Firefighter Challenge

York City firefighter Ivan Flanscha carries a 42-pound hose up five stories yesterday during a practice run for the Firefighter Combat Challenge at the York County Fire School. Flanscha and seven other members of the York City Fire Department team will compete against more than 200 other firefighters tomorrow and Saturday at Continental Square in downtown York.

FEEL THE BURN

York team gears up for tough contest

By HEIDI BERNHARD-BUBB
The York Dispatch

York City firefighter Mark Bowman said most people respect firefighters, but they don't understand quite how hard the job is.

The Firefighter Combat Challenge — coming to York this weekend for the first time — might give Yorkers an opportunity to witness for themselves how tough firefighters have to be.

Billed as the toughest two minutes in sports, the challenge starts with a run to the top of a five-story tower while wearing about 50 pounds of equipment and carrying 42 pounds of hose.

Competitors must then run back down the steps, swing a mallet into a 160-pound steel beam.
Combat Challenge events

The 2006 Paul Davis Restoration-York City Firefighter Combat Challenge will be held this weekend at Continental Square. The square will be closed one block in every direction, from George Street to Beaver and Duke streets and from Market street to King and Philadelphia streets, starting at 9 a.m. tomorrow through 5 p.m. Saturday.

The Challenge does not start until 6 p.m., but the early road closures will enable crews to erect a five-story tower used in the event. The opening ceremony will be followed by individual races.

Events begin at 9 a.m. Saturday with a Firefighter Fun Run. The Challenge will continue at noon with tandem races.

A scaled-down version of the challenge, called the Kid’s Crawl, Drag and Squirt, will also be held at noon.

The Challenge will close with an awards ceremony scheduled for 4 p.m.

Event planners expect more than 250 firefighters from the United States and Canada to compete. Admission and activities are free.

For more information, visit www.pdr-pa.com.

John Pavoncello — The York Dispatch

York City Fire Chief John Senft, left, pounds away on a sled as Hanover Fire Commissioner James Roth waits to be tagged in yesterday during practice for the Firefighter Combat Challenge’s Over 50 Relay event at the York County Fire School.

Dave Michaels, Kevin Holtzapple, Rolando Suarez and Mark Bowman.

Stamina and strength

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until it moves 5 feet, carry a hose through a series of cones 75 feet long and, finally, drag a 175-pound dummy 100 feet to the finish line.

The top three times are used to determine team results, but contestants can also compete in individual and relay events.

Bowman is a member of an eight-member York City Fire Department team that will compete against teams from throughout the United States and Canada in 16 regional meets. Winners of the regional meets will head to a national meet and then the World Combat Challenge, which is featured on ESPN.

Unsung heroes: The York City meet is one of two in the eastern United States this year, said Steve Rotay, York franchise owner and general manager of Paul Davis Restoration. Paul Davis is sponsoring the free two-day event and also sponsors the York City team.

"It was an easy decision to support this event; these guys are unsung heroes. It was an easy thing to decide, especially with all they deal with. They are always under scrutiny with budget cuts and dollars," Rotay said.

The York City team is: Deputy Chief Richard Halpin, Ivan Flanscha, Chad Deardorff, Mike Anderson,