

STARTING STRENGTH STRENGTHLIFTING

Rules of Competition

Originally written by Mark Rippetoe, 12 April 2007
Revised May 2018

General Rules

1. Three lifts will be recognized for competition:
 - a. Squat
 - b. Press
 - c. Deadlift
2. The sum of the heaviest lifts of the three shall constitute the Total.
3. Divisions:
 - a. Open: Congenital male, transgender, and intersex lifters
 - b. Women: Congenital females
 - c. Masters: Lifters who turn 40 years old during the calendar year in which the meet is held

Lifters must choose Division a or b, and may add c: Open, Open Masters, Women, or Women Masters. Congenital women may lift in the Open Division.

4. Weight classes:
 - a. Open: up to 52 kg, up to 56 kg, up to 60 kg, up to 67.5 kg, up to 75 kg, up to 82.5 kg, up to 90 kg, up to 100 kg, up to 110 kg, up to 125 kg, and over 125 kg
 - b. Women: up to 44 kg, up to 48 kg, up to 52 kg, up to 56 kg, up to 60 kg, up to 67.5 kg, up to 75 kg, up to 82.5 kg, up to 90 kg, and over 90 kg

The Lifts and the Rules of Performance

1. All three lifts shall be performed on a platform with a level, flat surface of either wood, rubber, or commercial non-slip carpeting. Its dimensions must be a minimum of 8' x 8'. Either adjustable squat stands or a power rack can be used. If a power rack is used, its inner floor must be flush with the platform surface.
2. Two spotters are to be present during each squat attempt, positioned to have immediate access to each end of the bar. Additional spotters may be used on heavy squat attempts at the discretion of the head judge or meet director. No spotter is permitted to stand directly behind a lifter. No use of spotters in any other lift is permitted.
3. At the conclusion of each attempt the lifter must leave the platform immediately unless unable to do so because of injury.

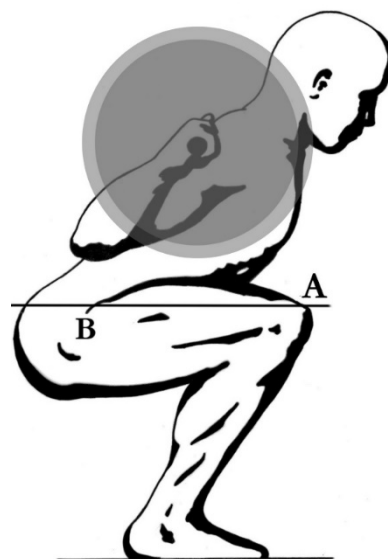
4. Any intentional loss of contact with the bar during or after the execution of the squat results in mandatory disqualification from the competition and the immediate removal from the meet venue. Such loss of contact before the bar is replaced in the rack for the press, or on the platform for the deadlift, is grounds for disqualification from the competition at the discretion of the meet director.
5. Any disrespectful or aggressive behavior directed towards the judges, meet staff, or competitors is grounds for disqualification from the competition at the discretion of the meet director.

The Squat

1. The bar must be removed from the racks and a position assumed on the platform at least 2' from the racks, or a distance sufficiently removed from the racks to ensure the safety of the lifter and the spotters in the event of a miss.
2. No contact with the rack is permitted until the bar is replaced in the rack.
3. The bar must be held across the back with some part of both palms distal to the wrist in contact with the bar. This position, once fixed, cannot change during the attempt.
4. The starting position must be upright, with the knees and the hips fully extended and with the chest up. This position must be obvious and under control before the descent starts.



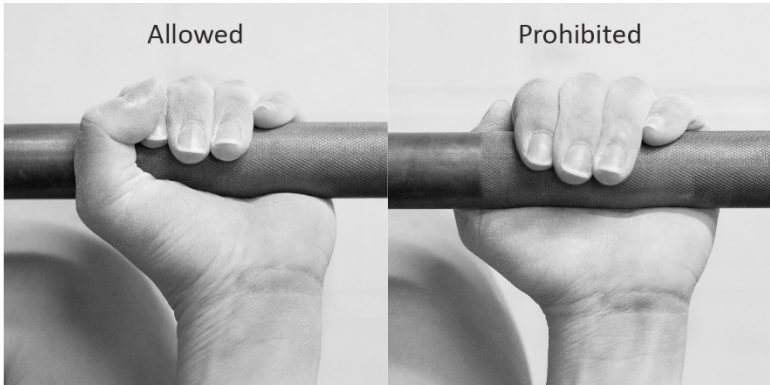
5. For purposes of timekeeping, the attempt starts when the bar leaves the rack.
6. The hips are lowered until the top surfaces of both of the legs at the hip joint are lower than the knees, and then the bar is lifted back up. The bottom position is identified by (1) the apex of the crease in the singlet formed as the hips are lowered, (2) the surface of the top of the patella, (3) the plane formed by a straight line between the two, and (4) the dipping of the hip end of that plane below horizontal. Once the bar is lowered, the stance cannot change until the bar is to be racked. At no time during the squat can the elbows or arms come into contact with the legs.
7. The finish position is the same as the starting position, and the athlete must return to this position before the bar is racked. When the finish position is obviously



attained, the bar must be replaced in the rack. Then the bar must be walked back into the rack without the help of the spotters. The spotters are permitted to steady the racks as the lifter replaces the bar. Once the bar is above the uprights on the return to the rack, the spotters can help guide it safely down to the hooks. Any touching of either the bar or the lifter by any spotter at any other point before the lifter reaches the uprights, whether necessary or unintentional, invalidates the attempt.

8. After the ascent begins, any downward motion of the whole bar, identified at its position on the back rather than at its ends, disqualifies the attempt, as does any change in position of the feet against the floor during the squat.

The Press

1. The press is done from the squat racks or power rack.
2. The bar must be removed from the racks and a position assumed on the platform at least 2' from the racks, or a distance sufficiently removed from the racks to ensure the safety of the lifter in the event of a miss.
3. The bar is held in both hands in front of the neck and taken out of the rack with a prone power grip. The bar sits in the palm with the four fingers wrapped around the bar and the thumb opposed.
4. The lifter steps back away from the rack in a position facing the head judge, with the vertical plane of the legs parallel to the bar. No contact with the rack is permitted until the bar is replaced in the racks.
5. For timekeeping purposes, the attempt starts when the bar leaves the rack.
6. Once the stance is assumed it cannot change until the lift is completed. The starting position must be upright, with the knees and hips fully extended and the chest up. The bar must be below the level of the undersurface of the chin. Excessive raising of the chin to artificially limit the range of motion of the press is not permitted. Starting from a position higher than the position at the end of the attempt disqualifies the attempt.
7. After the starting position is correctly and obviously assumed, the bar is pressed overhead to lockout. Any deliberate effort to press the bar after the bar is removed from the racks counts as the attempt.
8. The bar is pressed overhead until the elbows are completely extended, with the bar in a position behind a vertical line from the most anterior aspect of the armpit to the floor. Failure to attain this position constitutes a missed attempt. Any uneven extension of the elbows must be corrected by the time lockout occurs, such that both elbows lock out simultaneously.
9. Once this position has been obviously assumed, the bar is lowered to the same point in front of the neck where the attempt began, walked back into the rack, and replaced securely. The attempt is concluded when the bar is placed back in the rack.

10. After the upward initiation of the press, any change in the position of the feet against the floor during the attempt, any bending of the knees that *directly* contributes to the upward movement of the bar (a “push press”), or any active plantar flexion of the ankles disqualifies the attempt.



11. Any athlete who is anatomically unable to fully extend one or both elbows must report this condition to the referees before the start of the press competition.

The Deadlift

1. The bar shall be loaded on the platform in a position parallel to the front of the platform, with the lifter facing the head judge. The lifter assumes a position facing the bar, with the vertical plane of the legs parallel to the bar. The bar is gripped with both hands outside the legs, and pulled with one continuous uninterrupted movement until the lifter is standing erect with knees and hips fully extended, the chest up and shoulders back. Any failure to attain a fully erect position disqualifies the attempt.
2. For timekeeping purposes, the attempt starts when the bar leaves the floor.
3. Once the lockout position is attained and the bar is motionless, the bar is lowered under control with both hands back to the ground. Any release of the bar from the hands before it is lowered to the floor disqualifies the attempt.
4. Any downward motion of the bar prior to lockout disqualifies the attempt, as does failure to assume a fully erect position with the back, shoulders, hips, and knees fully extended. Any attempt to raise the bar counts as an attempt. The stance must be maintained during the attempt, and any movement of the feet while the bar is off the ground disqualifies the attempt.
5. The use of any lubricants on the thighs or legs is forbidden. Knee-high socks must be worn during the deadlift, to prevent blood from contaminating the bar. If necessary, socks may be changed between attempts to prevent contamination of the bar and the interruption of the meet for bar maintenance.

Order of Competition

Registration

1. Registration begins 2 hours before the start of the meet and ends 1 hour before the start of the meet. Upon check-in, the lifter must provide identification, the weight class, and opening attempts for each of the three lifts. These attempts may be changed later in accordance with the limitations on the number of attempt changes as prescribed in the Rules of Competition.
2. The athlete's name, lot number, weight class, sex, age, and opening attempts for each lift are recorded on an expediter card, which shall be used by the meet announcer to conduct the meet.
3. Lot numbers will be assigned based upon the order in which the meet entries were received. A meet entry consists of the completed and signed entry form and the entry fee.
4. The competition shall be conducted in sessions, with weight classes grouped into flights according to criteria deemed expedient by the meet director. All three lifts will be contested during each session, with a ten-minute break between lifts.

Weigh-out

1. Bodyweight for each lifter will be measured immediately after the last deadlift attempt. An official will be present near the platform to direct lifters to the weigh-out area.
2. Athletes shall present themselves for weigh-out promptly at that time and will have one opportunity to make weight within their declared weight class, after which they shall not be permitted to weigh-out again. Weighing outside of the lifter's stated weight class will result in an invalidation of the lifter's total for the meet entered, and the lifter will not be eligible for ranking or awards. At the meet director's discretion, this rule may be suspended for local competitions. The total will apply to subsequent qualifying totals in the weight class for which the lifter was actually eligible. A scale shall be available at all times for the lifter's convenience beginning at the start of registration.
3. Competitors must weigh-out according to their order within their flight. Athletes may be weighed wearing their singlet by an official on an accurate and precise scale. Upon athlete request, a sex-appropriate official can weigh competitors in a private area who wish to remove clothing for the purposes of making weight.
4. Upon completing weigh-out, the competitor will have successfully completed the meet and will be eligible for ranking and awards.

Conduct of the Competition

1. The competition shall be conducted by sessions, during each of which are contested the lifts (Squat, Press, Deadlift), with each lift divided into flights or groups of lifters. The order of the flights will be listed prior to the commencement of the meet. Each flight will complete its three attempts at a lift before the next flight is called to perform the same lift.
2. The meet announcer controls the conduct of the competition. The announcer is responsible for announcing:
 - a. the name of each competitor
 - b. the weight that the competitor will lift

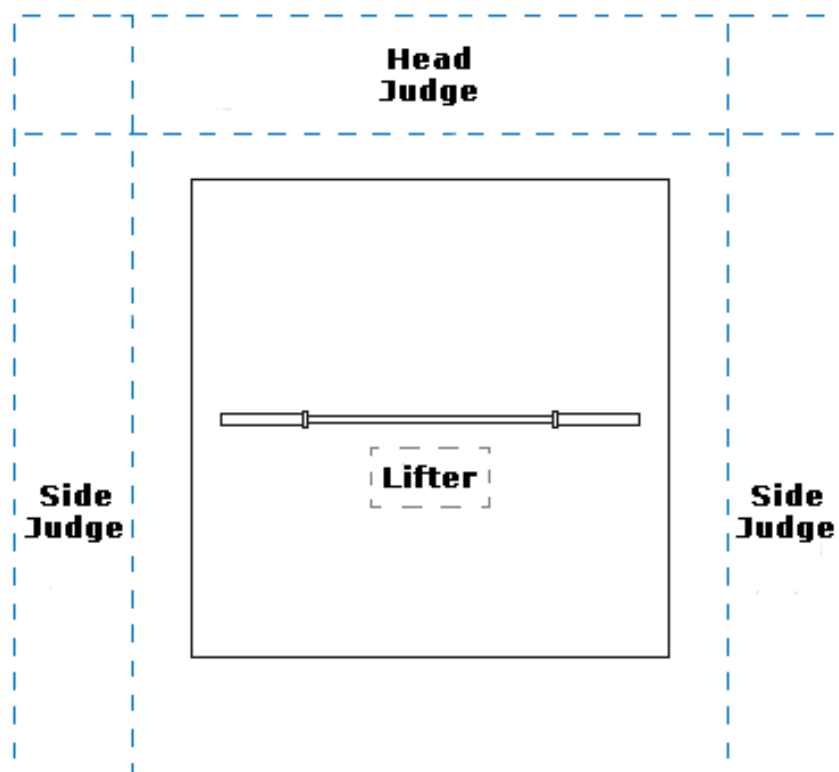
- c. the completion of the loading of the bar and the commencement of the time allotted for the attempt
 - d. whether the attempt was good or bad.
- 3. If the warm-up facility is not immediately adjacent to the platform area, i.e. if the athletes and coaches in the warm-up facility cannot clearly hear the announcer directly, the public-address system must provide clear information in the warm-up facility.
- 4. Music shall not be played over the public-address system, or other loudspeakers, during the competition.
- 5. The meet expeditor takes next attempts from lifters and coaches, manages the expeditor cards, prepares the scoresheet at the end of each lift, and aids the announcer in keeping the order of the competition. A scorekeeper may be appointed to assist with these duties.
- 6. The only persons allowed in the immediate area of the platform and the area of the announcer's table are the announcer and expeditor staff, judges, loaders, spotters, the athlete taking the attempt and the athlete's coach. All other persons must stay clear of this area, upon penalty of removal.
- 7. Once the bar is loaded and announced as such, the official charged with timekeeping starts the meet clock, and the lifter has one minute to initiate the attempt. An announcement at the point where thirty seconds remain in the allotted time may be made by the announcer.
- 8. The meet shall be conducted in kilograms. Increases in weight for the squat, press, and deadlift will be in multiples of 1 kilogram. If no next attempt is received from the lifter or the lifter's coach after a successful lift, it shall be assumed that the next attempt is the next incremental increase based on the currently contested lift. If the previous attempt was unsuccessful and no next attempt is received, the same weight will be repeated for the next lift.
- 9. Calibrated iron discs shall be used for all the contested lifts.
- 10. In the event of a misload, two things may occur:
 - a. If the misload is discovered before the attempt begins, the clock is stopped, the loading is corrected, and the original allotted time is restored to the clock.
 - b. If the misload is discovered after the attempt, the lifter may elect to take another attempt, or to accept the results of the attempt. If another attempt is granted, it shall be taken at the end of the round during which the error occurred, or at the meet director's discretion.
- 11. After the opening attempts have been submitted at registration, and for subsequent attempts, 2 changes in the attempt weight can be submitted. Any change in attempt must be submitted before the loading of the attempt is completed and under no circumstances can the weight already loaded on the bar be lowered.
- 12. The "rounds" system will be used as the order of competition. All lifters in the flight shall perform their first attempt, ordered from lightest to heaviest attempt within the flight. The bar shall then be reloaded to the lightest second attempt, and all lifters shall perform their second attempt, ordered from lightest to heaviest attempt in the flight. The bar shall then be loaded to the lightest third attempt, and all lifters shall perform their third attempt, ordered from lightest to heaviest attempt in the flight. All flights in the session will complete their squat attempts

before proceeding to their press attempts. All flights in the session will complete their press attempts before proceeding to their deadlift attempts.

13. In the event that two athletes taking the same attempt call for the same weight, the athlete with the lower lot number goes before the athlete with the higher lot number.
14. A failure to complete a successful attempt in any of the three lifts eliminates the athlete from the competition. At the meet director's discretion, the athlete may be permitted to participate in the next lift.
15. Awards are based on the total of the heaviest completed attempts of the three lifts. In the event of a tie, the lighter lifter wins. If both lifters weigh the same, they share the award.
16. If a first-place award is shared by two people, there will be no second-place award, only a third. If a second-place award is shared between two people, there will be no third-place award. The third-place award can be shared by two people.
17. The awards are at the meet director's discretion. A Best Lifter award for the Open and Women's division may be awarded, to be calculated from the Wilks formula. A Best Lifter award for the Open and Women's Masters division may be awarded, to be calculated from the Wilks formula and the appropriate McCulloch coefficient. Best Lifter awards are optional – the actual competition takes place within the official weight classes.

Judges

1. Three judges shall serve the competition platform. The head judge is seated directly in front of the lifter, and the two side judges sit on either side of the lifter at the point of best vantage. They shall be competent and qualified to serve in this capacity as determined by meet director.



2. Their duties include, but may not necessarily be limited to, ensuring that all the technical rules of competition are followed, that the bar is loaded correctly, and that each attempt is judged with full attention.
3. The judges indicate their decisions through the use of paddles, flags, or lights. White indicates a good attempt, and red indicates a bad attempt. Any two judges in agreement constitute the decision. The athlete or coach may inquire regarding the reason for a judge's decision at the discretion of that particular judge only after leaving the platform area, and only at a time when it does not interfere with the execution of the judge's duties.
4. At any point during the time the lifter is on the platform any judge sees any infraction of rules with respect to equipment, conduct, or safety, that judge can stop the clock and the competition with a raised hand until the situation is rectified to the satisfaction of all the judges, at which time the clock is restarted.
5. The judges must make every effort to render their decisions simultaneously, and to avoid at all costs influencing the decisions of the other judges through eye contact or discussion with each other between the time the attempt is concluded and the decision is rendered.
6. Judges may be replaced at the discretion of the meet director if it is determined to be in the best interests of the competition.
7. One of the judges may act as the timekeeper, or a timekeeper may be appointed to sit with the expeditor and announcer, the latter option being preferable.

Platform and Equipment

1. The competition platform shall be a defined area of at least 8' x 8' and no more than 4 m x 4 m, and shall be surfaced with wood, rubber matting, or commercial non-slip carpeting. It may be a discrete raised structure or an area of appropriate flooring designated by markings. The entire surface of the platform shall be flat, smooth, level, and flush. If multiple platforms are used in the competition, they shall all be equivalently equipped and staffed.
2. The expeditor/announcer table shall be in clear view of the platform, within close proximity that facilitates efficient functioning of the expeditor's duties. The expeditor cards shall be in clear view on the announcer's table.
3. The head judge sits a safe distance away directly in front or slightly to one side of the center of the platform, and the side judges are placed where they can best see the lifter from either side.
4. The bar shall be a high-quality, 20 kg powerlifting standard bar, or a bar produced specifically for competition. It shall be 28-29 mm in diameter and up to 2200 mm in length.
5. The plates shall be calibrated and accurate discs within 10 grams or 0.25 percent, whichever is greater, of their marked value. Calibrated plates must be available to allow for 1 kg increments when loading.
6. Collars shall be 2.5 kg calibrated competition collars. They must be secure and tight when applied.
7. Loaders must be provided by the meet director to load the bar. They operate under the direction of either the head judge or the platform manager, if one is provided. A platform manager is recommended for larger meets. The platform manager ensures the correct and timely loading of the bar and directs the loaders in their duties. Loaders are responsible for

handling the plates only; it is the responsibility of the officials to ensure that the loaders have correctly loaded the bar. The meet director shall provide loading charts to the appropriate officials for this purpose.

8. The timing clock must be a desktop unit or one projected on a screen, not a stopwatch, visible from a reasonable distance and easily viewed from the platform area. It shall be placed in a conspicuous location adjacent to the judge acting as timekeeper or on the announcer's table.
9. A chalk box must be provided in close proximity to the platform. It is supplied with commercially prepared athletic chalk, as is the warm-up facility.
10. In the event the bar becomes contaminated with the blood of a competitor, the meet shall be stopped and the bar disinfected with an application of 70% isopropyl alcohol applied with a small brush or cloth. The bar shall be allowed to dry completely before the meet resumes. In the interest of the expedient conduct of the meet, the meet director shall take the steps necessary to ensure that the meet is not interrupted again, which may include the disqualification of the competitor.
11. The warmup facilities must be adequate for the size of the session. It must be equipped comparably to the competition platform, although it need not be identically equipped.

Official Documents

The following documents must be established, maintained through the competition, and kept as an official record of the competition:

1. The start list is prepared and published as soon as possible after the entry deadline. It includes the name, lot number, projected weight class, age, division, and session of each entrant in the competition.
2. Expediter cards are assigned to each lifter at check-in. They must include the athlete's name, weight class, division, age, actual weight, and opening attempts for each lift. These are the documents used to run the competition. They should be accessible to coaches and lifters to the greatest extent possible under the constraints of efficient management of the expediter/announcer table.
3. The scoresheet records the final results of each lift within the session, and is prepared at the end of each lift so that the squat and the subtotal of the squat and press is available to the lifters and coaches.

Personal Equipment

Athletes must comply with these rules regarding costume and equipment; no inspection of equipment will be conducted, but if illegal equipment is found to be used, either on the platform or in the warm-up area, it shall constitute cause for immediate disqualification from the competition. This applies retroactively to any completed competition in which a competitor was subsequently found to have used illegal equipment.

Costume

1. The lifter's costume shall consist of a collarless t-shirt and a powerlifting, weightlifting, or wrestling singlet. Both garments must be clean and free of graphics of a nature that the average spectator would find offensive.
2. Both garments must fit snugly to facilitate the judging of depth and lockout positions. Both must be constructed of normal commercially available materials, and absolutely cannot be supportive in any way. All garments are subject to the review and approval of the judges. Only one shirt and one singlet may be worn at any time. Women may wear one bra of any type desired. No power briefs, nor any sufficiently compressive shorts or briefs that resist hip flexion or aid in hip extension may be worn.
3. Long socks that extend to just below the knee and completely cover the shin and calf must be worn in the deadlift to allow the bar to slide against the legs and to avoid blood from the competitors from contacting the bar. Thin shin guards that do not impede the upward motion of the bar may be worn under the socks if desired, and may be required at the meet director's discretion.
4. Any type of shoe may be worn, provided that it is in good repair and clean. Shoes must be worn on the platform at all times. Deadlift slippers are acceptable as well. Shoes with cleats or metal spikes are not permitted.
5. No headwear or hats of any sort are permitted to be worn on the platform.
6. No headphones or earbuds of any sort are permitted to be worn on the platform.
7. Long hair that would interfere with determining the bar's placement on the back during the squat shall be restrained or tied back.
8. Long hair or beards that interfere with determining the bar's placement with respect to chin at the bottom of the press shall be restrained or tied back.

Equipment

1. A belt may be worn during all three lifts. It may be of any type, provided that when worn it only overlaps itself one time at any point along its circumference, and that it does not exceed four inches in width at any point along its length.
2. Rubberized knee sleeves may be worn. Only one knee sleeve per knee may be worn. There can be no visible contact between the socks and the knee sleeves or between the singlet and the knee sleeves. Knee sleeves that fit so tightly that they cannot be easily removed solely by the lifter are not allowed. Officials may at any time ask the lifter to pull their knee sleeves down below the knee and back up again. If this cannot be done without help, the knee sleeves cannot be worn in competition.
3. Wrist wraps may be worn. Any bandages worn on the hands must be shown to the judges prior to the start of the lift. Any ankle or knee bandages must be approved by the judges prior to the start of the lift in which they are worn.
4. No wraps of any kind may be worn on the elbows, or on any part of the body other than the wrists. No supportive undergarments of any type may be worn.
5. The use of ammonia or smelling salts prior to the lift is permitted so long as their usage takes place off the platform and not within view of the audience.

6. No lubricants of any type, whether fluids, powders, or solids, may be used anywhere on the competition venue or any areas adjacent to the competition venue. Chalk is not considered a lubricant. Use of any lubricants for any purpose constitutes cause for immediate disqualification.
7. The use of counter-irritants is permitted on areas of the skin that do not come in contact with the bar. If there is any uncertainty about whether this use may constitute a use-of-lubricants infraction, the judges should be consulted prior to their application.
8. No foreign substances of any type except the chalk provided by the competition may be used on either the platform equipment or the lifter's personal equipment. No rosin, spray sticky, or any other substance designed to enhance the friction of hands against bar or shoes against floor may be used.
9. A warm-up room marshal may be appointed for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the equipment rules.