

# RAW POWERLIFTING

## MALE CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

Men's Squat

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>275+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	292	320	348	389	452	495	535	565	590	620	662
<b>MASTER</b>	269	294	320	358	416	455	492	520	543	570	609
<b>CLASS I</b>	239	262	285	319	371	406	439	463	484	508	543
<b>CLASS II</b>	210	230	251	280	325	356	385	407	425	446	477
<b>CLASS III</b>	184	202	219	245	285	312	337	356	372	391	417
<b>CLASS IV</b>	161	176	191	214	249	272	294	311	325	341	364

Men's Bench Press

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>275+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	235	258	275	314	358	387	415	440	462	483	500
<b>MASTER</b>	214	235	253	289	329	356	382	405	425	444	462
<b>CLASS I</b>	193	212	226	257	294	317	340	361	379	396	412
<b>CLASS II</b>	169	186	198	226	258	279	299	317	333	348	363
<b>CLASS III</b>	148	163	173	198	226	244	261	277	291	304	315
<b>CLASS IV</b>	129	142	151	173	197	213	228	242	254	266	275

Men's Deadlift

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>275+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	346	374	402	468	537	597	625	642	660	689	700
<b>MASTER</b>	318	344	370	431	494	549	575	591	607	634	644
<b>CLASS I</b>	284	307	330	384	440	490	513	526	541	565	574
<b>CLASS II</b>	249	269	289	337	387	430	450	462	475	496	504
<b>CLASS III</b>	218	236	253	295	338	376	394	404	416	434	441
<b>CLASS IV</b>	190	206	221	257	295	328	344	353	363	379	385

Men's Strict Curl

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>275+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	85	100	115	130	142	151	160	168	175	175	175
<b>MASTER</b>	77	91	105	118	130	138	148	156	163	163	163
<b>CLASS I</b>	70	82	94	107	117	124	132	139	144	144	144
<b>CLASS II</b>	61	72	83	94	103	109	116	122	127	127	127
<b>CLASS III</b>	54	63	72	82	90	95	102	107	111	111	111
<b>CLASS IV</b>	46	54	62	70	78	83	88	92	97	97	97

Men's Powerlifting Total

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>220</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>275+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	805	881	947	1124	1261	1396	1495	1587	1630	1710	1740
<b>MASTER</b>	741	811	871	1034	1160	1279	1375	1460	1500	1573	1601
<b>CLASS I</b>	660	722	777	922	1034	1148	1226	1301	1337	1402	1427
<b>CLASS II</b>	580	634	682	809	908	1012	1076	1143	1174	1231	1253
<b>CLASS III</b>	507	555	597	708	794	879	942	1000	1027	1077	1096
<b>CLASS IV</b>	443	485	521	618	694	768	822	873	897	941	957

These lifting classifications apply to a drug free lifter that is only using a belt and wrist wraps. The squat is below parallel, the bench press is paused, the deadlift is not hitched, and the curl is up against the wall.

# RAW POWERLIFTING FEMALE CLASSIFICATION STANDARDS

Women's Squat

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>198+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	179	189	204	240	250	260	279	295	305	330
<b>MASTER</b>	163	172	186	218	228	237	254	268	278	300
<b>CLASS I</b>	147	155	167	197	205	213	229	242	250	271
<b>CLASS II</b>	131	138	149	175	183	190	204	215	223	241
<b>CLASS III</b>	113	119	129	151	158	164	176	186	192	208
<b>CLASS IV</b>	97	102	110	130	135	140	151	159	165	178

Women's Bench Press

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>198+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	120	135	143	160	170	181	192	206	210	225
<b>MASTER</b>	109	123	130	146	155	165	175	187	191	205
<b>CLASS I</b>	98	111	117	131	139	148	157	169	172	185
<b>CLASS II</b>	88	99	104	117	124	132	140	150	153	164
<b>CLASS III</b>	76	85	90	101	107	114	121	130	132	142
<b>CLASS IV</b>	65	73	77	86	92	98	104	111	113	122

Women's Deadlift

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>198+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	248	259	285	304	321	353	363	380	385	405
<b>MASTER</b>	226	236	259	277	292	321	330	346	350	369
<b>CLASS I</b>	203	212	234	249	263	289	298	312	316	332
<b>CLASS II</b>	181	189	208	222	234	258	265	277	281	296
<b>CLASS III</b>	156	163	180	192	202	222	229	239	243	255
<b>CLASS IV</b>	134	140	154	164	173	191	196	205	208	219

Women's Strict Curl

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>198+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	50	58	65	72	76	79	83	88	94	99
<b>MASTER</b>	45	53	59	65	69	72	74	80	85	90
<b>CLASS I</b>	41	48	53	59	62	65	67	72	77	81
<b>CLASS II</b>	36	42	47	52	55	57	59	64	68	72
<b>CLASS III</b>	32	37	42	46	49	50	51	56	60	63
<b>CLASS IV</b>	27	32	36	39	42	43	44	48	51	54

Women's Powerlifting Total

<i>Wt. Class</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>132</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>181</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>198+</i>
<b>ELITE</b>	535	573	611	665	703	756	813	839	859	918
<b>MASTER</b>	487	521	556	605	640	688	740	763	782	835
<b>CLASS I</b>	439	470	501	545	576	620	667	688	704	753
<b>CLASS II</b>	385	418	446	485	513	552	593	612	627	670
<b>CLASS III</b>	342	361	385	419	443	476	512	529	541	578
<b>CLASS IV</b>	289	309	330	359	380	408	439	453	464	496

These lifting classifications apply to a drug free lifter that is only using a belt and wrist wraps. The squat is below parallel, the bench press is paused, the deadlift is not hitched, and the curl is up against the wall.

# Lifter Classification Information

This is applicable to all lifters that compete in raw, drug free powerlifting competitions in federations that enforce below parallel squats and paused bench presses.

Operational Definitions of the following terms:

**Elite:** An exceptional lifter, for males this means the lifter is very likely in the top 10 in the nation for their respective weight class and the lifter may be close to a top 5 ranking among comparable federations for that competition year. For females this means the lifter is very likely in the top 5 in the nation for their respective weight class and the lifter may be close to a top 3 ranking among comparable federations for that competition year. Elite lifters generally place very well at local level competitions and will usually hold their own at National level competitions. It is not uncommon for Elite level lifters to have 10+ years of experience with serious powerlifting training. Approximately 1% of competitive powerlifters will reach the Elite level of classification.

**Master:** A very skilled lifter, for males this means the lifter is likely in the top 50 in the nation for their respective weight class among comparable federations for that year. For females this means the lifter is likely in the top 20 in the nation for their respective weight class among comparable federations for that competition year. Master lifters usually perform quite well at local level competitions and may want to think about competing on a National scale. Master lifters are likely to have 6+ years of experience with serious powerlifting training. Approximately 10% of competitive powerlifters will reach the Master level of classification.

**Class I:** A skilled lifter. A Class I lifter is significantly stronger than the average person that engages in regular intense weight training. Class I lifters are likely to have 4+ years of experience with serious powerlifting training. A high percentage (~30%) of competitive powerlifters are at the Class I level classification.

**Class II:** A relatively skilled lifter. A Class II lifter is stronger than the average person that engages in regular intense weight training. Class II lifters are likely to have 3+ years of experience with serious powerlifting training. A high percentage (~30%) of competitive powerlifters are at the Class II level classification.

**Class III:** A Class III lifter is stronger than the average person. Class III lifters are likely to have 2+ years of experience with hard resistance training. A reasonable number (~20%) of competitive powerlifters are at the Class III level classification, this classification is common among teenage and upper level master lifters (50+ yrs old).

**Class IV:** A Class IV lifter is at the beginning stage for a powerlifter. Class IV lifters are likely to have 1+ year of experience with hard resistance training. A smaller number (~10%) of competitive powerlifters compete at the Class IV level classification.

## FAQ about the New Lifter Classification System

### Why were the numbers revised?

Initially the goal was to simply create a classification system for the individual lifts based off of the system that was currently being used to classify a lifter's powerlifting total. After further examination it became apparent that the current system was not quite describing what we were seeing on the platform. Just a few people each year were hitting elite at the lightweights, even with a large number of competitors, and a large number of people were hitting elite at the heavyweights, the terms were not balanced. An attempt has been made to more properly align the standards so that elite at 148 means approximately the same thing as does elite at 242. Standards have been established for each individual contested lift and the numbers for the powerlifting total standards have been slightly revised.

### How did you come up with the numbers?

The primary resource that was used to calculate actual numbers instead of expected numbers was the lifter rankings system on PLwatch.com. Information from the years 2008, 2009, and 2010 were primarily used. PLwatch.com does not separate by out federation standards and/or if lifters are drug tested so we had to further examine the rankings based on those qualities. Those numbers provided the backbone for the Elite standards, however several lifting formulas were also used, input was given from federation officials, and patterns were analyzed. The other rankings (Master through Class IV) were set up to maintain a similar standard in relation to the Elite rankings as occurred in previous years.

### **Why do we need 4 classes of lifters plus Elite and Master, why not fewer classes?**

Powerlifting is a sport that accepts all comers, some great lifters, some not so great. Some lifters are at the tail end of their sporting career and others are just getting started. In addition general gym goers that lift weights but don't compete like to "look in" to get a sense of how they might fare in a competition. The 6 rankings help separate out those lifters that are at the top of their game to those lifters just getting started and everywhere in between. While it is true that the significant majority of full meet lifters will be class II or above, the standards for the single lifts are higher and many lifters will find themselves working hard to simply place on those standards, let alone shoot for a Class I or Master level or beyond. Multiple standards can inspire a lifter to get that extra 5 or 10 lbs on a lift, if one is so close to that next level it might be the motivation they need to hit that weight. Finally powerlifting as a whole is inclusive, not exclusive. It is not just a sport for the "super strong" among us, it is a sport for all those lifters that want to test themselves in a competitive setting and to see what their own personal limits may be. If lifters disapprove of the lower classes they can simply ignore them.

### **What's new about this?**

First, the powerlifting total standards have been revised, although not greatly. In general the light weight standards have been lowered slightly, the middle weights are relatively unchanged, and the heavy weight standards have been raised slightly. Secondly there are standards presented for each individual lift which is a new idea. The individual lift standards can be applied to both a full meet and a single lift competition.

### **Why don't the standards on single lifts add up the standards for the total?**

The single lifts standards represent the ability to specialize, if one only trains the bench press it will be easier to improve just that than if one divides up their resources among additional lifts. Thus a good all around lifter whom is Class I in most lifts might actually be a Master lifter when examining their total because they have no weak points.

### **Why are the standards higher for females than males relatively speaking?**

Fewer women compete than men, it can be assumed that if more women were to compete there would be more good lifters.

### **Why aren't the jumps between weight classes more even?**

The jumps in weight between the weight lifted in weight classes was based on actual performance, not expected performance. For some weight classes and lifts there was a minimal advantage in being just one weight class heavier, in others there was a very significant difference in the performance of the lifters. The standards were set up in general to classify what lifters were actually doing on the platform instead of what was simply expected of them.

### **I know a lot of people that can hit the Elite numbers, are your numbers right?**

It is natural with any sport that the more accomplished lifters receive more press and recognition. Elite in this sense does not mean one is guaranteed to be a National Champion or a World Class lifter, although both of those lifters would be elite. Elite simply means very good. When looked at nationally there will still be a reasonable number of elite lifters per year. If you think you have seen a lot of people train in the gym that could be elite, it is likely you might not be familiar with the standards set forth to complete the raw powerlifts in a competitive setting and you may not be aware if those other lifters are drug free or not. The rankings on PLwatch.com confirm that an elite level performance to the standards set is relatively rare. If you think you really know some people that could hit these numbers but they don't currently compete, suggest that they go and lift in a competition, they should be very competitive.

### **Aren't these standards too high?**

The standards need to be moderately high in order for them to mean anything. If 50 people in each weight class are hitting Elite then it lessens the title. You personally might have your own definition of Elite and Master and so on, these standards are based on the operational definitions put forth at the beginning of this article.

### **Aren't these standards too low?**

They were based on the rankings on PLwatch.com. It is likely that if all competitive powerlifters competed in the same federation under the same standards, there would be more "elite" level lifters than the numbers here and the numbers might need to be revised. However, use of powerlifting equipment, strictness of judging, and drugs all play a significant role in the numbers lifters can put up. If more people want to come and lift under these standards and prove them too low, so be it. Until that time all we can use is the information we have.

## Will you revise these standards?

Yes, the plan is to reexamine them in 3-5 years and see how they are holding up. If they are still adequately describing the type of lifting seen then it will not be necessary to revise them. If many more lifters are achieving the designations put forth then the standards can be revised.

## What's with the Curl?

The curl was actually included in the first powerlifting competitions in the 1960's but it was dropped after a few years, likely due to the time a full powerlifting meet takes as it is. The curl has been reintroduced lately in several federations to test the strength of the arms. These standards apply to a strict curl (up against the wall) using an EZ bar. For those that like this lift, it is meant as a guide, for those that don't like this lift, ignore it. The curl is not added to a lifter's total, it is a stand alone event.

## Why don't the Elite numbers on Curls increase after the 242 weight class?

So far there has not been a noticeable increase in curl strength in the heavier weight classes so the standards reflect that.

## How did you come up with the curl numbers?

Because less people compete in the curl the standards are higher. The elite number would generally give a lifter the first or second ranking for the curl in that weight class that year for that federation. As more people compete in the curl those numbers might rise. The curl numbers can be revised in 3-5 years if necessary as well.

## How come the Master lifter is closer to Elite than the other categories?

The Master lifter ranking is closer to the Elite lifter ranking from a percentage point of view than the other rankings because of the fact of diminishing returns. In the beginning lifters start off using low weight but make great progress. The more experienced the lifter gets the slower the gains come. Once a lifter has reached a high level of proficiency adding another 5 or 10% to their strength can be quite a challenge.

## If I am not at a Category IV level am I too weak to compete in powerlifting?

Powerlifting is more about competing with yourself and better yourself than lifting a certain amount of weight. If you can lift the bar and you enjoy testing yourself in a competitive environment, powerlifting is for you. You will very likely find the atmosphere at a powerlifting competition to be quite supportive, almost all good lifters started out pretty weak at some point so they can relate to where you might be now. In addition if you are older (50 + years old) or younger (<18 years old) of course it is less common for those lifters to lift extremely high amounts of weight.

## What can I do with this information?

You can use this information to assess your strengths and weakness as a powerlifter. If you are a Class I bencher but a Class III deadlifter it means your deadlift is a weak point for you and likely needs more work. You can use these standards as a motivation tool to lift more weight. You can use these standards to see if moving up or down a weight class is likely a good idea for you. If you can move up a level by gaining or losing body weight it is a likely good idea, if your relative classification goes down then it is likely not a good idea. Finally you can acknowledge your accomplishments and hard work by purchasing certificates that designate your ranking with a particular lift in a certain competition for that year.

To purchase a certificate with your lifter classification on it, contact **Paul Bossi at [rawlifting@aol.com](mailto:rawlifting@aol.com)**

If you have any questions/comments/concerns or feedback about these standards please contact **Tim Henriques at [NPTTim@aol.com](mailto:NPTTim@aol.com)**

