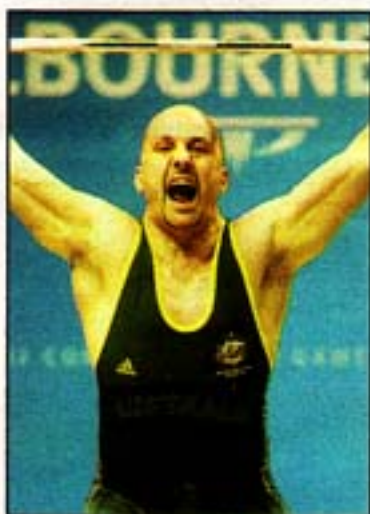


Showman lifts crowd in silver send-off

SIMON Hefferman left elite weightlifting just the way he wanted, with a silver medal-winning performance and his many supporters cheering him on.



Hefferman

The 30-year-old Kew schoolteacher came second behind Hawthorn Weightlifting Club champ Alex Karapetyan in the 94kg class — an improvement on the bronze he won at the 1998 Games in Kuala Lumpur.

“A different colour, but a better colour, one step up,” he said.

No heavy metal band could have rocked the Melbourne Exhibition Centre the way Hefferman did as he celebrated his lifts at last Tuesday’s event.

His three snatches produced hauls of 143kg, 147kg and 150kg, putting him in a strong position for a medal.

He made a certainty of it by hoisting 178kg and 182kg in the clean and jerk. When 190kg proved beyond him, the showman in him came out, as he blew kisses to the crowd.

“Yeah, I loved it,” he said.

“Haven’t had a crowd like that before.”

Asked about the future, he said: “I’ll probably hang around the sport but I won’t go for another Games.”