

Judging/Rules Review on Day of Competition

Effective immediately, all requirements listed below are to be consistently adhered to at all APF competitions.

- A Chief Referee will be appointed by the Meet Director or APF State Chair at each competition. This appointment must be the best choice of available referees pertinent to call consistency, lifter interface, and ability to audit and correct performance of other referees. The Chief Referee will not necessarily be the most experienced, and will not necessarily be a WPC official versus an APF official with a proven record of better performance, just one of if not the best available that day.
- The designated Chief Referee will be the focal point for any issues not readily resolved by other judges, and will ensure judging performance is consistent with but not exceeding APF rule requirements.
- The Chief Referee will have the authority for that single competition to displace a judge that from audited performance doesn't consistently call lifts versus our requirements, or by their behavior is in any way a discredit to the sport and/or the APF.
- The Chief Referee will make judging assignments. Each judge on each event is to be assigned such that their strengths benefit the competition, and weaknesses do not hinder the competition. In instances where the Chief Referee may not have knowledge of other officials, he/she will work with the Meet Director and/or State Chair to gather pertinent info. to make the assignments.
- The Chief Referee will conduct the rules briefing to lifters. All referees are required to attend.
- The rules briefing will be conducted 1 hour before the advertised start time of the competition. It is to be consistently comprehensive, and allowing for lifter questions after covering each event, effort should be made to keep it at no more than 10 minutes.
- The rules briefing will include:
 - Proper starting position for each event
 - Proper finish position for each event
 - Causes for disqualification for each event
 - Start (if any) and completion signal for each event
 - Explanation of 1 minute rule
 - Requirements to process records (no 4th attempts except for World Record – World Record attempts at National and World meets only)
 - A request that each lifter ask why they received a “no lift”, and a guarantee of a respectful and useful immediate explanation
 - A commitment that each lift and each lifter will be judged consistently with the rules with no less than required passing but no more than defined required
 - A commitment that when a judge has doubt the doubt will benefit the lifter
- Immediately following the rules briefing there will be a required judge's meeting at all competitions with mandatory attendance of all judges.
- The judges' meeting will be conducted by the competition's Chief Referee. It should be conducted somewhat isolated from the lifters and spectators to avoid disruption. It

should not exceed 15 minutes, allowing for a final break prior to the competition, and to allow time for judges to interact with lifters and spectators resulting in improved relationships, with a corresponding benefit of reduced conflict and enhanced enjoyment.

-The judge's meeting should include:

- Judges' best placement for consistent calls on each event
- Clear definition of rule requirements on each event
- Direction to not advance influence the calls of other judges
- Judging assignments by event

Pertinent to best placement for consistent call (may require weight tree relocation on each event):

- Squat – Head judge is to be per the rulebook in front of the lifter. The “start” and “rack” commands are to be sharp and loud enough to be easily heard by the lifter and other judges, and are to be coordinated with the simultaneous exaggerated downward and upward/backward arm movements. For side judges, the rulebook makes a good effort at getting the judges into best position but more is needed. The rulebook was written when lifters were in poly suits with a shoulder width stance doing a rebound squat typically handling no more than 70% of the weights we see today, and typically with no more than 3 spotters on the platform. Lifters are now in thick minimally stretch suits lifting significantly more weight, and routinely with 5 spotters that may each weigh 300+ pounds. The result is that to make consistently accurate calls the side judge now has to be significantly mobile on each lift. Judges should leave their chair to get into position perpendicular to the mid-point between the lifter's knee and hip, lower yourself so that your eyes are parallel to the top surface of the lifter's knee, identify the point on the top of the leg at the hip *as the lifter starts their descent*, and even if the point disappears between abdomen and thigh conflict you know where it is, and make your depth judgment based on the relative position of those 2 points when the lifter starts recovery. Required depth is for the point on the top surface of the thigh “*at the hip*” to be below the top of the knee.
- Bench – Head judge location is typically consistent with expectation. There are opportunities for improvement on side judge location. Side judges should be located 45° from the foot end of the bench and 3-6 feet from the bench. This location allows the side judge the best vantage point to see both feet, to watch for full arms extended handout, to watch for adherence to the “press” and “rack” commands, to watch for downward movement, to watch for pronounced uneven pressing or lockout, and to lean over to the side to ensure hip contact with the bench between the “press” and “rack” commands.
- Deadlift – Head judge is typically consistent with expectation. Side judge location hasn't. From the line perpendicular from each lifter's side, the side judge should be 3-6 feet away from the lifter and located approx. 15° forward. This allows the best vantage point to assess downward movement at or between the hands, to assess leg assist, and to assess final position ensuring fully upright with knees locked.

Pertinent to clear definition of rule requirements on each event:

- Squat – Depth calls have to be consistent with the rules regardless of weight being lifted, and regardless of who is lifting. Anything less than required by the rules cheats everyone, results in disrespect of the judge, and compromises federation integrity. Anything more than required by the rules cheats everyone, results in disrespect of the judge, and compromises federation integrity. Work as hard as required on every attempt to be in the best position to make your best call, then make it. If you've done your best but have doubt, give the benefit of the doubt to the lifter. Consistency versus rule requirements is non-negotiable.
- Bench – The only thing that will disqualify a bench attempt not between the “press” and “rack” command is not receiving the bar at arms' length on handout. Call this consistently. Pertinent to violations between the commands that are not being called consistently, downward movement and incomplete lockouts are problems. Any downward movement during press disqualifies the attempt. Call it every time. Inability to achieve lockout at full arm's length disqualifies the attempt. Call it every time. Full arm's length may vary by individual due to injuries. Require lifters to give you advance notice of such condition, and verify it prior to execution of the lift. Also, give a “press” command the instant the bar is motionless on the lifter's chest, not before, and the word “pause” doesn't exist in our rulebook.
- Deadlift – Any downward movement prior to reaching final position at the top disqualifies the attempt. Call it consistently. Inability to stand fully upright (shoulders not required to be rolled back) with knees locked (hyperextension not required) disqualifies the lift. Call it every time.

Pertinent to not influencing the call of other judges:

- Do not point out violations in advance of or during an attempt by a lifter other than minor equipment infractions that the lifter can correct in advance of the lift. After an attempt share information on “no lifts” as opportunities for improved performance consistency.

Pertinent to judging assignment by events:

- Make assignments to minimize impact of weaknesses. As examples, judges that have trouble with depth consistency on squats may need to be in the head chair, judges that have a soft voice may need to be in a side chair on bench, judges that have trouble giving “press” commands on bench and “down” commands on deadlift consistent with rule requirements should be in the side chair.

Respectfully,
APF Executive Committee