



Strongman-Powerlifting League

2024 Technical Rulebook

What is Strongman-Powerlifting?

Strongman-Powerlifting is a strength sport that involves three main lifts: squat, bench press, and deadlift. Athletes compete to lift as much weight as possible in each of these lifts within their respective weight categories. Competitors have three attempts at each lift, aiming to lift the heaviest weight they can manage while adhering to strict rules regarding form and technique. Powerlifting competitions are often divided by gender, age, and weight class to ensure fair competition. It's a sport that requires not only physical strength but also mental focus and determination.

Explaining the Lifts

1. **Squat:** The squat is considered one of the most fundamental compound exercises. It primarily targets the muscles of the lower body, including the quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes, and lower back. In competition, powerlifters perform the squat by unracking a loaded barbell from a rack, descending until their hips are aligned the top of their knees, and then standing back up to lockout position.
2. **Bench Press:** The bench press focuses on the upper body, particularly the chest, shoulders, and triceps. In this lift, competitors lie on a bench and lift a loaded barbell from chest level to full arm extension. The bench press requires a combination of strength, stability, and technique to maximize performance.
3. **Deadlift:** The deadlift is a full-body exercise that targets multiple muscle groups, including the posterior chain (lower back, glutes, and hamstrings), as well as the grip and upper back muscles. Powerlifters lift a loaded barbell from the floor to a standing position, with the hips and knees fully extended and the shoulders pulled back.

Rules of the Squat

In the squat, there are specific rules and commands that must be followed to ensure proper execution of the lift:

1. **Starting Position:** The lifter positions themselves under the barbell, placing it on their back in a comfortable position. Once ready, they may unrack the barbell.
2. **Unracking:** The lifter can lift the barbell off the rack, either with or without the assistance of side spotters. They then step back and establish stability before initiating the squat.
3. **Set Position:** With the barbell on their back and stability established, the lifter lifts their head straight, indicating to the referee that they are ready for the squat. This signals the referee to give the command "down."
4. **Descent:** Upon hearing the "down" command, the lifter begins their descent into the squat. They lower their body until the top surface of their thighs (hip crease) is at or below the top of their knees, achieving proper depth.
5. **Ascent:** Once reaching proper depth, the lifter initiates the ascent by standing back up with the weight. The lifter must maintain control and balance throughout the entire movement.
6. **Rack Command:** After completing the ascent and standing fully upright, the lifter waits for the "rack" command from the referee before returning the barbell to the rack. They must remain motionless and demonstrate stability while awaiting this command.
7. **Equipment Rules:** Squat suits are not permitted during the squat. However, lifters are allowed to wear a belt, knee sleeves, squat briefs, and knee wraps. Any violation of equipment rules may result in disqualification from the competition.

These rules ensure consistency and fairness in judging across different competitions and lifters. Proper depth, control, and stability are essential for a successful squat lift, and adherence to the specified commands is crucial for a valid lift.

Rules of the Bench Press

In the bench press, several rules and commands govern the execution of the lift to ensure fairness and safety:

1. **Starting Position:** The lifter lies flat on a bench with their feet touching the ground. Their head, shoulders, and buttocks must remain in contact with the bench throughout the lift.
2. **Unracking the Bar:** The lifter lifts the bar off the rack and hold it in a stationary position above their chest.
3. **Descent:** Once ready, the lifter lowers the bar to their chest under control. The bar must make contact with the chest, and there must be a momentary pause (typically about 2 seconds) to ensure control and prevent bouncing.
4. **Press Command:** After the bar is motionless on the lifter's chest, the judge gives the command "press." This indicates that the lifter can begin to press the bar upward.
5. **Ascent:** The lifter presses the bar upward until their elbows are fully extended, completing the lift. The lifter must maintain control and stability throughout the ascent.
6. **Rack Command:** Once the bar is locked out overhead, the judge gives the command "rack." The lifter then carefully racks the bar back onto the bench rack.
7. **Judging:** The lift is judged by a panel of referees. Any failure to follow the specified rules, such as failure to pause on the chest, failure to lock out fully, or lifting the buttocks off the bench, will result in a "no lift."

Additional Rules: The lifter is not allowed to wear bench slingshots or bench suits. Violation of these rules will result in disqualification of the lifter.

In the absence of a judge to give commands, the lifter must self-time the pause on the chest for about 2 seconds before pressing and again after locking out before racking the weight. These rules ensure consistency and fairness in judging across different competitions and lifters.

Rules of the Deadlift

In the deadlift, there are specific rules and commands to ensure proper execution of the lift:

1. **Starting Position:** The lifter approaches the barbell, which is loaded with weights, and stands with their feet hip-width apart. The lifter can choose their grip width, either conventional (hands outside the legs) or sumo (hands inside the legs). The barbell is placed on the floor in front of the lifter.
2. **Gripping the Bar:** The lifter grips the bar with their hands, ensuring that their hands are outside their legs for a conventional deadlift or inside their legs for a sumo deadlift.
3. **Lifting the Bar:** Upon receiving the command "lift" from the referee, the lifter lifts the barbell off the floor using a smooth, controlled motion. The lifter must fully lock out their hips and knees at the top of the lift, with their shoulders pulled back. To add clarity, hitching and ramping will be allowed during the performance of the deadlift.
4. **Lowering the Bar:** After reaching the fully locked-out position, the lifter lowers the barbell back to the floor under control. Dropping the barbell or releasing it before it touches the ground will result in a disqualification for that lift.
5. **Equipment Rules:** The use of knee wraps, or knee sleeves is not permitted during the deadlift. However, lifters are allowed to wear a belt for support and a deadlift suit.
6. **Commands:** The deadlift typically does not have verbal commands like the squat and bench press. Instead, the lifter initiates the lift on their own after setting up and receiving the "lift" signal from the referee. The only command will be "down" which will signal the lifter to lower the bar.
7. **Judging:** The lift is judged based on the lifter's ability to fully lock out their hips and knees at the top of the lift and demonstrate control while lowering the barbell back to the floor. Failure to adhere to the specified rules, such as incomplete lockout or dropping the bar prematurely, will result in a "no lift."

These rules ensure consistency and fairness in judging across different competitions and lifters. Proper technique, control, and adherence to equipment rules are essential for a successful deadlift lift in powerlifting competitions.

Use of Equipment

In raw powerlifting, where lifters compete without the use of supportive equipment that aids in lifting heavier weights, approved equipment is limited to items that provide minimal assistance and support while still allowing lifters to perform to their best abilities. Here's an explanation of the approved equipment in raw powerlifting:

1. **Singlet:** A singlet is a one-piece form-fitting garment that lifters wear during competitions. It allows judges to clearly see the lifter's body position and movement during lifts. Singlets are typically made of stretchy material to provide freedom of movement while conforming to competition standards.
2. **T-Shirt:** Lifters are required to wear a t-shirt under their singlet during competitions. The t-shirt should be form-fitting and not excessively baggy to prevent interference with the judging of lifts.
3. **Shorts or Deadlift Socks:** Lifters have the option to wear shorts or deadlift socks during deadlift attempts. These items provide protection for the shins and knees while minimizing friction between the barbell and the lifter's legs during the lift.
4. **Belt:** Lifters are permitted to wear a belt during squats, deadlifts, and bench press for added support and stability. The belt is worn around the waist and tightened to provide abdominal and lower back support during heavy lifts.
5. **Knee Sleeves:** Knee sleeves are allowed for additional knee support during squats. These sleeves are made of neoprene or similar material and provide compression around the knee joint to help keep it warm and stable during the squat. However, knee wraps, which provide more substantial support and assistance, are not permitted in SPL competitions.
6. **Wrist Wraps:** Wrist wraps may be worn during bench press and overhead pressing movements to provide support and stability to the wrists. These wraps are typically made of elastic material and are wrapped around the wrists to prevent hyperextension or injury during heavy lifts.
7. **Chalk:** Lifters are allowed to use chalk to improve their grip on the barbell during deadlifts and other lifts. Chalk helps absorb moisture and sweat from the hands, reducing the risk of slipping and improving grip strength.
8. **Straps:** Lifters are allowed to use straps to enhance their grip on the barbell during the deadlift event. Any type of strap is allowed.

It's important for lifters to familiarize themselves with the specific equipment regulations of the powerlifting federation or organization hosting the competition to ensure compliance with the rules. By adhering to approved equipment guidelines, lifters can compete fairly and safely in raw powerlifting competitions. All lifters are not required to use the equipment listed, they are options.

Weight Classes and Age Divisions

Weight Classes:

Men:

- 59 kg (130 lbs)
- 66 kg (145.5 lbs)
- 74 kg (163 lbs)
- 83 kg (183 lbs)
- 93 kg (205 lbs)
- 105 kg (231 lbs)
- 120 kg (264.5 lbs)
- 120+ kg (264.5+ lbs)

Women:

- 47 kg (103.5 lbs)
- 52 kg (114.5 lbs)
- 57 kg (125.5 lbs)
- 63 kg (138.5 lbs)
- 72 kg (158.5 lbs)
- 84 kg (185 lbs)
- 84+ kg (185+ lbs)

Age Divisions:

- Open: The open division includes lifters of all ages and experience levels.
- Sub-Junior: Typically includes lifters under the age of 18.
- Junior: Typically includes lifters between the ages of 19 and 23.

Master:

- Master 1: Typically includes lifters between the ages of 40 and 49.
- Master 2: Typically includes lifters between the ages of 50 and 59.
- Master 3: Typically includes lifters between the ages of 60 and 69.
- Master 4: Typically includes lifters aged 70 and above.