

IWF Technical Committee Meeting 29 September 2025, Forde, Norway Minutes

Attendance

Sam Coffa (Chairman), Liwat Limsuknirun, Mustafa Mahdi, Pedro Sanchez, Milan Mihajlovic, Zhou Zhiqin, Abdullah Aljarmal, Maude Charron (Athletes Commission), Horst Sayler (WFA)

Online

Manareddin Eshelli, Olga Solovyeva (AWF)

In attendance also: Mohammed Jaloud (IWF President), Jose Quinones (IWF General Secretary), Ursula Papandrea (IWF Vice President), Matthew Curtain (IWF EB Member), Achilleas Tsogas (IWF CEO), Ioannis Mournianakis (Legal Counsel), Matyas Lencser (IWF Competition Manager)

Apologies

Doris Marrero, John Ogolla, Maritza Ortiz, Forrester Osei (Athletes Commission), Tina Beiter (EWF), Jessica Castillo (PAWF)

Meeting Overview

The International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Technical Committee (TC) convened on **September 29, 2025**, in Norway to deliberate on key technical matters shaping the sport's immediate and long-term future. The meeting gathered committee members, IWF leadership, and representatives from partner organizations, including SBD Apparel.

The primary focus areas were:

- The introduction of **new bodyweight categories** for all age groups (Senior, Junior, and Youth) and recommendations for the Olympic program (LA 2028).
- Review of the **new SBD weightlifting costume** and its compliance with IOC branding rules.
- Updates on **technical officials' regulations** and the establishment of a comprehensive database.
- Discussion of **technical rule changes** and deferred agenda items for upcoming sessions.

1. Presentation of the SBD Weightlifting Costume

The meeting opened with a detailed presentation from **William Islip**, Commercial Director of SBD Apparel, on the newly designed **IWF-SBD weightlifting costume**, developed over 18 months in partnership with elite athletes. The costume features:

- Specialized **anti-abrasion panels** on shoulders and thighs to reduce barbell friction.
- Distinct **male and female fits** with inclusive sizing (XS–5XL men, XS–3XL women).
- Integrated **QR code and garment weight label**, ensuring standardized weigh-in procedures.
- IOC-compliant branding layout, with logo placement limited to 30 cm².

Committee members raised several points:

- **Athlete feedback and inclusivity:** The Athlete Commission requested broader athlete consultation, noting that early testing was limited to the Great Britain team.
- **Cultural sensitivity and design options:** Members suggested additional female designs suitable for countries requiring more modest attire, as well as models with shorter sleeves.
- **Branding and visibility:** Calls were made to increase the prominence of the IWF logo and maintain balance between manufacturer and national insignia, aligning with IOC Rule 50 guidelines.
- **Technical feedback:** Questions addressed the effect of washing on garment weight, logo positioning, and the need for uniformity across competitions.

Following deliberation, the committee agreed:

- To align costume branding with **IOC Olympic standards** for Los Angeles 2028, while developing **distinct IWF branding guidelines** for world and continental events.
- To consider **two uniform types**, one compliant with IOC rules for the Olympics and another more flexible model for IWF events.
- To request that SBD explore innovations for **secure Bib numbers** and **durability improvements**.
- To collect further athlete feedback at upcoming competitions through on-site demonstrations and feedback boxes.

The committee emphasized that adoption of the SBD costume remains **non-mandatory**, national federations may continue to use other approved suppliers. However, SBD will serve as the **official partner**, alongside five certified providers, under the forthcoming **IWF Licensing Program**.

2. Bodyweight Categories – New Structure and Olympic Recommendations

A major portion of the meeting was devoted to finalizing **new bodyweight categories** for IWF competitions and recommending configurations for the Olympic Games.

Three proposals were presented:

a)

Dr. Mustafa Mahdi's Proposal

Dr. Mahdi presented a detailed, research-driven model based on historical data and the **"golden ratio" (1.3)** principle to ensure proportional spacing between categories. He emphasized balanced representation among light, middle, and heavy classes to safeguard athlete health and competitive fairness.

Proposed Olympic categories:

- **Men:** 65, 75, 85, 95, 110, +110 kg
- **Women:** 53, 61, 69, 77, 86, +86 kg

He noted that the expanded eight-category structure for IWF events (to be implemented in 2026) allows more natural progression and fair competition.

Note: During the meeting, Mr. Pedro Sanchez had intended to present his own proposal; however, after reviewing Dr. Mustafa Mahdi's similar and more detailed version, he chose to withdraw his and express support for Dr. Mahdi's proposal instead.

b)

IWF Secretariat Proposal (Achilleas Tsogas)

The Secretariat emphasized consistency with IOC expectations and the practical feasibility of reducing from eight to six categories for the Olympics by **removing the lightest and heaviest divisions**.

The Secretariat favored gradual weight progression and greater focus on heavier classes, citing audience engagement and the IOC's encouragement to highlight higher-weight categories.

c)

Dr. Abdullah's Proposal

Dr. Abdullah proposed a simplified structure of **one light, two middle, and three heavy categories**, aligning with the Olympic ideal of "Faster, Higher, Stronger." He argued for prioritizing strength-based divisions to appeal to spectators and the IOC's objectives.

Outcome and Decision

Following extensive debate:

- The committee **endorsed Dr. Mahdi's distribution** as the preferred framework for all IWF competitions, aligning with health and performance balance principles.
- The Secretariat's IOC-oriented adjustments were noted as relevant for Olympic implementation, pending Executive Board approval.
- Final categories were approved as follows:

Senior & Junior Categories (effective August 1, 2026):

- **Men:** 60, 65, 70, 75, 85, 95, 110, +110 kg
- **Women:** 49, 53, 57, 61, 69, 77, 86, +86 kg

Youth Categories (effective August 1, 2026):

- **Men:** 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 95, +95 kg
- **Women:** 45, 49, 53, 57, 61, 69, 77, +77 kg

Olympic Recommendations:

- **Men:** 65, 75, 85, 95, 110, +110 kg
- **Women:** 53, 61, 69, 77, 86, +86 kg

These will be submitted to the IWF Executive Board and Athletes' Commission for approval, after which they will be forwarded for IOC consideration and integrated into the LA28 Qualification System.

3. Technical Officials – Guidelines and Database

The committee reaffirmed the importance of high standards and transparency in appointing and evaluating technical officials.

Key decisions:

- **Eligibility:** Federations without competing athletes generally should not nominate officials, except under specific circumstances.
- **Rotation:** Officials may serve in a maximum of **two consecutive World Championships**, after which they must sit out the next two editions.
- **Priority:** TC members are prioritized for appointments and can self-nominate.
- **Database Creation:** A comprehensive **IWF Technical Officials Database** will be established, led by **Pedro, Zoli, and Matyas**, to centralize data on qualifications, performance evaluations, and availability.
- Formation of a **Referee Evaluation Subcommittee** was deferred to the next online meeting.

4. Rule Amendments and Procedural Updates

Several key rule clarifications were reviewed and approved:

- **Definition of “The Total & To Compete”:** Clarified what constitutes a valid total and what it means to compete in competition.
- **Weigh-in Rules:** Athletes exceeding weight limits must wait until the end of the session for re-weighing; gender-matched weigh-in officials remain preferred.
- **Attempt Increments:** Maintained the **1 kg increment rule** for lifts.
- **Belt Specifications:** Referred flexibility on **belt width** to the Medical Committee for safety assessment.
- **Referee Promotions:** Process for upgrading referees from Category 2 to Category 1 was reviewed, with noted concerns about examination integrity in certain national federations.

5. Additional Discussions

- The committee discussed the concept of introducing a **Mixed Team Event**, encouraging further feasibility studies.
- Emphasis was placed on maintaining **transparency in referee examinations** and **upholding global standards**.
- A future focus will be developing **IWF branding guidelines, uniform certification standards**, and stronger **athlete feedback loops** in product development.

6. Next Steps

- Implement the new **bodyweight categories** across all IWF competitions from **August 1, 2026**.
- Finalize **Olympic category recommendations** and submit them to the IWF Executive Board and Athletes’ Commission for ratification.
- Develop the **Technical Officials Database** by early 2026.

- Hold an **online follow-up meeting within one month** to conclude deferred items, including referee evaluation processes.
- Refer ongoing **medical and equipment** matters to the appropriate IWF committees.

Sam Coffa

Chairman, IWF Technical Committee