



# Lifter's Handbook

The condensed version of the *USA Powerlifting* Rulebook

Based on Version 2021.1 of the Technical Rules

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*Lifter's Handbook* is designed for use by lifters and coaches. It includes the basic rules currently used by *USA Powerlifting*.

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

USA Powerlifting is committed to excellence and to the honor and integrity of competitive powerlifting. USA Powerlifting seeks to provide a fair platform for competition and requires all who join its ranks and compete on its platform to do so with sportsmanship, honor, and respect. All USA Powerlifting members agree to honor the following values and principles:

### COMPETITION

All members are to abide by the bylaws, policies, rules and regulations of USA Powerlifting. No member shall use performance-enhancing drugs and/or other such drugs that are prohibited by the [World Anti-Doping Agency](#), the [United States Anti-Doping Agency](#), and USA Powerlifting.

### PROFESSIONALISM

All members shall be professional on and off the platform. The only acceptable standard is good sportsmanship. All members are to refrain from conduct that is disruptive and/or detracts or adversely affects competing athletes for purposes of gaining a competitive edge.

### RESPECT

All members shall treat all others involved in the sport - other athletes, referees, officials, administrators, meet directors, spectators, sponsors, members of the media, venue employees - with respect, courtesy, and dignity. Rude, abusive, unprofessional language and/or conduct toward another member of USA Powerlifting or toward anyone affiliated with our sport will not be tolerated. Petty criticism and complaints undermine the well-being of the organization. Members should instead strive to take action where improvement is desired or needed and should accept and support the final decision of the majority.

### ORGANIZATION

All members, officials, administrators, officers, and representatives shall focus on the best interests and goals of USA Powerlifting over and above individual desires. USA Powerlifting, through its members, is here to serve all members with quality competition.

### NON-DISCRIMINATION AND NO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

USA Powerlifting maintains a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination based upon age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, USA Powerlifting does not permit any conduct that engages in sexual harassment, which is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that is either unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile environment, and the offending party knows this or is told this and that is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context.

**Membership to USA Powerlifting is conditional upon abiding by and honoring this Code of Conduct and Principles. Violations of this Code subject the member to discipline pursuant to the USA Powerlifting By-Laws, Rules and Regulations and to the potential loss of membership in USA Powerlifting.**



## BANNED SUBSTANCES

As a condition of membership\*, lifters may not have used any strength inducing drugs (i.e., any anabolic steroid, natural hormone, or synthetic growth hormone) as part of their training during the past thirty-six months, nor may lifters use prescription diuretics or psychomotor stimulants during the seven days prior to participating in any sanctioned competition.

All members are subject to out-of-meet testing (OMT) without prior notice. The sanction imposed on a lifter who tests positive in the drug testing procedure is: 4-year suspension for anabolic steroids, diuretics, and related compounds. A second offense draws a lifetime suspension. The suspension from lifting begins on the date the test is administered. USA Powerlifting doping policies are modeled after WADA guidelines, which will be applied also in cases for substances not covered above. Banned substances include, but are not limited to, anabolic steroids and growth hormones.

Note: A [Therapeutic Use Exemption \(TUE\)](#) should be applied for any and all prescription medications taken by an athlete. Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicines and supplements may violate doping regulations and result in a positive doping control test. Athletes are responsible for what they put into their bodies.

\*Non-Compete Membership is not subject to drug testing

## GENERAL RULES OF POWERLIFTING

### BODYWEIGHT CATEGORIES

#### Teen, Junior, Open, Master

Men	lb.	Range (kg)	Wo	lb.	Range (kg.)
<b>53.0</b>	116.	up to 53.0	<b>43.0</b>	94.7	up to 43.0
<b>59.0</b>	130.	53.01 – 59.0	<b>47.0</b>	103.5	43.01 – 47.0
<b>66.0</b>	145.	59.01 – 66.0	<b>52.0</b>	114.5	47.01 – 52.0
<b>74.0</b>	163.	66.01 – 74.0	<b>57.0</b>	125.5	52.01 – 57.0
<b>83.0</b>	182.	74.01 – 83.0	<b>63.0</b>	138.7	57.01 – 63.0
<b>93.0</b>	205.	83.01 – 93.0	<b>69.0</b>	152.0	63.01 – 69.0
<b>105.</b>	231.	93.01 – 105.0	<b>76.0</b>	167.5	69.01 – 76.0
<b>120.</b>	264.	105.01 – 120.0	<b>84.0</b>	185.0	76.01 – 84.0
<b>120+</b>	264.	120.01 and	<b>84+</b>	185.0	84.01 and

\*The men’s 53.0 kg and women’s 43.0 kg weight classes are only contested for teen and junior athletes.

As of January 1, 2021, USA Powerlifting introduced a new MX division. Please see the [description on the national website here](#) for the MX weight classes and a description of the MX division within USA Powerlifting.



### Youth

Boys	lb.	Range (kg)	Girls	lb.	Range (kg.)
<b>30.0</b>	66.0	up to 30.0	<b>30.0</b>	66.00	up to 30.0
<b>35.0</b>	77.0	30.01 – 35.0	<b>35.0</b>	77.00	30.01 – 35.0
<b>40.0</b>	88.0	35.01 – 40.0	<b>40.0</b>	88.00	35.01 – 40.0
<b>44.0</b>	97.0	40.01 – 44.0	Thereafter IPF women’s weight categories		
<b>48.0</b>	105.	44.01 – 48.0			
Thereafter IPF men’s weight categories					

NOTE: Youth lifters are not permitted to enter the open division, nor are they allowed to compete equipped.

### AGE CATEGORIES

Open:	From the day they reach 14 years and upwards (no category restrictions need apply).
Youth:	USA Powerlifting recognizes the following Youth divisions: 1. From the day they reach 8 years to the day before they reach 10 years 2. From the day they reach 10 years to the day before they reach 12 years 3. From the day they reach 12 years to the day before they reach 14 years
Teenage:	USA Powerlifting recognizes the following Teenage divisions: 1. From the day they reach 14 years to the day before they reach 16 years 2. From the day they reach 16 years to the day before they reach 18 years 3. From the day they reach 18 years to the day before they reach 20 years Note: Eligible High School National lifters cannot turn 19 prior to September 1 <sup>st</sup> of the academic school year
Juniors:	From the day they reach 20 years to the day before they reach 24 years.
Masters:	USA Powerlifting recognizes the following Master divisions: 1A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 40 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 44 years 1B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 45 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 49 years 2A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 50 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 54 years 2B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 55 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 59 years 3A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 60 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 64 years 3B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 65 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 69 years



Masters (con't):	4A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 70 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 74 years 4B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 75 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 79 years 5A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 80 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 84 years 5B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 85 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 89 years 6A - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 90 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 94 years 6B - From January 1 <sup>st</sup> in the calendar year they reach 95 years and throughout the full calendar year in which they reach 99 years
Note:	American records are recognized and kept for the A and B master subcategories in each age group, but those subcategories are no longer contested at national championships.

### NATIONAL CONTEST QUALIFYING TOTALS

National qualifying totals can be found on the USA Powerlifting website under: [ATHLETES > ATHLETE INFO > Qualifying Totals](#)

Note: A national meet qualifying total must be achieved in a USA Powerlifting-sanctioned meet on or after January 1 of the year before the year in which the national meet is being held and before the entry deadline for the meet. This includes all USA Powerlifting national meets.

Note: Guest lifters are not allowed to compete at national events unless they meet basic qualifications of the meet (age or male/female).

### NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

- Open (Equipped)
- Raw
- Collegiate
- High School
- Military
- Bench
- Youth



## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

All items worn on the platform must be clean, untoned and in a good state of repair or they will not pass the equipment check procedures. Support briefs or support underwear are not allowed. Obscenities or profanities are not allowed on any attire to be worn in the competitive area. Leotards are not permitted. Hats are not permitted on the platform. The lifter may wear professionally made headbands. Any request for a religious exemption from personal equipment/apparel requirements must be made to the chairman of the Technical Committee (tc@usapowerlifting.com) at least 60 days prior to the intended competition and prior to registering for the competition. Submission of a religious exemption request does not guarantee that it will be granted.

## COSTUME

### SUPPORTIVE

Supportive shirts, suits, and knee wraps must be on the [IPF Approved List](#) for all levels of competition. A division in which supportive equipment is used is typically referred to as “Equipped.”

### NON-SUPPORTIVE

For all national championships except Youth Nationals, only non-supportive equipment (singlets, belts, knee sleeves, and wrist wraps) from manufacturers on the [IPF Approved List](#) is permitted for use in competitions. [Note: For High School and Collegiate Nationals, team singlets are not required to be on the IPF Approved List] For all other contests (i.e., local, state, regional), equipment does not need to be on the IPF Approved List but must meet all the specifications as defined in the rulebook.

A non-supportive lifting suit (i.e., wrestling style or weightlifting style singlet) must be worn for all lifts in divisions which are designated as “raw” (sometimes referred to as “classic” or “unequipped”) and must conform to the following specifications:

- a) The suit shall be one-piece and form fitting without any looseness when worn.
- b) The suit must be constructed entirely of fabric or a synthetic textile material, such that no support is given to the lifter by the suit in the execution of any lift.
- c) The suit’s material shall be of a single thickness, other than a second thickness of material of up to 12 cm x 24 cm allowed in the area of crotch.
- d) There must be legs to the suit, extending a minimum of 3 cm and a maximum of 25 cm, from the top of the crotch down the inside of the leg, as measured when worn by the lifter in a standing position.
- e) If the suit contains any logos and/or emblems, they must conform to the USA Powerlifting Approved Apparel Policy (see pp. 8-9).

Muslim women shall be allowed to wear:

- a tight fit, non-supportive full body suit that covers the legs and the arms
  - knee sleeves or knee wraps may not be worn over or underneath the full body suit
- Hijab (head scarf) while lifting
  - in bench press, the jury or referees may require the lifter to affix her hair accordingly to the performance of the bench press



## T-SHIRT

A t-shirt must be worn under the lifting suit by all lifters in the squat, bench press, and deadlift. The only exception to those requirements is that a Supportive shirt is permitted to be worn instead of a T-shirt as per rule “Supportive Shirts” below when competing in the equipped division; a combination of T-shirt and supportive shirt is not allowed.

The T-shirt must conform to the following specifications:

- a) The shirt must be constructed entirely of fabric or a synthetic textile and shall not consist, in whole or part, of any rubberized or similar stretch material, nor have any reinforced seams or pockets, buttons, or zippers. Shirts may not have a V-neck collar.
- b) The t-shirt must have sleeves. Those sleeves must terminate below the lifter’s deltoid and must not extend onto or below the lifter’s elbow. The sleeves may not be pushed or rolled up onto the deltoid when the lifter is competing.
- c) The T-shirt may be plain (i.e., of a single/multi-color) with no logos or emblems. If the shirt contains any logos and/or emblems, they must conform to the USA Powerlifting Approved Apparel Policy (see below).

## SUPPORTIVE SHIRTS

Supportive shirts must be on the [IPF Approved List](#) for all levels of competition. All of the conditions as defined for the T-Shirt also apply to the supportive shirt. The supportive shirt cannot be so long as to cover the buttocks when tucked into the suit and therefore serve as extra support.

## APPROVED APPAREL POLICY FOR ALL USA POWERLIFTING EVENTS

Policy is effective October 6, 2019 by Executive Committee decision.

- Apparel may be plain (i.e., of a single/multi-color fabric) with no logos or emblems.
- Apparel may bear the logo or emblem of:
  - Lifter or coach’s nation
  - Lifter or coach’s name
  - Current event or any previous USA Powerlifting, NAPF, or IPF event
  - USA Powerlifting
  - USA Powerlifting Corporate Sponsors
  - IPF Approved equipment manufacturers
  - Lifter or coach’s registered USA Powerlifting club name or logo\*
  - Lifter or coach’s registered USA Powerlifting affiliate gym\*
  - Official High School and Collegiate logos
  - United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard, and Reserves branch logos



- The logos or emblems of commodity sportswear brands\*\* not on the “Approved List of IPF Equipment Manufacturers” nor on the addendum of approved logos or emblems established by this rule “Sponsor’s Logos,” may be worn only on t-shirts, shoes, or socks, where the logo or emblem is printed or embroidered and is no more than 5 cm x 2 cm in size (note: manufacturer logos/emblems on shoes are exempted from the 5 cm x 2 cm requirement and may be any size). A lifter may use masking tape generally consistent in color with the item of personal equipment/apparel it is applied to in order to obscure a non-approved logo or emblem so as to render the item in conformity with the rules.

\*All club and affiliate gym logos are subject to approval including variations of such logos

\*\*Commodity sportswear brand examples include Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Asics, Champion

## BRIEFS

- a) A standard commercial “athletic supporter” or standard commercial briefs of any mixture of cotton, nylon or polyester must be worn under the lifting suit. See Appendix A for examples of allowable and non-allowable underwear.
- b) Women may wear a commercial or sports bra.
- c) Swimming trunks or any garment consisting of rubberized or similar stretch material except in the waistband, shall not be worn under the lifting costume.
- d) Any supportive undergarment is not legal for use in competition.

## SOCKS

Socks may be worn. See Appendix A for examples of allowable and non-allowable socks.

- a) They may be of any color or colors and may have manufacturer’s logos.
- b) They shall not be of such length on the leg that they come into contact with the knee wraps or knee sleeves.
- c) Full length leg stockings, tights or hose are strictly forbidden.
- d) Shin length socks must be worn to cover and protect the shins while performing the deadlift.
- e) Socks may not be in contact with the knee and cannot be worn over the knee.

## BELT

Competitors may wear a belt. If worn, it must be on the outside of the lifting suit. See Appendix A for examples of non-allowable belts.

Materials and Construction of the belt are as follows:

- a) The main body shall be made of leather, vinyl or other similar non-stretch material in one or more laminations which may be glued and/or stitched together.
- b) It shall not have additional padding, bracing or supports of any material either on the surface or concealed within the laminations of the belt.

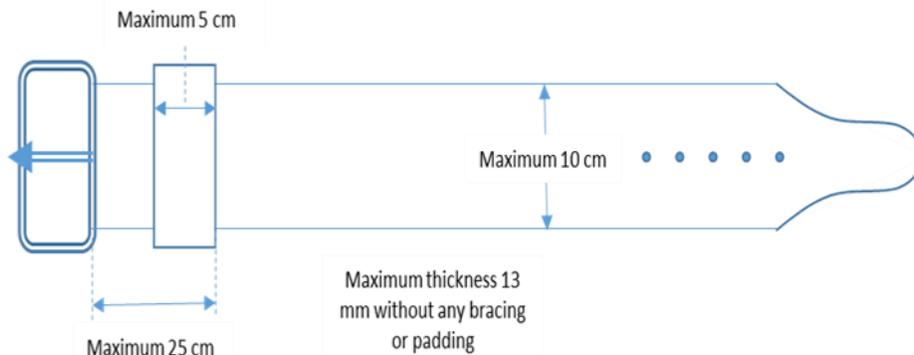


- c) The buckle shall be attached at one end of the belt by means of studs and/or stitching.
- d) The belt may have a buckle with one or two prongs or “quick release” type (“quick release” referring to lever).
- e) A tongue loop shall be attached close to the buckle by means of studs and/or stitching.
- f) The belt may be plain i.e. of a single or two or more colors and with no logos, or may bear the logo or emblem
  - of the lifter’s nation
  - of the lifter’s name
  - as per the rule “Sponsor’s Logos”
  - In national and lower level contests only, the lifter’s club or individual sponsor, where the logo or emblem has not otherwise been approved by the IPF.

## BELT DIMENSIONS

- 1) Width of belt maximum 10 cm.
- 2) Thickness of belt maximum 13 mm along the main length.
- 3) Inside width of buckle maximum 11 cm.
- 4) Outside width of buckle maximum 13 cm.
- 5) Tongue loop maximum width 5 cm.
- 6) Distance between end of belt and far end of tongue loop maximum 25 cm.

## CORRECT POINTS OF MEASUREMENT



## FOOTWEAR

Shoes or boots shall be worn. See Appendix A for examples of allowable and non-allowable footwear.

- a) Shoes shall be taken to include only indoor sports shoes/sports boots, weightlifting/powerlifting boots, or deadlift slippers. The above is referring to indoor sports (e.g., wrestling/basketball). Hiking boots do not fall into this category
- b) No part of the underside shall be higher than 5 cm.
- c) The underside must be flat (i.e., no projections, irregularities, or a doctoring from the standard design).
- d) Loose inner soles that are not part of the manufactured shoe shall be limited to one centimeter (1 cm) thickness.



- e) Socks with a rubber outside sole lining are not allowed in the squat, bench press, or deadlift.

Note: Shoes with individual toes are specifically prohibited.

## KNEE SLEEVES

Sleeves, being cylinders of neoprene, may be worn only on the knees by the lifter in the performance of any lift in competition; sleeves cannot be worn or used on any part of the body other than the knees. Knee sleeves cannot be worn when the lifter also wears knee wraps.

Knee sleeves must conform to the following specifications:

- a) The sleeves must be constructed entirely of a single ply of neoprene, or predominantly of a single ply of neoprene plus a non-supportive single layer of fabric over the neoprene. There may be stitched seams of the fabric and/or of the fabric onto the neoprene. The entire construction of the sleeves may not be such as to provide any appreciable support or rebound to the lifter's knees.
- b) Knee sleeves shall be of a maximum thickness of 7 mm and a maximum length of 30 cm.
- c) Knee sleeves shall not have any additional strapping, Velcro, drawstrings, padding or similar supportive devices in or on them. Knee sleeves must be continuous cylinders, without holes in the neoprene or in any covering material.
- d) When worn by the lifter in competition, knee sleeves must not be in contact with the lifter's suit or socks and must be centered over the knee joint.

Lifters may not have or use any form of assistance (from another person, or suit slippers, plastic bags, powder, etc.) to put on knee sleeves. Referees may ask lifters to demonstrate they can put on their sleeves without assistance.

## WRAPS

Only wraps of one ply commercially woven elastic that is covered with polyester, cotton or a combination of both of those materials or medical crepe are permitted.

Supportive wraps: Only wraps from commercial manufacturers officially registered and on the IPF Approved List shall be permitted for use in Powerlifting competitions.

Non-supportive wraps: Wraps made of medical crepe or bandage and sweatbands do not require special approval.

## WRIST WRAPS

- a) Wrist wraps shall not exceed 1m in length and 8cm in width. Any sleeves, and Velcro patches or tabs for securing, must be incorporated within the one-meter length. A loop may be attached as an aid to securing. The loop shall not be over the thumb or fingers during the actual lift. Note: If it is discovered during a lift that the thumb loops are around the thumbs or fingers (i.e., the technical controller and referees missed it prior to the lift commencing), this alone is not a reason for a referee to fail a lift and the lifter should be given a warning and told to correct the problem on future lifts.



- b) Standard commercial sweat bands may be worn, not exceeding 12 cm in width. A combination of wrist wraps and sweat bands is not allowed.
- c) A wrist covering shall not extend beyond 10 cm above and 2 cm below the center of the wrist joint and shall not exceed a covering width of 12 cm.

#### KNEE WRAPS

- a) Wraps not exceeding 2 m in length and 8 cm in width may be worn only in competitions offering an Equipped or Raw with Wraps division. A knee wrap shall not extend beyond 15 cm above and 15 cm below the center of the knee joint and shall not exceed a total covering width of 30 cm.
- b) Wraps shall not be in contact with the socks or lifting suit.
- c) Wraps shall not be used elsewhere on the body.

#### MEDICAL TAPE

- a) Two layers of medical tape may be worn around the thumbs. Medical tape or its like may not be worn anywhere else on the body without official permission of the Jury or Chief Referee. Medical tape may not be used as aids to the lifter in holding the bar
- b) Contingent upon prior approval by the Jury, Official Doctor, Paramedic or Paramedical personnel on duty medical tape may be applied to bodily injuries in a fashion that would not grant the lifter an undue advantage.
- c) At all competitions where a jury may not be present and no medical personnel are on duty the Chief Referee shall have jurisdiction over the use of medical tape.

#### GENERAL

- a) The use of oil, grease or other lubricants on the body, or personal equipment is strictly forbidden.
- b) Baby powder, resin, talc, or magnesium carbonates are the only substances that may be added to the body and attire. These substances may not be added to the wraps.
- c) The use of any form of adhesive on the underside of footwear is strictly forbidden. This applies to any built-in adhesive (e.g., glass paper, emery cloth, etc.) and includes resin and magnesium carbonate. A spray of water is acceptable.
- d) No foreign substances may be applied to the powerlifting equipment. This takes into account all substances other than that which may be used periodically as a sterile agent in the cleaning of the bar, bench, or platform.
- e) Light protective guards between sock and shin may be worn.



## RAW EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

Raw lifting is defined as using only the following (as previously described above):

- a) Non-supportive singlet
- b) T-shirt
- c) Undergarments (underwear, bra)
- d) Socks
- e) Belt
- f) Shoes
- g) Wristwraps
- h) Single-ply neoprene knee sleeves without attaching and/or tightening mechanisms like Velcro, clips, or straps

## RULE REGARDING EQUIPMENT INFRACTIONS OR REJECTIONS

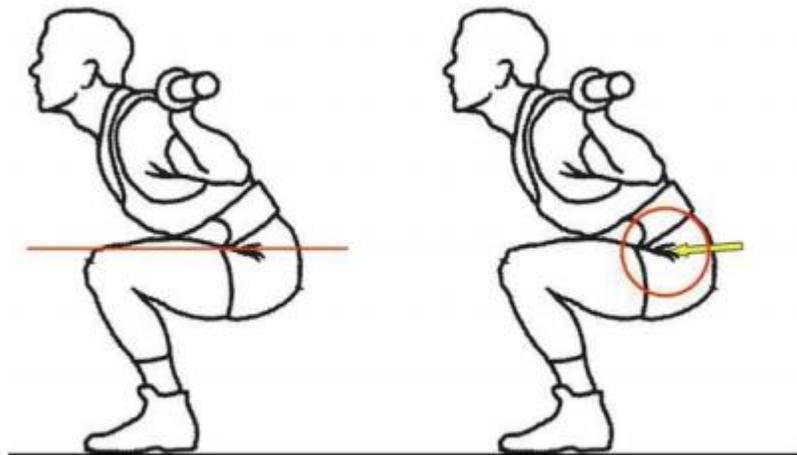
1. Equipment which is rejected may be resubmitted within the specified inspection time after it has been altered to meet regulations.
2. The costume, with the exception of the belt, may not be adjusted on the lifting platform.
3. The lifter may be warned of minor attire infractions which could be cleared up before reaching the platform.
4. If after inspection, a lifter appears on the platform wearing or using any illegal items not approved at equipment check, the lifter will be immediately disqualified from the competition. If an official notices an illegal item prior to the commencement of the lift, the lifter may remove/replace the illegal item without penalty. This must happen off the platform and the clock, if already running, will not be stopped.

## POWERLIFTS AND RULES OF PERFORMANCE

Note: When a referee gives a red light (i.e., no lift) for an attempt, electronic light systems will display a small red, blue, or yellow indicator underneath the red light to indicate the infraction the referee observed, or the referee will hold up a colored card. In the “causes for disqualification” sections for each of the three lifts/disciplines below, the color code for the infractions precedes the cause (R=red, B=blue, Y=yellow). This can help lifters/coaches determine the reason(s) for a lift being turned down. Asking the jury (or technical controller in the absence of a jury) for clarification is also permitted.

## SQUAT

1. The lifter shall face the front of the platform. The bar shall be held horizontally across the shoulders, hands and fingers gripping the bar (a “thumbs around” grip is not required). The hands may be positioned anywhere on the bar inside and or in contact with the inner collars.
2. After removing the bar from the racks, (the lifter may be aided in removal of the bar from the racks by the spotters/loaders) the lifter must move backwards to establish the starting position. When the lifter is motionless and erect (slight deviation is allowable) with knees locked the chief referee will give the signal to begin the lift. The signal shall consist of a downward movement of the arm and the audible command “squat.” Before receiving the signal to squat the lifter may make any position adjustments within the rules, without penalty. For reasons of safety the lifter will be requested to “replace” the bar, together with a backward movement of the arm, if after a period of five seconds they are not in the correct position to begin the lift. The chief referee will then convey the reason why the signal was not given.
3. Upon receiving the chief referee’s signal the lifter must bend the knees and lower the body until the top surface of the legs at the hip joint is lower than the top of the knees. Only one descent attempt is allowed. The attempt is deemed to have commenced when the lifters knees have unlocked.
4. The lifter must recover at will to an upright position with the knees locked. Double bouncing at the bottom of the squat attempt or any downward movement is not permitted. When the lifter is motionless (in the apparent final position) the chief referee will give the signal to rack the bar.
5. The signal to rack the bar will consist of a backward motion of the arm and the audible command “rack.” The lifter must then return the bar to the racks. Foot movement after the rack signal will not be cause for failure. For reasons of safety the lifter may request the aid of the spotters/loaders in returning the bar to, and replacing it in, the racks. The lifter must stay with the bar during this process.
6. Not more than five and not less than two spotters/loaders shall be on the platform at any time. The referees may decide to the number of spotters/loaders required on the platform at any time (2, 3, 4, or 5).



The figure above indicates the required depth for the squat.



## CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF A SQUAT

1. ■ Y Failure to observe the chief referee's signals at the commencement or completion of a lift.
2. ■ B Double bouncing at the bottom of the lift, or any downward movement during the ascent.
3. ■ B Failure to assume an upright position with the knees locked at the commencement or completion of the lift.
4. ■ Y Stepping backward or forward or moving the feet laterally. Rocking the feet between the ball and heel is permitted.
5. ■ R Failure to bend the knees and lower the body until the top surface of the legs at the hip joint is lower than the top of the knees (see diagram on the previous page).
6. ■ Y Contact with the bar or the lifter by the spotter/loaders between the chief referee's signals in order to make the lift easier.
7. ■ Y Contact of the elbows or upper arms with the legs. Slight contact is permitted if there is no supporting that might aid the lifter.
8. ■ Y Any dropping or dumping of the bar after completion of the lift.
9. ■ Y Failure to comply with any items outlined under "Rules of Performance" for the squat.

## BENCH PRESS

1. The bench shall be placed on the platform with the head facing the front or angled up to 45 degrees.
2. The lifter must lie on their back with head, shoulders and buttocks in contact with the bench surface. The feet must be flat on the floor (as flat as the shape of the shoe will allow). The lifter's hands and fingers must grip the bar positioned in the rack stands with a "thumbs around" grip. This position shall be maintained throughout the lift. Foot movement is permissible but must remain flat on the platform. The hair of the lifter must not hide the back of the head when lying down on the bench. The jury or referees may require the lifter to affix their hair accordingly.
3. To achieve firm footing the lifter may use flat surfaced plates or blocks not exceeding 30cm in total height and a minimum dimension of 60 cm x 40 cm, to build up the surface of the platform. Blocks in the range of 5 cm, 10 cm, 20 cm, and 30 cm will be made available for foot placement at all national competitions.
4. Not more than five and not less than two spotters/loaders shall be on the platform at any time. After correctly positioning themselves, the lifter may enlist the help of the spotter/ loaders in removing the bar from the racks. The lift-off if assisted by the spotter/loaders must be at arms' length. If receiving a hand-off in the bench press, it must be given by the platform staff member designated for hand-offs; lifters may not receive hand-offs from coaches, friends, other lifters, etc.



5. The spacing of the hands shall not exceed 81 cm measured between the forefingers (i.e., index fingers). Both forefingers must be within the 81 cm marks and the whole of the forefingers must be in contact with the 81 cm marks if maximum grip is used. The use of the reverse grip (i.e., underhand grip) is forbidden.
6. After removing the bar from the racks, with or without the help of the spotters/loaders, the lifter shall wait with straight arms elbows locked for the chief referee's signal. The signal shall be given as soon as the lifter is motionless and the bar properly positioned. For reasons of safety the lifter will be requested to "replace" the bar, together with a backward movement of the arm, if after a period of five seconds they are not in the correct position to begin the lift. The chief referee will then convey the reason why the signal was not given.
7. The signal to begin the attempt shall consist of a downward movement of the arm together with the audible command "start."
8. After receiving the signal, the lifter must lower the bar to the chest or abdominal area (the bar must not touch the belt), hold it motionless on the chest, after which the chief referee will signal the audible command "press." The audible command "press" will be accompanied by a visible signal - an upward movement of the arm. The lifter must then return the bar to straight arms' length with elbows locked. When held motionless in this position the audible command "rack" shall be given together with a backward motion of the arm. If the bar is lowered to the belt or does not touch the chest or abdominal area, the chief referee's command is "rack." The bar may be pressed up unevenly and one arm may lock out before the other one provided there was no downward movement of the whole of the bar at any point after receiving the press command.

#### **CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF A BENCH PRESS**

1. ■ Y Failure to observe the chief referee's signals at the commencement, during, or completion of the lift.
2. ■ Y Any change in the elected lifting position during the lift proper (i.e., any raising movement of the head, shoulders, or buttocks, from the bench, or lateral movement of hands on the bar, or raising of the feet). Foot movement is permissible but must remain flat on the platform.
3. ■ Y Heaving or sinking the bar into the chest or abdominal area after it is motionless in such a way as to make the lift easier.
4. ■ B Any downward movement of the whole of the bar in the course of being pressed out.
5. ■ R Bar is not lowered to the chest (i.e., not reaching the chest or abdominal area), or the bar is touching the belt.
6. ■ B Failure to press the bar to straight arms' length elbows locked at the completion of the lift.
7. ■ Y Contact with the bar or the lifter by the spotters/loaders between the chief referee's signals in order to make the lift easier.
8. ■ Y Any contact of the lifter's feet with the bench or its supports.



9. **Y** Deliberate contact between the bar and the bar rests supports during the lift in order to make the lift easier.
10. **Y** Failure to comply with any of the items outlined under the “Rules of Performance” for the bench press.

## DEADLIFT

1. The lifter shall face the front of the platform with the bar laid horizontally in front of the lifter’s feet, gripped with an optional grip in both hands and lifted until the lifter is standing erect.
2. On completion of the lift the knees shall be locked in a straight position and the shoulders back.
3. The chief referee’s signal shall consist of a downward movement of the arm and the audible command “down.” The signal will not be given until the bar is held motionless and the lifter is in the apparent finished position.
4. Any rising of the bar or any deliberate attempt to do so will count as an attempt. Once the attempt has begun no downward movement is allowed until the lifter reaches the erect position with the knees locked. If the bar settles as the shoulders come back (slightly downward on completion) this should not be reason to disqualify the lift. Prior to the lifter’s bona fide/deliberate effort to raise the bar to commence the deadlift attempt, the lifter may roll the bar on the platform and/or shake the bar. It will be the referees’ discretion to determine whether or not a bona fide/deliberate attempt to raise the bar occurs.

## CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF A DEADLIFT

1. **B** Any downward movement of the bar before it reaches the final position.
2. **R** Failure to stand erect with the shoulders back.
3. **R** Failure to lock the knees straight at the completion of the lift.
4. **B** Supporting the bar on the thighs during the performance of the lift (see image below). If the bar edges up the thigh but is not supported this is not reason for disqualification.
5. **Y** Stepping backward or forward or moving the feet laterally. Rocking of the feet between ball and heel is permitted. Foot movement after the command “down” will not be cause for failure.
6. **Y** Lowering the bar before receiving the chief referee’s signal.
7. **Y** Allowing the bar to return to the platform without maintaining control with both hands (i.e., releasing the bar from the palms of the hand).
8. **Y** Failure to comply with any of the items outlined under “Rules of Performance” for the deadlift.



Note: The image to the right shows an example of supporting the bar on the thighs.



## ORDER OF COMPETITION

### THE ROUND SYSTEM

- a) All competitions must use the rounds system.
- b) In the rounds system, the bar is loaded progressively for each attempt. The lifter attempting the lightest weight lifts first, the lifter attempting the next heaviest weight lifts second, and so on until all lifters in the flight (i.e., group) have taken their attempt.
- c) When two or more lifters declare the same weight for an attempt, the order of lifting is determined by lot number (a unique number assigned to each lifter before weigh-in). The lifter with the lower lot number goes first.
- d) In the rounds system, all lifters in the first flight will complete their first attempt squat in round 1. Once all lifters have completed their first attempts for squat in round 1, they will all complete their second attempts for squat in round 2. Once all lifters have completed their second attempts for squat in round 2, they will all complete their third attempts for squat in round 3. If there is another flight that follows, lifters in that group will begin their round 1 squat attempts immediately following the completion of the last squat attempt in round 3 of the first flight. After all flights in the session complete the squat event, the first flight will return to begin the bench press in the same manner as described above. After all flights in the session complete the bench press event, the first flight will return to begin the deadlift in the same manner as described above.
- e) The squat is always done first, followed by the bench press, and then by the deadlift.
- f) If there is a single flight of lifters in a session, there will be a 20-minute break in-between the end of the squat and the start of the bench press and another 20-minute break in-between the end of the bench press and the start of the deadlift. If there is more than one flight of lifters in a session, the time between squat and bench press and the time between bench press and deadlift will be 10 minutes. The 10-minute clock will start once the equipment has been prepared and the bar has been loaded with the weight of the first attempt of the next discipline.

### ATTEMPTS

- a) Starting attempts for all three lifts must be declared by the lifter at the weigh-in. One change on the first attempt may occur up to 3 minutes prior to the starting time for lifters in the first flight. For lifters in any flight other than the first flight, one change on the first attempt may occur up to 3 minutes prior to the start of that lifters flight (i.e., the time for a first attempt change expires when the bar is called loaded for the third to last lifter in the flight that immediately precedes the flight that includes the lifter wanting to make a change).
- b) No changes are permitted in the second and third attempts with the exception of the third attempt deadlift, which may be changed twice. During bench press only competitions the third attempt may be changed twice, under the same conditions as the deadlift during 3 lift competitions.
- c) The lifter or coach has 1 minute between completing the last attempt and submitting to officials the weight for their next attempt. If the attempt is not submitted within 1 minute, the next attempt will either be automatically raised 2.5 kg (or 5 lb in meets using pounds) if the previous attempt was good or remain unchanged if the previous attempt was missed.



- d) The weight submitted for an attempt can never be lower than the prior attempt regardless of whether or not the prior attempt was successful.
- e) Increases between each attempt must be a minimum of 2.5 kg (or 5 lb in meets using pounds). The exception is that if a lifter misses an attempt, that same weight may be repeated. An increase as small as 0.5 kg may be submitted to break an American record. American records can only be set at state, regional, national and international championships, and pro meets, where the appropriate officials are in the refereeing positions, where the scale has the proper certification, and where testing for drug usage is available. Three national/international referees are necessary for adjudicating an American record attempt.
- f) Three unsuccessful attempts in any lift will disqualify the lifter from posting a total, and eliminate them from scoring, placing, setting records, and best lifter awards. The lifter may, however, continue in the meet.
- g) Once the bar has been called loaded by the chief referee, the lifter has 1 minute to begin the lift (i.e., receiving the “squat” or “start” command or initiating the pull on deadlift) or the attempt will be forfeited.

### TIME LIMITS

- a) When the announcement has been made that the bar is loaded/ready by the Chief Referee, the lifter has 1 minute to get the signal to begin that lift.
  - For the **SQUAT**, the referee’s signal is “Squat”
  - For the **BENCH PRESS**, the referee’s signal is “Start”
  - For the **DEADLIFT**, the lifter must make a determined effort to lift the bar from the platform. There is no referee’s signal to begin.
- b) If the lift does not begin within the time limit, the Chief Referee will give the audible command “Rack” or “Down” depending on the lift. The lift will be declared “No Lift” and the attempt is forfeited.
- c) If the lifter is in an apparent starting position, two or more referees may keep their hands raised, delaying the start, if they are not satisfied with the lifter’s starting position. After 5 seconds, if the lifter is not making an attempt to adjust the starting position, the Chief Referee will give the signal to “Replace” the bar. The referees should tell the lifter what adjustment to the starting position is required. The lifter must replace the bar, but it is important to realize that the clock to receive the start signal is still running. The lifter must still receive the start command within the original 1-minute time frame.
- d) The lifter must leave the platform within 30 seconds following their attempt. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of the attempt.



## MISCELLANEOUS RULES OF PERFORMANCE

- a) During the lift, coaches must remain outside the designated lifting area but within the coaches' area, if one is so designated.
- b) Any lifter or coach, who by reason of misconduct upon or near the platform, which is deemed to discredit the sport, shall be officially warned. If the misconduct continues, the Jury (or referees in absence of a Jury), may disqualify the lifter or order the coach to leave the area or venue.
- c) All lifters must weigh-in within the 1½ hour period beginning 2 hours prior to the start of their session.

## LOADING, SPOTTING, AND ANNOUNCING ERRORS

If in a round an attempt is unsuccessful due to a wrongly loaded bar, spotter error, or equipment failure, the lifter will be granted a further attempt at the correct weight. If the fault is a wrongly loaded bar and the attempt has not actually started, then the lifter shall be given the option of either continuing at that time or taking another attempt at the end of the round. In all other cases, the lifter shall take their extra attempt at the end of the round. If the lifter also happens to be the last lifter in the round, they shall be granted a 3-minute rest prior to making their attempt, last but one in the round 2 minutes, last but two in the round 1 minute. In these cases where lifters are following themselves and given compensatory rest time the bar will be loaded as soon as the new attempt is turned in. The compensatory time will then be added to the usual 1 minute to begin the attempt. The clock will be started, and the lifter will have that time (the appropriate compensatory rest time plus the usual 1 minute for the attempt) to begin their attempt. Lifters following themselves will have 4 minutes placed on the clock, during which time the lifter can begin their attempt as soon as they are ready. Lifters last but one in the round will be given 3 minutes, last but two in the round will be given 2 minutes, and all others will be given the usual 1 minute to begin the attempt. In the third round of deadlift (and third round of bench press in single-lift bench press championships), if a lifter for any reason gets a new extra attempt by the jury (e.g., wrongly loaded bar, spotter error, or equipment failure), the lifter will be granted a further attempt at the correct weight and the lifter must follow themselves.

## RECORDS

### AMERICAN RECORDS

1. American records can only be set at state, regional, national and international championships and pro meets where the appropriate officials are in the refereeing positions, where the scale has the proper certification, and where testing for drug usage is available. Three national/international referees are necessary for adjudicating an American record attempt. American records may not be set at local meets.
2. The American record attempt must exceed the existing listed record by a minimum of 0.5 kg (or 1.1 lb). Taking an American record attempt that is not the standard 2.5 kg increment (i.e., an increment of 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, or 2.0 kg) is sometimes referred to as "chipping." This applies only to individual lift records. Attempts of less than 2.5kg may not be taken for the sole purpose of breaking an American total record.
3. A lifter successful in setting an open American record must be drug tested to be credited with the record. This includes all equipped and raw open American records.
4. Lifters intending to break an American record at a state or regional championship must notify the meet director and chief referee in advance to ensure the correct officials are in place for the attempt and that the correct paperwork is filled out and submitted following a successful attempt.



5. Lifters do not have to be registered in their specific age group at a competition to set age group American records (i.e., master, teen, and junior). For example, a 21-year-old lifter (technically a junior lifter) who is only entered in the open division may still set junior American records.
  - a. Note: Lifters attempting to break a master, teen, or junior record may only take an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg if they are competing solely in the division for which the record applies. For example, lifters simultaneously competing in the master and open divisions may not take an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg to set a master American record.
    - i. Example A: a 46-year old lifter (i.e., Master 1) who is competing in the open division may not attempt to break a master's record with an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg.
    - ii. Example B: a 46-year old lifter (i.e., Master 1) who is competing in the master's division may attempt to break a master's record with an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg.
    - iii. Example C: a 46-year old lifter (i.e., Master 1) who is competing in the open division may attempt to break an open record with an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg.
    - iv. Example D: a 46-year old lifter (i.e., Master 1) who is competing in the master's division may attempt to break an open record with an attempt that is not a multiple of 2.5 kg.
6. All American record attempts must be adjudicated by three national and/or international referees. In the case of American records in the total, each of the three successful attempts that comprise the total must be adjudicated by three national and/or international referees, regardless of whether or not one or more of the individual lifts is an American record.

## STATE RECORDS

1. State records can be set at any USA Powerlifting sanctioned event. It is not necessary to inform the meet director or chief referee of a state record attempt. Lifters who would like the speaker to announce the record should inform the scoring table personnel when submitting the attempt.
2. Lifters may only set state records for their state of residence which is based on the mailing address on the lifter's USA Powerlifting registration card. It is not based on the location of the competition.
3. Fractional plates or "chips" may not be used for setting state records. The minimum increment between attempts is 2.5 kg (or 5 lb in meets using pounds).
4. Lifters do not have to be registered in their specific age group at a competition to set age group state records (i.e., master, teen, and junior). For example, a 21-year-old lifter (technically a junior lifter) who is only entered in the open division may still set junior state records.

## WORLD RECORDS

World and international records may only be set at international competitions.

## APPENDIX A – PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

### Underwear / Briefs:



### Socks:



### Belt:



### Footwear:

