

PFQ RESULTS

BY GREG AMUNDSON

Physical fitness in law enforcement means more than just looking good in uniform — it is a matter of life and death. On one hand, research demonstrates that officers who look physically fit and self-confident are less likely to be challenged by a potential assailant. On the other hand, when push comes to shove and officers find themselves engaged in a fight for their life, high levels of physical fitness and conditioned willpower often give them the decisive edge they need to survive.

Developing an objective measurement of physical fitness for both individual operators and team capacity is a worthy endeavor with potentially resounding implications in the public safety profession, particularly at the “tip of the spear” in SWAT and SRT environments. Responding to what we felt was a need to develop and define this standard, the NTOA physical fitness section created a recommended Physical Fitness Qualification (PFQ) that has been in a developmental-trial phase for several months.

The objective of the PFQ was to create a recommended fitness standard with universal applications for all SWAT operators. This standard would implement functional movement, regulation and recovery, and capacity of training and performance using skills that are constantly varied and of high intensity. The goal of this standard is to holistically improve the longevity, safety and effectiveness of SWAT operators, therefore influencing use of force, lessening injury and increasing operational readiness for mission accomplishment. To solidify this standard, trial runs of the proposed test using multiple SWAT teams from across the United States and abroad has been underway since February 2020.

To date, the feedback and objective raw data of the test have been remarkable. Two pieces of evidence are immediately clear: The test is challenging, and there are some incredibly fit operators within our ranks.

The purpose of this article is to bring operators’ attention to areas

of the test where we feel the most improvement can be made, in addition to providing a high-level view of test results from nearly 150 PFQ scorecards.

The most challenging evolution has been the three minutes of burpees. Given that this particular evolution comes on the heels of the 800 and 400 meter running evolutions, this did not come as a major surprise. The burpee is a demanding skill that involves a combination of speed, endurance, and stamina, plus a fairly high level of agility, flexibility and coordination to perform at a high rate of speed.

In review of the total data, 36 operators failed this evolution. Given the nature of the PFQ, the failure of any one particular evolution leads to failure (or disqualification) from the entire test. The good news is that an increase in only a few repetitions of burpees will result in passing the entire test. In other words, of the 54 failures of the PFQ, 36 were the result of not passing the burpee evolution.



On the positive side of this data point, that means that improvement in Evolution 3 will result in 36 more operators passing the entire test. We recommend that operators utilize the free NTOA-sponsored PFQ training program to help make improvements on the entire PFQ — especially the burpees. You can access the training program at ntoa.org/pdf/PFQTrainingPlan.pdf

Fifty-two operators (approximately 49 percent of total test takers) successfully passed the test. It was encouraging to see that four officers “maxed the test” at 50 points. Furthermore, of the number of operators who maxed the test, a wide range of age was evident (the youngest operator to max the test was 24 and the oldest was 57). When extra credit was

added onto the scorecard, the highest score currently reported (as of Oct. 30, 2020) was 114.

PFQ FITNESS CHALLENGE – APRIL 2021

Are you ready for a challenge? The NTOA and the physical fitness section are hosting an online PFQ fitness challenge during the month of April 2021.

All operators who successfully max the test with 50 points will have their name and agency mentioned in *The Tactical Edge*.

Furthermore, the top 10 scores (to include extra credit) will receive a formal certificate of achievement from the NTOA on their accomplishment. The agency or SWAT team (to include regional teams) that submits the high-

est overall score (up to 10 scorecards per agency) will receive mention in *The Tactical Edge* in addition to a plaque commemorating their achievement.

3, 2, 1, go!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Amundson is a former DEA Special Agent with over 20 years of law enforcement experience. He is a Black Belt in Krav Maga and holds a Master's Degree in Ministry and Leadership from Western Theological Seminary.

ARE YOU READY FOR A CHALLENGE?

The NTOA and the physical fitness section are hosting an online PFQ fitness challenge during the month of April 2021.

The goal of this standard is to holistically improve the longevity, safety and effectiveness of SWAT operators, therefore influencing use of force, lessening injury and increasing operational readiness for mission accomplishment.