



Rules & Scoring Guide

LAST UPDATED MARCH 2026

READ THIS FIRST: We are aware that not every situation is the same, which is why we are vesting great trust in our approved Center Referees. Many of these rules have at least a little room for interpretation. More information covered in the black belt meeting.

1. Olympic Sparring

*Points will be scored using **hand counters**, with a minimum of three corner referees per ring, excluding the center referee. To ensure accuracy in scoring, points given have been simplified.*

The valid points are divided as follows:

- 1) **One** (1) point for a valid (shuttering) punch to the scoring area of the hogu (the red and blue areas only).
- 2) **One** (1) point for a valid kick to the scoring area of the hogu (the red and blue areas only).
- 3) **Two** (2) points for a valid kick to the head or a spinning kick to the scoring area of the body (the red and blue areas only).

We are aware that these are not the average scores for these techniques. However, given the extenuating circumstances, we have been forced to simplify for the quality of competition for both athletes and judges.

Rounds:

Each bout is best 2 out of 3;

Color Belts: 1.5 minute round with **30 seconds rest** in between each round.

Black Belts: 2 minute round with **45 seconds rest** in between each round.

Continuous clock; clock only stops on penalty or injury.

A competitor winning the first 2 rounds wins the bout, without going into the third round.

Excessive force may result in **immediate** disqualification as determined by center referee.

Illegal Techniques:

Disqualified = automatic last place

Below the Belt:

One warning

Second offense, loss of point

Third offense, disqualified

Face Contact:

One warning

Second offense, loss of point

Third offense, disqualified

Punch, or any arm contact to the Head:

Immediate point deduction

Possible disqualification

Lack of control/overuse of power:

One warning

Second offense, loss of point

Third offense, disqualified

Running/Pushing:

One warning

Second offense & beyond, loss of point

Falling:

Immediate loss of point (as determined by Center Referee)

Stepping Out of Bounds:

Immediate loss of point (as determined by Center Referee)

— Ref will restart the match right inside the boundaries, NOT in the center.

Point Gap:

Due to the method of scoring, point gaps will not be observed.

WARNINGS AND PENALTIES CARRY OVER INTO EACH ROUND.

2.Point Sparring

Points:

2 points: Valid kicks to the scoring area of the body (front and side of body above the belt and below the neck) and head (area above the neck, from ear to ear covering the back of the head).

Controlled kicks to the head may be implied meaning that judges may score techniques based on their control and accuracy and whether the judge believes the technique could have made contact to the head gear

1 point: Valid punches to the scoring area of the body (front and side of body above the belt and below the neck)

Backfist/ridgehands are allowed to the top and side of the helmet; LIGHT CONTACT ONLY. No spinning backfists allowed.

Rounds:

Two minute round with breaks called for each point OR first to 7 points

If tied at the end of 2 minutes, then 1-min. overtime will be given.

o If tied again then it will go to sudden death, first to score wins.

Illegal Techniques:

Illegal techniques will result in:

- One warning
- Second offense, loss of point
- Third offense, disqualified

- Punching and kicking with heavy force.
- Punching and kicking to the "No Contact" areas.
- Using "Prohibited Techniques" against the opponent
- The referee has the right to disqualify a competitor from the bout or competition if:
- The competitor receives 3 or more warnings from the referee.
- The competitor engages in unsportsmanlike conducts.
- The competitor injures his/her opponent using prohibited techniques or attacks to
- the no contact area, depending on the seriousness of the injury
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The referee has the right to stop the round if:

- There is a big gap in the skill level between the 2 competitors. The competitor with the skill advantage wins the bout.
- A competitor is injured as a result of a legal maneuver, depending on the seriousness of the injury. The opponent wins the bout, but ultimately end result is left up to center referee's discretion.

*All rules will be covered right before sparring begins.

Point Sparring admin is [Sandy Bequette](#) . Contact her with any questions.

3. Traditional Forms

Overview .

1. Competition shall be divided by age and division (novice, intermediate, advanced, blackbelt). 2 competitors will perform at the same time.

Groups may be collapsed to form equitable brackets as necessary.

2. All forms competitions will be bracketed based on the number of competitors.

3. Competition will begin with Black Belt forms (beginning with youngest division). Underbelt forms will continue after Black Belt forms are complete beginning with the lowest ranking/youngest division.

4. Due to the variety of Martial Arts styles involved in this event, judges will award the winning performance based on **power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form.**

****Spin Kicks are allowed in Traditional forms but additional 'tricks' such as cartwheels, flips or other such gymnastic moves common in creative forms are strictly prohibited. Any such moves will result in an automatic 'no score' from judges. This means they will all vote for the other opponent.****

Judging Procedure

A. Two competitors will perform their form/pattern simultaneously.

Note: Performers who require more space may take turns with one performer (red) going first, followed by the second performer (blue).

After bowing in, Participant will bow to judges, then introduce **themselves by name, school, and name of form.**

Participant 1 will be red; participant 2 will be blue.

B. Three judges will determine the winner who advances on in the bracket. The middle judge will serve as the Referee of the event. After competitors have both finished their form, referee will direct them to turn away from judges and state "Judges call" and judges will indicate red or blue (gesturing towards their vote) as the winner.

C. Judging criteria will include: **power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form.**

D. Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded for each division (by ranking, age).

4. Creative/Freestyle Forms

Overview

Competition shall be divided by age and division (novice, intermediate, advanced, blackbelt). Forms competitions are co-ed.

Groups may be collapsed to form equitable brackets as necessary.

2. All forms competitions will be bracketed based on the number of competitors.

3. Competition will begin with Black Belt forms (beginning with youngest division). Underbelt forms will continue after Black Belt forms are complete beginning with the lowest ranking/youngest division.

4. Due to the variety of Martial Arts styles involved in this event, judges will award the winning performance based on creativity, power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form. In addition, freestyle elements will be evaluated in the performance (i.e., skill of trick/flip/movement, execution of technique, power, energy).

5. Freestyle forms are **expected** to be creative in nature and may include any of the following:

Trick kicks

Gymnastic-like moves (cartwheels etc)

Flips (i.e., aerials)

Martial arts movements that have been combined into a freestyle creative format

APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL MUSIC FOR CREATIVE/FREESTYLE FORMS IS ALLOWED. SUPPLY YOUR OWN SPEAKER.

Judging Procedure

A. Two competitors will perform their form/pattern simultaneously.

Note: Performers who require more space may take turns with one performer (red) going first, followed by the second performer (blue).

After bowing in, Participant will bow to judges, then **introduce themselves by name, school, and name of form.**

Participant 1 will be red; participant 2 will be blue.

B. Three judges will determine the winner who advances on in the bracket. The middle judge will serve as the Referee of the event. After competitors have both finished their form, referee will direct them to turn away from judges and state "Judges call" and judges will indicate red or blue (gesturing towards their vote) as the winner.

C. Judging criteria will include: creativity, power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form. In addition, freestyle elements will be evaluated in the performance (i.e., skill of trick/flip/movement, execution of technique, power, energy). No music is allowed due to time constraints.

D. Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded for each division (by ranking, age).

5. Creative/Freestyle Weapons

Competition shall be divided by age and division (novice, intermediate, advanced, blackbelt). Forms competitions are co-ed.

Groups may be collapsed to form equitable brackets as necessary.

2. All forms competitions will be bracketed based on the number of competitors.

3. Competition will begin with Black Belt forms (beginning with youngest division). Underbelt forms will continue after Black Belt forms are complete beginning with the lowest ranking/youngest division.

4. Due to the variety of Martial Arts styles involved in this event, judges will award the winning performance based on **creativity, power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form.**

Freestyle elements will be evaluated in the performance (i.e., skill of trick/ flip/ movement, execution of technique, power, energy).

Level of weapon skill will be evaluated based on ranking of the individual. Weapon MAY leave the competitor's hand (i.e., overhead toss).

5. Freestyle weapons forms are expected to be creative in nature and may include any of the following:

Trick kicks

Flips (i.e., aerials)

Martial arts movements that have been combined into a freestyle creative format

Opportunity to showcase participants' skills in a creative format

APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL MUSIC FOR CREATIVE/FREESTYLE WEAPONS IS ALLOWED. SUPPLY YOUR OWN SPEAKER.

Weapons may leave the participant's hand. Weapons may touch the mat in a controlled and obviously intentional manner (such as a bo floor-tap toss)

****Piercing the mat and causing a noticeable blemish is HIGHLY DISCOURAGED and may result in loss of favor from judges. ****

Judging Procedure

A. Two competitors will perform their form/pattern simultaneously.

Note: Performers who require more space may take turns with one performer (red) going first, followed by the second performer (blue).

After bowing in, Participant will bow to judges, then introduce themselves by name, school, and name of form.

Participant 1 will be red; participant 2 will be blue.

B. Three judges will determine the winner who advances on in the bracket. The middle judge will serve as the Referee of the event. Referee will state "Judges call" and judges will indicate red or blue (raising red/blue bandana) as the winner.

C. Judging criteria will include: creativity, power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form. In addition, freestyle elements will be evaluated in the performance (i.e., skill of trick/flip/movement, execution of technique, power, energy). Level of weapon skill will be evaluated based on ranking of the individual. Weapon **MAY LEAVE HAND** if under control. **No music is allowed due to time/space constraints.**

D. Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded for each division (by ranking, age).

DROPPING THE WEAPON will result in;

- **BLACK BELTS:** NO SCORE/DISQUALIFIED (automatic unanimous vote for other opponent)
- **COLOR BELTS:** REDUCTION OF SCORE/PLACING

INJURY TO A JUDGE, COMPETITOR OR SPECTATOR DUE TO CARELESSNESS OR NEGLIGENCE ON THE OPERATOR'S PART WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION.

6. Traditional Weapons

Overview

1. Competition shall be divided by age and division (novice, intermediate, advanced, blackbelt). Forms competitions are co-ed.

Groups may be collapsed to form equitable brackets as necessary.

2. All forms competitions will be bracketed based on the number of competitors.

3. Competition will begin with Black Belt forms (beginning with youngest division). Underbelt forms will continue after Black Belt forms are complete beginning with the lowest ranking/youngest division.

4. Due to the variety of Martial Arts styles involved in this event, judges will award the winning performance based on power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form. In addition, skill with the weapon will be evaluated based on ranking of the individual. For traditional weapons, weapon should not leave the competitor's hand (i.e., **no overhead tosses**). Simple tradition spins, such as figure 8s, are permissible.

**** IF AN ILLEGAL TECHNIQUE OCCURS, BLACK BELTS WILL RECEIVE A NO SCORE AND COLOR BELTS MAY RECEIVE EITHER A NO SCORE OR LOSS OF FAVOR FROM ANY JUDGE. ****

Judging Procedure

A. Two competitors will perform their form/pattern simultaneously.

Note: Performers who require more space may take turns with one performer (red) going first, followed by the second performer (blue).

After bowing in, Participant will bow to judges, then **introduce themselves by name, school, and name of form.**

Participant 1 will be red; participant 2 will be blue.

B. Three judges will determine the winner who advances on in the bracket. The middle judge will serve as the Referee of the event. Referee will state "Judges call" and judges will indicate red or blue (raising red/blue bandana) as the winner.

C. Judging criteria will include: power, technique, and focus as well as grace/beauty of the form. In addition, skill with the weapon will be evaluated based on ranking of the individual.

D. Gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded for each division (by ranking, age).

7. Team Forms (Doubles and 3+)

One team will perform at a time. Some important items to note:

- **MUSIC IS ALLOWED.** Obviously, only clean music. **BRING YOUR OWN SPEAKER & MUSIC OPERATOR.**
- Teams must be made up of **3 or more people.**
- Performances are open hand, **NO WEAPONS.**
- Performances will be judged similarly to all other forms competitions, additionally, cohesive performance and team cooperation will play a large role in final placement.
- Forms may be traditional or creative.
- **TEAMS WILL BE BRACKETED BY OLDEST AND HIGHEST RANK IN THE GROUP.** Staging staff may make exceptions to this, but coaches and athletes will always be consulted and involved in the changing of any brackets.
- Make sure to ask us any questions you may have.

Introduction Guide

When a competitor's name is called, they will stand up, bow to enter the mat, and bow when they arrive at their place. They will then wait for the Center Referee's call to 'begin when ready'. If they finish before their opponent, they will **hold their final move until Center Ref calls to relax.**

Introduction:

Greeting, Name, School, Request for permission to perform.

Example:

"Judges, my name is Johnny Johnson of Leap of Faith Martial Arts, with your permission, I would like to present my poomsae, Koryo."

We are well aware that the order and even the existence of such an introduction varies from school to school, dojang to dojang. That is why **this introduction does not impact a competitor's score.** If they miss something, a judge may either let it go or politely prompt the missing information. **We require this introduction because, among other reasons, we believe the ability to speak in front of others is an important skill.** This also gives your officials an idea of your background, which will help them judge better.

It is recommended to practice this with your students so they are better prepared for the competition.

With ANY questions regarding **Traditional or Creative Open Hand and Weapons Forms, Olympic Sparring or Team Forms**, email us at leapoffaithmartialartsllc@gmail.com or text 620.343.7544.

For questions on Point Sparring Rules, contact Point Sparring Admin Sandy at sbequette08@gmail.com