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THE SPORT OF TOURNAMENT POINT KARATE AND FORM COMPETITION HAS COME OF AGE. THE SPORT'S ATHLETES HAVE ADVANCED TO SUCH TREMENDOUS SKILL AND ARTISTIC LEVELS THAT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WINNING AND LOSING IS USUALLY DETERMINED BY A FRACTION OF A SECOND OR 1/100<sup>TH</sup> OF A POINT. THEREFORE, IN SUCH A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SPORT, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT EVERYONE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE RULES OF THE GAME.

WE INVITE ALL ORGANIZATIONS AND INDEPENDENTS, LARGE AND SMALL, TO USE IMAC RULE BOOK. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE PART IN THE SOLUTIONS OF UNIFIED TOURNAMENT RULES AND WE WELCOME YOUR SUGGESTIONS, THOUGHTS AND IDEAS TO MAKE THIS GREAT OPPORTUNITY A REALITY.

## **Competitor**

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

### **Delay of Time Penalty**

**\*Sparring:** If a competitor does not present him/herself suitably attired (No groin protectors allowed on outside of clothing) to compete, an automatic warning will be issued to the competitor. A penalty point will be issued for each minute the competitor is not properly ready to compete. Upon receiving 3 penalty points, the offending competitor will be disqualified.

**\*Form:** If a competitor is not properly prepared or suitably attired for form competition, .10 points will be deducted from the final score. For each full minute the competitor is not ready to compete, an additional .10 points will be deducted from their final score. If the competitor is still not ready to compete after 3 minutes have expired, he/she will be automatically disqualified.

### **Rank Rule**

All competitors must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts. A competitor can never compete in a division of which he/she has not earned that rank. Once a competitor competes as a black belt, he/she must always compete as a black belt.

And to be ready for competition when called to do so. He/she must be suitably attired, weighted-in, and at all the appropriate ring when the competition begins. Three calls will be made for completion at ring side; a first call, a second call, and a final call. If the competitor is not at his/her ring to compete when the competition begins, he/she will not be allowed to compete. If a competitor leaves a ring after the ring competition begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, his/her name will be called three times at ringside. If he/she is still not present to compete on the third call, he/she will be disqualified.

### **Required And Recommended Safety Equipment**

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

Insufficiently-padded gloves, foot and head gear will not be allowed Equipment must be in good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury. Equipment with heavy or too many seams on the striking surfaces is also not allowed. The approval or denial of the equipment is ultimately determined by the tournament's head rules arbitrator.

## **Proof of age rule**

All competitors must have proof of age. If there is a legitimated reason to question a competitor's age, he/she must present a birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents to prove his/her age. If proof of age cannot be presented, and the competitor wins a division, his/her award(s) and rating points (if rating points are awarded) will be held until proof of age is furnished. Proof of age must be furnished within seven days of the tournament date.

## **Legal Age Rule**

All IMAC members will have the option of competing in the save division all year long by establishing a legal age for the competition year instead of the chronological age. However, all competitors will always be allowed to compete in the division dictated by the chronological age, but once this decision is made, it cannot be reversed for that competition year. A competitor's legal age is there age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year.

## **Uniform**

All competitors must wear a complete (top and bottom) traditional or professional sport karate (kung fu, tae kwon do, etc. ) uniform in a good state of repair. A competitor with offensive words or art work on the uniform may be denied the privilege of participation. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition.

- **Sparring Uniforms**

All Sparring uniforms must have sleeves that reach at least to the middle of the bicep. No seats, tank tops or shoes are allowed in the sparring divisions. Official school T-shirts are allowed.

- **Form Uniforms**

T-shirt, tank tops and sweat shirts are allowed in form if they are part of a competitor's official school or if they list the school's name or logo on the uniform top. Uniforms in the form divisions are allowed more liberties because form is not one-on-one competition where the uniform could cause a decisive disadvantage or advantage to a competitor. Traditional white uniforms are advised, not required in traditional Jap./Okin. Forms divisions. Shoes may be worn in form competition if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.

## **Responsibilities**

It is the competitor's responsibility to know the rules tae kwon do and kung fu equipment is allowed. (Boxing and other contact sports equipment is not allowed in karate tournaments.) Shin, elbow, rib, knee, and breast protectors (female competitors only) are recommended for additional safety to all sparring competitors.

## **Officials**

### **Timekeeper**

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

### **Scorekeeper**

The scorekeeper is the appointed helper to keep score. He/she will write down the form scores from each judge, throw out high and low scores (if 5 or more judges are being used) and add the remaining scores to attain a total score. The scorekeeper should check his/her addition a second time (calculators should be used). In sparring, the scorekeeper will write down or flip score cards at the command of the center referee when a fighter gets the appropriate number of points to automatically win. It is in the scorekeeper's duty to listen very closely to the center referee and keep score as the referee commands. Any discrepancy or confusion of the score rests in the hands of the center referee, not the scorekeeper. The center referee will make the final score decision.

## **Referee**

The referee should be the most experienced official in the ring and be thoroughly versed on the rules. He/she is in complete charge of the ring and the match. He/she promoted the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administrated the voting of the other judges, communicated clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper, and announces the winner of each match. The referee shall announce in a loud, dear voice all official decisions, and shall indicate – with voice and gesture – the competitor affected by the official decision. Center referee should always face scorekeeper and timekeeper.

### **Added Powers of the Referee:**

1. Match starts and ends only with his/her command(Not the command of the timekeeper)
2. Has final decision on any disputes on score.
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 penalty point.
5. Automatically has power to disqualify a competitor who receives three (3) penalty points (otherwise there must be a majority vote to disqualify).
6. Has power to issue time-outs. A competitor can ask for a time-out, but it is the determination of the referee to issue one.

## **Judges**

The judges call points as they see them. They may be consulted by the center referee to help in determining penalties or warnings, although the referee alone has the power to issue them.



They will be asked to vote on disqualification rulings. It is the majority vote of the judges and referee that determines a scoring point. Calls an official May Make when the referee believes there has been a significant exchange of technique, or when signaled to do so by the corner judge, he/she shall call out the word Stop! In a loud voice. The referee shall then return the competitors to their starting marks and address the judges by saying, "Judges, call!" All Judges and center referee cast their votes simultaneously in the following manner:

1. **Point 1 scored** – If flags are used, a judge raises the appropriate color flag of the competitor who he/she feels scored the point. (If the judge is calling for a two-point kick, he/she will raise two fingers on the other hand at the same time. If he/she is calling for 1 point, no fingers are raised.) If no flags are used, the judge will point with his/her index finger at the competitor who he/she feels scored the point and point with his/her index and middle fingers if a kick is being called.
2. **No point scored** – A judge crosses his/her flags or wrist a waist level to indicate that he/she believes no point was scored.
3. **No See** – The judge holds his/her hand over his/her eye's indicating that he/she could not see whether a point was scored or not. (Same as saying no point, unless "No See" optional rule is being used – see table of contents for page number).
4. **Clash** – With or without flags, a judge makes a motion as though he/she is hitting both fists together. This means both competitors scored at the same time, therefore no point.
5. **Penalty** – The judge wave's flag color of the offending competitor in a circular motion. If no flags are being used, the judge waves hand in a circular motion as he/she points to the offending competitor.

6. **Out** – The center referee calls stop when, he/she sees a competitor go out of bounds. If a call is being made and a judge believes the competitor was out-of-bounds, he/ she taps the flag which represents the competitor who went out, on the floor. If no flags, he/she points the right hand at the out-of-bounds line nearest them.
7. **Disqualification** – A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the Center referee will say, judges, call! A judge will then hold the flag color, or point if no flags are being used, at the competitor he/she thinks should be disqualified. If he/she does not believe there should be a disqualification, he/she does not hold up a flag or point to a competitor.
8. When a judge sees a point, he/she should hold up both flags or hold up one arm if no flags are being used. At the same time, he/she should yell out the word Call! In a loud, clear voice to let the referee know he/she has a call.

### **Late Call**

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

### **Number of Officials**

In the black belt form elimination rounds, there must be one referee and four judges. Under black belt form divisions may have only one referee and two judges.

#### **Removal of Officials and Protest**

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

division, he/she may file a protest at any time, before or after the division starts.

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

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

### **Changing of Officials**

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

The Ring The size of the fighting and form adult black belt rings shall be approximately 20' x 20'. The borders of each ring shall be clearly marked. Starting lines should be marked approximately six feet apart in the center of each ring. Additionally, each ring should be posted with a ring number visible to competitors, officials, and medical personnel from across the floor.

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

## **Weighing-In**

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

## **Late Entries**

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

## **Order of Competition**

Once the final call for competitors of a division has been made at ringside, the referee and his/her ring personnel will collect the competitor's cards, tickets, or other proof of entry. Once the cards are mixed thoroughly and byes – if needed – are drawn, the rest of the names will be written on the sparring bracket sheet. If cards are being used, cards will be numbered and placed in order of play.

## **Length of Match**

An elimination match shall last a total of two (2) minutes running time, unless a competitor earns enough points to be declared the winner before the two (2) minutes are up. Running time means that the clock continues to run during the point calls, etc. unless the referee calls for a time out. During unusually Long point calls, equipment's, adjustments, rule clarification, etc. the referee shall stop the time.

If at the end of the two minutes the match is tied, the match will continue into a sudden victory overtime period. The first competitor to score a point is declared the winner.

All grand champion fighting matches will be one two minute round. The competitor with the most points at the end of the round will be declared the winner. A promoter may opt to make all black belt elimination matches two minutes accumulated points.

## **Point Values and Winner Determination**

All legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. All legal kicking techniques that score will be awarded two (2) points. Groin kicks are only awarded one (1) point. All penalty points awarded will be one (1) point value. The competitor who earns five (5) points automatically wins. If no one scores five (5) points by the end of two minutes, the competitor who is ahead wins.

### **How Points Are Awarded**

Scoring points are awarded by a majority vote on the judges. The Majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored. Only that a point was scored. The only agreement to be made that the point was scored was either a kick or a hand technique.

The judges acknowledge this by holding up two fingers if a kick and one finger if a hand technique scored. A majority of the judges calling for a point must agree that a kick scored in order to award two (2) points. Otherwise only one point is awarded. (For example, if three of five judges see a point for one competitor, two of the three judges must call a scoring kick in order for the competitor to be awarded two points. If there are only three judges being used and two of the three see the competitor's scoring technique, but one sees a hand technique and the other sees a kicking technique, the competitor receives one (1) point. To score a point, it takes a majority of judges to see the point. To be awarded two (2) points, a majority of the judges who saw a point must see a kicking technique). See penalty points for additional information on receiving penalty points and scoring points at the same time.

### **What a Point Is**

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

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

(for more information see "Judging" section).

**Legal Target Area's:** Entire head and face, ribs, chest, abdomen. Collarbone, and kidneys.

**Illegal Target Area's:** Spine, back of neck, throat, and sides of the neck, groin, legs, knees and back are all illegal target areas. Any attacks to these areas could result in a warning and / or penalty points.

**Non-Target Area's:** Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet are all non-target areas. Points cannot be scored to non-target areas. If it is deemed that a competitor is actually attacking these areas, a warning and/or a penalty point may be awarded.

**Legal Techniques:** Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques, except those listed as illegal. When determining the legality of technique, the official considers if the technique is a legitimate, controlled sport karate technique that adheres to all other rules governing sport point karate.

**Illegal Techniques:** Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs on hard surface floors, ground fighting on hard surface floors, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed opponent, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled blind techniques, any uncontrolled throws, takedowns or sweeps, and any other uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.

(For more information on legal and illegal techniques, see judging sections)

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

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

### **Ground fighting is not permitted.**

#### **Padded Surface Defined**

Concrete, wood, tile, terrazzo, rubber or any other similar surfaces are not considered padded or soft. Padded means a surface that is resilient enough so that an opponent is able to withstand the shock of a fall or takedown without damage or injury. An actual resilient pad must be present on the surface to be considered padded or soft (Examples: boxing or wrestling ring, gymnastic mats, etc.)

#### **Touch Contact Defined**

**Light Touch Contact** means there is no penetration or visable movement of the opponent as a result of the technique. Light touch may be made to all legal target areas.



**Moderate Touch Contact** means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch may be made to all illegal target areas except the head and face.

**Excessive Contact** is made when an opponent strikes with force in excess of what is necessary to score a point. Though it is largely a judgement call, indications that contact has been excessive may be accessed by the following reactions:

1. Visible snapping back of a competitor's head from the force of a blow.
2. A knockdown of an opponent (not recklessly charging into a technique or occurring in instances where the fallen party either fell, slipped, or was off balance).
3. A knockout of an opponent.
4. The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding. (Bleeding or other obvious external injury may in itself be grounds for excessive contact if it is considered the fault of a competitor. Bleeding, however, does not necessarily imply excessive contact.)
5. The distortion or injury of the body from the force of a blow to the body.

#### Touch Contact Requirements

1. All adult black belts must make light touch contact to the head (head gear) to score a point, and light or moderate touch contact to the body to score a point.
2. Youth black belts may make light touch contact to the head gear. Please note that youth black belts do not have to touch the head gear with light contact, but can score by delivering a controlled, well focused technique approximately one inch from the head gear or face. Youth black belts must make light or moderate contact to the body to score a point.

3. Light touch to head gear is allowed in any under black belt division (youth or adult), but points may be made by delivering a well-focused controlled technique close to the face or head gear. The higher the rank, the closer the technique should be. All under black belt competitors must make light or moderate touch contact to the body to score a point.

## **Methods of Penalizing**

### **Warning and Penalties**

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

Warning may be given if coaches and / or parents become verbally abusive or disruptive.

### **Other Penalty Rules**

1. A competitor cannot be penalized and still receive a point on the save call. A penalty always overrules a point by the same competitor.
2. A competitor can receive a point because his/her opponent was penalized at the same time. Receive a points or points for scoring. (Example: competitor A receives three (3) points because he/she scored with a kick to competitor B and at the same time competitor B hits competitor A "with excessive contact, therefore receiving a penalty.

The referee awards two points to competitor A for the kick that scored and one point to competitor A for the penalty by Competitor B.

3. If, in the opinion of the referee or medical personnel, a competitor is unable to continue because of an injury caused by an illegal attack executed by his/her opponent, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified.
4. If a competitor is injured and it is considered that he/she is responsible for his/her own injury, or no fault can be associated with the injury, the opponent will not be penalized (i.e. , ducking into a knee, bumping heads, etc.) In the event a fighter is unable to continue because of a no-fault foul, his/her opponent will be declared the winner even if he/she is not ahead at the time of the foul.
5. If a competitor scores a point and immediately proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point technique, the warning for breaking the rules voids the point (a competitor cannot receive a point and a warning on the same call).

### **Causes of Penalizing**

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

1. Attacking illegal and non-target areas.
2. Using illegal techniques.

3. Running out of the ring to avoid fighting (not fighting out).
4. Falling to the floor to avoid fighting.
5. Continuing after being ordered to stop (fighting after break)
6. Excessive stalling.
7. Blind, negligent or reckless attacks.
8. Uncontrolled techniques.
9. Any unsportsmanlike behavior from the competitor or his/her coaches, friends, etc.
10. Any abusive behavior from the competitor or his/her coach, teammates, family, friends, etc., such that the referee feels it affects the outcome of the match or the performance of the officials or other competitors.
11. Excessive contact
12. Not being prepared or ready when it is time to compete.

## Disqualification

Disqualification of a competitor requires a majority vote by all officials, except when a competitor is automatically disqualified when he/she receives three penalty points. When a competitor is disqualified, it is proper to notify the tournament's rules arbitrator.

A competitor who bows out for accepts a bow out of any grand championship match may be disqualified. If so all awards and rating points (if awarded) are forfeited. (An exception to this rule is if the competitor bows out due to a substantiated injury verified by the tournament medial personnel.)

### Out-of-Bounds

A competitor is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one foot touching inside or on the boundary line. Stepping out-of-bounds does not immediately stop the match. The referee is the only one who can stop the match. An out-of-bounds competitor may be scored on by his/her opponent so long as the in-bounds competitor has at least one foot in bounds and the referee has not signaled to stop. In the event of a jumping technique, the attacking competitor must land with one foot in-bounds in order to score.



## **Non-Competing Penalty**

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

## **Wrong Division**

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

## **Coaching**

Coaching is a luxury that most competitors do not have access to. Therefore, it sometime can become an unfair advantage over a competitor who does not have a coach. Rules are made and enforced so no one competitor has an advantage or disadvantage over another competitor. Once the competitors enter the ring, the rules make the contest as equal and as fair as possible for both competitors. Therefore, the following rules on coaching apply:

- 1.) Never at any time, can a coach, friend, team member, etc., enter the ring without the referee's permission (only the officials, competitors and medical personnel are normally allowed in a ring).
- 2.) No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching allowed.
- 3.) A coach cannot ask for a time out (only a competitor may ask for a time out).
- 4.) A coach can never, at any time, interfere with the proper running of the ring or decisions of the judges.
- 5.) Penalties for any of the above coaching infractions are issued by the referee.

## **Sport Karate Form Rules**

### **Competitor**

All competitors must present themselves suitably attired (as described under sparring and form uniforms) and ready to compete. They may be divided into separate divisions based on style, size, gender, belt color, origin of the form, or age. To Enter an adult form division, a competitor must be 18 years or older. Adults who are 36 years and older can choose to enter the regular adult division or the senior division. A competitor must enter the division corresponding to his/her age, sex and belt color.

### **Late Entries and Order of Performance**

It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at the ring prior to the time that the form division starts. Once the division is organized and the first competitor begins, there will be no additional entries. If a competitor comes late but the first competitor has not started, he/she can compete but must compete first and immediately. The order of performance will be by random draw, shuffling of cards, computer selections, numbers, etc. Switching the order of performance numbers is not allowed between competitors. If there is good reason to believe that competitors switched numbers, he/she will be disqualified. The order of performance of the grand championship rounds will also be determined by random draw. If the competitor(s) is not present at the designated time to draw numbers, he/she will automatically go before the ones who are present. If only one is not present, he/she will automatically go first. If more than one are not present, a separate drawing is made by the designated form coordinator for those not present. They will go in that order before the competitors who are present.

### **Time Limit**

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

### **Japanese/Okinawan/Chinese/Korean/Kenpo Divisions**

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

Musical Division, American Division, Women and Senior Open Divisions

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

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



The Women's black belt open division is an empty hand form division that does allow music.

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

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

It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide his/her own battery-operated cassette for his/her music. If the music box or cassette malfunctions due to no fault of the tournament and its coordinators, the competitor will be downgraded by the judges.

#### External Aids

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

#### Weapon Divisions

1. The referee should check all weapons for safety. Weapons are subject to referee's approval (no sharp weapons allowed in the youth division).
2. The referee should make sure all spectators and competitors are at a safe distance from the performing competitor.
3. Safety of all competitors, judges, spectators and helpers should be considered by all involved. Therefore, the competitor's control of his/her weapon is of utmost importance. If a competitor unintentionally drops his/her weapon, he/she is automatically disqualified. If a competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses his/her weapon, he/she may be penalized or disqualified.

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

### **Grand Championship Form & Weapon Rounds**

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

National tournament finals are not all the same. Some may be filmed for television or have added attractions such as full contact karate, etc. These differences dictate the structure of each national tournament’s finals. Some grand championship runoffs may be altered to fit into the finals properly. (Example: in a finals where there is not enough time to have all the black belt form winners perform, a selected number of an earlier runoff will go on to compete against each other in the nighttime finals). Luck of the draw for placement will determine the order of both the grand championship elimination round and the final grand championship round. Only the score of the final grand championship round will determine the winner.

### **Scoring of Form**

The officials will each score forms in the range of 9.00 to 10.00. Black belt scoring averages 9.75. Average forms will be scored from 9.50 to 9.75. The best competitors in the division will receive scores from 9.76 to 10.00.

## **Ties**

The first three competitors must perform before any scores are given (grand championship rounds and divisions with less than 5 competitors are exceptions to the rule). The high and low scores should always be eliminated before totaling the scores when five (5) or more judges are involved. If after adding up the scores for each competitor, there are ties, the high and low scores can be added back in to break the tied scores except when determining a first (1<sup>st</sup>) place winner.

Competitors tied for first place as well as any competitors who are still tied after adding back the high and low scores (for 2<sup>nd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> place) must perform again to break the tie(s). The competitor can perform the same form or another form in the tie breaker. If after the competitors have performed again, there is a second tie, the competitor who received the majority of the judges votes (winning scores) will be declared the winner of the second tie breaker (all judges scores are used). If the scores remain tied after the second tie breaker, the competitors will perform again using the same form or a different form.

Ties for 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> place (if given) will be broken by adding back the high and low scores. If the tie is still not broken, the competitor with the majority of the judges winning scores will be declared the winner. If the competitors remain tied after the above two tie breakers, the competitors will remain tied.

## **Extreme Forms**

The Extreme forms divisions allow the competitor to perform any movements whether they originate from traditional or contemporary martial arts systems or otherwise. However, (1) at least half the form must originate from martial arts techniques, and (2) the competitor must execute at least one technique that involves an inverted move or greater than 360 degree spin. Emphasis is placed on the quality of execution of techniques and movements, martial arts skills, balance, speed, power, degree of difficulty, and showmanship. In addition, only those movements that portray a definite offensive or defensive martial arts purpose, or are included to illustrate extreme flexibility or agility, are allowed. Inclusion of other movements, or the performance of a form meeting the criteria above for a

traditional or creative form, will result in a downgrade by the judges, or upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division.

## **Extreme Weapons**

The extreme weapons divisions allowed the competitor to perform any movements whether they originate from traditional or contemporary martial arts systems or otherwise. However, (1) at least half the form must originate from martial arts techniques, and (2) the competitor must execute at least one technique that involves a higher level of difficulty. Emphasis is placed on the quality of executions of techniques and movements, martial arts skills, balance, speed, power, degree of difficulty, and showmanship. In addition, only those movements that portray a definite offensive or defensive martial arts purpose, or are included to illustrate extreme flexibility or agility, are allowed. Inclusions of other movements, or the performance of a form meeting the criteria of other movements, or the performance of a form meeting the criteria above for a traditional or creative form, will result in a downgrade by the judges, or upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division.

The Extreme weapon divisions are to be judged by the level of difficulty, of the weapon and not the competitors personal abilities unless they are in direct reference to the weapons use. Flips, spins, etc. are not considered points in this division unless it shows a direct relation to the weapon. For points on personal ability you need to enroll in the Extreme forms.



## **Team Fighting Rules**

### **Fighting Rules**

1. Standard IMAC rule will be used.
2. Total points for each match will be added together to give the final team score.
3. Each match will be one(1) minute and 30 seconds.
4. A coin toss will determine which team sends up a fighter first. The opposing team will match the fighter sent up with an appropriate fighter of the same weight.

### **Disqualification**

Points will be awarded to the opposing team in the event of a disqualification. Intentional and unintentional disqualifications will be handled differently and determined by the officials. A team cannot win by disqualification in the last match if it is leading, going into the last match.

### **Forfeit**

Points will be awarded to the opposing team in the event a team forfeits a match. Intentional and unintentional forfeits will be handled differently and determined by the officials. A team cannot win by forfeiting the final match if it is leading, going into the final match

If the teams score is a tie at the end of all the matches,

The team which won the coin toss can choose one of their team members to fight off a sudden victory overtime. The opposing team must match the fighter with an appropriate fighter of the same weight. The sudden victory overtime will be the first point that scores. Win!

### **Fairness Rule**

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

### **Optional Rules**

1. Legal Age Rule: the competitor's legal age is his/her chronological age, no exception. A competitor may only compete in that division-which is designated for his/her chronological age.
2. T-Shirts: It is the opinion of the promotor and tournament organization whether T-shirts may be worn by form and sparring competitors.
3. Required Recommended Safety Equipment: All
4. Legal Target Area's: The groin may be a legal target area at the discretion of the promotor and/ or the tournament's governing body. If the groin is a legal target area, the promotor should note on their tournament flyer that it is being declared a legal target. Light touch contact only is allowed to the groin target.
5. **Light Touch Contact:**

**Option 1** - No face, head or head gear touch contact is allowed in any youth division (17 years and under).

**Option 2** – Light face, head and head gear touch contact is allowed in all adult divisions.

**Option 3** – Light face, head and head gear touch contact is allowed in all division.

**Option 4** – Light face, head and head gear touch contact is allowed in all adult read and brown belt divisions.

**Option 5** – Light head gear touch (Not face) contact is allowed in is allowed in all divisions.

**Option 6** - Light head gear touch (Not face) contact is allowed in adult divisions only.

**Option 7** - Light head gear touch (Not face) contact is allowed is allowed in all red and brown belt divisions.

**Option 8** – Touch contact will be permitted to the ear but not to the face in under black belted touch contact to the head gear will be required division to score a point; light face contact will be permitted.

6. *Form Competitors*: It is the option of the tournament promotor and / or the local, regional or state organizations' policies as to how many different form and weapons divisions a competitor may enter.

7. *Form Competitors*: It is the option of the tournament promotor and/or the local, regional or state organizations' policies whether a youth (17 years and under) can enter an adult(18 years or over) form division.





## **Judging**

### **Sparring**

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

- 1.) Know and understand the rules in their entirety – only by knowing the rules can you make the split second decision that are required in point karate judging.
- 2.) Make all decision quickly and decisively in a confident manner – You must be able to stand with conviction on each and every one of your calls.
- 3.) Call only what you see clearly, not what you heard or thought you saw.
- 4.) Give each match your full, focused attention – Don't let yourself be distracted or influenced into making a call by outside forces (i.e., other judges, fans, coaches, etc.)
- 5.) Stay out of the way of the competitors so as not to interfere with the match.

**Point Definition:** A point is a controlled, legal sport karate technique scored by a competitor in-bounds which strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of focused touch contact or focused control to a legal target area.

**Control:** Holding back in reverse the amount of force that , if not restrained or pulled short of full contact, could have incapacitated or inflicted serious damage to an opponent.

**Focused Control:** No contact is allowed, but the technique must be focused close enough to the “no touch” target area.

#### **Decisions to be made on each point call:**

1. Was it legal, legitimate sport karate technique?
2. Was it focused to a legal target area?
3. Did it have the required legal touch control or focused control in the execution of the techniques?
4. Was the competitor under control with proper balance in the execution of the technique?
5. Was the competitor who scored in-bounds?
6. Had the match been stopped before the technique scored?
7. Was it a dash(each competitor scoring at the same time) ?

8. Were there any rules violations immediately following the scoring technique (i.e., a competitor cannot receive a point and a penalty on the same call)?
9. Was either competitor on the ground when the point was scored?
10. Was the match over before the point was scored?

### **Calls that can be made:**

See “calls an official may make”, and diagram of hand and flag signals.

### **Form and Weapons:**

Judging Categories: Each form and weapon routine is judged on execution, presentation and difficulty.

**Execution:** The act or process of performing (executing) the techniques of the form or weapon routine. The execution stage of judging is the most critical and should weigh the most in the judge’s final score.

**Elements of Execution:** Balance, power, speed, stability, proper technique formation, coordination, flexibility, stamina, timing, technique skill, etc.

**Presentation:** The image or impression of the competitor as reflected in his/her performance of the form or weapon routine. The presentation stage is the second most important or critical and should weigh accordingly in the judge’s final score.

**Elements of the presentation:** Confidence, poise, determination, commitment, imagery, respect, sportsmanship, realism, concentration, spirit, showmanship, appearance, imagination, etc.

**Difficulty:** The complexity and intricacy of the form or weapon routine. The difficulty category is the least critical of the three judging categories, but could become the deciding factor of winning or losing if a judge feels that two competitors are equally as good in the execution and presentation categories. Value should never be awarded for difficult techniques or forms performed poorly. Difficulty alone, without proper execution should always be downgraded.

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

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

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

1. **First three competitors:** Watch the first three competitors before scoring. The first three competitors will give you a representation of the division. The rest of the competitors will be scored against these first three.
2. Write down your scores and quick reference not regarding the competitor beside each score. In divisions with large number of competitors, it becomes difficult to remember each score that you have awarded. Remembering each score become more difficult when using the hundredths scoring range. Additionally, writing down your scores solves any disputes that could arise if the score keeper inadvertently wrote down a judge's score incorrectly.

The Use of Music: There may two uses of music in form and weapon competition. One is a division which allow music and the second, when allowed, is when music is used only to enhance to the mood or presentation of the form (i.e., grand champion runoffs).

1. Division which allow music: The music should be synchronized with the movements of the form routine. A judge should hear the beats and rhythm of the music in coordination and synchronization with the techniques in the form. The music cannot be only background music, but must be intrinsic part of the form or weapon routine.

2. Music to enhance the mood or presentation: When music is allowed, but the competitor is not representing a division which allows music (i.e., grand champion form runoffs and/or finals), the music may or may not be synchronized with the form or weapon techniques. The music may only be music to enhance the mood of presentation of the form. The lack of synchronization should not be graded off unless it should affect negatively the presentation or execution of the form.

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

### **Weapon Division**

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

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

1. The competitor's control of the weapon: The weapon should be seen as an extension of the competitor's arms and hands. The absolute control of the weapon at all times within the routine is essential.
2. The transition and combination of regular martial arts techniques with the weapon (i.e., kicking, blocking, etc.).
3. The percentage of weaponry movements to non-weaponry movements: The majority of any weapon form should consist of the use of the weapon.
4. Safety: No reckless or careless use of the weapon that would harm the competitor, another competitor, and judges or spectators.

# **Continuous Sparring Rules**

## **Judging**

Center Judge is there to control ring issue penalties and warning and act as the sole arbitrator.

There will be 3 judges at ringside. They cannot and will not be replaced. They have been specially trained and selected by the IMAC (International martial arts council)

## **Scoring**

All three judges will score on a 10-9 system. The 10-9 must system means there must be a winner in every round. In case of ties in any given round, there must be an additional round to decide the winner.

## **Length of Match**

Daytime elimination matches are one-2 minute round. Nighttime main event matches are four- 1 minute rounds, with a 390 second rest in between rounds.

## **Warning**

Two (2) warnings equal one penalty, and 2 penalties equal disqualification. For Instance: 1 warning for running out of the ring, and 1 warning for unsportsmanlike coaching are concurrent and equal one penalty. A warning does not have to be for the same infraction to count.

## **Penalties**

All infractions of the rules are concurrent. Two (2) penalties will mean automatic disqualification. A player can be disqualified for bad sportsmanship, excessive contact, intent to harm the opponent or an official, mouthing off, profanity, drawing of blood, or any other infraction of the rules that may have been deemed excessive or disrespectful. A player can be disqualified for disrespect shown by their coaches.

Disqualification is solely up to the center referee and cannot be contested, or changed. If the fight is called IT IS OVER.

## **Contact**

### **Definitions:**

- **Light** - No penetration or movement of the opponent as a result of the techniques. Just a touch. No blood can be drawn.
- **Moderate** – Slight penetration or movement of the opponent as a result of the technique. No blood can be drawn.
- **Excessive** – An extreme penetration or movement of the opponent as a result of the technique and possibly including swelling or bleeding (even if it was unseen by the judges). Any blood drawn as a result of an opponent's technique is considered excessive contact.

### **Legal Techniques**

Allowable techniques include: all kicks, punches, backfists, ridge hands, sweeps (front leg boot to boot only), and grabs for 3 seconds.

### **Illegal Techniques**

Techniques not allowed include: groin kicks, head butts, hair pulling, biting, scratching, spear hand, palm heel strikes, all open hand techniques (other than ridge hand and knife hand), blind techniques, elbow strikes, throws, takedowns (other than from legal sweeps), sweeps (other than defined as legal), kick or jumping downed opponents, boxing uppercuts and hooks, etc.

Our sole intention is to make this event as fun and as safe as possible. This is NOT a KICKBOXING event and any attempt by a player to make it one will not be permitted.

### **Scoring Areas**

A player may score to the head, face, side of neck, ribs, chest, abdomen, or kidneys.

### **Non-scoring Areas**

A player cannot score to the back (spinal area), shoulders, throat, arms, elbows, hips, buttocks, groin, legs, knees, feet, or any other area not specifically accepted as a legal scoring area.

### **Self Defense**

Center Judge has final say as to what is and what is not allowed and any other issues that may arise during competition.

### **Requirements:**

1. Number of Techniques: The competitor will be required to demonstrate a minimum of 3 defense to be eligible to win. The defense the competitor uses is entirely the decision of the competitor. No more than 6 separate attackers with a 3 minute time limit.

Although there is a minimum of 3 attacks as described above, there is a maximum number of 6 attacks as long as the competitor complies with the time limit. There are also no restrictions as to the nature of attacks defended against. A competitor may defend against any attack/situation he or she can create including, but not limited to, attackers with weapons, multiple attackers, and situational scenarios.

2. Use of Weapons: The competitor may only reuse a weapon that he/she has disarmed from an attacker. The disarm may be of any nature as long as the



weapon is taken from the attacker. The competitor may use no object unless it is first disarmed from the attacker.

3. Allowed Weapons: because of the wide variety of martial arts styles that may compete, there will be no restrictions as to what is considered a weapon. Any object may be used as a weapon by an attacker and the competitor may reuse the same object as long as he follows the guidelines in #2
4. Time Limit: There is a 3 minute time for each competitor. Time begins when the competitor enters the ring. Time will be stopped at the last bow of the competitor.
  - a. Although a competitor is not required to demonstrate the defenses slow and then fast, the judges may score competitors higher if they do demonstrate the defenses in this manner. Defenses demonstrated slow and then fast ensure the competitors mastery of the defense used, and will better help the judges understand the nature of the defense.
  - b. If the competitor exceeds the 3 minute time limit, he/she will automatically be disqualified.
5. Judging (Promoter option #2): Competitors will be judged on the following areas, as seen by the judges:
  - a. Presentation and execution
  - b. Practicality
  - c. Effectiveness
  - d. Creativity
6. These guidelines will also be in effect for all under black belt divisions.

## **Extreme Fighting**

Legal target areas: Head (sides, back, forehead), ribs, abdominals collarbone, and kidneys.

Illegal Target Area's: Spine, back of neck, throat, sides of neck, groin, legs, knees and back. Any attacks to these areas could result in a warning, penalty point, or disqualification.

Point Value: All legal techniques that score will be awarded on (1) point. All penalty points will be awarded (1) point value. The competitor who earns 5 points by the end of 3 minutes wins. If no one scores (5) points by the end of the 3 minutes, the competitor who has the most points is declared the winner.

Illegal Techniques: Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, stomps , kicks to the head on the ground, slapping, grabbing for more than three(3) seconds, uncontrolled blind techniques, any uncontrolled throws, and any uncontrolled techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.

Throws, sweeps and grabs: sweeps to take down an opponent or obstruct balance can only be executed to the back of either leg mid-calf or below. These described sweeps are legal on any marked area on a padded surface in this division only. It is important to note that sweeps do not make it legal to kick the legs and a sweep does not constitute a point. A sweep must be used in conjunction with a legal technique for the competitor to receive a point.

A competitor may grab the uniform top of their opponent in an attempt to score. The grab may not exceed three (3) seconds at which the time the uniform top must be released. Likewise, the uniform pants may be grabbed. A kick may be trapped or grabbed for three (3) seconds for the purpose of executing a counter attack to an upright opponent. Ground fighting is not permitted.

Shoulder or hip throws are permitted provided there is a carry down (soft controlled throw) . Any throw (joint, leg etc.) where there is no body contact with the throwers body is not permitted. You may only throw an arm, leg, throws are not permitted.

