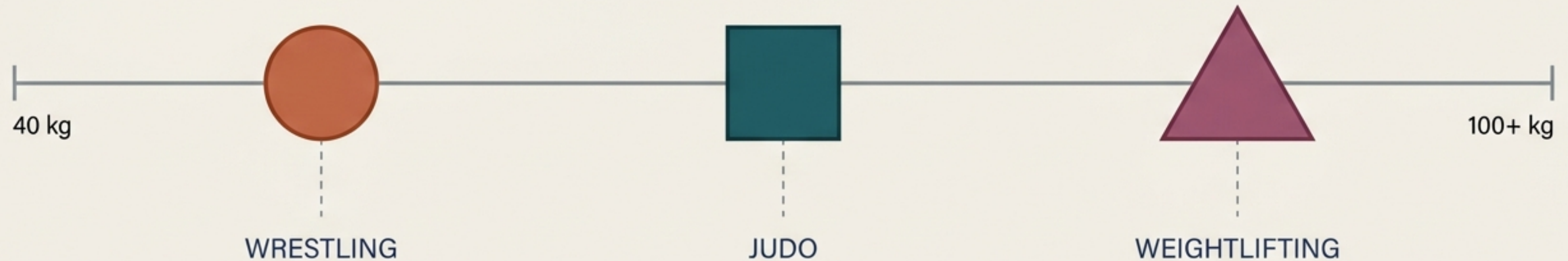


Are Women's Wrestling Weight Classes Spread Out Enough?

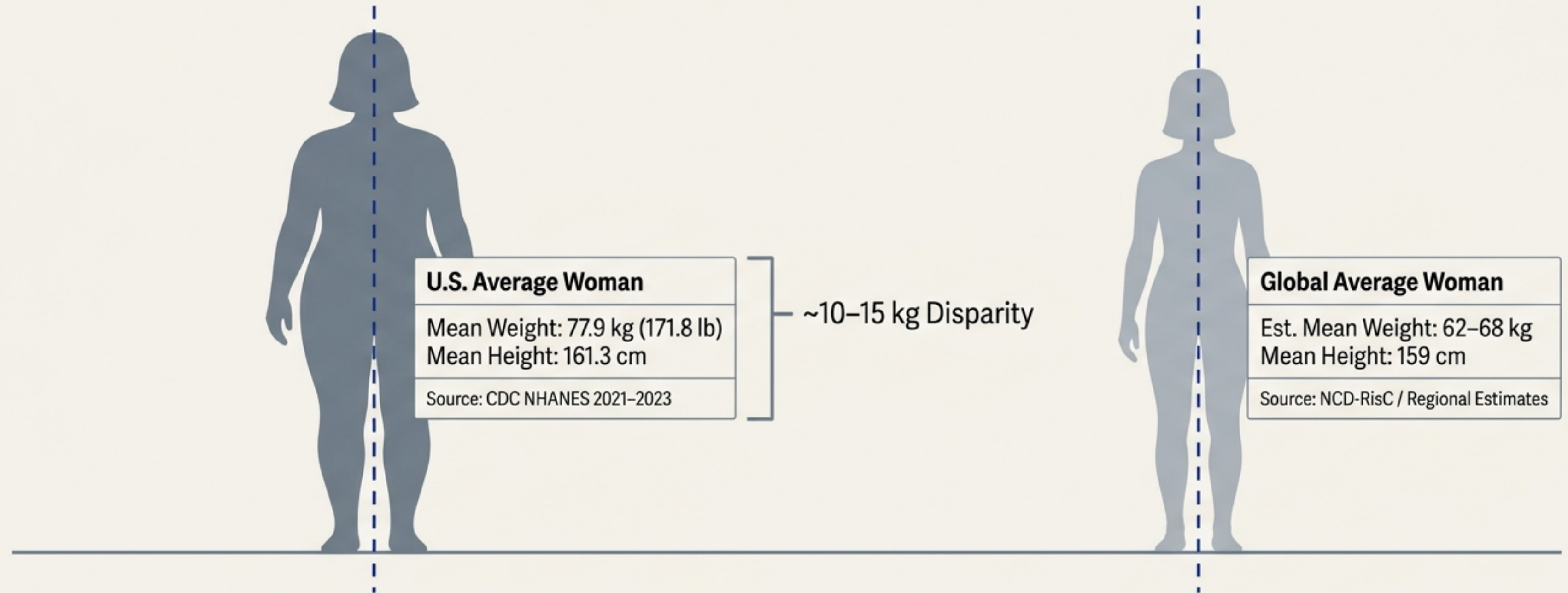
A comparative structural analysis of Olympic Wrestling, Judo, and Weightlifting against global demographic realities.

An Explainer and Diagnostic Comparison designed for sports administrators and athletic policy researchers.



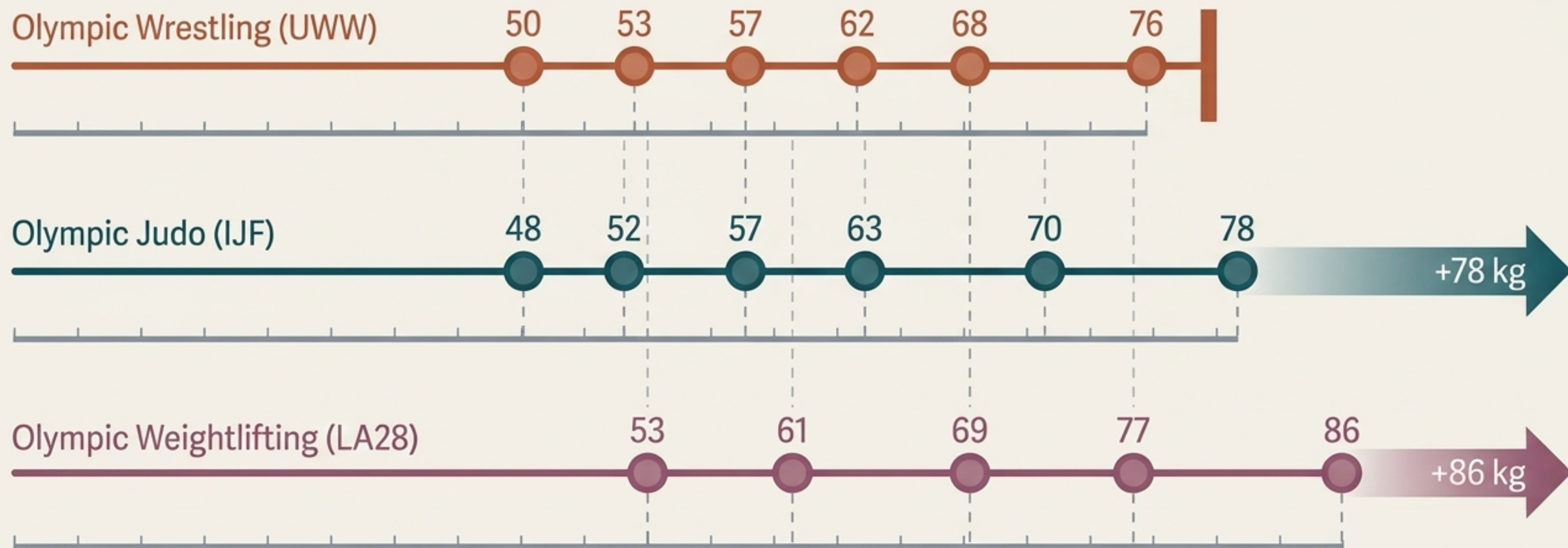
The Baseline Dilemma: Designing for the U.S. vs. The World

Evaluating a weight class requires knowing the target population. If we design for the U.S., the center is heavy. If we design globally, the center is lighter.



The Olympic Architectures

Wrestling uses the fewest categories and is the only sport of the three that utilizes a strict hard cap without an open-ended heavyweight class.



Structural Comparison Matrix

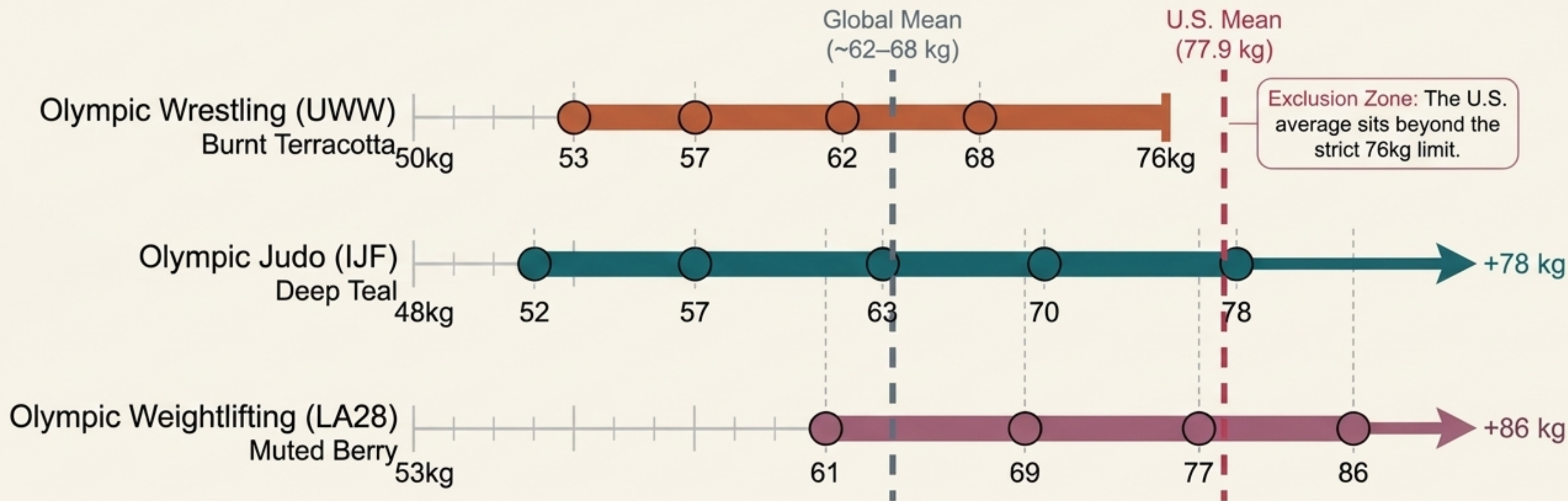
Wrestling offers the tightest step intervals but is structurally unique in its absolute exclusion of an above-threshold open class.

Sport	Lightest Floor	Average Step Size	Highest Capped Class	Open Heavyweight (+)
Wrestling (Paris 2024)	50 kg	~5.2 kg jumps	76 kg	
Judo (Paris 2024)	48 kg	~6.0 kg jumps	78 kg	 +78 kg
Weightlifting (LA 2028)	53 kg	~8.3 kg jumps	86 kg	 +86 kg

Structural Outlier:
A 76kg cap means athletes exceeding this limit have no competitive division.

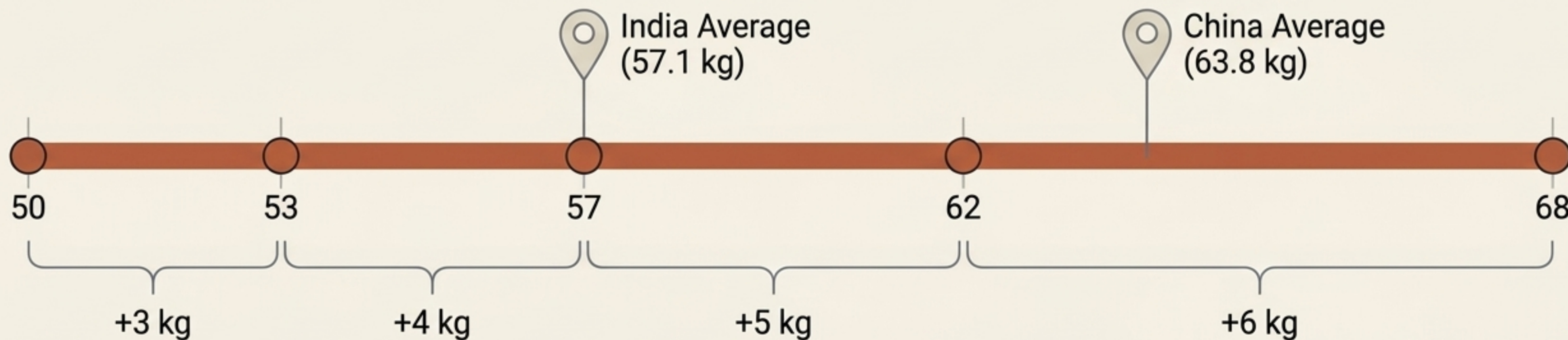
Mapping the Spectrum: Where the Baselines Intersect the Sports

Wrestling's Olympic spacing brackets the global average woman beautifully. However, the average U.S. woman is statistically heavier than the highest allowable weight class in Olympic wrestling.



Wrestling's Core Strength: Granular Resolution at the Global Mean

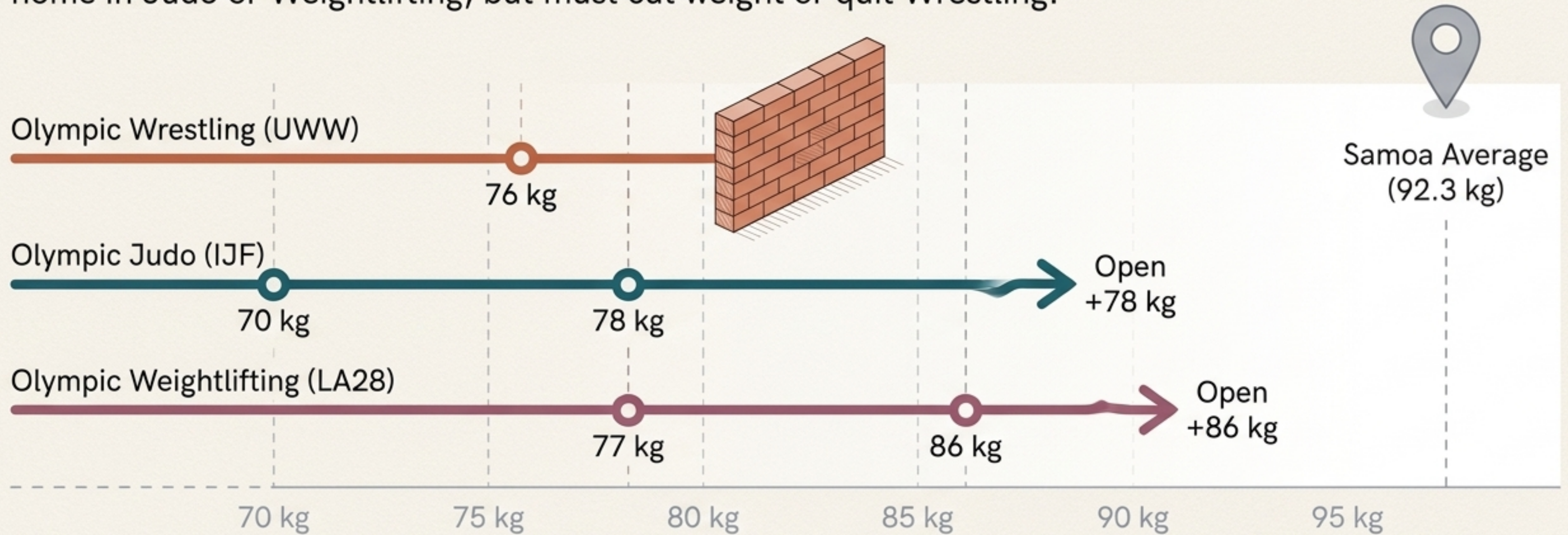
For populations in South Asia, East Asia, and Eastern Europe, UWW's Olympic distribution provides exceptional, safe competitive resolution where athlete density peaks.



Four of the six Olympic classes exist at or below 62 kg, perfectly capturing international female athletic density without forcing extreme cuts at the lighter end.

The Structural Gap: The Hard Cap vs. The Open Ceiling

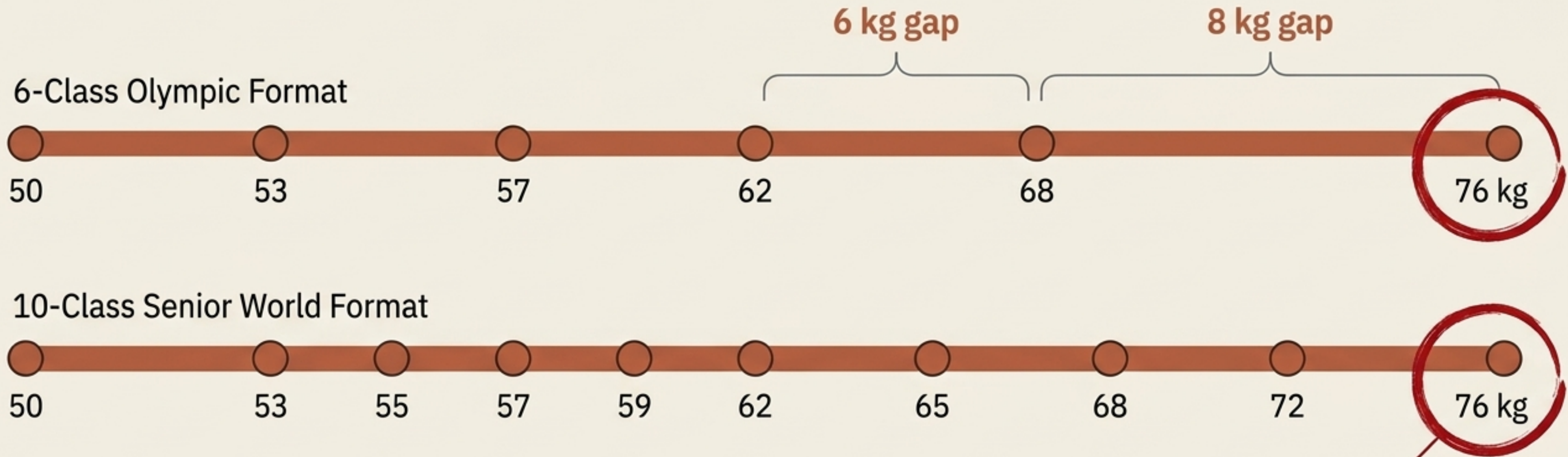
The issue is not the spacing; it is the ceiling. An 85kg athlete has a competitive home in Judo or Weightlifting, but must cut weight or quit Wrestling.



A 76kg hard cap forces severe weight cutting or total exclusion for naturally larger, taller, or higher-BMI athletes (highly prevalent in North America and Oceania).

Does the 10-Class World Championship Format Solve the Gap?

The full UWW system eliminates large weight gaps but maintains the heavyweight exclusion issue.



The 76 kg cap remains unbroken in both formats.
The spacing is fixed, but the ceiling persists.

The Verdict: Are the Classes Spread Out Enough?

Global Fit



Relative to the World: YES.

Wrestling's spacing provides excellent, finely-tuned inclusion for the average global female frame, outperforming peers in lightweight granularity.

Olympic Spacing



Relative to Peers: PARTIALLY.

Condensing to 6 Olympic classes forces larger 8kg upper-weight jumps compared to Judo's steady 7-class progression, though UWW's 10-class non-Olympic system resolves this.

The Heavyweight Gap



At the Top End: NO.

Wrestling is the only sport lacking an open heavyweight class. The 76 kg cap structurally excludes heavier athletes who are accommodated in both Judo (+78kg) and Weightlifting (+86kg).

Methodology & Population Baselines

Data Sources & Governance

- U.S. Demographics: CDC NHANES (Aug 2021–Aug 2023).
- Global Baselines: NCD-Risk Factor Collaboration & WorldData compilations.
- Olympic Wrestling: United World Wrestling (UWW) Paris 2024 regulations.
- Olympic Judo: International Judo Federation (IJF) Paris 2024 regulations.
- Olympic Weightlifting: International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) LA 2028 program.

Analytical Context

Population averages do not perfectly mirror elite athlete phenotypes. Athletes naturally possess different lean mass ratios, and size variation among elite competitors is narrower than the general public. However, broad population distributions serve as the most and objective barometer for evaluating both structural inclusion and systemic exclusion in Olympic sport policy.