

Proposal to add the IAWA gender adjustment to USAWA official scoring

Presented by Beth Skwarecki

I propose that the USAWA Official Scoring adopt the IAWA's 33% adjustment for female lifters. This will allow men and women to be ranked together in overall scoring. This will encourage a more competitive experience for female members, and benefit USAWA's growth and development as an organization.

Rationale

This proposed rule change will benefit the USAWA and its members in several ways:

- **Offer a more competitive field for women:** Since women are in the minority in this organization, we often have few or no opponents at in-person meets. For example, if a meet draws 23 men and 2 women, the men have a competitive field of 23 people but the women only have a field of 2 people. This rule change would allow all lifters to compete in a field of 25 people.
- **Encourage turnout at in-person meets:** Women made up 25% of the participants in the 2023 postal series, yet typically make up a much smaller percentage of in-person meets. One likely reason is that women are more interested in competing when they know they will have meaningful competition!
- **Encourage growth of USAWA as an organization:** Several members have brought up the need to bring in more women as part of growing our sport. While the USAWA is welcoming to women, the disparity between the number of male and female lifters means that we currently provide a lesser competitive experience for women than we do for men. Incorporating a gender adjustment into our scoring will provide competitive opportunities for women that are more in line with what we currently are able to offer to men.
- **Encourage development of female lifters:** When all lifters are ranked together, each person can see where they stand and, if they choose, focus their training on climbing up the rankings. Male lifters in USAWA already have the ability to see where they stand with respect to most of the rest of the membership. It's time to bring this opportunity to all members of our organization.
- **Build on IAWA's experience with the same scoring formula.** This is not a new, untested idea; it has been part of IAWA's official scoring for many years. USAWA lifters already compete under this scoring when they participate in world events.

At the bottom of this proposal, I answer a few questions that have come up when discussing this potential rule change with other USAWA members.

Proposed change of language

Current rulebook	Change to (new wording in bold)
<p>II. Participants</p> <p>1. Competitions are to be organized for both men and women in separate divisions.</p>	<p>II. Participants</p> <p>1. Competitions are to be organized for both men and women.</p>
<p>IX. Official Scoring</p> <p>1. Official scoring in the USAWA is done using the Lynch Formula that provides an adjustment for a lifters bodyweight, and an Age Adjustment which provides an adjustment for a lifters age. After applying both of these adjustments, Age Adjusted Lynch Points are calculated and used to determine the ranking of the competition.</p>	<p>IX. Official Scoring</p> <p>1. Official scoring in the USAWA is done using the Lynch Formula that provides an adjustment for a lifters bodyweight, an Age Adjustment which provides an adjustment for a lifters age, and a gender allowance for female lifters. After applying all three of these adjustments, the lifter's Amended Total is calculated and used to determine the ranking of the competition.</p>
<p><i>Add the following language (taken directly from the IAWA rulebook) as a new point 4 after point 3 of the Official Scoring section. Renumber the old point 4 to become point 5, etc.</i></p>	<p>A Gender allowance is given to female lifters, which is 33%, that they can more equally compete against male competitors. A lifter's total is multiplied by the Lynch Formula Factor, then multiplied by any Age Allowance% (plus 33% extra for female lifters). This will find a lifter's Amended Total and will be used to determine the overall rankings of all of the lifters in a competition.</p>

Q & A

Does this mean meet directors cannot give a Best Women's Lifter award?

No, meet directors can still give any awards they choose. This rule change does not take anything away, it just adds the ability to give awards based on overall rankings.

IAWA meets often give men's and women's awards while also calculating gender-adjusted scores.

Is the 33% adjustment fair?

The 33% adjustment is in line with the data we have about men's and women's performances in weightlifting and powerlifting. It is also the same scoring that IAWA has been using for years.

Below I present additional data confirming that the 33% adjustment is appropriate for use in USAWA official scoring.

Comparison to powerlifting formulas

In the Wilks formula for powerlifting, a 150-pound woman lifting a 1000 pound total is equivalent to a 150-pound man lifting a 1325 pound total, for a ratio of 1.325. (Both would receive a 460 point Wilks score).

With DOTS, a 1000 pound total for a 150-pound woman is equivalent to a 1341 pound total for a 150-pound man, giving a ratio of 1.341. (Both would receive a 466 point DOTS score.)

So the 33% adjustment, which is equivalent to a 1.33 ratio, is right in line with the major formulas used in powerlifting.

Comparison to weightlifting records

In Olympic weightlifting, I calculated the ratio between the world and national records for men versus women in comparable weight classes:

- 55kg world record total: 1.26
- 81kg world record total: 1.33
- 55kg US record total: 1.17
- 81kg US record total: 1.41
- Average of all the above: 1.29

This data also provides support for 1.33 being a fair number to use for competition.

Comparison to past USAWA meets

At Nationals 2023, using the 1.33 multiplier would have put me (Beth S.) in 9th place overall, out of 16 lifters. If I hadn't bombed the strict press, I would have finished around 5th overall.

In the Q4 postal from 2023, here's how the top three women would have fared with a 1.33 multiplier:

- Kasey: 6th
 - Beth: 7th
 - RJ: 9th
- (out of 38 lifters)

And the Q3 postal:

- Sylvia: 2nd
 - Beth: 5th
 - Kasey: 7th
- (out of 35 lifters)

In conclusion, the 33% adjustment factor matches the formulas used in powerlifting, is close to the ratio seen between men's and women's records in Olympic weightlifting, and appropriately levels the playing field for women in our organization.