

Q-Points Information for Canadian Masters Weightlifters

M Gomes 2024/09/12

Determining the most effective and equitable way of comparing weightlifters, Masters included, has been an ongoing exercise of many dedicated mathematicians well versed in the sport of weightlifting. This search for an overall comparison of weightlifters began with the development of the Sinclair Coefficient formula in 1978. Although other less accurate comparisons existed prior Dr Sinclair's formula, it was the Sinclair formula that was accepted by the IWF.

To compare athletic ability and determine an overall best masters lifter, a body weight adjustment is applied to the total weight lifted in order to compare performances made by lifters of different body weights, called "Sinclair points". The Sinclair points are then multiplied by "age factors" to take into account performance decline due to aging. The resulting scaled total is called "Sinclair-Meltzer-Faber" (SMF) for men and "Sinclair-Huebner-Meltzer-Faber" (SHMF) for women. This is named after the researchers who derived the bodyweight formula (Dr. R. Sinclair) and the age factors for men and women, respectively (Drs. M. Huebner, D.E. Meltzer, and F. Faber).

Starting in January 2025, the IMWA will be using what is called "Q-Points" to determine masters' best lifters. Like the Sinclair Points, Q-Points are used for all weightlifting categories such as Juniors and Seniors. There is some concern about its application at the Youth level, but that is not of a concern to Masters weightlifters.

The statistical method used in calculating a score based on body mass and total weight lifted is called Quantile Regression, hence the name Q-Points. The method is "robust against outliers" - results that stand out as extreme or, in some cases, questionable. While Sinclair and Robi Points are directly tied to world records, Q-Points were developed by comparison with not just one record-breaking performance, but with competition results ranging from 50 in the lightest non-Olympic weight category to more than 200 in ultra-competitive classes.

"Maybe it makes more sense to use Robi Points or Sinclair, both based on world records, at the very highest level, but if you want to compare results in national championships it makes more sense to use Q-Points.... "The main advantage of Q-Points is that they are consistent across body weights and changes in body weight, which is not the case for Robi points." (Marianne Huebener, Department of Statistics and Probability and Kinesiology Michigan State University.)

Q-Points are being incorporated into the OWLCS, thanks to its creator, Jean-Francois Lamy and it will be applicable to Masters weightlifters. Q-Points for Masters start at age 30, so this will be consistent with WCHM masters age requirements.

Weightlifting Canada Haltérophilie Masters will adopt the use of Q-Points. Understandably, each Canadian Provincial Weightlifting Association will ensure that their Provincial Masters Championships, and Provincial Masters records will also use the starting age of 30 and Q-Points.

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