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NEWS >>

CHICAGO TEAMSTER WINS U.S. NATIONAL FORKLIFT COMPETITION

Local 786 Member Heads to Ireland Oct. 24 to Claim World Title

When it comes to forklift operations in America, no one beats the Teamsters.

Teamsters Local 786 member Mike Troncozo saw to that this summer when he won first place in the U.S. National Moffett Competition, a premier international forklift challenge. On July 25, forklift operators from around the country traveled to Ohio to complete a timed obstacle course that tested workers' skill, speed, operational prowess and adherence to safety regulations.

A Chicago-based Teamster and driver for Illinois Brick Company, Troncozo admitted to shocking some of his younger competitors to take top prize in the contest.

"I've been a Teamster for 36 years and been working in trucking for 21 years, so there were definitely some guys there who thought I might be past my prime," Troncozo said with a laugh. "But I completed the course with a good time and just one penalty — far better than all other Moffett operators. It was a good feeling."

From Oct. 24-25, Troncozo will head to Ireland for the Moffett Competition's Grand Final, where he'll climb back on the forklift to square off with drivers from around the world. This summer, competitions similar to the U.S. trials were held in Canada, Australia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, France, Holland, Germany and Scandinavia. The upcoming course challenges operators to properly mount and dismount the forklifts, perform operational checks, negotiate obstacles and test various skill levels to pick up and place other objects and equipment.

Of course the obstacles for the world title must be completed in less than five minutes and thirty seconds — without any penalties.

"I love what I do and I love being a Teamster," Troncozo said. "I'm ready to do this."

"The Local 786 family is incredibly excited for Mike and honored that he's accomplished so much with the pride of a Teamster driver," said Eddie Rizzo, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 786. "To potentially be named the Moffett Operator of the Year is a big deal, especially for our members in the industry. We know no matter what happens in Ireland, Mike has achieved something all Teamster members can be proud of back in Chicago."

In addition to bestowing the world title, Moffett will make a donation to a charity of the winning operator's choosing following the competition.

Teamsters Local 786 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, America's premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.