

Paralympics Fact File

All About Powerlifting

What is Powerlifting?

Powerlifting is a major sport at the Paralympic Games.

In powerlifting, athletes compete in a bench press competition where they lie flat on a special bench and lift a weighted bar from arms' length to the chest.

Team GB had five Powerlifting athletes competing in London 2012 - Anthony Peddle, Jason Irving, Ali Jawad, Zoe Newson and Natalie Blake. The team secured a bronze medal, won by Newson.

Athletes with any physical impairments can take part in Powerlifting. There are 10 different weight categories.

Powerlifting rules are very strict and must be followed at all times.



Facts About Powerlifting:

- Powerlifting first became an event at the Paralympics for men in Seoul in 1988 and for women in 2000 at Sydney.
- At the London 2012 Paralympics, Nigeria topped the medal table winning 12 medals, Egypt took second place taking 11 medals and Iran were in third place with 6 medals. Team GB came in tenth place with one bronze medal.
- Zoe Newson won the bronze medal in London 2012, by lifting a huge 88kg! - Amazingly, she bettered this in 2016, when she lifted 102kg!
- Most powerlifters can lift around three times their own body weight!
- In Rio 2016, Ali Jawad won a silver medal in the Men's -59kg event. Zoe Newson also won bronze in the Women's -45kg event.

The Rules

- The weighted bar is placed on two racks and the lifter must take the bar until the chief referee gives the 'start'. This is when the athletes' arms are fully extended and 'locked'.
- The athlete must lower the bar to their chest, hold it for a pause and then press the bar to where the arms can be 'locked' out and until the referee shouts the command 'rack'.
- Powerlifting is judged by three judges, who indicate whether the lift was successful by showing white lights; if a lift was unsuccessful, a red light is shown.
- Athletes can make three lifts during the event, although they must increase the weight of the bar by 1kg each time. Athletes are given three attempts at each lift.
- Athletes must leave the competition platform within 30 seconds of completing their lift.
- The winning athlete is the one who has lifted the greatest amount of weight in their category, within three lifts.