



ACTION MEN: Ireland's Strongest Man Dave Warner, right, from Ballymoney, wins his battle during the pole push at the final in Co Donegal yesterday
PICTURE: Conor McGonagle

Battle for pole position

By Kate Chambre

HUNDREDS of people gathered in Co Donegal over the bank holiday weekend to watch eight of the country's toughest men battle it out for the title of Ireland's Strongest Man.

Competitors from both sides of the border displayed their Herculean skills as they performed numerous gruelling tasks, which included pulling an 11-and-a-half tonne truck 15 metres and lifting cars off the ground.

Held in Ballybofey for the first time, the national competition is a stepping stone to the British and World's Strongest Man championship finals, which are due to take place in Belfast and China in a

few weeks time.

The main organiser of the event was 30-stone TV celebrity colossus Glenn Ross, from Bangor, Co Down, famous for winning Britain's strongest man competition three years in a row – and for being able to lift three cars off the ground.

"I've always wanted to bring the competition to Donegal, given the county's history with ancient Celtic battles," he said.

Among the crowd who turned out to watch the men compete was Ann Connelly from Co Tyrone who said she thought the whole event was "crazy".

"I think it's mad and sore on the heart," she said.

The overall winner of the event was Dave Warner from

Ballymoney, who at 37 was the oldest person in the competition.

He claimed that part of the secret of his success was eating 10,000 calories a day to maintain his strength.

"I'd usually eat up to four roast chickens a day – or sometimes steak when I can afford it – a dozen eggs, and four litres of milk," he said.

Other competitors taking part included 6ft fins postman Jason Reilly (25) from Co Meath, nicknamed 'redwood' after the huge tree.

Mr Reilly, who is currently the Republic of Ireland's strongest man, said yesterday: "I've always been a fan of this competition, in fact I used to watch Dave Warner compete on the television as a kid."

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