

Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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“Norfolk Firefighters Win Competition at State Fair”

City of Norfolk firefighters are some of the strongest and fastest in the state – evidenced by a first place win at the recent Nebraska State Fair Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge.

For 25 years the Scott Company has sponsored a contest held in various locations throughout the country to test the fitness of firefighters by having them run through timed events.

A team of five fulltime firefighters from Norfolk won first place in the state and second among regional competitors on Sunday. The team included Lance Conroy, Ryan Goodman, Chad Wurdeman, Trevor O'Brien and Nathan Wortmann.



In photo at left in black is Lance Conroy. In brown from left to right is Trevor O'Brien, Ryan Goodman and Nathan Wortmann. Dragging the mannequin in black with his back to the camera is Chad Wurdeman.

Another team of four Norfolk reserve firefighters and one career firefighter also competed, finishing eighth in a field of sixteen teams. The team consisted of Cody Stevens, Adam Sobotka, Chris Reilly, Victor Jaras (all reserve firefighters) and Travis Rich (career firefighter). Career, reserve and volunteer firefighters compete in the same division.

It's a difficult competition and some fitness magazines have described the Combat Challenge as tougher than the famous "Tough Mudder", "Spartan Race" or "Warrior Dash."

"The course is pretty challenging. Not only are we dragging heavy hoses or running up stairs, we're also each wearing 50 pounds of fire equipment while we're competing," said Wortmann who has participated in the Combat Challenge four times.

The competition is designed to simulate fire fighting and rescue activities. For the first phase, a firefighter has to drag a 52 pound fire hose pack up five flights of stairs to the top of a tower. He then

hands off a baton to the next firefighter who hoists a 42 pound donut roll of fire hose from the ground up to the top of the tower. The third firefighter uses a nine pound shot mallet to pound a steel beam five feet on a sled. The fourth firefighter runs through a 140 foot slalom course, picks up a fire hose full of water and drags it 75 feet. The last firefighter of the relay team lifts and drags a 175 pound mannequin backwards 106 feet.

The team that won the competition in the Nebraska division had to compete head-to-head with firefighters from Grand Island. Norfolk firefighters won with a total time of one minute and 20 seconds.

"It's a friendly competition and gives us mostly bragging rights. It's a good motivation for us to keep fit. We train at the fire training tower in our off time at least two to three days a week all summer," Wurdeman said.

The Norfolk firefighters went through the course individually on Saturday at the fair, doing all of the phases of the competition themselves with the added challenge of having to wear a breathing apparatus while competing.

Since there were different brackets to work through during the relay portion of the contest on Sunday, by the end of the day, the team had gone through the entire course five separate times.

The Norfolk firefighters compete at other Combat Challenges throughout the year. Wortman estimates they will travel a total of about 3,000 miles to these competitions during their days off. Travel and registration expenses are paid for by the individuals and by area sponsors.