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105-pound woman wins lobster-eating contest

KENNEBUNK, Maine (AP) -- America's top speed-eater wolfed down 38 lobsters in 12 minutes Saturday to win the World Lobster Eating Contest.

Sonya Thomas, of Alexandria, Virginia, won \$500 and a trophy belt for her efforts, consuming 9.76 pounds of lobster meat.

Each contestant had a partner cracking the shells and pulling out the meat. Eleven competitors ate as many lobsters as they could in a 12-minute period, devouring a total of 300 pounds of the unshelled crustaceans.

"I have a natural ability because of my stomach capacity," said Thomas, who weighs a mere 105 pounds. "I could eat more, but something else -- not a lobster."


The competition, only in its second year, sought to elevate Maine into the big leagues of competitive eating, alongside New York's Coney Island with its Nathan's Famous hot dogs and New Orleans with its oysters.

This year's competition at the Pilot House Grill & Boatyard was sanctioned by the International Federation of Competitive Eating, which ranked Thomas the country's top speed-eater.

Thomas was coming off a baked bean victory days before in Indiana, where she consumed 8.4 pounds of beans with pork in 2 minutes and 47 seconds. She also holds records for hard-boiled eggs.

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