

The Basic Rules of Olympic Weightlifting Competitions

The Lifts:

The Olympic Weightlifting competition consists of two Lifts.

The Snatch is a single movement where the lifter holds the bar in a wide grip, lifts the weight off the ground overhead in one movement, then stands upright holding the bar overhead. Once the lifter is in control, the judges will give the “Down” signal and the lifter will drop the bar.

The Clean and Jerk is a two-part movement. First, the lifter holds the barbell in a shoulder width grip, then pulls the weight up to the shoulders and then stands up with the barbell balanced on the shoulders. Once settled, the lifter will snap the bar overhead and stand upright again with the barbell in control overhead.

The Weights:

The Barbell is loaded with Disks of various weights. All competitions use a combination of the international standard of 25, 20, 15, 10, 5, 2.5, 2, 1, 0.5-Kilogram disks to set the barbell at a certain weight. The barbell will be loaded with the minimum number of disks required to total the required weight.

Two additional weights are included. The Bar itself is a standard... Women and under 14 year old youths use a 15Kg bar which is a slightly smaller diameter than the standard 20Kg bar used by all men.

In addition, most meets use collars that tighten on the ends of the barbell to keep the weight disks attached. The standard collars are 2.5 Kg each.

The Competition:

Each lifter is given three attempts at each of the Snatch and the Clean and Jerk. First, all lifters in a session will complete all three attempts at the Snatch. Then, after a break, all lifters will take three attempts at the Clean and Jerk. The Total of the Best Snatch and the Best Clean and Jerk determine medal or trophy placement.

Each lifter competes with other lifters in their own weight class but in most sessions, a few weight classes are mixed. In Open events, both Weight Classes and Age Classes are often mixed. Schoolage lifters are under 17 years old, Junior Lifters are under 20 years old, Seniors are under 35 and Masters are over 35.

The weight on the bar only goes up! All lifters who are attempting a certain weight complete their attempts before the other lifters attempt higher weights.

Judging:

Three Judges watch for un-acceptable features of the lift to separate a “Good” lift from a “Bad Lift”. Here are the basic items judges look for:

- 1) No part of the lifter (except the bottom of the feet) shall touch the platform.
- 2) The Lifter cannot “press out” the barbell. Press out is when the elbows are bent and the lifter uses strength of the arms to lock out the elbows.
- 3) The lift must be all in one movement... no stopping and restarting.
- 4) The elbows must not touch thighs or knees during the Clean. This is dangerous and can cause serious injury.
- 5) The Lifter must hold the bar steady and quiet between the Clean and the Jerk.
- 6) The Lifter must hold the bar steady and quiet overhead with feet together until the judges give the down signal
- 7) The Lifter must guide the bar down at least below waist level when the lift is complete. Dropping from overhead is dangerous.
- 8) The Lifter must stay on the platform.