



Last Revision 06/05/2023

#### RECENT REVISIONS:

- **[Inclusion of Open Weight Divisions to the Grand Champion Runoffs: Page 5]**  
Point Sparring Open Weight Divisions will be included to each of the age specific Grand Champion Runoffs.
- **[Flag Sparring Rules Added: Page 12 ]**  
[B] First player to **5 points** OR player with the most points at the end of Regulation Time

## General rules

**Competitor Responsibilities:** It is the responsibility of the competitor to know the Rules and be ready for competition when called to do so.

If the competitor is not at his/her ring when their division is called three times by the ring coordinator/announcer, he/she can be disqualified.

If a competitor leaves the ring after their division begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, his/her name will be called again at ringside. If he/she is still not present to compete, he/she will have two minutes to show up to compete. If he/she is still not present to compete, he/she will be disqualified.

No division/ring will be held up waiting for another competitor to get finished with another division in another ring.  
(absolutely no refunds)

**Uniform:** All competitors must wear a complete top and bottom (karate, kung fu, tae kwon do, or sport martial arts uniform). Uniform must be in good state of repair. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition.  
T-shirts, tank tops and sweatshirts are allowed in forms if they are apart of the competitors official school uniform. Shoes may be worn in forms competition if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.

Ring Star sparring shoes are not allowed in sparring divisions.

**Ring coordinator:** the designated ring coordinator is in charge of the ring. They will determine the order of performance and determine sparring matchups. They will also settle initial arbitrary issues. Any further arbitrary decisions will be settled by the designated kata/sparring arbitrator.

**Arbitrators:** If a competitor has an issue with an official or a decision call, the events' designated ring arbitrator can be called upon for final resolution. All decisions by an arbitrator are final. If Event Arbitrator is not available, the Final Majority Decision between the 3 officials will preside.

**Number of Officials:** 3 officials are required for all divisions. 5 officials are desired in all black belt grand champion divisions, but not mandatory.

**Protests/Arbitrations:** all protests must be made in an orderly, professional and sportsmanlike manner.

All protests must be made immediately. Protests are not allowed once division has been completed and division has been closed. A competitor may be penalized or even disqualified if he/she is protesting improperly or without proper cause.

A "competitor accommodation" may be made by arbitrator/ring coordinator/event promoter if inquiry was due to staff error and division has been completed or closed. This "Accommodation" may include awarding of a higher placing, earned competitor points for that said event, or inclusion in grand runoffs.

**Removal of officials:** No removal of officials may be executed at the request of a competitor or parent. The only case where an official can be replaced is if a competitor and an official come from the same dojo/school/training facility.

**Late Entries:** Once a division has started, no additional competitors can be added.

**Weighing-in:** it is mandatory for all adult fighting competitors & continuous fighters, who are in weight divisions, to weigh in before competition. All competitors must fight in his/her weight division. A competitor cannot fight up or down in another weight division for which he/she has not made proper weight. It is the responsibility of the tournament personnel to weigh and properly record the competitors' weight.

## Competition Age

**Competition Age:** All competitors must enter divisions based upon the age they were on January 1<sup>st</sup> of that said year at 12:00am. Competitors who turn 18yrs+ and 30yrs+ of age during the circuit season (Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup>) are allowed to move up and compete in those divisions if the competitor will be turning that age during the circuit season. Competitors under 18yrs that move up to an age bracket must stay in that bracket.

All Competitors may NOT fight up and down multiple age brackets and must fight at the age level they qualify for.

\* Petitions can be made to the Governing Board regarding Juniors fighting up age brackets due to safety reasons based upon body size/body weight.

**Proof of Age Rule:** All competitors must have proof of age, if requested. If there is a legitimate reason to question a competitors' age, he/she must present proof of age. Please provide a copy of competitor's birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents with you or send a copy in with your enrollment form.

- Any discrepancies with the age of another player must be reported before the last tournament of the regular season. After the last tournament of the regular season, all players at The Finals will be locked in their respective divisions they have been competing in all season long.

## Rank rules

**Rank Rule:** A competitor must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts/competed in a sport martial arts tournament.

A competitor may compete in a division of which he/she has not earned a rank in, as long as they are going up in division . A competitor can never compete in a lower belt division than the level of belt he/she had earned in the martial arts.

For competitors switching schools/teams, although they may be of lower rank at the new school, they MUST COMPETE in the highest division they have competed in a LEAGUE event.

A competitor who promotes to a higher rank mid-season must compete in the higher ranked division. Any participation points accumulated previous to their rank promotion can be transferred to the new division. Placing points (1st/2nd/3rd place) cannot be transferred. **[10.27.21]**

**Competing on Other Circuits:** If a competitor participates in another circuit at a higher belt level, they must stay competing at that belt level. For example, a competitor is a purple belt, but competed in a black belt division on another circuit or tournament, they must compete at that higher belt division.

### Belt Colors:

Novice- White, yellow, Gold, Orange

Intermediate- Purple, Blue, Green

Advance- Red, Brown

Expert- Black

**Split Belt or Colored Striped Rank Belts Rule:** Vinyl tape on the ends of belts does not change rank status. It is recommended that all competitors wear a solid color belt to avoid any discrepancies and misplacement. Competitors wearing a belt with a black solid stripe will be moved up to the next ranking (example: orange belt with a purple stripe will be moved up to intermediate; green belt with a brown stripe will be moved up to advanced level).

## First timer divisions

**First Timer Divisions:** All Belts, except Black Belts, are allowed in these divisions.

A competitor may not compete in BOTH First Timer (Kata,Point Sparring) and Regular (Kata,Point Sparring) Divisions. The competitor must exclusively compete in only one of those divisions.

Participation points are tracked in the LEAGUE point standings for these divisions for qualifying purposes for the said year of the League Finals. The LEAGUE does not transfer points from first timer divisions to regular divisions.

First timer divisions are intended for competitors competing in their first season in the LEAGUE circuit. It is our goal to make their first few tournaments a fun and motivating experience. The emphasis of these divisions is participation and gaining competition experience.

The LEAGUE Board of Governors may disallow competitors to compete in First Timer Divisions based upon superior skill level at their discretion throughout the regular season. If this is executed, participation points that have been accumulated will be transferred to the regular division the competitor is placed at.

#### **First Timer Rules**

**Kata:** each competitor will perform their kata once, and will immediately receive a score.

**Sparring:** each competitor will fight a minimum of (2) matches, paired with another first time competitor.

All first timer sparring matches have a 5 point ceiling and a 1:30 minute regulation round. (see under belt sparring rules)

## General Sparring rules

**Sparring Safety Equipment:** Only approved foam type sport martial arts sparring gear will be allowed.

Mandatory Equipment include: headgear, hand gear, feet gear, mouthpiece, and groin area protectors are mandatory. Hard plastic pads used for other sports are not allowed (i.e. soccer shin pads). The competitors' equipment will be checked and if it is deemed unsafe, he/she will be asked to change the equipment before he/she can compete. Equipment must be in good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury. All fingers must not protrude the hand pads, and all toes must not protrude on footpads as well.

MMA type gloves are not allowed.

No ringstars type foot shoes are allowed in LEAGUE events.

The groin area is not a legal target. Since this is a sport of semi-contact, it is advised and recommended that all competitors, including females, wear a groin area guard. Females may, at their own risk, elect not to wear one.

No eyeglass spectacles are allowed. A player may wear Prescription Sport Goggles or eye contact lens.

Failure to observe these rules will result in forfeiture if a competitor cannot conform. Semi-contact is permitted to the head, so it is recommended that a face shield be used for all youth competitors.

#### **Length of Match:**

UNDERBELT DIVISIONS: 2-minute running time, No timeouts allowed, 10 point ceiling, 7 point spread

BLACK BELT DIVISIONS: 2-minute running time, No point ceiling, 10-point spread rule

- Regulation time in regular season events that feature round robin, double elimination, 3 match minimum elimination formats will be adjusted to 1:30 rounds

**30-Second Sparring Over Time Period:** If a match is tied at the end of 2 minutes, an extended 30-second overtime period will ensue. Player with most points in overtime wins the match

In the result of a tie after the first overtime period, a second 30-second overtime period will take place. 30-second overtime periods will continue until a fighter has more points than his competitor.

After (3) overtime periods, the match will be determined by Next-Point-Wins decision.

**Sparring Elimination Matches:** Once the final call for the sparring division has been made at ringside and the division is ready to be set up, the competition cards should be collected by the scorekeeper/ring coordinator only. Center referees or side judges may not pair up competitors, touch the player cards, or determine matchups.

Matches should always be selected by random. Only certain allowances may be given to competitors from the same school that is matched up in the first round of competition. This is determined by players wearing the same uniform or containing the same patch/emblem/logo. Associated schools or teams training together does not equate in two players from the same school/team.

The scorekeeper/ring coordinator will make sure the competitors from the same school are not paired up with each other in EACH round. Although scorekeepers will do their best, there will be no guarantees regarding same school matchups after the first round.

### **Point values and winner determination:**

**For all under belt/black belt divisions:** all legal hand techniques, and kicks to the body will be awarded (1) one point. Any kicks to the head, jump kicks, and any spinning kicks to the body/head from a standing position will be awarded (2) two points.

**Grand Champion Bouts:** in the grand champion runoffs, elimination matches are 10 point ceiling, 7 point spread

Point Sparring Open Weight Divisions will be included to each of the age specific Grand Champion Runoffs. [3.29.23]

All grand champion final matches are **one 2-minute round**. There is a 10 point spread rule in effect in all grand champion bouts.

**Six Point Sparring Equipment Check:** All side judges will perform a fighter equipment check for all fighters at the fight line before the beginning of each match. They will check for:

- 1) head gear: gear is strapped and fitted snug on the fighter's head.
- 2) No Jewelry: No earrings, bracelets, or necklaces allowed.
- 3) Mouthguard: every fighter must wear a mouthpiece.
- 4) Hand gear: All fingers must fit snug into the hand and strapped on.
- 5) Groin cup: fighters will be asked to knock on their groin cup and prove they are wearing a groin protector.
- 6) Feet gear: toes must be covered and not sticking out and gear strapped snug.

Any gear with loose Velcro will not be allowed and gear must be replaced.

Any violation of the above equipment check, fighters will be given 2 minutes to get the appropriate equipment to the level of approval of the league.

## Coaching & Time Outs

**Coaching Time outs:** there are no coaching timeouts allowed in sparring matches. Coaches may not stop a fight mid-match to communicate with their player.

**Sparring Equipment Time outs:** All equipment adjustment timeouts must be handled by the center referee. If a player needs a pause in the match to fix strapping or thereto of feet equipment, hand equipment, head equipment, etc, it must be directly handled by the center referee and not the player or coach. Penalty points may be given for this delay.

If there are any Sparring Equipment Adjustment timeouts during live action play, then center referee will (1) call for stoppage (2) center referee will fix/adjust gear (3) players will be positioned in the ring where they were at last before stoppage was called. [4] Fight will resume on Center Referee's command. [10.28.21]

**Injury Time outs:** the center ref will classify each injury as a "low level minor injury", "a high level minor injury", or a "major injury".

"low level Minor injury": a player is given 90 seconds to recoup from injury

"high level minor injury": a player is given 5 minutes to recoup from injury

"major injury": center ref must immediately end the match and issue a disqualification of the opponent or a forfeiture of the injured player

When an injury occurs, the center referee will request for the head scorekeeper to start the injury clock. The injury clock stops when the fight reconvenes. The scorekeeper will record this accumulation of injury time. If the same player gets injured again later in the match, they only have the difference of time remaining from 5 minutes (high level minor injury) subtracted by the amount of time used in the previous injury.

The opposing player may confer with their coach during an injury timeout.

If the injured player cannot continue after the allotted time, they must forfeit due to injury.

Any injured player must have medical clearance to continue.

**Official time outs:** A center ref may consult with their scorekeeper staff and call an officials time out to resolve match up issues/scoring issues.

A center ref may also issue an official's time out in order to calm down an escalating fight in which players are on the brink of unsportsmanlike behavior.

During this timeout, players may confer with their coaches.

**Coaching:** coaching is allowed but only under the following guidelines-

- never, at any time, can a coach enter the ring without the referee's permission
- no abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching
- coaches can never interfere with the proper running of the ring or the decisions of the judges
- Only one coach is allowed per fighter and they must be positioned in the appropriate coaches box
- Center referee has the added power to remove a coach for constant abuse/rule infraction

# Referees

**Center referees:** certified league center referees are the most experienced person in the ring and are thoroughly versed on the rules and order of competition. He/she promotes the safety of competitors, enforces the rules, and ensures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administers the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper, and announces the winner of each match.

Added powers of the Center Referee:

- 1) match starts/stops with his/her command, not the command of the timekeeper, scorekeeper or coach
- 2) has final decision on any disputes on score unless an arbitrator is called
- 3) has the power to issue warnings and award penalty points without a majority decision
- 4) can overrule a majority call only to issue a warning or a penalty point
- 5) automatically has power to disqualify a competitor who receives 3 penalties
- 6) has power to issue competitor time out or officiating time out

**Side Judges:** the side judges call points/penalties as they see them. The center referee, to help in determining penalties or warnings, may consult them, although the center referee may not persuade them. It is the majority vote of the side judges and center referee that determines a scoring point.

Side judges may border around the outer edges of the ring. They may maneuver in a 'L' shape along the edges of the ring, but may never step into the actual ring of play. The only judge allowed in the ring of play is the center referee.

**Euro style point calls:** when the center referee believes there has been a significant exchange of techniques or when signaled to do so by a side judge, he/she shall call out the word, "stop!" in a loud voice.

At the moment the "stop!" command is made, all referees judging the fight must make their call, otherwise their call may be disqualified. Judges do not wait for fighters to come back to the fight line to make their point call. All judges must make their call at the moment the point is scored.

As the players return back to their starting fight lines the decision on if a point confirmation by the judges should have already been made.

When the "Stop!" call is made by the center ref, judges may make the following calls:

**Calls a referee or side judge may make:** when the center referee believes there has been a significant exchange of techniques, or when signaled to do so by a side judge, he/she shall call out the word, "Stop!" in a loud voice. The center referee shall then return the players to their starting fight lines and simultaneously and assertively in the following manner:

- **Side judge sees a point:** He/she should hold up one arm. At the same time, he/she yells out the word "CALL!" in a loud, clear voice to let the referee know he/she has a call.
- **Point calling:** when signaled by the center referee, a judge raises the arm and points to the competitor who scores the point. If a competitor scores a one point technique the judge should point with only one finger. If a two point technique is being called, the judge should point with two fingers.
- **no point scored:** a center referee or side judge crosses his/her wrists at waist level pointing downward to indicate that he/she believes that a point was not scored.
- **Clash:** center referee or side judge makes a motion as though they are hitting both fists together, indicating that both competitors scored at the same time. Judges may not give points to both players simultaneously in one call.

- **Penalty:** the center referee or judge points his arm towards the offending competitor with his thumb pointing down.
- **Disqualification:** A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. The center ref will request to huddle with the two side judges and without persuading or influencing the side judges, inform them to make a decision on whether a fighter should be disqualified for an improper infraction. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the referee will say, “judges call”. The judges will then hold their arms out with a circular motion with their finger point towards the competitor who is to be disqualified.
- **Exit Penalty:** An exit penalty will be signaled by judges by waving 5 fingers in a downward swaying motion below the hip. A majority of judges ( 2 out of 3 judges) must call the exit penalty. A center judge alone may not issue an exit penalty.

**Late Calls:** all judges should make their calls at the same time. If in the opinion of the center referee, the corner judges are making a late call intentionally, the referee can disqualify the call. Center referee/arbitrator may make an exception, such as (noise not allowing the side judges to hear the center referee make a call for points OR the honest mistake of raising the wrong hand or pointing at the wrong competitor should be taken into consideration not to disqualify the call.

Should a late call affect the score of a clash, the center ref may request for a re-call in which the judges will re-score the current clash.

Should a specific judge continue to make late calls, they may be requested to be removed by a center referee or a coach.

**Majority vote:** points are awarded by a majority vote of all judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. A majority of the judges calling the point must call a (2) point technique before points can be awarded, otherwise only one point is awarded.

**What is a point?:** a point is a controlled legal sport karate technique scored by a competitor in bounds and up-right without time being called that strikes a competitor with the allowable amount of focused touch contact.

**Legal Target/Scoring Areas:** Light touch to the side of the helmet, ribs, chest, abdomen, kidneys

## Sparring Penalties

**Infraction Rule:** A sparring match can never be determined and end by an infraction/penalty. If a match is tied, and player ‘a’ receives their last point by a penalty point before regulation time, and the penalty point decides the winner of the fight, the match must continue. In order to complete the bout, either: (scenario 1) player ‘a’ must score one (1) more point **OR** (scenario 2) player ‘b’ must score two (2) points. First player to complete either of those options will end the match.

If the match goes above the allowable point ceiling or allowable point spread, and the infraction rule comes into play, the match will continue as outlined above.

If, at the end of regulation time either player has more points than the other without the penalty point as the deciding point, then the player with the most points wins the bout.

**Illegal target areas:** spine, back of the neck, throat, sides of the neck, knees, groin, and back

**Illegal techniques:**



(illegal techniques warranting a penalty point if executed)

- groin kick
- head butts
- hair pulls
- bites
- scratches
- elbows
- knees
- eye attacks of any kind
- take downs or sweeps
- slapping
- grabbing for more than two seconds
- uncontrolled blind techniques
- throwing
- any uncontrolled or dangerous techniques deemed unsafe by center ref/arbitrator

(illegal techniques warranting a warning if executed the first time, then a penalty point if repeated)

- cartwheel kick

**Ground Fighting:** There is absolutely no ground fighting. Any stomps, punches or kicks to the head or body of a downed competitor is grounds for penalty points or disqualification. Match play must be stopped by the center referee once a player falls to the ground or has a knee/elbow/hip touching the floor.

If a player has a hand(s) touching the floor while kicking (i.e. supporting balance hands for execution for a kick) that is deemed ground fighting and no points by the falling player can be counted. The match will continue exactly where the fighters are positioned in the ring of play before the initial stoppage.

**Grabbing:** A competitor may grab the uniform top/pants of his/her opponent in an attempt to score with a sport martial arts technique for only one second immediately after which time he/she must release the uniform.

**Penalties:** there are no warnings for breaking the rules. Penalty points will be awarded for each sparring infraction. After the 4<sup>th</sup> penalty point is given, a competitor can be disqualified. If the severity of the first rules violation is deemed by the center referee to be too severe/excessive a disqualification can be issued immediately.

A competitor cannot be penalized and still receive a point on the same call. A competitor can receive a point for a proper technique and receive another point on a penalty call called on their opponent. If, in the opinion of the referee and/or medical personnel, a competitor cannot continue because of an injury caused by an illegal penalized attack executed by his/her opponent, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified regardless of score.

### **Sparring Penalties:**

- attacking illegal and non target areas
- running out of the ring to avoid fighting
- falling to the floor to avoid fighting
- continuing after being ordered to stop
- blind, negligent or reckless attacks
- displaying unsportsmanlike behavior by the competitor, coach
- hand on the ground while kicking
- using illegal techniques
- excessive stalling
- uncontrolled techniques
- delay of time
- excessive contact

**Blood Rule:** A player may be disqualified for drawing blood only if the blow to the head is deemed excessive. If the blow was not deemed excessive, yet blood is drawn, the match continues (with the approval of medical personnel)

If match resumes and calls are made by judges, and then blood starts to show a player cannot be disqualified. The match will continue with the approval of the medical personnel. If a fighter cannot continue because of blood, it will result in a forfeit due to injury.

In the case of an equal clash where two fighters collide with equal contact, no disqualification is given if blood is drawn. The fight may not continue without medical personnel approval.

**Non competing penalty:** non-competing penalty: if, in the majority opinion of the officials, it is considered that the competitors are not making an obvious attempt to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be warned and if it continues, will be disqualified.

**Out of Bounds:** See Exit Rule.

**Point Sparring Exit Rule:** A player willingly and voluntarily exiting out of the ring during live action without being “forced out” will have one point awarded to their opponent. A majority of judges ( 2 out of 3 judges) must call the exit penalty. A center judge alone may not issue an exit penalty. An exit penalty will be signaled by judges by waving 5 fingers in a downward swaying motion below the hip. A majority of judges ( 2 out of 3 judges) must call the exit penalty.

An “exit” is defined as a player having one foot (entire foot) or both feet stepping past the out of bounds boundaries. The whole of the foot must be outside the designated area. Stepping on the line should not be considered stepping out. An EXIT PENALTY is defined as a player going out of bounds moving backwards or laterally. There are NO FORWARD EXITS (A player attacking forward and going out of bounds).

A player will be disqualified after 4 exit penalties

If a player is Forced Out (i.e. punched or kicked out of bounds by their opponent) this DOES NOT count as an EXIT. There are no forward attacking exit penalties. Exit penalties only apply to lateral or retreating or evasion movement.

A player may not step out of bounds with one foot and then step back in and re-establish themselves. Once the entire foot is out, then an Exit Penalty must be issued by the judges.

**Upright Scoring Rule:** A competitor cannot score a point if they fall after connecting on a score (i.e. diving forward and falling after a hand attack/blitz or falling after a fading kick, etc.).

“Falling” is defined as a knee, elbow, or gluteus hitting the ground. A hand on the ground still is deemed upright and is legal.

If a player is pushed/thrown down by the opponent then this rule does not apply and the player’s score will be counted.

**Penalty & Point Scoring Rule:** A player cannot receive both a Penalty Score and Punch/Kick Score within one fighting segment. If Player A gets called for an Exit and Player B also scores a blitz soonafter, then Player B only receives the Penalty Score (for Player A’s Exit Penalty).

The only exception is if Player A gets called for an unsportmanlike conduct penalty or excessive contact penalty and Player B scores a point. **[10.28.21]**

## Continuous Sparring

**Continuous Sparring:** This is a semi-contact division, this is NOT a full contact division. Events can choose either Scoring Option for Continuous Sparring (Option A or Option B):

**[Scoring Option A]:** This is a 2 round, continuous sparring matchup. Each round is 1 minute long. Rounds will be scored by three side judges using the **10-point must system**. The center referee does not score the fight, but controls the rules & fight flow inside the ring.

A judge must score one fighter 10 and one fighter 9. A judge may not score a 9-9 round. Judges will consider to determine a round winner.:

- (1) *Ring Generalship* (the fighter who controls the action/pace and enforces his will and style)
- (2) *Defense* (How well the fighter is slipping, parrying, blocking; skillfully incorporating defensive maneuvers)

After two rounds, each judges score card is tallied and a winner is determined.

In case of a tie, an Overtime Period of two (2) 30 second rounds will ensue. The fighter with the most total points after those 2 Overtime Rounds will be declared the winner. Additional Overtime Periods will be ran if necessary. **[4/16/22]**

**[Scoring Option B]:** This is a 2 round, continuous sparring matchup. Each round is 1 minute long. Rounds will be scored by two side judges using the **point clickers**. The center referee does not score the fight, but controls the rules & fight flow inside the ring. All scores are 1 point each.

Scoring Side Judge A will tally scores for Fighter A in Round 1 and Fighter B in Round 2.

Scoring Side Judge B will tally scores for Fighter B in Round 1 and Fighter A in Round 2.

Most Total Points after 2 rounds wins the matchup. **[01.04.22]**

**Other Rules:** A fighter cannot punch more than four (4) times without either throwing a kick or disengaging from his/her opponent. A fighter can kick as many times consecutively as they choose.

Penalties are issued by the center referee. They can be given for:

- (a) too many consecutive punches [see consecutive punch rule above]
- (b) running/Stepping out of bounds (with two feet out) or excessive falling to the floor (exception is getting kicked/pushed out of bounds)
- (c) illegal or low blows to illegal targets (no blows to the head/back/groin/lower extremities)
- (d) excessive contact
- (e) violating the 4 technique maximum disengagement rule

Penalty Point Deductions:

- (For Scoring Option A)- A player who accrues 4 total penalties in a round, will lose one entire point from each judges' scorecard for the round. A player will lose one point off of each judge's scorecard for every penalty thereafter.
- (For Scoring Option B)- will lose one point for every penalty accrued in that round

Only closed fingered point sparring gloves are allowed in continuous sparring divisions. No open fingered gloves or boxing gloves are allowed. No hand wraps are allowed.

The head is no longer a legal target. All punches and kicks are to be aimed to the body only. Any punches/kicks aimed to the head will result in a penalty warning. 2 penalty warnings will result in a deduction of 1 point off of each judge's round scorecard. An additional point will be deducted for every head penalty thereafter in the round.  
**[10.28.21]**

Only head gear that cover the cheek bone area must be used OR head gear with acrylic/plastic face mask. No metal Caged Masks are allowed.

This is a semi-contact division, there is NO FULL CONTACT, NO KNOCKOUTS allowed in this division. Any player engaging in this behavior will be disqualified from the division and may be subject to suspension from THE LEAGUE.

A fighter who is forced out of ring of play by being "kicked out" or "punched out" will not be issued a penalty. A fighter who is also kicked down or punched to the ground within the ring of play will also not be issued a penalty. Although, scoring referees may use this as a scoring weight when making a decision on scoring a round. A fighter who is constantly being forced out via punched out or kicked out shows zero Ring Generalship

For any stoppage of play during a continuous round, the match will continue exactly where the fighters are positioned in the ring of play before the initial stoppage. There will be no reset to the center fight line unless both fighters exit out the ring.

If there is a tie after two rounds, there will be a third round of 30 seconds. In the event of a second tie after the over time round, the center judge will determine the winner based upon the action in the overtime round.

## Team Sparring & Specialized Sparring Divisions

### **Flag Sparring:**

- [A] Regulation Time: 90 seconds
- [B] First player to **5 points** OR player with the most points at the end of Regulation Time **[3.29.23]**
- [C] Each player will be provided a Flag Belt
- [D] Players must provide their own Foam Head Gear & Mouth Piece
- [E] The objective is to maneuver and pull and possess the entire Flag off of your opponent
- [F] No Flag Holding, No Ground Fighting, No Kicks or Punches is allowed

### **4 Corners Sparring:**

- [A] 2 Minutes, 4 individual players (no less than 2 players) compete simultaneously and stationed at each corner of the squared ring
- [B] Regular point sparring rules apply.
- [c] player(s) with the most points at the end of regulation time wins or proceeds onto the next round. Placings will be dependent upon how many points scored in the final four championship round.
- [d] ties will be broken with all four players still in play. First player to score amongst the tied competitors wins the tie breaker. Only ties for first place will constitute a tie breaker runoff. Ties for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place will result in multiple winners for that placing.

### **Doubles Team Sparring:**

- [A] Coin flip to determine which team will send up first
- [b] Regular point sparring rules apply
- [c] 2 minutes each round
- [d] team with the most points at the end of two rounds wins
- [e] if there is a tie after two rounds, both teams may send up any fighter and fight in a 30 second overtime period. Fighters will continue to fight 30 second overtime periods until a team is up by one point at the end of o.t..

[f] If an injury is caused by an infraction from the opposing team (contact, misconduct, late hit, etc) and the injured player cannot continue, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> player may fill in for the injured player for the remaining amount of time left in that round.

- If a player is injured and cannot continue with time still left in the round and no infraction was identified by the judges by the opposing team, then the team with the injured player forfeits the matchup and the opposing team wins due to forfeit.

### **Doubles Tag Team Sparring:**

[A] 2:30 each round

[b] Players may tag at any point during the match including on point calls and during live fight action

[c] A tag is constituted by any body contact between two team members.

[d] Any ties at the end of regulation time will result in a "Sudden Point" Next-Point-Wins clash. Players may tag in/tag out during the Sudden Point clash

[e] No Point Ceiling, 10 point spread rule applies

### **Chess Team Sparring: [9.15.21]**

[A] 3:00 minutes or until entire team is eliminated

[B] When a player gets scored upon they are eliminated from match play for that round

[C] When a judge makes a call, they will point to the fighter that got scored upon

[D] Round ends when one team is completely eliminated OR after the 3-minute time limit runs out

[E] If the round exceeds the 3-minute time limit, then the Team with the most fighters remaining wins the round.

- If there are an equal amount of players left, the remaining players will fight to a Sudden Victory Overtime

[F] Best 2 out of 3 Rounds

[G] Any excessive contact results in the penalized player being eliminated and the inclusion of an eliminated player from the opposite team

[H] 5 players maximum per team (4 players in play, 1 substitute that can enter play in between rounds)

## WAKO Sparring

- **[WAKO Rulebook for WAKO Divisions]** Please see attached WAKO Rulebooks:
  - o WAKO POINT FIGHTING RULES link:  
[http://theleaguema.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapter-4\\_Point-Fighting\\_-\\_v19-\\_2\\_-1.pdf](http://theleaguema.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapter-4_Point-Fighting_-_v19-_2_-1.pdf)
  - o WAKO TATAMI SPORTS GENERAL RULES:  
[http://theleaguema.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapter-3\\_Tatami-Sports\\_General-Rules.pdf](http://theleaguema.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Chapter-3_Tatami-Sports_General-Rules.pdf)

## Kata rules

**Number of officials:** 5 officials are desired but not mandatory in all kata divisions.

At least 3 judges are required. When 5 judges are officiating the high and low scores must be thrown out, and the remaining 3 scores are tallied; if there is a tie the high and low scores are tallied to break the tie and determine the winner.

**Order of competition:** once the final call for the kata and weapon divisions has been made at ringside the competition cards will be collected and shuffled thoroughly. The competitor cards will then be drawn randomly for the order of competition. All competitors will perform before any scores are awarded.

**Kata attire:** each competitor must present him/herself to the center referee and judges suitably attired with proper uniform and equipment and physically prepared to compete.

### **Kata introductions:**

[A] all kata introduction presentations in all kata divisions (presenting judges competitor name, coach, team/dojo, style, etc) **WILL NOT** be permitted.

[b] When it is a players turn to perform, they will bow into the ring and locate their starting point where they will announce the name of their kata and proceed to execute their kata performance.

[d] if a player executes a kata introduction, they will be marked .01 points off of each judges scorecard

**Ring size:** Rings are 20' x 20' when possible and ring borders will be clearly marked

Competitors cannot be marked off negative points if they step out of an irregular sized ring.

Competitors will be marked off on the 'control' aspect of the kata judges score sheet at each judge's discretion.

### **Scoring Ranges:**

#### Regular kata divisions

- Novice	6.50-6.60
- Intermediate	7.70-7.80
- Advanced	8.80-8.90
- Black belt	9.90- 10.0

#### Grand champion divisions

- underbelt grand	8.90 - 9.90
- black belt grand	9.90 - 10.0

If a grand division has mixed divisional ranks, the higher scoring range will be used for the highest rank participating in the grand runoffs.

### **Kata Scoring Guide:**

Kata judges will base their scores upon four overall kata components in traditional kata: Technique, Focus/Intensity, Control, and Difficulty.

#### **Traditional Kata**

Technique (0-4 points)

Focus/Intensity (0-2 points)

Control/Balance (0-2 points)

Difficulty (0-2 points)

Kata judges will base their scores upon four overall kata components in extreme and extreme weapon kata: Martial Arts Element, Showmanship/intensity, Control/Balance, Dynamics/Risk.

**Extreme Kata**

Martial Arts Element (0-3 points)  
Showmanship/Intensity (0-1 points)  
Control/Balance (0-3 points)  
Dynamics/Risk (0-3 points)

**Extreme Weapon Kata**

Martial Arts Element (0-2 points)  
Showmanship/Intensity (0-2 points)  
Control/Balance (0-3 points)  
Weapon Dynamics/Risk (0-3 points)

Kata judges will base their scores upon five overall kata components in Musical extreme and Musical extreme weapon kata: Martial Arts Element, Showmanship/intensity, Control/Balance, Dynamics/Risk, and music synchronization.

**Musical Extreme**

Martial Arts element (0-2 points)  
Showmanship /Intensity (0-1 points)  
Dynamics/Risk (0-3 points)  
Control/Balance (0-3 points)  
Music Synchronization (0-1 points)

**Musical Extreme Weapon Kata**

Martial Arts element (0-2 points)  
Showmanship /Intensity (0-1 points)  
Weapon Dynamics/Risk (0-3 points)  
Control/Balance (0-3 points)  
Music Synchronization (0-1 points)

For each competitor, a judge will circle the number score for each scoring criteria that they believed the competitor deserved. They will then tally up the total, multiply it by .01 and add it to the base score. The base score is determined by the belt rank of the division.

For example, TOTAL = 8 x .01 = .08

BASE SCORE if 9.90 + .08 = 9.98

**Ties:** to break ties for 1<sup>st</sup> place competitors must perform a second time.

The player has the option to perform the same form or use a different form in the tie breaker placing rounds.

After a second tie, judges must execute a finger point decision to break the tie. Judges who scored the player higher on the first tiebreaker must point to that specific player. Any judge(s) who scored both players a tie in the first tiebreaker must make a decision and point to a winner based upon the first overtime performance. [08/25/17 scd]

- [a] kata ties will be broken for 1<sup>st</sup> place only. Any ties for 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place will result in multiple winners for that placing.

[b] If there is a second tie for 1<sup>st</sup> place, judges will immediately use the flag system and choose the winner [12.04.17]

## Kata Penalties

**Coaching:** coaching is not allowed in any forms division.

**Starting a form over penalties (All Events):**

No restart option throughout all divisions (beginner, intermediate, advanced, black belt) because of a memory lapse/slip or fall or any other reason due to his/her own negligence,

Referees will score the player at the lowest base score.

**Time Limit:** each kata, weapon, or creative routine must be 3 minutes or less. Any kata that goes over the allowed time limit will have a deduction of .05 off of each judge's scorecard. The time starts and judging begins once the competitor enters the competition ring.

The deduction will be marked off after judges give their scores.

**Stepping out of the ring:** any player stepping out of the ring will have a deduction marked off of each referee's scorecard at each judge's discretion under the 'control' aspect on the kata score sheet

Even at the request of a competitor, no stepping out of the ring is allowed. [10.28.21]

**Late entries:** once a division has started no additional competitors can be added.

**Dropping Your Weapon:**

In Traditional Weapon divisions, a dropped weapon will result in a Base Score 9.00.

In Creative Weapon/Musical Weapon divisions, a dropped weapon will result in the Control Element score of '0'. All other elements will be tallied and scored accordingly. [02.08.22]

## Specific Kata Guidelines

**Japanese/Okinawan/Chinese/Korean/Traditional/etc:** competitors in these divisions must exhibit a kata or weapon routine that reflects the essence and traditional values of the division name in which they are competing. The kata does not have to be a classical form handed down over the years, but should not deviate too far in form and content from the style's classical form movements, otherwise the competitor risks disqualification or downgrading.

**Creative/Extreme Divisions:** competitors in these divisions must display dynamic, gymnastic, extreme movements in their routine. The routine must reflect a mixture of a strong sense of basic martial art moves/stances, creativity, a high level of difficulty in movement and a risk factor must be involved.

No music is allowed in this division. No traditional katas are allowed in this division.

**Creative/Extreme Musical divisions:** all competitors are responsible for their own music and player (battery operated only, no extension cords). All music boxes must stay outside the competition area and can only be placed in a ring if allowed by the ring coordinator.

Competitors in musical divisions must design & execute their form in harmony with their music choice.



- Creative Extreme and Musical Extreme Kata performances must contain **ONE** of the following: (1) Jump Spin Kick (2) Invert Move (3) Three Jump Kicks. Failure to include at least one of these elements will result in a base score.

**Traditional Weapon divisions:** weapons that the competitor is being judged on for ability to use, must have a resemblance and evolution to traditional martial arts weaponry.

Throwing of a weapon , unless using a chain/rope, is not allowed. However tossing of a weapon upward with intent to catch is allowed.

A competitor who drops his/her weapon will be automatically disqualified. If a competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses his/her weapon, he/she may be penalized or disqualified.

**Extreme Weapon divisions:** please follow the same guidelines outlined above in ‘extreme/creative kata’. No traditional weapon katas are allowed.

- Extreme weapon and musical extreme weapon performances must contain one of the following: (1) Jump Spin Kick (2) Three Jump Kicks (3) Invert Move (4) a Weapon Release & Catch. Failure to include at least one of these elements will result in a base score.

**Weapon Inspections:** all weapon inspections will be conducted prior to the division starting by the center referee. Any disputes about an ineligible weapon must be settled before the division begins. A player cannot be disqualified for an ineligible weapon once a division has started.

No sharp bladed weapons are allowed. All swords, kamas, and similarly bladed weapons must be dulled.

**Traditional Synchronized Katas:** The members of the team must demonstrate competence in all aspects of the traditional kata performance, as well as synchronization. No more than 3 members are allowed per Synchronized Team. **[10.31.21]**

**Creative Synchronized Katas:** The members of the team must demonstrate competence in all aspects of the creative performance, as well as synchronization. No traditional katas are allowed in this division. No more than 3 members are allowed per Synchronized Team. **[10.31.21]**

### **Traditional Self Defense:**

A player in the self defense division cannot have more than 4 attackers.

4 minute time limit for the entire self defense presentation. Official time will begin when player(s) step into the ring.

Player must meet requirement to demonstrate the moves in slow motion first then in real time (fast) motion afterwards.

competitors must demonstrate proficiency in 3 self defense aspects:

- 1) a open hand grab
- 2) an impact weapon (i.e. Knife/club)
- 3) a strike (punch or kick)

### **Choreographed Self Defense:**

A player in the self defense division can have unlimited number of attackers. Music and props are allowed.

4 minute time limit for the entire self defense presentation. Official time will begin when player(s) step into the ring.

No need to display self defense moves slow motion like in traditional self defense.

competitors must demonstrate proficiency in martial arts and self defense tactics.

### **Self Defense scoring:**

Scoring aspects for self defense divisions include:

- (1) Realism/Intensity (0 to 3) [Are attacks authentic & Threatening? Are Self defense moves authentic?]
- (2) Effectiveness (0 to 2) [Would Self defense moves really work?]
- (3) Difficulty (0 to 2) [How challenging are Attacks vs How sophisticated are counters?]
- (4) Technique (0 to 3) [ did competitor display a variety of techniques including blocking, jamming, throwing opponent off balance, and evasion? Did competitor display a variety of counter attacks?]

### **Demo Team :**

Scoring elements for Demo Team Divisions include:

- (1) Choreography/Music (0 to 3)
- (2) Creativity/Artistic Expression (0 to 2)
- (3) Synchronization/Teamwork (0 to 2)
- (4) Martial Arts Techniques (0 to 3)

Maximum Time Limit: 10 minutes

## League Seasonal Award Determinations

- **[All Star Award Determinations]:** [A] Each Conference Director must submit five (5) prime performance award honorees to league offices 1 week after each event. These honors will be voted on by ring coordinators, head referees, and the conference director. At season's end, league offices will send conference directors a list of prime performance honorees from their specific conference. From this list the conference director will choose all star honorees from their conference [b] Each league conference will receive two (2) all star recipients per event but no more than ten (10) all star recipients altogether.
- **[Conference Player Of the Year Award Determinations]:** [A] each conference director must submit two (2) Event MVP's (one junior, one adult) to league offices one week after each event. These honors will be voted on by ring coordinators, head referees, and the conference director. [B] At season's end, league offices will send conference directors a list of event mvp's from all their conference events and from this list will choose one conference player of the year honoree.
- **[MVP Award Determination]:** [A] All Conference Directors will submit their choice for MVP Categories based upon their own knowledge of player performances to league offices on sept 1<sup>st</sup>. [b] choices for mvp will be based upon dominance & overall wins across all league sanctioned events & conferences. Overall wins in regular division(s) and grand division will be heavily considered. [c] if there is not a majority vote amongst directors then the league governing board will thoroughly hear out director choices and consider and appoint the winner accordingly.
- **[Top Team Award Determination]:** [A] each conference director must identify top three teams after each event and submit to league offices one week after each event. This is based upon overall participation and team success. [b] each conference director will appoint two competition teams each as recipient for top team to be honored at world league finals. This honor is based upon overall participation and team

- success during the regular season. Each top team recipient must be identified at least twice (for conferences with multiple events; once for conferences with only one event) as a top team.
- **[Team Of The Year Award Determination]:** [A] the criteria for the team of the year will include (1) overall participation & success in their own local conference, (2) Overall participation & success in outer region conferences (3) overall **TEAM SPIRIT, PROFESSIONALISM, UNIFORMITY,** and **COMMUNITY.** Team spirit includes player displays of passion and competitiveness in and out of the ring. Team professionalism includes the before, during, and after interaction of the players with other competitors, officials, and spectators. It also includes public displays on how they handle victory/defeat. Team Uniformity includes how a team shows Togetherness (do they sit together? How well they cheer for their own players during live action, do they congratulate team members after victory/consol after defeat?, what is their team uniform/warm up jacket attire presentation?) and (4) Team in the community (How well the team interacts with other teams; volunteering in several tournament production roles (officiating, scorekeeping, etc); Service to charities and community outside of competition.

## Qualifying for the World League Finals

Competitors may receive LEAGUE points in their particular division and respective region by:

- (1) Pre-Registering/registering for an event. A competitor receives x amount of points for pre-registering for a tournament. Pre reg deadlines are noted on the LEAGUE website listing/event flyer. Point values are determined by the specific event, as some events have higher point values than others.
  - a. 5-Diamond Rating \*\*\*\*\*: 50 points for registration
  - b. 4-Diamond Rating \*\*\*\*\*: 35 points for registration
  - c. 3-diamond rating \*\*\*: 25 points for registration
  - d. 2-diamond rating \*\*: 15 points for registration
  - e. 1-diamond rating: 15 points for registration
- (2) Win a Grand champion division. A competitor will receive an additional 20 points for winning their respective grand champion division.
- (3) Placing in the top 3 placing positions of a division. A competitor receives (7) points for placing first place, (5) points for placing second place, and (3) points for placing 3<sup>rd</sup> place in a regular league event.

Players may receive higher point values for placing positions for higher rated tournaments/double point tournaments.

### **Qualifying point total for National Conference events:**

the qualifying point total for a seed in the League Finals is based upon the minimum qualifying point total outlined for each conference

Any player who earns the qualifying point total within each conference will earn a seed in their respective division.

**Wildcard:** Competitors who participate in the world league finals and are below the qualifying point total in their respective region will enter the Finals as a Wildcard.

### **Conference seeding for unreported event results:**

the highest seed a player can obtain in the finals will be a #3 seed where complete event results are not submitted by conference director

# World League Finals ELIMINATIONS

**Finals – Point Sparring Double Elimination for seeded players:** all seeded competitors in sparring divisions receive double elimination status. A competitor must lose twice before being officially eliminated from the division.

The only exception where a player is eliminated without losing twice is if a player is disqualified for an excessive misconduct. If a player is disqualified for an excessive misconduct and have no losses to their name, they are automatically dq'd from the division.

Point sparring matches are:

Underbelt: 2 minutes; 10 point ceiling, 7 point spread

Black Belt: 2 minutes; no point ceiling, 10 point spread

**Finals – Point Sparring Wildcards (single elimination throughout all rounds):**

Wildcard competitors receive only single elimination throughout all rounds. Wildcards do not earn double elimination status, regardless if they win the wildcard round or not. Once a wildcard loses one match, they are eliminated.

**Finals Eliminations – point sparring:** all competitors in sparring divisions who meet the qualifying point total will be seeded #1-10 in each of their respective conferences in the League Finals.

Any players who meet the qualifying point total and is seeded #11 and lower in their conference will automatically receive a #10 seed in the World League Finals.

In the Finals, eliminations begin with the wildcard seeds (if any). Wildcard seeded competitors continue fighting off in a single elimination runoff until there is only one wildcard competitor left. Remember, wildcard seeds receive single elimination status throughout the entire division, even throughout the seeded rounds.

Once the wildcard seed is determined, that competitor joins all competitors rated #10 in each of the various conferences in the LEAGUE. All #10 rated competitors compete in a double elimination runoff.

Each #10 seed is ranked with a corresponding letter (i.e. 10A, 10B, 10C, 10D, etc). The letter corresponds to the overall ranking that player has in their seeded bracket. Thus, 10a is the highest ranking #10 seed, 10B is the second highest #10 seed, etc. These seeded rankings for each bracket is determined by a number of factors including (1) seeds earned from a second and/or third conference, and (2) overall points earned.

These letter rankings assist with the initial pairings within each seeded bracket and the double elimination process. They also assist with determining byes, with the highest ranking player receiving byes when necessary.

When there is only one player left after the #10 seeded bracket, that player moves up to the #9 seeded bracket and the process repeats itself.

When there is only one player left after the #9 seeded bracket, that player moves up to the #8 seeded bracket and the process once again repeats itself. This process continues until the division climbs all the way through the #1 seeded bracket and only one player is left. That one player left standing is the divisional winner in the LEAGUE FINALS.

**Finals Eliminations – Continuous/Doubles team sparring:** all competitors in Continuous and Doubles Team Sparring, whether seeded or wildcard, have single elimination status only.

**Finals Eliminations – Chess Sparring:** Chess Sparring rounds are best 2 out of 3 rounds throughout elimination and championship rounds. Single elimination status for all seeded and wildcard chess teams.

**Finals Eliminations – FIRST TIMERS Kata:** This division will run just like the regular kata divisional format. No seeds in this division. All qualifiers will be randomly drawn to determine order of performance.

**Finals Eliminations – FIRST TIMERS Sparring:** This division will be a double elimination division. No seeds in this division. All Qualifiers will be randomly drawn to determine matchups.

First Timers Point sparring matches are:  
1:30 minutes; 5 point ceiling, no point spread

**Finals Order Of Performance – Katas/Weapons/Open:** all competitors in kata divisions who meet the qualifying point total will be seeded #I-IO in each of their respective conferences in the World League Finals.

Any players who meet the qualifying point total and is seeded #II and lower in their conference will automatically receive a #IO seed in the World League Finals.

Each #I seed is ranked with a corresponding letter (i.e. IA, IB, IC, ID, etc). The letter corresponds to the overall ranking that player has in their seeded bracket. Thus, Ia is the highest ranking #I seed, IB is the second highest #I seed, etc. These seeded rankings for each bracket is determined by a number of factors including (1) seeds earned from a second and/or third conference, and (2) overall points earned.

These letter rankings assist with determining the Order of Performance.

In the Finals, the highest rated #I seed receives first choice in Order of Performance. For example, If there are 15 competitors in the division, the highest rated #I seed competitor can decide if they want to perform first, second, third, last, etc.

After, the second highest rated #I seed competitor in the division chooses their performance position, followed by the third highest #I seed, etc. When all #I seeds have chosen their position, then all #2 seeds choose their position, followed by #3 seeds, all the way down to the #IO seeds.

All wildcard competitors are randomly filled in the remaining positions left.