



SPORT KARATE

Rules & Regulations 2022

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1.0 COMPETITOR

Each competitor must present him/herself to the referee suitably attired and physically prepared to compete. Jewelry or any object which the referee feels might endanger either competitor cannot be worn. Finger and toe nails must be properly cut or covered to eliminate any possible chance of injury to an opponent. It is the competitor's duty to be ready to compete when called upon to do so. If he/she is not suitably attired or physically prepared to compete as deemed by the center referee, the competitor may be penalized for delay of time.

1.01 Delay of Time Penalty

- Sparring: If a competitor does not present him/herself suitably attired to compete, an automatic warning will be issued to the competitor. A penalty point will be issued for each minute the competitor is not properly ready to compete. Upon receiving 3 penalty points, the offending competitor will be disqualified.
- Form: If a competitor is not properly prepared or suitably attired for form competition, .10 points will be deducted from their final score. For each full minute the competitor is not ready to compete, an additional .10 points will be deducted from their final score. If the competitor is still not ready to compete after 3 minutes have expired, he/she will be automatically disqualified.
- Rank Rule: All competitors must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts. A competitor can never compete in a division under the rank he/she earned. Once a competitor competes as a higher rank or black belt, he/she must always compete as that rank.
- Proof of Age Rule: All competitors must have proof of age. If there is a legitimate reason to question a competitor's age, he/she must present a birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents to prove his/her age. If proof of age cannot be presented, and the competitor wins a division, his/her award(s) and rating points (if rating points are awarded) will be held until proof of age is furnished. Proof of age must be furnished within seven days of the tournament date.
- Legal Age Rule: All competitors will have the option of competing in the same division all year long by establishing a legal age for the competition year instead of their chronological age. However, all competitors will always be allowed to compete in the division dictated by their chronological age, but once this decision is made, it cannot be reversed for that competition year. A competitor's legal age is their age on June 30th of the current year. The purpose of this rule is to permit a competitor to compete in one division all year so that every competitor has an equal opportunity to be "Number 1" without being penalized by their birth date.



- Uniform: All competitors must wear a sport karate (kung fu, tae kwon do, etc.) (martial arts t-shirts are acceptable) uniform in a good state of repair. A competitor with offensive words or art work on the uniform may be denied the privilege of participation. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. No shoes are allowed in the sparring division.
- Form Uniforms: T-shirts, tank tops and sweat shirts are allowed in form if they are part of a competitor's official school or if they list the school's name or logo on the uniform top. Uniforms in the form divisions are allowed more liberties because form is not one-on-one competition where the uniform could cause a decisive disadvantage or advantage to a competitor. Shoes may be worn in form competition if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.
- Responsibilities: It is the competitor's responsibility to know the rules and to be ready for competition when called to do so. He/she must be suitably attired, weighed-in, and at the appropriate ring when competition begins. If the competitor is not at his/her ring to compete when competition begins, he/she will not be allowed to compete. If a competitor leaves a ring after the ring competition begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, his/her name will be called three (3) times at ringside. If he/she is still not present to compete on the third call, he/she will be disqualified.

1.02 Required and Recommended Safety Equipment

VFT approved head gear (with faceguards 17 & under) , chest protectors (17 & under), hand and foot pads, mouthpieces and groin cups (for male competitors only) are mandatory for all competitors in all sparring divisions. Because of the many brands and styles of martial arts equipment on the market today and more coming out each year, space prohibits listing all brands which are considered safe. VFT approved equipment means that each competitor's equipment will be checked to see if it is safe for use. If it is deemed unsafe, he/she will be asked to change the equipment before he/she can compete. If the competitor wears glasses there must be a protective cage or shield in front of them on the headgear. The following is a list of important and required features of Krane approved safety equipment:

1. Hand Pads - a soft padded, surface must cover the fingers, wrist and any striking surface of the hand. The striking areas such as the ridge of the hand (ridge hand) side of the hand (chop, hammer fist), back of the fist (back fist), and knuckles (punch) must be covered with a soft padded surface.
2. Kicks - A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel of the foot.
3. Head Gear - The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface.
4. A properly-fitted mouthpiece is required.



Insufficiently-padded gloves, foot and head gear will not be allowed. equipment must be in good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury. Equipment with heavy or too many seams on the striking surfaces is also not allowed. The approval or denial of the equipment is ultimately determined by the tournament's head rules arbitrator. Shin, elbow Pads are mandatory in all black belt divisions. Rib and knee are recommended but not mandatory for additional safety to all sparring competitors.

1.03 OFFICIALS

➤ Timekeeper

The timekeeper is the appointed helper to keep time. He/she will start and stop time at the command of the center referee and will inform the center referee when the two (2) minutes for sparring or the three (3) minutes for form have expired. In sparring, the timekeeper does not start or stop a match. His/her only duty is to keep time for the center referee.

➤ Scorekeeper

The scorekeeper is the appointed helper to keep score. He/she will write (type on computer) down the scores from each judge. The scorekeeper should check his/her addition a second time (calculators should be used). In sparring, the scorekeeper will write down (add in computer) or flip score cards at the command of the center referee. The scorekeeper should inform the center referee when a fighter gets the appropriate number of points to automatically win. It is the scorekeeper's duty to listen very closely to the center referee and keep score as the referee commands. Any discrepancy or confusion of the score rests in the hands of the center referee, not the scorekeeper. The center referee will make the final score decision.

➤ Referee

The (center) referee should be the most experienced official in the ring and be thoroughly versed on the rules. He/she is in complete charge of the ring and the match. He/she promotes the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decision, administers the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper and announces the winner of each match. The referee shall announce in a loud, clear voice all official decisions, and shall indict - with voice and gesture - the competitor affected by the official decision.

➤ Added Powers of the Referee:

- Match starts and ends only with his/her command (not the command of the timekeeper).
- Has final decision on any disputes on score.



- Has the power to issue warnings and award penalty points without a majority decision.
- Can overrule a majority call only to issue a warning or penalty point.
- Automatically has power to disqualify a competitor who receives three (3) penalty points (otherwise, there must be majority vote to disqualify).
- Has power to issue time-outs. A competitor can ask for a time-out but it is the determination of the referee to issue one.

1.04 Judges

The judges call points as they see them. They may be consulted by the center referee to help in determining penalties or warnings, although the referee alone has the power to issue them. They will be asked to vote on disqualification rulings. It is the majority vote of the judges and referee that determines a scoring point.

- Calls an official may make - When the referee believes there has been a significant exchange of technique, or when signaled to do so by a corner judge, he/she shall call out the word, "Stop!" in a loud voice. The referee shall then return the competitors to their starting marks and address the judges by saying "Judges Call!" All judges and the center referee cast their vote simultaneously in the following manner.
- Point is scored - If flags are used, a judge raises the appropriate color flag of the competitor who he/she feels scored the point. (If the judge is calling for a two-point kick, he/she will raise two fingers on the other hand at the same time. If he/she is calling for only one point, no fingers are raised). If no flags are used, the judge will point with his/her index finger at the competitor who he/she feels scored the point and point with his/her index and middle fingers if a kick is being called.
- No Point scored - A judge crosses his/her flags or wrists at waist level to indicate that he/she believes no point was scored.
- No-See- The judge holds his/her hand over his/her eyes indicating that he/she could not see whether a point was scored or not.
- Clash - With or without flags, a judge makes a motion as though he/she is hitting both fists together. This means both competitors scored at the same time, therefore, no point.
- Penalty - The judge waves flag color of the offending competitor in a circular motion. If no flags are being used, the judge waves hand in a circular motion as he/she points to the offending competitor.



- Out - The center referee calls stop when he/she sees a competitor go out of bounds. If a call is being made and a judge believes the competitor was out of bounds, he/she taps the flag which represents the competitor who went out, on the floor. If no flags, he/she points the right hand at the out of bounds line nearest them.
- Disqualification - A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the center referee will say, "Judges Call!" A judge will then hold the flag color, or point if no flags are being used, at the competitor he/she thinks should be disqualified. If he/she does not believe there should be a disqualification, he/she does not hold up a flag or point to a competitor.

When a judge sees a point he/she should hold up both flags or hold up one arm if no flags are being used. At the same time, he/she should yell out the word, "Stop!" in a loud, clear voice to let the referee know he/she has a call.

- Late Call - All officials should make their calls at the same time. If, in the opinion of the center referee, a corner judge is making a late call intentionally, the referee can disqualify the call (noise not allowing the judges to hear the referee and the honest mistake of raising the wrong flag color should be taken into consideration).

1.05 **Number of Officials**

In the black belt form elimination rounds, there must be one referee and four judges. Under black belt form divisions may have only one referee and two judges. When a shortage of judges exists three may be used in black belt divisions as well.

1.06 **Removal of Officials and Protest**

If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a form division for a good reason, he/she must file a protest before the division gets under way. If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a sparring division, he/she may file a protest at any time, before or after the division starts.

The proper way to file a protest is through the tournament arbitrator. The decision regarding the actual removal of the official is the arbitrator's decision. The decision is final. If an arbitrator cannot be immediately found, the competitor should ask the center referee to hold the division until the arbitrator can be summoned to the ring. All protest shall be made in an orderly, proper, and sportsmanlike manner.

If a competitor has a protest about anything, he/she should file the protest with the referee. The referee will summon the arbitrator to the ring to render a decision on the protest. All protests must be filed immediately. No protest is allowed after competition has resumed.



1.07 **Changing of Officials**

A sparring official can be changed at any time during a division once a match has stopped. A form judge cannot be removed until the division he/she is judging is completed.

1.08 **The Ring**

The size of the fighting and form adult black belt rings shall be approximately 18' x 18' minimum. The borders of each ring shall be clearly marked. Staring lines should be marked approximately six feet apart in the center of each ring. Additionally, each ring should be posted with a ring number visible to competitors, officials and medical personnel from across the floor.

Youth black belt and youth under black belt rings can be approximately 16' x 16' minimum. Adult under black belt rings shall be approximately 18' x 18' minimum.

1.09 **Weighing-In**

It is mandatory for all adult fighting competitors - who fight in a weighted division - to weigh-in before engaging in competition. Only one official weigh-in is required. All adult fighting competitors must fight in their weight division. A competitor cannot fight in a weight division in which he/she does not make the proper weight. This means a competitor cannot go up to a heavier weight division or go down to a lower weight division. If the weight official feels a competitor is trying to weigh heavier by wearing unreasonable clothes or equipment, he/she will be asked to take off those articles of clothing before weighing-in. The weight division and/or actual weight in pounds must be recorded on the competitors competition card or computer software

1.10 **Late Entries**

It is the responsibility of the competitors to be registered, weighed-in and at his/her ring prior to the time his/her sparring division starts. Once the first sparring match has started in his/her division, no other competitors can enter that division.

1.11 **Order of Competition**

Once the final call for competitors of a division has been made at ringside, the referee and his/her ring personnel will check-in competitors in the computer system. Once they are checked in the computer will shuffle. Byes - if needed - are entered. The system will randomly set the competitors' order and bracket the fighters.



1.12 Length of Match

All BB 2 rounds 2min

Underbelts 1 round 7point spread

- Underbelts - An elimination match shall last a total of two (2) minutes, unless a competitor earns seven (7) points to be declared the winner before the two (2) minutes are up. Running time means that the clock continues to run during point calls, etc., unless the referee calls for a time out. During unusually long point calls, equipment adjustments, rule clarification, etc., the referee shall stop the time. If at the end of two minutes the match is tied, the match will continue into a sudden victory overtime period. The first competitor to score a point is declared the winner.
- BB - All grand championship fighting matches will be a two round two minute, total points or a ten (10) point spread. The competitor with the most points at the end of the round will be declared the winner. If the score is tied at the end of regulation, fighters have two options:
 - first point wins; or
 - an additional 1 minute round.

If fighters split the decision, then it will be decided by coin toss:

- Heads = Next Point
- Tails = 1 Additional Minute

1.13 Point Values and Winner Determination

All legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. All legal kicking techniques that score to the body will be awarded (1) points. All legal kicking techniques that score to the head will be awarded (2) points. All penalty points awarded will be one (1) point value. In the Black Belt divisions the competitor who has the most points automatically wins. In the Under belt divisions, the competitor who earns seven (7) points automatically wins. If no one scores seven (7) points by the end of the two minutes, the competitor who is ahead wins.

➤ How Points are Awarded

Scoring points are awarded by a majority vote of the judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. The only agreement to be made is that the point that scored was either a kick or a hand technique. The judges acknowledge this by holding up two fingers is a kick and one finger is a hand technique scored. A majority of the judges calling for point must agree that a head kick scored in



order to award two (2) points. Otherwise only one point is awarded. See Penalty Points for additional information on receiving penalty points and scoring points at the same time.

➤ What a Point Is

A point is a controlled legal sport karate technique scored by a competitor in-bounds that strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of contact to legal target areas. Criteria that officials use when deciding if a point was scored are:

- Was it a legitimate and legal sport karate technique?
- Was it delivered with the required control or allowed contact to a legal target area?
- Was the competitor who scored in-bounds?
- Had the match been stopped by the referee?
- Was either competitor down illegally when the point was scored?
- Was the competitor who scored the point in control and well balanced?
- Was the technique delivered with an amount of "controlled force" that would have incapacitated the opponent, at least momentarily, if the technique had not been controlled?

- Legal Target Areas: Entire head and face, ribs, chest, abdomen and kidneys.
- Illegal Target Areas: Spine, back of neck, throat, sides of neck, groin, legs, knees and back are all illegal target areas. Any attacks to these areas could result in a penalty points.
- Non-Target Areas: Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet are all non-target areas. Points cannot be scored to non-target area. If it is deemed that a competitor is actually attacking these areas, warning and/or penalty point may be awarded.
- Legal Techniques: Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques, except those listed as illegal. When determining the legality of a technique, the official considers if the technique is a legitimate, controlled sport karate technique that adheres to all other rules governing sport point karate.
- Illegal Techniques: Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs on hard surface floors, ground fighting on hard surface floors, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed opponent, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled blind techniques,



any uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.

- Sweeps, Takedowns, Grabs, and Ground Fighting: Sweeps not to take down an opponent, but only to obstruct the balance can only be executed to the back of the front leg at mid-calf or below. These described sweeps are legal on all types of fighting surfaces if the sweep is only to force the opponent off balance so as to execute a technique to an upright opponent. If the sweep is considered to have knocked down the opponent, then it would be illegal. It is important to note that sweeps do not make it legal to kick the legs. A sweep must be deemed proper sweep and not a kick, to be legal.

A competitor may grab the uniform top of his/her opponent in an attempt to score. He/she may grip the uniform top for one second, after which time he/she must release the uniform. Likewise, the uniform pants may be grabbed. A kick may be trapped or grabbed for one second for purposes of executing a counterattack to an upright opponent.

Deliberately dropping to the floor to avoid or evade fighting is not legal. All dropping to the floor deliberately on a hard surface is not legal. A fighter is down when any part of the body, other than the feet is touching the floor.

1.14 Touch Contact Defined

- Light Touch Contact means there is no penetration or visible movement of the opponent as a result of the technique. Light touch may be made to all legal target areas.
- Moderate Touch Contact means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch may be made to all legal target areas except the head and face.
- Excessive Contact is made when an opponent strikes with force in excess of what is necessary to score a point. Though it is largely a judgment call, indications that contact has been excessive may be accessed by the following reactions:
 - Visible snapping back of a competitor's head from the force of a blow.
 - A knockdown of an opponent (not recklessly charging into a technique or occurring in instances where the fallen party either fell, slipped, or was off balance).
 - A knockout of an opponent.
 - The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding. (Bleeding or other obvious external injury may in itself be grounds for excessive contact if it is considered the fault of a competitor) (Bleeding, however, does not necessarily imply excessive contact).



- The distortion or injury of the body from the force of a blow to the body.

1.15 Touch Contact Requirements

- All adult black belts must make light touch contact to the face and head (head gear) to score a point, and light or moderate touch contact to the body to score a point.
- Youth black belts and all under belts can make light or moderate touch contact to the body and head to score a point.
- Light touch contact is allowed to all face guards in 17 & under divisions or any adult competitor who chooses to wear one.

1.16 Methods of Penalizing

- Underbelts
 - Warnings and Penalties

One and only one warning is allowed without penalty for breaking the rules. After the first warning is given, a penalty point is awarded to the opponent on each and every violation of the rules. If a competitor receives four warnings (giving 3 penalty point to his/her opponent) in any one match, he/she is automatically disqualified and his/her opponent is declared the winner. If the result of the first rules infraction is considered by the referee to be severe enough, he/she can omit the first warning and issue a penalty point automatically. In doing so, the referee is omitting any first warning to the offending competitor. A penalty point can determine the winner of a match.

- Black Belt Competitors

There will be no warnings. A penalty point will be given for each Penalty. On the 4th penalty the Penalize fighter will be disqualified.

- Other Penalty Rules

- A competitor cannot be penalized and still receive a point on the same call. A penalty always overrules a point by the same competitor.
- A competitor can receive a point because his/her opponent was penalized and at the same time receive a point or points for scoring.
- If a competitor is injured and it is considered that he/she is responsible for his/her own injury, or no fault can be associated with the injury, the opponent will not be penalized (i.e., ducking into a knee, butting heads, etc.). In the event a fighter is unable to continue because of a no-fault foul, his/her opponent will be declared the winner even if he/she is not ahead at the time of the foul.



- If a competitor's injury was deemed the responsibility of his/her opponent, the opponent is then disqualified, even if the injured person can not continue.
- If a competitor scores a point and immediately proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point technique, the warning for breaking the rules voids the point (a competitor cannot receive a point and a warning on the same call).

1.17 Causes of Penalizing

This is a partial list of possible causes of penalizing and may be used as a guideline to follow.

- Attacking illegal and non-target areas.
- Using illegal techniques.
- Running out of the ring to avoid fighting (not fighting out).
- Falling to the floor to avoid fighting.
- Continuing after being ordered to stop (fighting after break).
- Excessive stalling.
- Blind, negligent or reckless attacks.
- Uncontrolled techniques.
- Any unsportsmanlike behavior from the competitor or his/her coaches, friends, etc.
- Any abusive behavior from the competitor or his/her coach, teammates, family, friends, etc., such that the referee feels it affects the outcome of the match or the performance of the officials or other competitors.
- Excessive contact.
- Not being prepared or ready when it is time to compete.

1.18 Disqualification

Disqualification of a competitor requires a majority vote by all officials, except when a competitor is automatically disqualified when he/she receives three penalty points.(on the 4th one)When a competitor is disqualified, it is proper to notify the tournament's rules arbitrator. A competitor who bows out or accepts a bow out of any grand championship match may be disqualified. If so, all awards and rating points (if awarded) are forfeited. (An exception to this rule is if the



competitor bows out due to a substantiated injury verified by the tournament medical personnel).

If a competitor's injury was deemed the responsibility of his/her opponent, the opponent is then disqualified, even if the injured party cannot continue.

If a competitor scores a point and immediately proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point technique, the warning for breaking the rules voids the point (a competitor cannot receive a point and a warning on the same call).

➤ Causes of Penalizing

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- Continuing after being ordered to stop (fighting after the break).
- Excessive stalling.
- Blind, negligent or reckless attacks.
- Uncontrolled techniques.
- Any unsportsmanlike behavior from the competitor or his/her coaches, friends, etc.
- Any abusive behavior from the competitor or his/her coach, teammates, family, friends, etc., such that the referee feels is affects the outcome of the match or the performance of the officials or other competitors.
- Excessive contact.
- Not being prepared or ready when it is time to compete.

1.19 **Out-of-Bounds**

A competitor is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one foot touching inside or on the boundary line. Stepping out-of-bounds does not immediately stop the match. The referee is the only one who can stop the match. An out-of-bounds competitor may be scored on by his/her opponent so long as the in-bounds competitor has at least one foot in bounds and the referee has not



signaled to stop. In the event of a jumping technique, the attacking competitor must land with one foot in-bounds in order to score.

1.20 **Non-Competing Penalty**

If, in the majority opinion of the judges and the referee, it is considered that competitors are not making obvious attempts to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be disqualified and all awards and rating points (if awarded) are forfeited.

1.21 **Wrong Division**

If any competitor competes in a division he/she is not qualified for, because of age, weight, gender or style, he/she will be disqualified from the form, fighting, or weapon division and all awards and rating points (if awarded) are forfeited.

1.22 **Coaching**

Never, at any time, can a coach, friend, team member, etc., enter the ring without the referee's permission (only the officials, competitors and medical personnel are normally allowed in a ring).

No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching allowed.

A coach cannot ask for a time out (only a competitor may ask for a time out).

As in all sports, coaching is allowed.

A coach can never, at any time, interfere with the proper running of the ring or the decisions of the judges.

Penalties for any of the above coaching infractions are issued by the referee.

Only one coach is allowed per competitor and the coach must stand outside the ring "behind" that competitor.

2.0 **FORMS/KATA**

2.01 **Competitor**

All competitors must present themselves suitably attired and ready to compete. They may be divided into separate divisions based on style, size, gender, belt color, origin of the form, or age. To enter an adult form division, a competitor must be 18 years or older. A competitor must enter the division corresponding to his/her age, sex, and belt color.

➤ Late Entries and Order of Performance



It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at the ring prior to the time that the form division starts. Once the division is organized and the first competitor begins, there will be no additional entries. If a competitor comes late but the first competitor has not started, he/she can compete but must compete first and immediately.

The order of the performance of the non-seeds (where seeding is used) will be by random draw, shuffling of cards, computer selection, numbers, etc. Switching the order of performance numbers is not allowed between competitors. If there is good reason to believe that competitors switched numbers, he/she will be disqualified.

The order of performance of the grand championship rounds will also be determined by random draw. If the competitor (s) is not present at the designed time to draw numbers, he/she will automatically go before the ones who are present. If only one is not present, he/she will automatically go first. If more than one are not present, a separate drawing is made by the designated form coordinator for those not present. They will go in that order before the competitors who are present.

➤ Time Limit

A competitor must be ready to compete when called upon to do so. All form competitors have a maximum of three (3) minutes to present and perform their routine. The time starts once a competitor enters the ring. If the judge feels the competitor is stalling before he/she enters the ring, he/she can call for the timekeeper to start the clock. A competitor whose forms exceed the 3-minute time limit will be disqualified. Competitors in the grand championship runoff or finals will receive four (4) minutes to present and perform their routine.

➤ Japanese/Okinawan/Chinese/Korean Divisions

Competitors in these divisions, if offered, must exhibit a form that reflects the essence and traditional values of the division name in which they are competing. The form does not have to be classical form handed down over the years, but should not deviate too far in form and content from the style's classical form. Competitors exhibiting forms that are too "free", have gymnastics, or other non-martial art techniques in them or are comprised of elements from more than one style, should enter the American, Musical or Open division. Otherwise the competitor risks disqualification or down grading.

➤ Musical Division, American or Open Division

The Musical division is an empty hand form division that requires music.

The American or Open division is an empty hand form division that does not allow music.



All of the above divisions do not allow the use of weaponry.

It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide his/her own battery-operated music box and his/her music. If the music box malfunctions due to no fault of the tournament and its coordinators, the competitor will be downgraded by the judges (see "starting a Form Over" rule).

➤ Competition Ring Size

All black belt competitors should be prepared to perform routines within a 18' x 18' (youth rings (youth rings may be smaller). If more space is available which does not restrict any other rings, spectators, judges, etc., more space to perform a routine may be allowed by the promoter. But it should be noted that additional space is a privilege and a competitor cannot automatically assume it will be made available. Allowing more space will be the exception, not the rule. Adult under black belt rings should be approximately 18' x 18' minimum and youth rings can be approximately 16' x 16' minimum.

➤ Starting a Form Over

If a competitor starts his/her form over because of a memory lapse or any other reason due to his/her own negligence, he/she may perform the form again. The officials will score the competitor as though there was not a mistake, but the scorekeeper will deduct .10 from the competitor's total score. A competitor can only start over one (1) time. If a competitor does not finish on the second try, he/she will be disqualified. If a competitor has to start over not due to his/her own negligence, he/she may start over without penalizing. It is important that the referee discuss the penalizing procedure with the judges and scorekeeper. When a competitor starts over, the clock is reset and starts over as well.

➤ External Aids

No external aids such as props, weapons, music, etc., can be used in any division except those divisions where it is permissible. No external aids can be used that would damage, disrupt or render the competition area unsafe for the other competitors, spectators or judges.

➤ Weapon Division

The referee should check all weapons for safety. Weapons are subject to referee's approval (no sharp weapons allowed in the youth divisions or under belt divisions).

The referee should make sure all spectators and competitors are at a safe distance from the performing competitor.

Safety of all competitors, judges, spectators and helpers should be considered by all involved. Therefore, the competitor's control of his/her



weapon is of utmost importance. If a Black Belt competitor (adult or youth) unintentionally drops his/her weapon, he/she is automatically disqualified. Under belts may start their form over if they drop a weapon with the same deduction as if a form was forgotten and started over. If a competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses his/her weapon, he/she may be penalized or disqualified.

If a competitor wins the weapons form division during the eliminations, he/she must perform with a weapon in the weapon grand championship round (if a grand championship round is offered).

➤ Grand Championship Form & Weapon Rounds

The grand championship form round pits the appropriate first place form winners against each other. All competitors should have an equal opportunity to compete at their best. Therefore, routines may be altered or changed and music may be used by all competitors.

The weapons winners must use a weapon in the weapon grand championship round, but it does not have to be the same weapon used during the elimination.

A winner of a non-weapon division cannot use a weapon in the grand championship runoff.

National tournament finals are not all the same. Some may be filmed for television or have added attractions such as full contact karate, etc. These differences dictate the structure of each national tournament's finals. Some grand championship runoffs may be altered to fit into the finals properly. Luck of the draw for placement will determine the order of both grand championship elimination round and final grand championship round. Only the score of the final grand championship round will determine the winner.

➤ Scoring of Form

The officials will each score forms in the range of 9.80 to 10.00. Average is 9.90 (or the center referee will tell the range to the judges if less competitors), most scores will be above this for very few competitors do below average forms.

➤ Ties

All competitors must Perform before judges score of them. Judges must take good notes in order to accurately score competitors.

If there is a tie the competitor who received the majority of the judges' votes (winning scores) will be declared the winner (all judges' scores are used). If still tied the judges will vote on whom they felt had the overall better performance.



➤ **Fairness Rule**

If a question arises that is not covered by this rule book, the arbitrator and/or his/her appointed representative, may at his/her discretion, overrule, modify or change a delineated rule if he/she believes that enforcing such a rule would result in an inherent unfair outcome to a competitor ("Fairness Rule"). However, the arbitrator and/or his/her appointed representative should overrule, modify or change a delineated rule only in extreme cases.

➤ **Maximum Deviation Rule**

Divisions with three officials will use the Maximum Deviation Rule. Since high and low scores are not dropped when three officials are used, the Maximum Deviation Rule has a similar effect of limiting the impact of a judge's score that is significantly higher or lower than the other judge's scores. This prevents a single score from being so high or so low that it controls the placing order.

When a form or other performance is ready to be scored, the Chief Official will say "Ready", then, "Check", at which point the three judges show their score to each other only (not to the competitors or spectators).

The center judge will then look at the 3 scores to determine which one is the middle score (for example, a 9.92, 9.96 and a 9.95 – the 9.95 is the middle score. The other 2 scores must be .02 from the middle score. So in the example the 9.92 must be upgraded to 9.93.

Other than this mandatory adjustment, a judge may not change his score. If no score is more than .02 higher or lower than the middle score, then there is no adjustment. After assuring that any necessary adjustment has been made, the Chief Official then says, "Score", and the scores to the audience, the competitors, and the scorekeeper as usual.

3.0 JUDGING

3.01 Sparring

➤ **Do's and Don'ts of Point Calling:**

- Know and understand the rules in their entirety - Only by knowing the rules can you make the split second decisions that are required in point karate judging.
- Make all decisions quickly and decisively in a confident manner - You must be able to stand with conviction on each and every one of your calls. Call only what you see clearly, not what you heard or thought you saw.



- Give each Match your full, focused attention - Don't let yourself be distracted or influenced into making a call by outside forces (i.e., other judges, fans, coaches, etc.).
- Stay out of the way of the competitors so as not to interfere with the match.
- Point Definition: A point is a controlled, legal sport karate technique scored by a competitor in-bound which strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of contact or focused control to a legal target area.
- Control: Holding back in reverse the amount of force that, if not restrained or pulled short of full contact, could have incapacitated or inflicted serious damage to an opponent.
- Focused Touch: Light, medium and excessive (see the rule book definition on touch contact).
 - Was it focused to a legal target area?
 - Was the competitor under control with proper balance in the execution of the technique?
 - Was the competitor who scored in-bounds?
 - Had the match been stopped before the technique scored?
 - Was it a clash (each competitor scoring at the same time)?
 - Were there any rules violations immediately following the scoring technique (i.e. a competitor cannot receive a point and a penalty on the same call)?
 - Was either competitor on the ground when the point was scored?
 - Was the match over before the point was scored?

3.02 Forms and Weapons

- Judging Categories: Each form and weapon routine is judged on execution, presentation and difficulty.
 - Execution: The act or process of performing (executing) the techniques of the form or weapon routine. The execution stage of judging is the most critical and should weigh the most in the judge's final score.
 - Elements of Execution: balance, power, speed, stability, proper technique formation, coordination, flexibility, stamina, timing, technique skill, etc.



- Presentation: the image or impression of the competitor as reflected in his/her performance of the form or weapon routine. The presentation stage is the second most important or critical and should weight accordingly in the judge's final score.
- Difficulty: the complexity and intricacy of the form or weapon routine. The difficulty category is the least critical of the three judging categories, but could become the deciding factor of winning or losing if a judge feels that two competitors are equally as good in the execution and presentation categories.

Value should never be awarded for difficulty techniques or forms performed poorly. Difficulty alone, without proper execution, should always be downgraded.

- Elements of Difficulty: Complexity of techniques, flexibility, balance, versatility of techniques, stamina, length, ambidexterity, etc.

When judging form and weapon competitors, you are actually comparing the competitors in the division against each other to arrive at the best 3 or 4 (8 in national competitions). This requires extreme attentiveness and memory of details to make an accurate judging decision.

To help you better arrive at correct decision, the following two procedures are recommended:

- First three competitors: Watch the first three competitors before scoring. The first three competitors will give you a representation of the division. The rest of the competitors will be scored against these first three.

Write down your scores and quick reference not regarding the competitor beside each score. In divisions with a large number of competitors, it becomes difficult to remember each score that you have awarded. remembering each score becomes more difficult when using the hundredths scoring range. Additionally, writing down your scores solves any disputes that could arise if the scorekeeper inadvertently wrote down a judge's score incorrectly.

- The Use of Music: There may be two uses of music in form and weapon competition. One is in a division which allow music and the second, when allowed, is when music is used only to enhance the mood of presentation of the form (i.e., grand champion runoffs).
- Divisions which allow music: The music should be synchronized with the movement of the form routine. A judge should hear the beats and rhythm of the music in coordination and synchronization with the techniques in the form. The music cannot be only background music, but must be an intrinsic part of the form or weapon routine.



- The use of Gymnastic Movements: It is important to keep in mind when judging form and weapon divisions that we are judging technical skills as they relate to the value of martial arts. Using gymnastic movements may or may not have an inherent value to the martial arts. It is the judges decision as to what value the gymnastic movements are to the form and to the martial arts. If a competitor performs a sub-par gymnastic movement, the movement should be scored down. If the gymnastic movement is performed well, but is not of value to the martial arts, the move may be scored down or ignored. If the gymnastic movement has an inherent value to the martial arts as perceived by the judges, it should be scored as any other technique (i.e., execution, difficulty, presentation).

➤ Weapons Division

Judging a weapon division is no different than judging an empty hand form division except the main emphasis and value to the form is placed on the competitor's use of the weapon.

Important elements of weapon judging, in addition to execution, presentation and difficulty, are:

- The competitor's control of the weapon. the weapon should be seen as an extension of the competitor's arms and hands. The absolute control of the weapon at all times within the routine is essential.
- The transition and combination of regular martial arts techniques with the weapon (i.e., kicking, blocking, etc.).
- The percentage of weaponry movements to non-weaponry movements:
The majority of any weapon form should consist of the use of the weapon.

4.0 SAFETY

No reckless or careless use of the weapon that would harm the competitor, another competitor, the judges or spectators.



