

HULK VS. BULK

SUPERHUMANS GIVE CONCRETE THE HEAVE-HO.

strongmen and 10 professional strongwomen from around the world for two days of grueling competition in May.

The norm for these competitions includes such events as the 700-pound tire flip, the 400-pound stone carry and the car deadlift. But this contest promised to be more intense. This time, in addition to all the standard fare, each athlete would back up to a 5-foot section of the concrete manhole and roll it – slightly uphill – a total of 50 feet. “The pieces each weigh 15,000 pounds,” said Babbert.

And it wasn’t just some unused product lying around in the precastor’s yard. “We had to make these special because we had to cast in some inserts so they could get a full 360-degree roll without any restrictions,” said Babbert. “So we went with cast-in lifting anchors. That way we’ve got a means of handling it and they’ve got a means of rolling it.”

The day of the event finally arrived. Solid masses of steel, stone and concrete put up a fierce resistance against solid masses of bulging muscle. Mass against mass, dead weight against iron will and determination, the humans overcame – not by a lot, but by enough to determine who would claim the title.

Ironically – or perhaps understandably – the man and woman who scored highest in the pipe roll event also won the overall competition. Both were from Poland.

Just when you think there couldn’t possibly be any new uses for concrete, something entirely different comes from out of the blue. Chuck Babbert, president of sales for EC Babbert Inc., was approached by a strongman contest promoter who wanted to borrow some of the company’s product for a local competition.

Contestants in the Built Solid Strongman Challenge would push a 96-inch-diameter manhole up Nationwide Boulevard in Columbus, Ohio, as part of this year’s World’s Strongest Man contest. It was an event that pitted 24 professional

