

Olympic/Sport Karate Program & Travel Team Guidelines

This package fully details our policies regarding all facets of sport karate and travel opportunities for our athletes. Details, rules, etc. are subject to changes.

Karate has a sport element that is Olympic and Paralympic. There are a tremendous amount of martial art styles and organizations and more; however, TKC focuses on the traditions of Japanese Karatedo and Olympic Sport of Karate.

Participation in karate tournaments are fun, extracurricular activities that are best covered in our Olympic Karate program. Tournament play comes with additional expenses such as registration and spectator fees; specified uniforms, equipment, and team gear; seasonal coaching fees; and expected travel expenses of airfare, transportation, lodging, and meals.

Olympic Karate Program

- **Olympic Karate** is an add-on, NOT a standalone, program designed to enhance athletic preparation and skillsets for point fighting in competitions *IF* that is desired.
- This program is not a mandatory requisite for TKC Dojo membership or to advance in rank.
- Concentrated areas include fighting techniques and tactics; athletic conditioning; dissemination of WKF/NKF rules
- Students ARE NOT REQUIRED to compete in tournaments to engage this program; however, it IS MANDATORY for TKC athletes on our travel team - NO EXCEPTIONS
- We may/may not accept non-TKC students.
- Costs are reasonable (like family discounts not offered elsewhere) and never negotiable.
- Originally, we offered the training only ONCE each week on Saturdays and later added Mondays for students who were unable Saturdays. Out of generosity on our part, we allow students to engage both days and sometimes double sessions at no extra cost. *[NOTE: Monday training hours replace Saturday hours during the months of July & August when TKC is closed on weekends.]*
- Does not include kata training for competition. *[Kata training is covered often in Karatedo classes from Samurai, Gojukan & IKGA classes. Team members receive additional, detailed hours of individual and team kata and weapons kata instruction as a benefit of their seasonal coaches' fees.]*
- Workout uniform requirements change seasonally for comfort as determined by staff.

Sport Karate Tournaments

- Tournaments have positive values for athletes and negative as well.
 - Positives - the challenges of learning from wins and losses
 - Negatives - bad or biased officiating, event disorganization
- They are LONG days! I'm told they are not nearly as long as dance competitions.
- Coaching can be a major key to success or failure.
- Athletes need compliant gear and uniforms.
 - Compliant fighting gear (NKF-approved or WKF-approved) is required.
 - Mouth guards are mandatory, and I recommend the SISU Aero (1.6mm) mouthguard that can be ordered through Amazon Prime. It is moldable up to 20 times, comfortable enough for speech and protection, and minimizes a gag reflex in most kids.
 - Groin protection is mandatory for boys; and parents assume ALL responsibilities for if your child does not use it and becomes injured. We recommend the more comfortable, briefs style as the old fashion jock straps are not as comfortable.
 - NOTE: except for the mouthguard and groin protection, as per TKC rules and policy, all gear and uniforms are purchased through the dojo.
- Typical regional events cost \$85-100 on average for 1 or 2 divisions (kata and kumite). USA-NKF National Championships cost a few hundred dollars.
- Regional events only include one, bracketed, kumite divisions. Regional and higher events can easily be a one-and-done venture if you lose your first match - how does that give your child more experience? It doesn't. *More matches = more experience.
- For those interested, we offer training, coaching, and events to consider. Travel karate team participation should be both fun and event focused. Competition karate without focus has the potential of being dangerous - especially with kumite (fighting).

COACHING 101

Coaches are absolutely necessary to guide athletes before, during and after competitions. They are not volunteers - they are compensated for their time and expertise. Fees are used for many things such as criminal background checks for annual credentials and registrations; floor passes for each event; varied travel expenses (airfare, hotel, food). Every event has costs for every coach. Coaching is extremely time intensive. At national and international championships, it's as many as 5 days with very long hours. The more events our team engages and the larger the team traveling, the higher the expenses. Finally, because competition karate is extracurricular, these costs are not dojo expenses; they are separate.

- Coaches' fees are seasonal expenses from Sept 1st until the following Aug 31st for all competing athletes at local, regional, national, or international tournaments. For the 2024-25 season, our fee is \$500/athlete for the first two athletes per family; and \$250/athlete thereafter. Subject to change
- Fees are not prorated, nor refundable, due to participation in fewer tournaments, or fewer divisions, or joining mid-season, or quitting, or getting expelled from our team.
- Paid fees do not guarantee you will have one particular coach with you at all competitions or matches.
- To dissuade excessive protests at events, there are protest fees of as much as \$300 EACH payable in CASH. **Coaches' fee will not cover protest costs**; those are the financial responsibility of the athlete/family.
- Karatedo is rooted in personal honor, integrity, and self-discipline. Conduct that is violent, or profane; or abusive; or disrespectful will not be tolerated towards anyone on/off team in dojo and at events. Expulsion from team and dojo may occur.
- Kata is not "coached" during matches. Coaches are prohibited from making remarks during kata performances. Coaches may have greater demands elsewhere during a busy tournament. Do not complain that your athlete wasn't coached for kata.
- Coaches can only protest with clear, supportive video that meets several compliance standards (ask coaches to explain). It is not the team's responsibility to video all divisions; your help is needed, and we can instruct you about videotaping requirements.
- There is a 'pecking order' for our highest qualified coaches (read Team Rules & Culture).
- Communication is key. Let us know if your athlete is about to start without a coach!

TEAM RULES & CULTURE

- Travel karate builds great friendships and lasting memories for our athletes and dojo families.
- We look and act as a team. Athletes on our team are required to own and wear their team jacket to events.
- Do not disgrace our dojo, team, coaches, or athletes at any time. No in-fighting nor gossiping on our team. No arguing with officials, opposing athletes/teams, or their supporters. Screaming profanity at a tournament will not be tolerated by athletes, parents, or supporters. Bring all matters to Shihan.
- NO TKC athlete may compete in any tournament, karate camp, or non-TKC training and/or coaching situation without the permission from Shihan - absolutely NO exceptions.
- There is an order of coaching priorities: (1) Kumite is first and foremost - especially Elite level and advanced levels; (2) Kata; (3) Weapons or Staging preparation depending on circumstances. Everything else is a distraction if any of the above needs to be attended to. [**There is no coaching during kata; we can observe for rules compliance; however, this is seldom an issue and many regional events discourage or decline it. We will not leave an athlete who is fighting to watch kata because that makes no sense.**]
- Communication is key. There are many distractions during events and our team may be large. When an athlete competes without a coach at ringside, it is usually because one of our coaches was not informed in a timely manner. If your child is about to get into the ring for kumite (not just lining up), call me or grab another coach immediately. Also, tell your athlete to inform the ringside officials that they need their coach. Note: I cannot hear texts at loud events

TEAM TRAVEL RULES

- The *primary* purpose of our travel karate team is the competition - NOT vacation.
- Team practices at nationals are mandatory, and curfews *should be* 10 PM the night before each event for athletes to be rested and focused.
- Compete to your best and always show good sportsmanship win or lose.
- Distractions should be avoided or minimized. Fun excursions, pool time, and more should be planned afterwards because we have had athletes injured in the past.
- On our trips, the actions of coaches, athletes, and our team supporters reflect on the reputation of our dojo and our organization. Belligerence, illegal actions, or any activities that cast a negative image on our team and/or dojo will not be tolerated at all. Incidents will be handled on a case-by-case basis and worst-case scenarios may lead to exclusion from team travel or expulsion from TKC.
- Coaches: you have many obligations to the team before, during and after events.
Coaches' Fees. Our coaches' travel expenses cover background checks, credentials, registrations, floor passes, and varied expenses covered for travel (airfare, hotel, food stipend, etc.). Every event has coaching expenses. Coaches are in demand for long hours before, during and after events. At national championships, there are 4, full days of competition, practices each evening before, and a mandated coaches meeting on day prior (Wednesday) to their start. The more events our team engages in and the larger the team traveling, the higher the expenses. These are not the dojo's expense; team matters are a separate thing.
- From years of only seeing the inside of hotel rooms and venues without any sightseeing, I've learned that I've missed so many opportunities. I encourage you to consider making trips educational and fun for your family as long *as it doesn't derail your athlete's competition focus and goals*.
- Your costs to travel are not cheap and can become stressful, especially if you bring your entire family. In those cases, it becomes more of a vacation; however, that should *never* be your reason for traveling with the team. At your disposal is an NPO and a number of actionable fundraising options for YOU to utilize. Sponsorships are possible if you get out there and ask.

SPORT KARATE EXPENSES

Money is very often the biggest obstacle athletes have to engaging the team fully.

We are blessed to have a special relation with **A Positive Life (NPO)** working as a fundraising “vehicle” for our athletes. Note: **A Positive Life** does not give money away; they facilitate fundraising opportunities for you to help yourself raise funds. If you have any questions, please speak with Chris Hausner at dojo - he is the current President of the NPO.

- Uniforms and gear: all fighters (kumite) must have all required, competition gear and a kumite uniform.
- Competition registrations
- Spectator fees.
- Flights - depend on location.
- Hotels - depend on location.
- Ground transportation - may need to rent a car or pay for Ubers...
- Meals and snacks - don't forget proper nutrition for the athlete on competition day.
- Passport and more may be required for elite athletes and those wanting to compete internationally. *They must have 6+ months until expiration left on them to leave the country.
- Private or semi-private instruction if requested.
- External training seminars.

TEAM TKC WARRIORS HISTORY

Our team has been blessed with over 23+ years of travel and competing with regards to safety and success and that extends into this 2025 season. There have been 3 breaks from competition since our first Team TKC competed in Akron, Ohio in 1995; they were 2001-04 (karate politics were terrible); 2011-12 (following my major surgeries and building up Matawan Gojukan); and 2020 (COVID - No Nationals offered). There were 3 years that we sent athletes without coaching for varied reasons: 2000 (Sacramento, CA), 2007 (Charleston, WV), & 2010 (Charleston, WV).

We have a large group of athletes with very good athleticism, good heart, good intuition, high interest... all forms of 'potential' for success. To improve, training should be consistent, informed, and goal focused. Strict discipline must exist in the coach-athlete relationship for strong, reflex skillsets (i.e.: action-reaction, ringmanship, strategic responses to athletes we encounter, scoreboard, rules, and more) to be forged.

Reasons for not engaging in competition karate exist. Most boil down to 2 key obstacles:

1. Parental lack of interest (differs from child's interest)
2. Commitments of time and costs

There is the invested time to train as well as travel time and long competition days. Expenses pile up for long road trips and air travel which also include hotel and dining out costs. However, on the long trips you also have opportunities to visit new places and explore the sights. What have I learned from years of competitive travel? Don't just see the inside of the venue and your hotel room! On my first trip to Boston, I traced out the Freedom Trail and visited many historic sites from the forging of our country and the birthplace of the American Revolution. On my visit, we drove over to Salem and learned about the Salem witch trials and about pirate activities along the northeastern US.

During my 20+ years of coaching, I've had numerous conversations with parents who completely thwarted their children from all competitions fearing academic grades would drop. There are many approaches to problem solving other than irradicate the situation all together. Their child now has more incentive to maintain high grades to keep pursuing competition karate so why not make a contract with their child: if their grades slip, they lose their trip? As coach, I completely accept any of you pulling my athlete from the team, or out of a specific event, due to the child not upholding their end of the bargain.

APPENDIX A

WELCOME

We are pleased to announce that the 2025 USA National Karate Championships and Team Trials will be held from July 10-13, 2023, in Fort Worth, Texas at the Fort Worth Convention Center. You can find Information regarding the event along with the preferred hotels below.

Fort Worth, Texas is available by direct flights from our area into the Dallas/Ft Worth International Airport.

HOTEL INFORMATION

Host Hotel

TBA

Overflow Hotels:

TBA

Appendix B

Menu For Athlete's Tournament Day Nutritional Bag Examples

In a lunch bag/Ziploc should be placed in gear bag so the athlete has access to it while waiting to compete

FRUIT: Choose 3-4 (this is for energy)

Raisins

Apple (carb)

Pear

Clementine (carb)

Squeeze Fruit

Grapes

POTASSIUM: (electrolyte balance) Choose 2

Sweet Potato Chips (w/hydration)

Banana (for cramping)

Dried Apricots

CARBOHYDRATE: (Stores as glucose giving extended energy) While waiting to compete Choose 1

Unsweetened cold cereal (dry)

Crackers

Rice Cakes

PROTIEN: After Kumite Choose 3

Hardboiled Egg

Cheese Stick

Almonds

Plain Yogurt

VEGGIES: Choose 2 Anytime during competition

Carrots

Squeeze Veggie

HYDRATION: All Day Choose 2

Water

Coconut Water

Celery Sticks

Watermelon

Strawberries (quick energy)

Appendix C

Fundraising

Fundraising is ‘a process’ requiring planning, time & work as others are not doing it for you. Most of us do not have enough disposable income to support every trip or tournament. It often requires sacrifices of vacation time, savings, and more to help your child fulfill their goals/dreams. Frankly, there’s only so much we do for our kids before it becomes too unrealistic. However, it’s sad to *never* try exhausting all possible channels to make it happen for them. Fundraising is neither begging nor demeaning & there’s plenty of support available.

From my many years of experience, these fundraising options are available & here are my thoughts:

- **Car washes & candy sales** are not effective campaigns, hosting **raffles** is risky, & **gambling** is illegal.
- **Athletic sponsorship & booster’s sheets** from businesses, family & friends works better. Partnership with **A Positive Life** (NPO), a local community-based 501(c)(3) charity, helps donors gain a tax write-off incentive to sponsor local athletes/teams.
- **Corporate matching** donations from larger corporations in conjunction with **A Positive Life** have been successful in the past as well.
- **‘Tagging’** or **‘canning’** is popular with all sorts of local teams & can be utilized by TKC athletes but it better with the aid of 2 things: (1) a sign identifying the team & its goals “Nationals or Bust”; (2) **A Positive Life** business cards thanking for donation & citing a link and/or QR code to donate more.
- **Corporate sponsors** - if we can find a NJ-based larger company to sponsor our team as a whole.
- **Donation jar route...** placement of these specially marked jars in local stores near their cash registers. This is passive donations for local athletes & only requires a few people to swap them out every few weeks like a route. Collected funds go to the collective team expenses.
- **Dine out nights** at select restaurants. Seek the locations that offer the best percentage returns and announce to all TKC community & friends.

- **Amazon Smile** is a charitable give back that does not interfere with your typical Amazon purchases and prices. It's a 'flag' to Amazon so they donate a small portion to a charity... again, **A Positive Life** on our team's behalf.
- **GoFundMe** campaigns... either as an individual or a team effort. Two team families raised a combined \$1,500 nationals in Chicago and networking throughout the entire TKC community's extended connections can yield more. IE: if a \$10,000 goal were reached, 20 athletes could receive \$500 toward airfare. It takes time (plan a 2-month campaign as soon as possible as it takes persistence on social media as well as compelling stories, messages & updates.
- **Collective Yard Sale** could be organized in our Town Square Shopping Center's parking lot with collective funds going toward the team. IE: registration costs for nationals. This kind of event takes coordination, social media maximization, and no startup capital and if you wanted to get rid of collected stuff, donate it to the cause. This could be a Sat/Sun event with all leftover items donated to Good Will (or another charity - TBD).
- **Fundraising Parties** can be evaluated for likelihood of success or not. It seemingly good, they can be organized & executed. Theme dance - 80s Party? Disco? House Music?
- **Gaming Contest** for kids, teens & adults (in separate levels & times). IE: Smash Brothers. This is an event that would be very popular throughout the neighboring communities if driven by social media. Collection of donated prizes is required. We have several TVs, games, & gaming consoles for use
- **Team Tee Shirt sale.** Make a cool designed cotton tee shirt for sale with all athletes' names & trip destination on it. *Tees are paid for by sponsoring businesses (printed on back) & favorable costs by one of our printing vendors increase revenues for our team.