



Sport History

Powerlifting

Origins and the sport today:

Para powerlifting debuted at the Tokyo 1964 Paralympic Games as a weightlifting bench press event for men with spinal cord injuries. Today it is a sport contested at an elite level by male and female athletes in more than 100 nations and territories worldwide, with other disability groups now incorporated.

The sport is open to athletes with any of eight eligible physical impairments: impaired muscle power, impaired passive range of movement, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia, ataxia and athetosis. The physical disabilities also include cerebral palsy, lower limb amputation and poliomyelitis.

All eligible athletes compete in one sport class, but in different weight categories.

Para powerlifting at the Commonwealth Games:

Men's Para powerlifting debuted at the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games, the first time in Games history that Para sports were included. Solomon AMARAUKO (NIG) set the tone for future Nigerian success, winning gold. His compatriot, Ruel ISHAKU, triumphed at Melbourne 2006 with a monster lift of 190.2kg, nearly 10kg clear of silver medallist Jason IRVING (ENG).

The Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games saw women's Para powerlifting added to the program for the first time and Nigerian dominance continued. They enjoyed a clean sweep of all six medals, with Yakubu ADESOKAN winning the men's competition and Esther OYEMA taking gold in the women's.

The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games saw an expansion of the competition, with heavyweight and lightweight events for men and women, but the pattern of results remained unchanged, with Nigerian athletes winning all four gold and two silver.

Para powerlifting in Australia:

Notable Australian Para powerlifters include Vic RENALSON, who won weightlifting medals at all four Paralympics from 1964 to 1976 – along with podium finishes in the discus, javelin and shot put.

After originally representing New Zealand, Brian McNICHOLL lifted for Australia at five Paralympics, winning gold, silver and three bronze in Para weightlifting and Para powerlifting.

In more recent times, Darren GARDINER won two Paralympic silver medals (2004 and 2008) in the men's over-100kg Para powerlifting event – he's nicknamed 'The Bear' because of the loud roaring noise he makes during competition.