

SOME LIKELY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PARA WEIGHTLIFTING

Is para weightlifting an official sport in Canada? And if so, why is it not public knowledge?

Para weightlifting is not an official sport and the term is used only to distinguish it from para powerlifting which is a recognized para sport in Canada. The reason para weightlifting in Canada is an unknown sport is because I only developed its explanation and structure in 2021 using an old draft I created a few years ago.

What caused you to go back to your older draft and rework it?

I was approached by a coach from a registered provincial weightlifting club inquiring as to whether an adaptive athlete could lift at our upcoming Canadian Masters Weightlifting Championships. Right off the top, I indicated that I would be open to the idea based upon the needs of this athlete and more information about his disability. After discussions with the athlete, I gave my permission for him to compete and quickly got to work on rewriting my initial rules and regulations. After that rewrite, I sought out input from various stakeholder groups.

Is there a para weightlifting movement in Canada in either weightlifting Federation?

At this point in time there is not. There are several adaptive athletes who are involved in Olympic weightlifting in the USAW. Some are competing at local competitions in the USA.

Why is the Canadian Masters Weightlifting Federation welcoming para weightlifters?

I know that there are disabled athletes in the community who are training with weights and would love the opportunity to compete. However, competing in the Bench Press, a powerlifting contested lift, in para powerlifting, is not what these athletes are looking for. As these disabled athletes discover that we will allow para-athletes as weightlifters at our CMWC, they can be assured that their competitive training has a purpose. The only limitation is that athletes must be at least thirty years old to belong to our Federation, and they must also belong to their respective provincial weightlifting associations.

How will para weightlifters qualify for the Canadian Masters Weightlifting Championships?

Para weightlifters will be required to post a total achieved at a local or provincial weightlifting competition exceeding the 50% of our CMWC qualifying total. If a competition was not available, and if athletes are members of their provincial weightlifting association, the coach can submit a video of their athletes' lifts and a written explanation of the athletes' limitations so that my advisors can assess whether accommodations can be made.

Can a para weightlifter break Canadian Masters Records? Yes. I have created ten para weightlifting categories in which athletes can contest or set records. There will be no minimum requirements with the first para weightlifters setting those upon their successful lifts.

Do coaches of para weightlifters require special certification? In Canada, coaches are certified by the Coaches Association of Canada. There is no focus on para weightlifting, so it will be up to the coaches to work on "best practices." Any insertion of para weightlifting into the coaching program for weightlifting coaches will either fall under the auspices of the Canadian Weightlifting Federation or a future federation of Para Weightlifters.

Do technical officials assigned to adjudicate the lifts of para weightlifters require any special designation or certification? No, they do not. Technical Officials are well trained in Canada and using the expectations of each of the lifts, in each of the para weightlifting categories, our Technical Officials will be briefed prior to adjudicating the para weightlifting athlete.

Under whose jurisdiction or affiliation is para weightlifting?

Since para weightlifting is not yet a recognized para sport, it is not under any other organization's jurisdiction, not even ours at the Canadian Masters. We are simply inviting the para-athlete to lift in our National Competition as a para weightlifter. As the number of para weightlifters grow nationally and internationally, that group of athletes will need to determine how they wish to be acknowledged by National Sports Organizations.

From where did your General Requirements for Para Weightlifters and Para Weightlifting originate?

As mentioned earlier, I had an old draft collecting dust. I came upon some references to adaptive weightlifting on the USAW website. I helped myself to some of those points from USAW, integrated it with my old draft, and sought out some advice from my Advisory Group, trainers of physically disabled athletes, educating myself on some of other para sports classifications and requirements, and several documents from Sports Canada. I then proceeded to develop the requirements with the goal of them being welcoming, inclusive, safe for the athlete, and closely resembling our basic weightlifting's competitive movements.

You have created ten para weightlifting categories. Are these recognized by any Provincial Weightlifting Association?

These categories were created for placing para weightlifters into appropriate groups supportive of their disabilities at the CMWC. Provincial Weightlifting Associations are free to organize para weightlifters consistent with their own organizational structure. Provincial Weightlifting Associations are affiliates of the CWFHC and are therefore under no obligation to adopt our classification system. Any support they can offer para-athletes pursuing weightlifting will be greatly appreciated by our Federation.

Since the modifications to the lifts performed by para weightlifters have never been tested on the platform either by technical officials or coaches, how do you know if the lifts' technical requirements will work?

To be totally honest, I do not know if they will work. But if we don't step up and give para-athletes that opportunity, then we would have failed to include them in our sport. I am sure there will be flaws exposed as technical officials actually adjudicate the lifts, or as coaches prepare their athletes for their attempts. That is the wonderful aspect of trying to grow a new sport...we learn and improve through our errors.