

## Judging the 2008 Mr. Olympia: Judges Provide Full Transparency and Complete Explanation of Results

Written by Muscletime

Tuesday, 14 October 2008 12:57

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The sport of professional bodybuilding is allegedly scored according to the "IFBB Guide Book for Judges, Competitors and Organizers." The judging guide book outlines several objective criteria that are to be used as guidelines for assessing muscular development, symmetry and aesthetics. The guidelines attempt to minimize the amount of subjectivity involved in the results of competitive bodybuilding contests.

The credibility of the sport of bodybuilding took a major hit in the aftermath of the 2007 Mr. Olympia contest where an undeserving Jay Cutler was announced the victor in spite of poor conditioning and inferior aesthetics when compared to his chief rivals whereas no less than three competitors should have placed ahead of Jay Cutler. The 2008 Mr. Olympia witnessed a new champion, Dexter Jackson, overthrow the reigning Mr. Olympia. But was this enough to salvage the legitimacy of IFBB judging where at least three additional bodybuilders should have defeated the reigning Mr. Olympia?

The justification for the results, then and now, is that the judging criteria was subjective and arbitrary such that there was no incorrect judging decision. However, based on the IFBB guidelines, judges must have clear rationales for their decisions based on specific criteria related to muscular development e.g. "size, shape, density, separation and definition, in relation to symmetry and natural aesthetics."

The judging can not be completely arbitrary when significance is placed upon "qualities of balance, proportion and the overall 'flow' of the physique," "balance between upper and lower body development, and harmony between the left and right sides of the body." There is little room for subjectivity when it is mandated that "distended abdomens and distorted muscles negatively impact... the overall physique" or "muscle size at the expense of symmetry and natural aesthetics will not be assessed favourably."

IFBB judges are not held accountable for their judges decisions nor required to explain why and how they scored a pro bodybuilding competition. This results in poor judging based on various factors completely unrelated to the physique competition on stage. If IFBB judges were required to give detailed analysis and reporting of their scoring, this would go along way towards cleaning up the sport and promoting fair competitions. No longer could judges hide behind the cumulative scores explaining away any controversy through suggestions of subjectivity. The scores AND individual judge's rationale for the scoring would be a matter of public record and could be used to create a higher standard of judging by eliminating incompetent, biased and politically motivated judges.

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Muscletime proposes complete transparency and full disclosure behind the judges scoring decisions and the relationships, financial and other, between the judges, the athletes, and the sponsors of professional bodybuilding competitions. As an example, we would like to offer our own two judges for the 2008 Mr. Olympia as examples of the type of transparency and detailed judging we propose.

## Judge Wolfgang

### 1. Phil Heath – Score Total: 4

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 1
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 1
- Finals (Posing Routine): 1
- Finals (Posedown): 1

Phil Heath clearly presented the best combination of size, symmetry and condition. His almost perfect muscle shape and overall look of his physique had me place him in first. He held a small amount of water during prejudging on Friday night, but not enough to keep him out of the first spot on my scorecard. Every muscle group was well-built and in great proportion. The separation is simply fantastic. One example is the amazing separation between his biceps and triceps during the double biceps pose. Another example can be seen in the rear double biceps from head to toe.

Phil Heath's weakest pose was the rear lat spread because his lats do not pop out real wide (e.g. Melvin Anthony). Heath was still able to hold his own because of his shredded glutes and hamstrings and calves. Heath's front relaxed pose also needs work; his forearm size and overall arm proportion is hidden by the way he stands in the lineup.

Phil Heath was tighter and in even better shape Saturday night during the finals. He was bigger than he was at the 2008 Iron Man Pro and his condition was comparable to that show. I had Heath in first place in every round. Nobody was even close. The main reason is his overall package. Heath has enough size, great condition and amazingly shaped muscles that are out of this world; he has incredible separation all over.

### 2. Dexter Jackson – Score Total: 8

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- Prejudging (Symmetry): 2
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 2
- Finals (Posing Routine): 2
- Finals (Posedown): 2

A very good Dexter Jackson. A clear second place. Jackson displayed few, if any, weaknesses at all. He possessed great overall symmetry and proportion, good size and great condition. Heath simply beat him because Heath had more size and even better muscle separation. For example, Dexter Jackson's arms were not a clearly separated in the double biceps; he simply did not have all the amazing detail that Phil brought to the stage – from the front and the back.

The very hard look of Dexter combined with good size and great shaped muscles put him ahead of the rest. I had him in second place in all rounds.

(he was much harder in real than the photos show, don't let yourself be fooled by it)

### **3. Dennis Wolf - Score Total : 14 (tie)**

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 4
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 4
- Finals (Posing Routine): 3
- Finals (Posedown): 3

### **3. Toney Freeman - Score Total: 14 (tie)**

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 3
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 3
- Finals (Posing Routine): 4
- Finals (Posedown): 4

Dennis Wolf and Toney Freeman were tied on my score sheet in the final results. Freeman was a clear third place after Friday's prejudging because he was significantly harder than Wolf. Both

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men are tall with good muscle shape. Dennis is bigger; Toney is harder.

Dennis held a bit too much water on Friday. His overall shape was there and, of course, so was the great size; he was simply not cut enough. Toney on the other hand was rock hard along with good size. The slightly deformed muscle development resulting from an old pec tear marked him down. But I still gave him the edge after Friday. Other than the pec tear, Toney only needs to fill out his large frame a bit more.

Dennis Wolf was vastly harder on Saturday than on Friday; he pulled ahead of Toney by the smallest margin. Dennis Wolf advantage in muscle size places him ahead of Toney when Wolf is hard. Since both men have great lines, great shape and a small waist, Toney Freeman's smaller size and pec tear (adversely affecting symmetry) make the difference. It was a very close call.

Dexter Jackson's and Phil Heath's detail and overall shape of the physique were superior to Dennis Wolf and Toney Freeman. Nobody on stage approached Phil and Dexter in the proportion department. Compared to the top two, Freeman lacked a bit of fullness in his frame and suffered with chest comparisons due to his pec tear. Compared to the top two, Wolf lacked the same overall condition and does not have the detail or separation.

### **5. Silvio Samuel – Score Total: 22**

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 5
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 5
- Finals (Posing Routine): 6
- Finals (Posedown): 6

Silvio Samuel managed to land the sixth place on my scorecard as a result of his superb conditioning. The final score was very close to Jay Cutler in the end. Silvio Samuel looks good in a lot of poses e.g. most muscular, side chest and the abs and thighs. Samuel possess dense muscles and a rock hard look. It was a close call between Melvin and Jay in my book. Silvio managed a slim lead at the end primarily as a result of his superb condition. (His abs are also very good too!)

Silvio inexplicably lacks muscle separation in some poses e.g. his arms during the double biceps pose. He also lacks biceps peak. His weakest body part is his back; it lacks thickness and width. Consequently, as soon as he opens up and lifts his arms, he loses overall proportion. His lats are hardly visible and appear thin during the front double biceps pose; therefore the V-taper is not good enough. In the back double biceps, his back is not very detailed and again his lats are too thin compared to his delts, hamstrings and arms. This has the effect of marking him down considerably in the symmetry and proportion department. Silvio does not have perfect balance between his upper and lower body; his lower body slightly overpowers his upper body.

## 6. Jay Cutler – Score Total: 24

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 7
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 7
- Finals (Posing Routine): 5
- Finals (Posedown): 5

I had Jay Cutler in seventh place on Friday night. Cutler's hardness improved considerably by Saturday and thus he managed to pull ahead of Melvin Anthony and even Silvio Samuel. On Friday, Jay looked soft throughout his entire upper body. His symmetry was poor. One thigh was significantly bigger than the other. His arms are also different from each other. Jay Cutler's proportion is not very good anymore. His waist is too big for his lats in his abs pose. The lats and entire back were really soft. The wrinkles in his back looked very bad. Jay Cutler possessed the size he is known for but the condition was not present during this contest.

By Saturday, Cutler appeared to have made a few adjustments and was much harder and fuller. His muscles did not appear washed out with a much improved look. The lack of symmetry in his arms and legs was still evident. Cutler simply held too much water in his back for a higher placing. His back size is mind-blowing. In my book he pulled ahead of Melvin during the posedown; Cutler and Anthony were tied in points after the first 3 rounds as a result of Cutler's awesome muscle size.

## 7. Melvin Anthony – Score Total: 19 (no 4<sup>th</sup> posedown round)

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 6
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 6
- Finals (Posing Routine): 7

- Finals (Posedown): N/A

Melvin Anthony was sixth place on my scorecard ahead of Jay Cutler and very close to Silvio Samuel after Friday night's judging. Anthony's physique was very good with his usual small waist and full lats that popped out. Melvin was good with good separation. The development in his thighs was good too. He was unable to get really hard. He appeared a little soft in almost all of his poses. Melvin's conditioning was off about 5% that would have resulted in him being 100% shredded.

The front double biceps was the only pose in which Melvin Anthony was able to achieve rock hard condition. All of his other poses had him appear soft in at least some areas. This was particularly noticeable in his hamstrings and glutes and back. But his arms (especially in side poses) were not dry enough for a top three placing. The separation between his delts and his arms in the most muscular poses is another example where Melvin needs to be drier.

Melvin Anthony's overall proportion and symmetry were very good. He was tied with Jay Cutler after the first three rounds. Cutler only moved ahead of Melvin because of his superior size going into the fourth and final posedown round.

### **8. Moe Elmoossawi – Score Total: 24 (no 4<sup>th</sup> posedown round)**

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 8
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 8
- Finals (Posing Routine): 8
- Finals (Posedown): N/A

Moe Elmoossawi's physique displayed good overall hardness matched by good size and symmetry. He had a well-developed physique with great arms. Elmoossawi's overall proportion sets him back in the placings. His V-taper during the front double biceps should be wider and better. His lats did not spread out enough. His quads needed a little bit more sweep. His delts could be a bit wider and more clear cut; his delt tie-ins and separation from arms needs improvement. These weaknesses caused some of his poses to look less than perfect. Elmoossawi needs to improve his separation between his hamstrings and quads in the side chest pose.

## 9. Dennis James – Score Total: 27 (no 4<sup>th</sup> posedown round)

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 9
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 9
- Finals (Posing Routine): 9
- Finals (Posedown): N/A

Dennis James had good condition with overwhelming size. His muscles are thick all over. He has awesome density which particularly contributes to great most muscular poses. James' distended stomach and lack of separation between muscle groups prevented me from placing him higher. It was his distended gut that pushed him out of eight place on my scorecard. The distention in his stomach was obvious especially between poses where James was unable to keep it under control. Dennis James' lats do not spread out enough especially when he lifts his arms during the double bicep poses. James also needs to improve his biceps peak for both the front and rear double biceps pose.

## 10. Darrem Charles – Score Total: 30 (no 4<sup>th</sup> posedown round)

- Prejudging (Symmetry): 10
- Prejudging (Muscularity): 10
- Finals (Posing Routine): 10
- Finals (Posedown): N/A

Darrem Charles was in good condition. His muscles are well rounded and balanced in size. He could use a bit more quad development for legs that are thicker with additional sweep. Charles' symmetry is not quite perfect; his arms are asymmetrical with the right arm noticeably larger and more peaked than the left arm during the front double bicep pose. But Darrem's overall proportion and symmetry are still ok.

Darrem Charles back was not hard enough to place higher than tenth. Charles good detail and proportion were sufficient to place him ahead of Gustavo Badell in eleventh. Badell was simply too smooth from head to toe for a top ten spot on my scoresheet. Darrem's conditioning was better especially from the front.

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As a professional judge, I must make sure nothing escapes my eyes while I'm at work. It is my job to give 100% focus in the last few hours of the competition. I make sure to get enough rest the day before, to drink enough water and to eat light and clean so that I am at my very best! I have great vision but, even for me, it is very hard to judge the Olympia sitting so far away from the stage.

If fans want to hear more on my scores and the reason for them please contact me at [info@muscletime.com](mailto:info@muscletime.com). I will be happy to explain my point of view in even greater detail. I believe that fans, industry and media deserve full transparency of the judging.

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## Judge Raymond

### 1. Phil Heath

I was unable to find any fault in this man's physique. He had perfect arms. He had perfect chest, legs, back... He had hardness, conditioning, full muscle bellies, posing. What else is there? The man had it all. And to top it off, he was the most charismatic and confident guy on stage. He was as close to perfection as I've seen. For some elite athletes, they are simply gifted with incredible genetics. I am in no way attempting to diminish the hard work and dedicated training that goes into become an elite bodybuilder, but the truth is that some men are already knocking on the door to the pro stage before they ever lift a weight due to their genetically endowed muscularity, symmetry and proportion. This is Phil Heath.

### 2. Dexter Jackson

The reason I put Dexter in second has nothing to do with him not being in shape. He was perhaps in his best condition ever but when you match him pose by pose. This time around, I felt he was beaten by Phil Heath. The only pose that Dexter or anybody could possibly beat Phil

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Heath is the front relaxed pose where he stands relaxed with his arms out. Dexter has mastered the front relaxed pose whereas Phil Heath still needs help mastering that pose. Phil looks like he sometimes has two guns in each hand. The assumed stance made Heath look narrow and awkward and not symmetrical. Dexter Jackson's mastery of a single pose was not enough to beat Phil Heath. Phil beats Dexter because he look fuller and his muscles connect and flow better in ever pose. In addition, Heath had the hardest glutes and the hardest lowest back.

Dexter was clear second place because, just like Phil, he has that muscle that flow and blend well together. Jackson is as close to Phil as symmetry , shape, combination of everything as anyone out there. Phil is just 10-20 percent better. When both are in such great shape, you have to separate one from another.

### 3. Dennis Wolf

I had Dennis Wolf in third place on my scorecard. The amazing size and shape on a guy that is over six feet tall make him a top three finisher. Wolf has very clearly defined muscles. He also improved, coming in better than last year. This was his best shape to date. He would have been a worth Mr. Olympia this year if it were not for Dexter Jackson or Phil Heath. Dennis Wolf is absolutely amazing in some poses - like the side chest, the front lat spread and the most muscular. However, when compared to Heath and Jackson, Wolf's conditioning and overall muscle shape are unable to compare.

### 4. Toney Freeman

Toney Freeman was impressive for a tall man. He is over six feet tall, like Dennis Wolf. But Freeman lacked physique needed to place 2nd, 3rd or 4th. Freeman was not outmuscled or outconditioned by Wolf; his genetic frame simply did not accomodate his muscle mass as well as Wolf. Toney's muscles were not full and round enough to compete with shorter guys like Jackson and Heath who had round, conditioned muscles.

The Mr. Olympia is the biggest show in bodybuilding. If the top four guys have no faults and Freeman steps on stage with minor muscle distortion due to an old pec tear, it makes it practically impossible to threaten those competitors for a higher placing. Even so, he came so close. He had great confidence. His hardness edged him over Melvin Anthony. But the pec tear

is what placed him behind Dennis Wolf, Dexter Jackson and Phil Heath.

## 5. Melvin Anthony

Melvin Anthony placed fifth instead of fourth because Toney Freeman looked tighter with much more detail from the back than Melvin presented. But Melvin's posing ability allowed his physique to flow. He did not just pose, he flowed. He had a magical way of displaying his physique in the most flattering way possible. Melvin hit every pose to the best of his ability. His upper back was lacking in detail that he has previously shown.

Every pose that Melvin hits displayed all his body parts in exactly the correct position. For example, during the front double biceps pose, Melvin's lats flared out wide, his legs hit the perfect stance and his biceps peaked. Watching Melvin Anthony pose is like watching a video tutorial on proper posing.

In addition to his posing, his physique was very well proportioned, his waist was very small (like those that placed ahead of him). But his condition from the front surpassed the condition from the rear poses.

## 6. Jay Cutler

Jay Cutler made the top six on my scorecard ONLY because of his dramatic improvement from prejudging on Friday to the the finals on Saturday. Cutler lacked hardness, details and separation on Friday; he also look very soft from the rear. This was not the Jay Cutler from a few years ago. Cutler's waist appeared to be larger than ever before; he was a little soft in the lower chest region. This was similar to the previous year. He did not have any details in his shoulders or arms. In certain poses, like the most muscular pose, the details completely escaped his physique. The side triceps even failed to impress. His legs from the side failed to show any detail that would make me place him higher than sixth. He seemed a few weeks out from a show.

Lack of condition. Lack of detail. The top five were very hard and in superior condition and

better genetically gifted when it came to body shape and muscle shape.

Cutler's physique is not very pleasant. He has lost something. But he has a lot of muscles. Jay Cutler is massive. Unfortunately, his physique was more boxy than ever before. The wrinkles in his back from mid back to his trunk looked bad. His lats did not flare. His great size was the only thing that saved him a sixth place spot on my scorecard.

### **7. Silvio Samuel**

Silvio Samuel was the best conditioned guy in the show after Phil Heath. Silvio improved his posing to better display the muscles in his physique. The most glaring weakness in his physique was his very high lat development. Each time Silvio closed in (with his arms close to his body e.g. most muscular, side chest), he looked very good because of the incredibly density and very hard appearance of his muscles. Bodybuilding is the sport where all things being equal, the best genetics succeeds.

Samuel made it this far in competition with his ability to come in super hard. But he loses this asset when he opens up. When Silvio Samuel closes in, he was very good because he is dense, hard, ripped, shredded, etc. But when he opens up, he lost the separations between the biceps and triceps, his lats failed to show a V-taper because they are so high which gave the appearance of him coming straight up from the waist without a lat flare. His thighs are too big in proportion to his lats. When Silvio closes in, he looks like a professional. But when Silvio opens up, he looks like an amateur. This is genetics. This keeps him out of the top six.

### **8. Moe Elmoussawi**

Moe Elmoussawi had a physique that displayed extreme hardness and pleasant looking muscles. He was "on" from head to toe. Elmoussawi possessed just enough size to place him in the top ten on my scorecard. His (lack of) size held him back. If he had more size, he could be in the top six. Moe Elmoussawi is very well proportioned. He knows how to display his physique. There is nothing holding him back

## 9. David Henry

David Henry had an extremely thick physique but still not enough weight (or height). He had condition. But he had one fault; it was his front double biceps. This pose did not blend together for David Henry. It's one of the most popular poses that exemplifies posing for a bodybuilder. But this pose is not a flattering pose for Henry. He lacks a biceps peak and whereas Melvin Anthony hits it exactly right, David Henry flexes his arms and shifts to the side.

David Henry's size (due to lack of height) make it impossible to move him any higher on my scorecard when compared to the other competitors who placed ahead of him.

## 10. Dennis James

Dennis James' weakness is similar to the primary weakness of Silvio Samuel. Dennis James looks great on "in shots" but loses the edge when he opens up. When James does the double biceps pose, his biceps have no peak, his waist is too wide due to his stomach distention, he has no V-taper, he lacks flaring lats and his thighs do not have real separation. When he opens up, his symmetry is ruined. James tried to hide his distended gut but it protruded prominently during the transitions between poses. Yet James was still better conditioned than those who placed below him in the competition.

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## Judge Millard

### 1. Phil Heath

Phil Heath had the most balanced, symmetric and aesthetic physique combined with superior muscle shape, separation and definition to all of the other competitors at the 2008 Olympia. The only weakness was Heath's narrow clavicle structure. However, this was really only noticeable due to Heath's lack of mastery with regard to posing. Phil's relaxed front pose emphasizes this weakness because Heath has an awkward stance where he sticks his arms out to the side

emphasizing (and exaggerating) the narrow clavicle structure.

## 2. Dexter Jackson

Dexter Jackson was very comparable to Phil Heath in every criteria of physique judging. But Heath had slightly better muscle size, shape and separation. Jackson could have arguably looked better than Heath in the front relaxed pose (due primarily to Phil's awkward stance). Dexter was not quite as good in every other pose.

## 3. Dennis Wolf

Dennis Wolf's physique was very impressive onstage. Wolf is one of a handful of taller bodybuilders who bring a great combination of muscle size, balance, proportion along with a small waist and good separation and definition. The definition and condition of Phil Heath and Dexter Jackson were superior to Wolf in this show.

## 4. Toney Freeman

Toney Freeman is another of the tall bodybuilders with great lines, size, shape, density etc. Freeman's physique appeared harder than Wolf's particularly during Friday. But Freeman slipped behind the larger Wolf on Saturday. Freeman's pec tear resulted in deductions. Dennis Wolf placed ahead of Toney due to his greater size, symmetry, and balance.

## 5. Silvio Samuel

Silvio Samuel earned the fifth spot in large part due to his incredible conditioning and hardness. His physique does possess weaknesses and flaws that prevent him from defeating bodybuilders with better balance and symmetry. His lack of separation in some poses and weak back (lats) hold him back.

## 6. Melvin Anthony

Melvin Anthony has excellent proportion and symmetry. His posing ability magnifies this on stage. His conditioning was not good enough to place higher particular in the hams and glutes.

## 7. Jay Cutler

Jay Cutler is difficult to place. He has numerous weaknesses. But his overwhelming muscle size and mass is still amazing. This earned him the seventh spot. When there are so many well-balanced, symmetrical and conditioned bodybuilders on stage, the asymmetries in Cutler's legs and arms, the thick waist, the lack of a flowing and aesthetic physique can not be overlooked.

## 8. Moe Elmoossawi

Moe Elmoossawi had a well-proportioned, very hard physique with decent size. His conditioning

made all the difference in his placing.

## 9. Darrem Charles

Darrem Charles had good proportion, good condition, and good separation but not great. Yet the combination and balance of his physique earned him the ninth spot.

## 10. Johnnie Jackson

Johnnie Jackson had a thick and powerful physique. But his conditioning was not where it needed to be. He was essentially tied with Gustavo Badell, who in spite of his muscle size, was too smooth. Dennis James had better conditioning than both of the aforementioned competitors but received major deduction for his very distended abdomen that detracted from his physique.

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