra of the “Lady Grangers” is ready. She had challenging words for the “Earth, Wind & Jamestown Fire” team.

“We gave them a run for their money,” she said. “They’d better watch out for us next year.”

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