



# Special Olympics Minnesota 2025 Powerlifting Handbook

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## COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

## MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at [www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx)

The Official Special Olympics sports rules for powerlifting shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon International Powerlifting Federation (IPF) rules. IPF or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they conflict with the Official Special Olympics sports rules for powerlifting. Special Olympics powerlifting competitions shall be run as Classic/Raw competitions with no supportive equipped gear.

For more information, visit the IPF website at <https://www.powerlifting.sport/>

## **RULES OF COMPETITION**

### **General**

Athletes must be a minimum of 14 years of age to participate in powerlifting.

A non-supportive lifting suit shall be worn in competitions. The suit straps must always be worn over the lifter's shoulders. The suit shall be one-piece and form fitting without any looseness when worn. A t-shirt must be worn under the lifting suit.

Additional information, including uniform details, can be found in the rules via this link to the Special Olympics International website: [Special Olympics Rules](#)

Weight belts may be worn on the outside of the lifting suit.

### **The Meet**

Bodyweights will be collected in the registration process as an athlete's qualifying score. Rack heights for the squat and bench (safety bar) will be collected upon arrival at the venue the morning of the competition.

Starting lift weights for each event will also be submitted during the Errors & Exceptions timeframe. These are needed to assist with divisioning within weight classes. Starting weights can be adjusted day-of, as well. With this, flight orders will not be confirmed until the competition day.

The order of events is squat, bench press, and then dead lift. Each athlete will have three attempts for each lift.

There will be three referees on the lifting platform. A lifting attempt must receive a minimum of two out of three white flags to be a successful attempt. Two or more red flags will constitute an unsuccessful attempt.

We will no longer use information cards to submit the next attempt weight. Coaches must bring (typically verbally) the next attempt weight to the scoring table immediately after the athlete completes an attempt. Weight attempts can stay the same or increase but cannot decrease after it has been attempted.

When an athlete is finished with all attempts for one lift, coaches should have them begin warming up for the next lift.

Based on the number of people registered, Special Olympics Minnesota may split athletes into multiple flights to keep the meet running on time. Flights will be determined by first attempts in each lift (lowest to highest).

Scoring of the events will be the maximum weight successfully lifted in that event. For combination events, the score will be a total of the maximum weight successfully lifted for each lift.

Awards will be given out immediately following the completion of the dead lift event.

## EVENTS

### Squat

The lifter faces the front of the platform with the bar held horizontally across the shoulders. The hands should be gripping the bar and the feet flat on the platform with knees locked.

The lifter must wait for the referee's signal to begin. Upon receiving the signal, the lifter must lower the body until the top surfaces of the legs at the hip joints are lower than the top of the knees. The lifter must then recover to the upright position with knees locked and remain motionless. The referee will give the signal to replace the bar on the rack.

Athletes with Down Syndrome who have been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial instability may not participate in the squat event.

Causes for disqualification:

- Failure to observe the referee's signal.
- Double bouncing or more than one recovery attempt at the bottom of the lift.
- Failure to assume an upright position with knees locked.
- Any shifting of the feet laterally, backward, or forward during the lift.
- Failure to bend the knees and lower the body until the top surface of the legs at the hip joints are lower than the top of the knees.
- Changing position of the bar across the shoulder after the lift has started.
- Contact of the bar or the lifter by the spotters/loaders between the referee's signals.
- Contact of elbows or upper arms with legs.
- Failure to make an attempt to return the bar to the racks.
- Dropping or dumping the bar after completion of the lift.
- Failure to comply with any of the requirements in the general description of the lift.

### Bench Press

The lifter must assume the position on the bench with the head and trunk in contact with the surface of the bench. The feet must be on the floor or on plates.

After removing the bar from the racks, the lifter waits with elbows locked waiting for the referee's signal. After receiving the start signal, the lifter must lower the bar to the chest and hold it motionless. The referee will give the signal to "press," at which time the bar should be pressed upward with an even extension of the arms and held motionless. The referee will then signal the bar to be placed back on the rack.

Causes for disqualification:

- Failure to follow the referee's signals.
- Any change in position after the start signal.
  - Raising the head, shoulders, buttocks, or feet from their original points of contact, or lateral movement of the hands on the bar.
- Any heaving or bouncing of the bar from the chest after it has been motionless on the chest.
- Any pronounced or exaggerated uneven extension of the arms during the lift.
- Any downward movement of the bar in the course of being pressed out.
- Failure to press the bar to full arm's length.
- Contact with the bar or the lifter by the spotters/loaders between the referee's signals.
- Deliberate contact with the bar and the bar-rest uprights during the lift.
- Failure to comply with any of the requirements contained in the general description of the lift.

## Dead Lift

The lifter faces the front of the platform with the bar positioned horizontally in front of the lifter's feet. The lifter can grip the bar with either the backs of both hands facing the front, or an over/under grip where the back of one hand faces the front and the palm of the other hand faces the front.

Any attempt to raise the bar will count as an attempt. On completion of the lift, the knees should be locked in the straight position, the shoulders held in an erect position, and the bar is held motionless. The bar should not be put down until the referee signals with an audible command.

Causes for disqualification:

- Any downward movement of the bar or on either end of the bar during the lift.
- Failure to stand erect with the shoulders in a locked position.
- Failure to lock the knees straight at the completion of the lift.
- Supporting the bar on the thighs during the lift. This may also include secondary bending of the knees and dropping of the hips.
- Lowering the bar before receiving the referee's signal.
- Allowing the bar to return to the platform without maintaining control with both hands.
- Failure to comply with any of the requirements contained in the general description of the lift.

## Combination 1

In this event the athlete competes in both the bench press and the dead lift. The athlete does not compete in the squat. The athlete's final score is calculated by adding together the maximum weight the athlete successfully lifted in the bench press and the dead lift. The athlete receives one award for the combination event. Three unsuccessful attempts in any of the lifts will result in a zero score for that lift.

## Combination 2

In this event the athlete competes in all three lifts: squat, bench press, and dead lift. The athlete's final score is calculated by adding together the maximum weight the athlete successfully lifted in the squat, bench press, and dead lift. The athlete receives one award for the combination event. Three unsuccessful attempts in any of the lifts will result in a zero score for that lift.

## Registration Details

Athletes may enter up to two individual events or one combination event.

When registering for combination events, choose only the combination event. Do not include any of the individual events.

Coaches need to submit the athlete's bodyweight or weight class as their qualifying score during online registration. Weigh-ins are no longer part of the competition day.

## WEIGHT CLASSES

Special Olympics Minnesota uses the athlete's gender and weight class for divisioning.

### Weight classes for Men

111 lbs  
130 lbs  
145.5 lbs  
163 lbs  
183 lbs  
205 lbs  
231 lbs  
264.5 lbs  
264.75 or more lbs

### Weight classes for Women

95.75 lbs  
103 lbs  
114.5 lbs  
125.5 lbs  
139 lbs  
158.5 lbs  
185 lbs  
185.25 or more lbs

Please be sure your athlete is in the appropriate weight class. For example, if a male athlete weighs 135 lbs, he will be in the 145.5 weight class. If a male athlete weighs 129 lbs, he will be in the 130 lbs weight class.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP**

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

### **Competitive Effort**

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a competition; Never quit

### **Fair Play Always**

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials