



REFEREE TESTING: REQUIREMENTS & PROCEDURES MANUAL

Version 2026.2

In Effect: March 1, 2026

International Drug Free Powerlifting Association

liftclean@idfpa.org

www.idfpa.org

For questions, contact the Technical Committee Chair: tc@idfpa.org

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Background

This manual describes and defines the requirements for all referee ranks in the IDFPA. Additionally, the procedures for the written exam (taken online via a computer) and practical exam are specified. Testing requirements may vary on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Technical Committee for International Referees as consideration may be given to previous status in another federation, the ability of a start-up affiliate to conduct practical exams, and the advancement of higher-level referees. In order to serve as a referee at any IDFPA event, all of the following are required:

1. Current IDFPA affiliate membership
2. SafeSport (or affiliate equivalent) completion on file with IDFPA National Office
3. Background check on file with the IDFPA National Office
4. Signed DCO Agreement <<https://form.jotform.com/usapowerlifting/ado-dco-agreement>>
5. Doping Control Officer Online Course <<https://usapowerlifting.thinkific.com/courses/doping-control-officer-training>>

The following are the levels/ranks of referee in the IDFPA:

- International
- Senior International

International Referee

International Referee: Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. Current IDFPA Affiliate member in good standing
2. Current with SafeSport and background check (or affiliate equivalent) requirements
3. National Referee (or affiliate equivalent) for a minimum of 2 years (i.e., 24 months).
4. Chief referee for a full session in at least 4 different full-power national championships (or affiliate equivalent) within the most recent 4-year period; pro-qualifiers, pro meets, and international events are not eligible to meet this requirement
5. Evaluation and letter of recommendation from an International or Senior International Referee
6. Approval from affiliate (or affiliate Technical Committee if applicable) and IDFPA Technical Committee to sit for exam
7. Pass closed-book written exam with a score of at least 90%
8. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%

Procedure:

1. Ensure requirements #1-4 above have been met and complete and submit [online referee application](#) at least 30 days prior to exam
 - a. The IDFPA Technical Committee Chair will send the application and applicant information to the affiliate Technical Committee chair (if affiliate has a Technical Committee) and the affiliate TC will vote on whether to approve the candidate's application
 - b. If the affiliate does not have a Technical Committee, the IDFPA Technical Committee chair will send the application to the affiliate chair for approval
 - c. If the affiliate does not have a chair at the time the application is submitted or if the affiliate chair takes more than 1 week to respond, the candidate should contact the chair of the IDFPA Technical Committee at: tc@IDFPA.org
2. Find an International or Senior International Referee who can write a letter of recommendation and complete an evaluation form
 - a. The International or Senior International Referee who agrees to write a letter of recommendation and complete an evaluation form must contact the Technical Committee (tc@idfpa.org) for specific instructions
 - b. IDFPA Technical Committee members may not complete letters of recommendation or evaluations for candidates
3. Receive Technical Committee approval to take International Referee exam (exam must be administered at a full power international event)

Maintenance of International Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the International Referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, platform referee, or jury member for a full session at four (4) international events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029). Note: Serving as a Technical Secretary for an international event counts toward the recertification requirements. International Referees must work as a scoring table official at least one full session at one (1) event every four-year certification cycle.
 - a. International Referees certified in 2026 and 2027 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at two (2) events (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2030
 - b. International Referees certified in 2028 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at one (1) event (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2030

- c. International Referees certified in 2029 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of eligible events worked as a referee
2. International Referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will lose their International Referee status and will be reduced to their previous rank held with their affiliate. Referees who are reduced in rank due to a failure to meet recertification requirements are eligible to pursue promotion to the next rank but must begin the certification process from the beginning

International Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of an IDFPA affiliate to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 5 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- The International Referee written exam has 100 multiple choice questions, is closed book (i.e., no resources are allowed to be used while taking the exam), is proctored, and is limited to 2 hours
- The written exam is administered virtually and consists of 100 multiple choice questions with a minimum score of 90% required to pass
- The written exam will be proctored by a member of the Technical Committee or, in the absence of an available Technical Committee member, an approved designee of the Technical Committee
- If the candidate receives a passing score of 90% or better, they are eligible to sit for the practical exam
- If the practical exam is not successfully completed within 24 months of passing the written exam, the candidate must restart the application process and retake the written exam
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam
 - Candidates who do not pass the written exam must wait to take the practical portion until they successfully pass the written exam retake (there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed)

Part 2: Practical Exam

- The practical portion of the International Referee exam must be taken at a full-power international event
- Candidates must dress in the appropriate referee uniform for their current rank
- A Technical Committee member or a Technical Committee approved Examiner will be assigned to administer the practical
 - The Examiner for the International Referee practical exam must be a Senior International Referee
 - Being a Senior International Referee does not guarantee approval as an Examiner
 - The International Referee candidate should coordinate with the event Technical Secretary (or Technical Secretaries) and Technical Committee to ensure an Examiner is available to administer the practical exam
 - If the Technical Committee is unable to identify a qualified Examiner for a particular event, the candidate will have to wait to take the practical exam at an event at which an approved Examiner will be present (i.e., meeting the candidate requirements and identifying an event for the exam does not guarantee the practical will be able to be conducted at said event)
- The practical exam consists of the candidate successfully running weigh-ins for the session in which they are testing and observing/making decisions on 40 squats, 30 benches, and 30 deadlifts for 100 graded attempts (90% agreement across all 100 attempts is the passing score)

- The candidate must coordinate with the event Technical Secretary (or Technical Secretaries) to ensure they are scheduled to run weigh-ins for the session they are assigned to take their practical
 - This portion is graded as pass/fail and must be passed prior to taking the rest of the practical exam
- During the platform component of the practical, the candidate must indicate to the Examiner whether they would give the attempt a white light or a red light and indicate what infraction(s) occurred if a red light was decided upon
- For each attempt, the candidate must make their decisions known to the Examiner before the decisions of the platform referees are known via the referee lights.
- Decisions will be scored based on whether the Examiner agrees with the candidates decision (i.e., the decisions of the platform referees do not factor in to practical scoring)
- During an International Referee practical exam, the candidate must never be in control of an official referee light controller nor may they make official competition decisions
- The International Referee practical exam must be given from the side referee position (chief referee and jury table positions are not allowed) with the Examiner and candidate sitting side-by-side. The candidate and Examiner may sit wherever the candidate feels they are able to most effectively see the lifts (i.e., in a similar position to where the candidate would sit if they were actively refereeing)
- The Examiner will keep track of the number of correct and incorrect calls via the International Referee Practical Exam Scoresheet
 - Examiner notes:
 - If the candidate correctly indicated a red light (i.e., no lift) but gave the wrong reason(s) for the red light, this is to be considered a missed/incorrect attempt by the Examiner
 - There will be no “practice lifts” (i.e., every decision made will be graded for exam purposes)
 - Attempts in which the lifter clearly failed and there is no judgment to be made are not to be counted as graded lifts for the practical exam and are not to be recorded on the exam scoresheet
 - Examples of non-graded attempts include: spotters needing to assist the lifter/bar up and into the racks for the SQ and BP and lifters not getting to the finished position in the DL
 - It is preferred that all graded attempts for an exam occur within a single session of lifting; however, if there is not a sufficient number of attempts within a single session of lifting, the exam may be extended across multiple sessions of lifting at the same event (i.e., same event sanction number)
 - A single practical exam may not be extended across multiple events
 - An Examiner may not administer more than one practical at a time
 - It is preferred that the same referee serve as the Examiner for the entire test; however, if necessary, different referees may serve as Examiners for the three different disciplines provided they meet the Examiner criteria described above
 - Unless absolutely necessary, there should not be more than one referee serving as an Examiner for a given discipline.
 - Example: one referee should not be the Examiner for the first 20 graded squats and a different referee grades the next 20 squats
 - Once the required number of graded attempts has been achieved for a given discipline (SQ, BP, DL), that portion of the practical exam is officially over
 - The practical exam is officially over after: 1) all 100 attempts have been graded and 2) all other requirements have been met
 - Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the event, either the state chair or the Examiner must submit the exam results online via the Referee Practical Exam Results form
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed

- Examiners must contact the chair of the Technical Committee at: tc@IDFPA.org to obtain a copy of the International Referee practical exam scoresheet
- If the candidate passes the practical exam, they are immediately granted the International Referee rank

Senior International Referee

Senior International Referee Requirements, Procedures, and Maintenance of Certification

Requirements:

1. Current IDFPA Affiliate member in good standing
2. Current with SafeSport and background check (or affiliate equivalent) requirements
3. International Referee for a minimum of 2 years (i.e., 24 months)
Note: Time in rank as a USA Powerlifting Category II Referee counts toward the 2-year requirement
4. Chief Referee for a full session in at least 4 full-power International or Pro events within the most recent 4-year period
 - a. For 2026, Chief Referee sessions at USA Powerlifting Raw Nationals, USA Powerlifting Collegiate Nationals, and USA Powerlifting High School Nationals will count toward this requirement and may be used for 3 out of the 4 required sessions
 - b. At least one (1) Chief referee session must be at an international event
 - c. This exception will be evaluated on a yearly basis
5. Evaluation and letter of recommendation from a Senior International Referee
6. Approval of Affiliate Chair (or affiliate Technical Committee if applicable) and IDFPA Technical Committee to sit for exam
7. Pass closed-book written exam with a score of at least 95%
8. Pass practical exam with a score of at least 90%

Procedure

1. Ensure requirements #1-4 above have been met and complete and submit [online referee application](#) at least 30 days prior to exam
 - a. The IDFPA Technical Committee Chair will send the application and applicant information to the affiliate Technical Committee chair (if affiliate has a Technical Committee) and the affiliate TC will vote on whether to approve the candidate's application
 - b. If the affiliate does not have a Technical Committee, the IDFPA Technical Committee chair will send the application to the affiliate chair for approval
 - c. If the affiliate does not have a chair at the time the application is submitted or if the affiliate chair takes more than 1 week to respond, the candidate should contact the chair of the IDFPA Technical Committee at: tc@IDFPA.org
2. Find a Senior International Referee who can write a letter of recommendation and complete an evaluation form
 - a. The Senior International Referee who agrees to write a letter of recommendation and complete an evaluation form must contact the Technical Committee (tc@idfpa.org) for specific instructions
 - b. IDFPA Technical Committee members may not complete a letter of recommendation or evaluation for a candidate
3. Receive IDFPA Technical Committee approval to take Senior International Referee exam (exam must be administered at a full-power international event)

Maintenance of Senior International Referee Certification:

1. To maintain the Senior International Referee rank, the referee must serve as a scoring table official, technical controller, platform referee, or jury member for a full session at four (4) international events every four-year certification cycle (current certification cycle: January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2029 Note: Serving as a Technical Secretary for an international event counts toward the recertification requirements. Senior International Referees must work as a scoring table official at least one full session at one (1) event every four-year certification cycle.
 - a. Senior International Referees certified in 2026 and 2027 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at two (2) events prior to January 1, 2030

- b. Senior International Referees certified in 2028 must serve in one or more of the roles listed in #1 above for a full session at one (1) event (eligible events listed in #1 above) prior to January 1, 2030
 - c. Senior International Referees certified in 2029 will automatically be recertified for the next four-year certification cycle regardless of number of eligible events worked as a referee
2. Senior International Referees not meeting the recertification requirements stated in Item 1 above will be reduced to their previous rank held with their affiliate. Referees who are reduced in rank due to a failure to meet recertification requirements are eligible to pursue promotion to the next rank but must begin the certification process from the beginning

Senior International Referee Exam: Procedures for Administration

General Requirements:

- Candidates must be current members of an IDFPFA affiliate to begin the exam process
- Candidates must meet all eligibility requirements listed on Page 9 of this document
- Candidates must pass the written exam prior to sitting for the practical exam

Part 1: Written Exam

- All aspects of the Senior International Referee written exam are identical to those of the International Referee written exam (see Page 6 of this document) with the only difference being that a score of 95% or higher must be achieved to pass the Senior International written exam
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 12 weeks before retaking the exam

Part 2: Practical Exam

- All aspects of the Senior International Referee practical exam, including a score of 90% or higher to pass) are identical to those of the International practical exam (see Page 6 of this document) with the following differences:
 - As part of the practical exam, the candidate must supervise the overall running/management of the equipment check/weigh-in portion of the session in which they are testing
 - Competency in the following areas will be assessed by the Examiner:
 - Arriving on time (i.e., at least 15 minutes before the start of equipment check and weigh-in)
 - Being properly attired in the referee uniform
 - Correctly assigning referees for equipment check, weigh-in, and other duties (if applicable)
 - Managing, organizing, delivering, and collecting required paperwork
 - All required paperwork will be given to the candidate by the Examiner or event Technical Secretary
 - Ensuring the overall process runs smoothly and efficiently and adheres to all rules
 - Appropriately answering questions, solving problems, and resolving disputes (if applicable)
 - The above must be done in consultation with the event Technical Secretary/Secretaries
 - This portion is evaluated by the event Technical Secretary (or an approved Senior International Referee if the event Technical Secretary cannot be present or is not able to adequately observe the candidate)
 - This portion is graded as pass/fail and must be passed prior to taking the rest of the practical exam

- The candidate will be a sitting referee in the chief position (i.e., adjudicating lifts) and will be evaluated by a jury made up of three (3) Senior International Referees
 - All three jury members serve as Examiners
 - For a candidate to get credit for a decision (i.e., correct answer for exam purposes), the majority of the jury (i.e., two or three members) must agree with the candidate's call
 - Each member of the jury will maintain their own individual scoresheet
 - Only valid attempts will be graded; failed/non-completed lifts in which no "judgment" needed to be made is not to be officially counted for exam purposes and should not be recorded on the practical exam scoresheet
 - Note: It is important that all three jury members periodically check to make sure they are all on the same attempt on the individual scoresheets; any inconsistency in this area could render the exam results uninterpretable and therefore invalid
 - When the exam is finished, the Chief of the jury will compare the three scoresheets and determine, for each valid (i.e., gradable) attempt, whether a majority (two or three members) of the jury agreed or disagreed with the candidate's decision and this data will be written on a new, blank scoresheet which will serve as the official scoresheet to be submitted as the official exam results
- The candidate will be assessed for their proficiency with overall platform management
 - Overall platform management includes the following:
 - Appropriately managing misloads, spotter interference, lifter time-outs, and relifts
 - Ensuring the session runs efficiently
 - Correctly applying rules, policies, and procedures as described in the rulebook
 - Ensuring spotters use best practices for spotting and maximizing lifter safety
 - Maintaining clear and timely communication with the jury, other platform referees, score table staff, spotters/loaders, and other applicable officials/staff when needed
 - This portion is graded as pass/fail (collectively agreed upon by the three examining jury members) and must be passed in order to pass the practical exam
- Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the event, the exam results must be submitted online via the Referee Practical Exam Results Form
 - Results can be submitted by the Chief of the jury, the event Technical Secretary, or a member of the Technical Committee in attendance at the event
- If the candidate does not achieve a passing score on the practical exam, they are eligible to retake the exam but must wait a minimum of 6 weeks before retaking the exam; there is no limit to the number of retakes allowed
- If the candidate passes the practical exam, they are immediately granted the Senior International Referee rank

Appendix A: Virtual Written Referee Exam Procedures

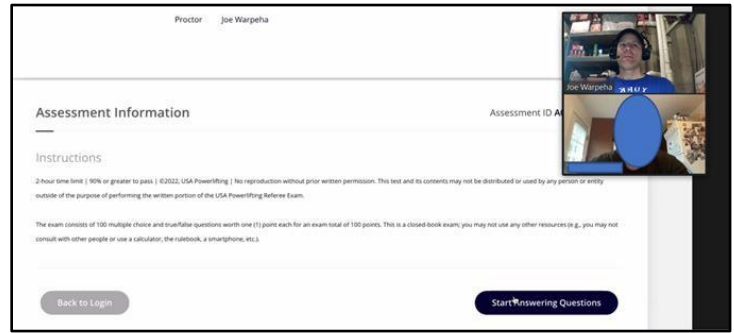
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Procedures for IDFPA Virtual Written Referee Exams

Virtual Written Exam (requirements):

- computer
- webcam
- microphone
- stable internet connectivity

Virtual Written Exam (procedures*):



1. Candidate and proctor arrange a day and time for the exam (a two-hour block of time is needed).
 - a. Proctor will be member of the Technical Committee or an approved proctor assigned by the Technical Committee.
 - b. Note: It is important for the proctor and candidate to be aware that they may be in different time zones.
2. Proctor creates a Zoom meeting for the scheduled time and sends the candidate the details (including the meeting link) a day or two prior to the exam date.
 - a. Experience using Zoom is not required and candidates unfamiliar with Zoom will be walked through the process by the proctor. Special apps or software are not required.
3. At the agreed upon date and time, the candidate and proctor will join the Zoom meeting by clicking the link mentioned above. At this point, the virtual connection will be established between the proctor and candidate (i.e., both can see and hear each other via their webcams and microphones).
 - a. If there are issues with establishing a video and/or audio connection (or the screenshare function described below), the proctor and candidate will work together to try to troubleshoot and resolve the issue(s).
4. The candidate shares their screen so the proctor can see everything the candidate is doing (e.g., not opening other windows, reading the rulebook, copying questions, etc.) in addition to seeing the candidate (see image above).
 - a. The candidate needs to be aware that the proctor will see everything on the candidate's computer screen from the start of the meeting to the end. Candidates should ensure that nothing they deem private or sensitive is visible on their computer screen.
5. The proctor emails the candidate the link to the exam after the screenshare function is enabled.
 - a. The exam remains disabled/inaccessible until the proctor activates it which is not done until the link is sent.
6. The proctor explains the exam process and the candidate begins the exam.
7. After the exam starts, the proctor will mute their microphone and camera (the proctor will not be visible or audible to the candidate) but will monitor the exam the entire time.
 - a. The candidate must leave their microphone and camera on for the entire exam.
8. When the candidate finishes the exam, they receive their score immediately and the proctor reviews the missed questions (which the Brillium testing program displays) and discusses the next steps in the exam process.
9. When the discussion concludes, the candidate and proctor leave the meeting thus terminating the virtual connection and the online exam is deactivated so it is no longer accessible.

* These procedures are described using Zoom but any videotelephony software program (e.g., Webex) may be used at the discretion of the proctor. Any differences from the procedures above will be communicated to the candidate. The main requirements are that the proctor and candidate can see and hear each other and that the proctor can see the candidate's screen for the entire exam.