


MERMET

Solar protection fabrics with a view

CV

MERMET

Solar Control Fabrics

SIMON HEFFERNAN IGNORES HIS COMM GAMES SILVER. HIS NATIONAL CHAMPS GOLD HE GAVE AWAY. IF AUSSIE

AUSTRALIAN WEIGHTLIFTING Champs, Hawthorn Weightlifting Centre, September 10, 2006: The 300 empty plastic chairs seem more like a memorial than a seating arrangement, bearing orderly testimony to absences. No fans, no devotees. Barely a dilettante or a wannabe, a sycophant or a crony. No grandeur or splendour, recognition or appreciation. Weightlifters and officials comprise the spectators.

Eight months ago, Simon Heffernan lifted silver at Melbourne's Commonwealth Games in front of a packed house that included 50 members of his family. However this time, he didn't bother telling any of them he was even competing;

he considers the event an embarrassing sham. Besides, his family wants him to quit.

As the lifters are introduced, Heffernan shakes his head at the inanity and absurdity of it all. Even for the most case-hardened performer, there's nothing more demoralising than performing in front of rows of vacant seats. In the dressing-room while warming up for his event, he says, in low tones: "This is sad. In a Commonwealth Games year, there should be kids and crowds and ... it's the smallest turnout ever."

Heffernan doesn't think he'll win - not with a troublesome wrist. Outside in the auditorium, Michael Noonan thinks