

STARTIN' OUT

*A special section
dedicated to the
beginning lifter*

MEET CHECKLIST

as told to Powerlifting USA by Doug Daniels



Let's imagine a worst case scenario: you're at the meet taking your first squat attempt. As you descend, you feel your trusty old squat suit rip at the seams. After the spotters re-set the bar, the first thought that enters your head is, where's your backup squat suit? Unfortunately, it's still in your gym bag at home because you forgot to pack it for the meet. Blowing your squat suit is a very likely possibility and not having a backup could cost you the meet and wipeout all those long hours of training. Fortunately, next time there are steps you can take to help make sure you have all the things you need to get the most out of the meet and your training. Compiling a checklist of items and issues prior to a meet and going over them prior to leaving for the contest, you can minimize the impact of unforeseen events that can spell D-I-S-A-S-T-E-R.

The first place to start is to read the contest application form carefully. Check the date and time to be sure when the meet starts, as well as when weigh-in starts and ends. Many weigh-ins are on the night before, some are the morning of the meet and some meets offer both. A very important thing to note and keep in mind is the time zone in which the meet is being held. Potentially, the meet could be on Central Time and you live in Eastern Time. This is a problem here in Northwest Indiana where our corner of the state is sometimes one hour behind the rest of the state. Also, if there are any questions on directions or motels, call the meet director for information. You may want to book a motel room in advance if you plan to stay the night before or the night of the contest. There could be other events in that town or city that weekend that may book most of the motel rooms available.

Develop a realistic list of openers and successive attempts for each lift. The term 'realistic' is critical. You can't change your openers after you have taken them, but you can adjust your next attempts based on your results of your openers. Some meets require you to supply openers at weigh-ins or just prior to the meet, so be ready. Check your bodyweight prior to leaving home on an accurate scale so there are no surprises at weigh-ins.

If the meet is sanctioned, remember to bring your membership card or money to purchase one there. Bring your credit card and enough cash for

meet t-shirts, food and gas. A cell phone or a calling card can come in handy for emergencies especially when you are not competing locally.

Many lifters bring food and beverages to consume during the contest. As we all know, contests can sometimes seemingly last forever, so bring a cooler with fruit and sports-type drinks for starters. One word of advice on food; many lifters try to eat a big breakfast, high in carbs, etc., like pancakes. I would suggest not eating anything for breakfast or the night before that you do not eat normally. Something out of the ordinary may wreak havoc on your digestive system during the meet, ruining all that training. Most food available at a meet,

especially at gyms, is bad at best. In that case, you may want to bring a sandwich or two. If the meet is at a motel or hotel with a restaurant, you may be able to get a bite there between lifts. Better to eat light during the meet, save the gorging for afterwards.

Bringing all your lifting gear to the meet is the most important thing to remember. It's critical you have a backup or spare for items like squat suit, bench shirt, lifting belt, and knee and wrist wraps. Any of these can fail while warming-up or lifting on the platform. A good tip is to wash your squat suits and bench shirts before the meet. This will not only make them fresher and more user-friendly, but it will leave them just a bit tighter for the meet.

Most meets supply chalk for the platform. As the meet goes on, the chalk magically disappears. This can leave you without chalk for some of your attempts. I suggest bringing your own chalk in a Tupperware type container and keeping it out of the sight of the other competitors, or it could magically disappear as well. Baby powder for your thighs in the deadlift and to apply under your bench shirt is great to have on hand. Keep it out of view and in your gym bag when not using it also.

Remember to bring the shoes you will use for each lift. If you have a pair of squat shoes that you find are better for one type of lifting surface over another, bring these too just 'in case.' Bring an extra pair of socks too and underwear. You can leave extra stuff in the car if it's close enough to retrieve quickly.

Packing towels and toiletries can be valuable especially if the meet area has shower facilities for after the contest. A warm-up suit can be comfortable to wear between lifts.

Icy/hot rubs can be useful in case of injury or to lessen any pain or stiffness you may have or could develop. Aspirin or another pain reliever can be a lifesaver. The caffeine in some aspirins may also act as a slight stimulant.

This is just a partial checklist of things to remember for a meet. I'm sure you can brainstorm other items to add

to your own list. List anything you forgot at previous meets, even if you think you never will forget it again. There are dozens of things to remember for a contest. Forgetting any one of them can result in anxiety, but also can result in missed lifts or even bomb-out. Be prepared and organized in your meet preparation. Don't let all that hard training and attention to diet go down the tubes because of mental error. Make this type of meet checklist a required part of your contest preparation. Not having one is flirtn' with disaster.

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