



# ONTARIO WEIGHTLIFTING ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT | MICHAEL MILLER

## 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Presented at the Ontario Weightlifting Association Annual General Meeting  
Ottawa, Ontario/Google Meets  
Saturday, September 14, 2024,  
Submitted by Michael Miller, OWA President

### **Mission**

Govern and promote Olympic weightlifting in Ontario by providing high-quality coaching, competitions, and officiating to help athletes reach their optimum performance.

### **Vision**

To be the leading provincial weightlifting association in Canada, recognized for excellence in coaching, officiating, and optimum athlete performance.

### **Preamble and Acknowledgements**

As President of the Ontario Weightlifting Association, I would like to present this annual report, reflecting on the challenges, goals, initiatives, and successes of the past year. Our previous meeting took place in September 2023, and since then, we've made significant strides. This marks my fifth report as President and my seventh meeting as a Board member. I want to express my gratitude for the continued support I've received through both the good and challenging times.

I would like to emphasize that any success achieved during the 2023/2024 season is due to the incredible work of the OWA team and the many volunteers who are the backbone of our sport. I take full responsibility for any shortcomings or unsuccessful initiatives.

### **Challenges and Resolutions.**

**Inflation and Rising Costs:** Last year, we identified inflation and rising costs as major challenges. Since then, we've reviewed all expenses and have balanced a significant portion of our operational costs. We've also implemented a four-year plan to gradually increase fees in line with inflation. While holding costs steady over the past 5-10 years kept us financially

competitive, it became clear that this approach was not sustainable long-term without accounting for inevitable cost increases.

We implemented proactive measures to manage our finances effectively and closely monitored expenses. Camps, traveling teams, and competitions consistently ran under budget. While these changes occasionally caused some friction, they proved overwhelmingly successful last season. I'd like to extend a special thanks to Linda Earnshaw and Dimitije Mancic for spearheading the ongoing monitoring of budgets.

**Bigger Traveling Teams:** At our last meeting, we recognized the rising costs associated with expanding the size of our traveling teams. The growth in team size was driven by changes in Junior team selection, an increase in coaches to enhance performance, and the addition of team leaders to ensure the safety and well-being of our team. Budget restrictions have helped alleviate some of these pressures and I'm happy to report all travelling teams were within budget. As mentioned earlier, our four-year plan also includes adjustments to account for inflation.

**Competition Hosting:** Competition hosting was identified as the biggest opportunity to make a positive impact on the budget. We've taken steps to curb excess spending, including introducing an additional fee for competition equipment maintenance, ensuring our competition system continues to run smoothly. Additionally, we are gradually investing in our major competition centers to minimize the wear and tear from constantly transferring equipment across Ontario.

Unfortunately, some Technical Officials in remote communities or high-cost geographical locations may have felt overlooked. However, balancing the budget and creating a sustainable foundation for competitions had to take precedence.

**Fundraisers:** Although we did not introduce new fundraising initiatives this year, we are actively engaged in ongoing discussions to refine our strategies. One idea we missed capitalizing on was to include a donation field on all competition registration forms specifically aimed at supporting travel expenses for the Ontario Winter Games. This initiative presents a straightforward yet potentially impactful fundraising opportunity.

**Membership Growth:** Low membership remains our most significant challenge, impacting various aspects of our organization. To address this, we are making membership growth a primary focus for the coming years. A higher membership will bring in more financial resources, Technical Officials, Junior and Master athletes, and high-performing individuals.

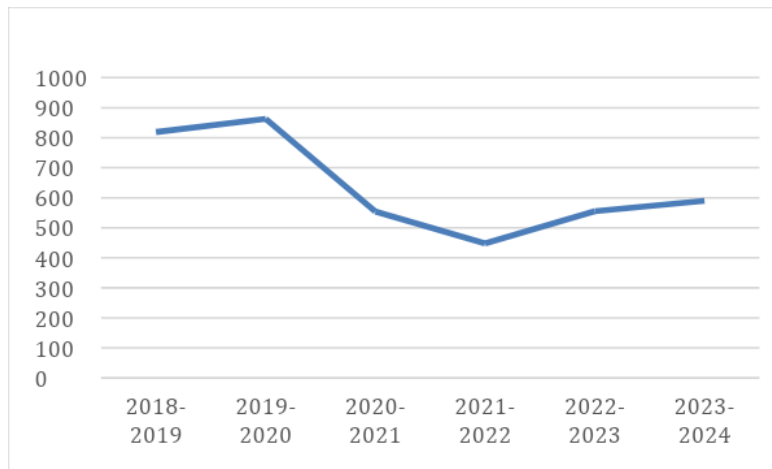
One successful initiative was the introduction of a quarterly club review. Each quarter, we shared the top five or ten clubs, allowing members to see where they stood. By the end of this season, these rankings will also be incorporated into the official ranking pages.

At the start of the season, we introduced the initiative for non-competitive members to register. This not only increases our membership but also ensures that everyone has access to safe

sport policies and that coaches are held accountable to consistent standards across Canada. If you're at a gym where your coach isn't encouraging your coverage or adhering to these standards, it's important to take note.

As we gain more control over our budget, we plan to explore monthly or quarterly draws and other membership-raising initiatives. These efforts will add value to membership beyond just the ability to compete and coverage under safe sport policies.

**Membership Trends by Season**



## Funding, Grants, Q4G

Funding and grants will be covered in detail under the VP Administration report. However, I am excited to mention that our OASF funding and Q4G funding have slightly increased. A substantial increase will not happen until we increase our membership.

Please note that the Quest for Gold program is currently being restructured with guidance from the Province of Ontario.

## Human Resources, Staffing, and Committees

**Gender Equity Committee:** We hope to restart the Gender Equity Committee this season. It's crucial to ensure that everyone is represented—not only for the best possible experience but also to prevent hidden liabilities.

**Social Media Administrators:** This year, we welcomed two new social media administrators: Noah Santavy and Martene Herbert. They have maintained our communications through our social media and we appreciate their efforts.

**Membership Administrator Transition:** This year also saw Amanda Braddock transition into a different role. Formerly our Competition Administrator, Amanda brings valuable skills to her new position, further strengthening our team.

## **WCH Key Points of Interest**

**Athlete Representation:** We'd like to extend our thanks to Noah Santavy for his continued commitment to the Athlete Representation Committee. Noah's dedication and passion for weightlifting are truly inspiring, and his return to this committee brings invaluable experience and insight. His leadership and advocacy ensure that the voices of our athletes are heard at every level, and we are grateful for his ongoing contributions.

**Technical Official Committee:** We are excited to announce the appointment of Sara O'Neil to the Technical Officials Committee of WCH. Sara brings a commitment to the integrity and excellence of our sport. Her enthusiasm will undoubtedly enhance the work of the committee, and we look forward to the positive impact she will have in this new role.

**Continued Board Involvement:** Dr. Trevor Cottrell continues to serve on the national board, where he has done an excellent job of cleaning up the NCCP and solidifying clear, reliable paths through the certification process. His expertise and dedication to our sport have been invaluable.

**Interest from Ontario Members:** It is encouraging to see growing interest from our Ontario members in running for vacant positions within the national organization. This demonstrates our members' dedication to actively participating in the governance and growth of our sport at the national level. We will continue to support and encourage members to pursue these opportunities.

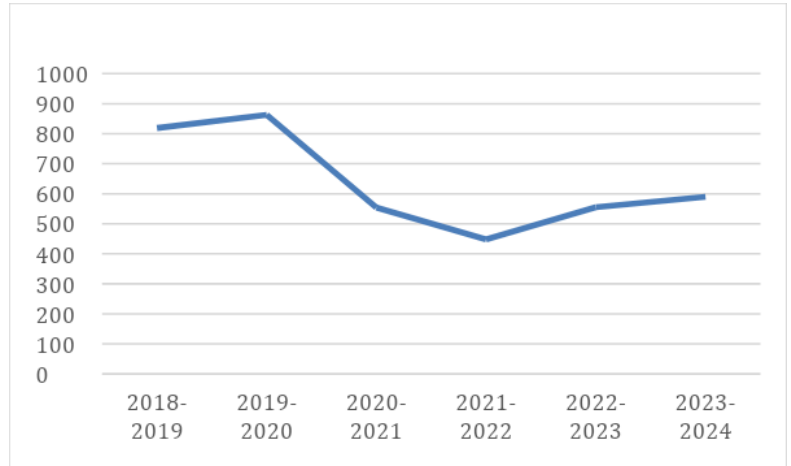
These developments at the national level reflect our organization's strong presence and influence within the broader context of our sport.

## Membership & Course Data 2018/2019 - 2022/2024

### Total Membership

Season	Members
2018-2019	819
2019-2020	863
2020-2021	554
2021-2022	448
2022-2023	555
2023-2024	590

### Membership Trends by Season



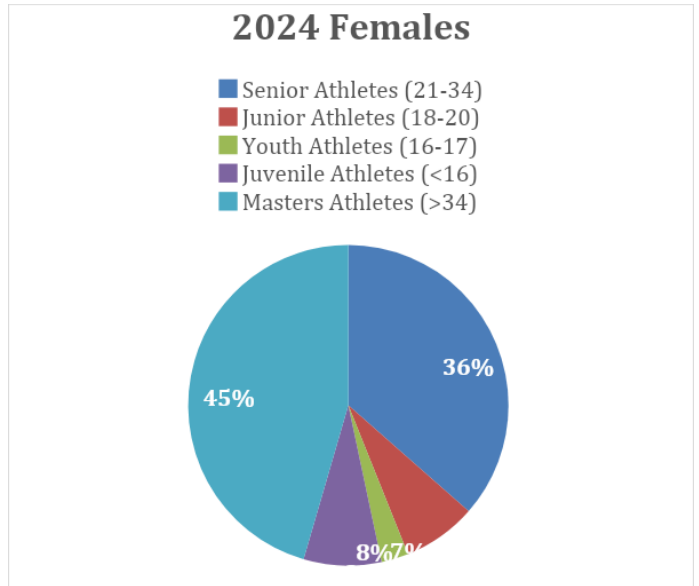
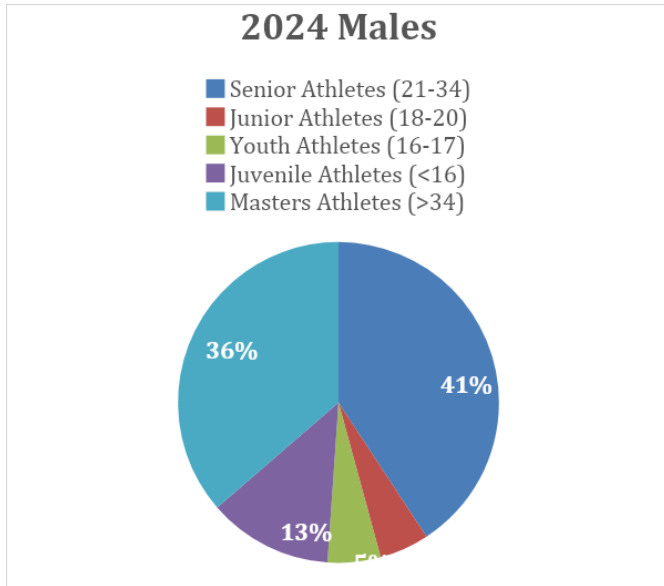
### Male Breakdown by age group

	Male 2018/19	Male 2019/20	Male 2020/21	Male 2021/22	Male 2022/23	Male 2023/24
Senior Athletes (21-34)	279	269	115	95	113	130
Junior Athletes (18-20)	15	22	17	13	15	16
Youth Athletes (16-17)	12	15	16	5	9	17
Juvenile Athletes (<16)	18	31	30	24	53	40
Masters Athletes (>34)	159	170	128	110	109	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>331</b>

### Female Breakdown by age group

	Female 2018/19	Female 2019/20	Female 2020/21	Female 2021/22	Female 2022/23	Female 2023/24
Senior Athletes (21-34)	167	168	93	78	107	93
Junior Athletes (18-20)	24	23	17	5	5	19
Youth Athletes (16-17)	10	14	7	14	16	7
Juvenile Athletes (<16)	15	22	22	20	36	20
Masters Athletes (>34)	120	129	109	83	92	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>225</b>

### 2024 Distribution Male/Female



## Technical Officials\*\*

Technical Officials	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Prov#4	7	11	29	25	21	31
Prov#4 in Training	18	12	10	16	7	30
CAN#3	50	46	14	16	11	15
IWF#2	16	17	4	4	4	4
IWF#1	4	3	9	10	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>88</b>

\*\*These numbers may not match numbers provided by VP – Technical. These numbers are self reported during registration.

## NCCP

NCCP Courses	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
NCCP Instructor Beginner	0	0	0	0	0	0
NCCP Competition Introduction	5	3	0	1	2	2
NCCP Comp. Intro. Evaluation	4	4	0	0	2	1
NCCP Competition Development	1	1	0	1	1	0
NCCP Comp. Dev. Evaluation	1	0	0	3	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

## Other

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
OTHER						
Competitions	29	29	4	11	20	24
First Start	1	0	0	0	0	0
Training Camps	1 - Senior	1 - Junior	0	3(Junior, Senior, Coach)	3(Junior, Senior, Master)	3(Junior, Senior, Master)

## Clubs

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024
Clubs	100	101	72	64	61	56

## 2023-2024 Points of Interest

**Masters Initiative Expansion:** We've continued to support our Masters athletes by expanding opportunities to compete, including adding another competition and renewing our camp. Additionally, we are expanding our support for Masters athletes outside the province. Many members have expressed concerns about national membership fees, confusing subsets of rules, the divisive mindset of the current national body, and the lack of consistency between local and national competition requirements.

Most Masters athletes train in clubs that support all athletes but are segregated by memberships and divisional mindsets. The absence of a system that supports all masters, regardless of fees paid, is unfortunate. One of our goals is to create an environment that makes sense for all, engaging other PSOs to support the approximately 1,200-1,500 masters athletes



nationally. We aim to create national championships and opportunities that involve all provincial sport members.

**Membership regulations:** This season, we tightened our membership requirements and eliminated loopholes that were creating several liabilities. Unfortunately, this resulted in the loss of some high-performance athletes from Ontario, but it was necessary to reduce the liability associated with other provinces shifting risks to Ontario.

**Increased Data Points:** We've expanded our data points, allowing members to filter results from 2015 to 2024. Our ranking system now includes running ranks for our two traveling teams and the Provincial Qualification Process.

**Doping Control:** Looking forward, we will tighten the criteria for qualifying for events from non-doping control competitions. There should be no path to Elite weightlifting that does not involve doping control. While this presents challenges for those in remote areas, it is necessary to keep us on the proper course. At the same time, we will look at sanctioning club competitions to make it easier for remote areas.

**Photography Partnership:** We are pleased to acknowledge Joel Kingston, with whom we have formed a partnership. Joel is allowed to sell photography packages, and in return, the OWA receives free promotional material upon request. This partnership allows us to maintain fresh visuals without constantly recycling the same photographs.

**National Championships Hosting:** This past summer, the OWA and Variety Village successfully hosted the Canadian Junior Championships. This event enabled the OWA to refresh almost all its computers and purchase a new, more accurate scale to comply with the new singlet rules. A huge thanks goes to Eva Martens and Abdallah Alsebaai and his team at Variety Village.

**Stable Competition Calendar:** Last year, our goal was to maintain stability in our elite competitions to provide a solid foundation for our competitive teams. We successfully achieved this goal. Moving forward, we will focus on creating clearer policies around the qualification process.

**Team Leader Selection:** We identified the need for a team to oversee the competitive process from start to finish. Team leaders Nichole Lee, Nic Koo, Logan Baker, and Jess Verwey did an outstanding job. This year, we will focus on setting goals and documenting the entire process. The goal is to have leaders who know and have built a relationship with the team. Although we are not a team sport, it's important to have a group to rely on.

**Transparency** – This year, we identified an area of non-transparency. Going forward, our public minutes will also include any email motions made between our monthly board meetings.

## **Strategies moving forward**

**Four-Year Plan:** We're set to begin development of our next four-year plan as our current plan concludes. This strategic roadmap will guide our organization's actions and goals, ensuring a clear and focused direction for the future.

**Support for Remote Communities:** This year, we will be releasing a set of policies to enhance our support for remote communities. As part of our Sport Hosting Grant funding, we allocated any surplus to a dedicated fund for these communities, in line with Ontario Government policies that prevent organizations from profiting from hosting national events. We plan to have the details finalized before Provincials, ensuring that remote communities can take full advantage of this support.

**Policy Overhaul:** In our last meeting, I reported that the goal to review all policies was set for the end of 2025. We're still on track, though progress has been a little slower than anticipated.

**NCCP Facilitators:** Identifying NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) facilitators is a priority. We aim to make coach training more transparent and accessible, reducing obstacles to certification and enhancing the quality of coaching within our organization.

**Club Challenges:** Our Club Challenges program has proven to be one of Ontario's most successful initiatives for growth and expansion. We will continue to focus on strengthening and supporting clubs, promoting grassroots development, and fostering a vibrant community.