



# United Karate Alliance

## Martial Arts Tournament Organization

### UKA Tournament Rules

Updated 19 Mar 2004

#### FORM RULES

**LEGAL AGE RULE:** All competitors have the option of competing in the same division all year long for rating purposes, by establishing a legal competition age for the year. The age that a competitor is on June 30th of the current competition year is their legal competition age for that year. They can compete all year at that age so he/she can earn rating points in one age division all year. A competitor can always choose to compete in his/her chronological age and will be awarded points in that division when doing so. All points stay in the division the competitor earned them in and do not go with the competitor if the competitor changes divisions. The legal age rule is developed for rating purposes only.

**PROOF OF AGE RULE:** All competitors must be able to provide proof of age. If there is a legitimate reason to question a competitor's age, he/she must be able to present a proof of age (birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents) to prove his/her age.

**RANK RULE:** A competitor must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts. A competitor can never compete in a lower belt division than the highest level of belt he/she has earned. All competitors have the option to compete in the same division all year long for rating purposes by establishing a legal competition rank for the year. If, because of a projected rank promotion during the year, a competitor wants to compete all year in a higher rank division in order to keep their points in one division, then the competitor can move up a rank division and earn rating points in that rank division all year. A competitor can always choose to compete at his/her current rank and will be awarded points in that division when doing so. All points stay in the division the competitor earned them in and do not go with the competitor if the competitor changes divisions. Once a competitor competes as a black belt legally, he/she must always compete as a black belt.

**Ranks In 3 Belt Divisions Are:**

Beginner - White, Yellow, Orange

Intermediate - Purple, Blue, Green

Advanced - Red, Brown, Black

**Ranks In 2 Belt Divisions Are:**

Advanced - Black, Brown, Red and the belt before

Beginner - All other belts

**COMPETITOR RESPONSIBILITIES/DELAY OF TIME RULE (FORMS/WEAPONS):** It is the responsibility of the competitor to know the rules and be ready for competition when called. He/she must be suitably attired, weighed-in and at the appropriate ring when competition begins. Three calls will be made for competition at ringside. If the competitor is not at his/her ring ready to compete when competition begins, he/she will not be able to. If a competitor leaves the ring after the 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 and/or ready to compete after 3 minutes, he/she will be disqualified.

**UNIFORMS (FORMS/WEAPONS):** All competitors must wear a complete traditional or professional sport karate (top and bottom) (Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, etc.) uniform in a good state of repair. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. T-shirts and sweatshirts are allowed in form and weapon

divisions if they are part of the competitor's official school uniform. Uniforms in these divisions are allowed more liberties because these divisions are not one-on-one competition where the uniform could cause a decisive advantage or disadvantage to a competitor. Shoes may be worn in form and weapon divisions if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.

**ORDER OF COMPETITION (FORMS/WEAPONS):** Once the final call for form and weapon divisions is made at ringside, competition cards will be collected and shuffled thoroughly. The competitor cards will then be drawn randomly for the order of competition. The first three competitors will perform before any scores are awarded. After the third competitor is finished, the first competitor will be called back up for scoring, followed by the second and third competitors. This provides the judges a sampling of the quality of the competitors. All competitors in the division will be judged in comparison to the first three competitors.

**NUMBER OF OFFICIALS:** Five officials are required in all black belt form and weapon divisions. At least three judges are required in all sparring divisions and under black belt form and weapon divisions.

**REMOVAL OF OFFICIALS:** If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a form or weapon division for good reason, he/she must file a protest before the division begins. If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a sparring division, he/she may file a protest at any time. It is totally up to the rules arbitrator to determine if an official should be removed.

**LATE ENTRIES:** Once a division has started (the first competitor has started his/her form or weapon routine) no competitor(s) can be added to that division. **BE ON TIME!**

**FORM AND WEAPON DIVISION SCORING:** The UKA will have two scoring ranges for all form and weapon divisions. The scoring range will be 8.00 to 10.00 points for rings with 5 judges and 8.00 to 9.00 for rings with 3 judges. This is not to say that the level of proficiency of a 9.00 white belt form score is the same as a 9.00 black belt form score. We are grading white belts against white belts and black belt against black belts, etc. These two scoring ranges simplify form and weapon scoring.

**RING SIZE/MARKINGS:** The size of the fighting and form adult black belt rings shall range from a minimum of approximately 18' x 18' to a maximum of approximately 20' x 20'. All youth and under black belt adult rings shall range from a minimum of approximately 16' x 16' to a maximum of approximately 18' x 18'. Starting lines should be marked approximately 6' apart in the middle of the ring. Each ring will be marked with a ring number visible to competitors, officials, and medical personnel from across the floor.

**BREAKING TIE SCORES IN FORM AND WEAPON DIVISIONS:** If there is a tie for first place, the competitors must perform again and be scored again to break the tie. Competitors must compete with the same form to break a tie. If there is a second tie, the majority of the judge's scores determine the winner. If with the scores that are given, there is still not a majority of judges for one competitor, the center judge will call for all judges to point to the competitor they feel should win. All judges must make a decision for only one competitor. For Panels with Five Judges: Second through fourth place ties will be broken by adding high and low scores back in. If a tie still results, the majority of judge's scores will be used to break the tie. If a tie still results, competitors must perform their same form again to break the tie. For Panels with Three Judges: The majority of judge's scores will be used to break the tie. If a tie still results, competitors must perform their same form again to break the tie. Ties for 5th through 8th place are never run off.

**JAPANESE/OKINAWAN, CHINESE, KOREAN, TRADITIONAL, ETC.:** Competitors in these divisions must exhibit a form or weapon routine that reflects the essence and traditional values of the division name in which they are competing. The form does not have to be a classical form handed down over the years, but should not deviate in form and content from the style's classical form movements. Competitors risks disqualification or down grading for deviations from the traditional essence of the form.

**WEAPON DIVISIONS:** A competitor who unintentionally drops his/her weapon or whose weapon breaks or comes apart during his/her routine is automatically disqualified. A competitor who recklessly or carelessly misuses a weapon may be penalized or disqualified.

**STARTING A FORM OVER:** If a competitor starts his/her form over because of a memory lapse or any other reason due to his/her own negligence, he/she may perform the form again. The officials will score as though there was not a mistake, but the center referee will instruct the scorekeeper to subtract .50 points from the competitor's final score. The three-minute time limit will start over. A competitor can only start over one time for scoring. If a competitor has to start over not due to his/her negligence, he/she will not be penalized for beginning again.

**PROTEST:** A competitor has the right to protest a rules infraction and/or if a possible mistake has been made (not a judgment call). If a competitor wishes to protest, he/she should first let the referee know he/she believes there has been an infraction of the rules or a mistake has been made. The referee will summon the arbitrator to the ring to render a decision if the referee cannot settle the protest to the competitor's satisfaction. All protests must be made in an orderly, proper and sportsmanlike manner. All protests must be made immediately. Protests are not allowed once competition has resumed. A competitor may be penalized or even disqualified if he/she is protesting improperly or without proper cause.

## **SPARRING RULES**

**REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** UKA approved headgear; hand and foot pads, mouthpieces and groin cups (for male competitors only) are mandatory for all competitors in sparring divisions. The center referee will check all competitors' equipment. If it is deemed unsafe, he/she will be asked to change the equipment before he/she can compete. Hand Pads: A soft padded surface must cover the fingers, wrist and any striking surface of the hand. Foot Pads: A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel of the foot. The bottom of the foot does not have to be padded. Head Gear: The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface and must be firmly secured. Insufficiently padded gloves, foot and head gear will not be allowed. Equipment must be in a good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury. The tournament's head rules arbitrator ultimately determines the approval or denial of the equipment. A properly fitted mouthpiece is required. Shin pads and rib/chest guards are highly recommended for additional safety to all sparring competitors.

**UNIFORMS (SPARRING):** All competitors must wear a complete traditional or professional sport karate (top and bottom) (Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, etc.) uniform in a good state of repair. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. All sparring uniforms must have sleeves that reach at least to the middle of the forearm. No T-shirts, sweats, tank tops or shoes are allowed in the sparring divisions.

**WEIGHING-IN:** It is mandatory for all adult sparring competitors (in weighed divisions) to weigh in before competition. All competitors must fight in his/her weight division. A competitor cannot fight up or down in another weight division for which he/she has not made the proper weight. It is the responsibility of tournament staff to weigh and properly record the competitor's weight.

**ORDER OF COMPETITION (SPARRING):** Once the final call for a sparring division has been made at ringside, competition cards should be collected. If byes are needed, they will be picked randomly. Matches should always be selected by random, but certain allowances may be given to prevent competitors from the same school from being matched up in the first round of competition. They may be separated randomly from each other in the first round if possible. (Competitors cannot pick whom they want or do not want to fight.)

**REFEREES:** The referee is the head official and is thoroughly versed on the rules and order of competition. He/she promotes the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administrates the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper, and announces the winner of each match. Added Powers of the Referee:

- Match starts and ends only with his/her command (not the command of the timekeeper);
- Has final decision on any disputes on score;
- Has the power to issue warnings and award penalties and penalty points without a majority decision;
- Can overrule a majority call only to issue a warning or a penalty point;
- Automatically disqualifies a competitor who receives three (3) penalty points;
- 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. The disqualification of a competitor, where disqualification is not automatic, is determined only by a majority vote of the judges.

JUDGES/OFFICIALS: Judges/officials call points as they see them. The center referee may consult with judges/officials 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/officials and referee that determines a scoring point.

CALLS AN OFFICIAL MAY MAKE: When the referee believes there has been a significant exchange of techniques, or when signaled to do so by a corner judge, he/she shall call out the word, "STOP!" in a loud voice. The referee then returns the competitors to their starting marks and addresses the judges by saying "JUDGES CALL!" All judges and the center referee cast their votes simultaneously and assertively in the following manner.

- Judge Sees A Point - He/she should hold up both colors or hold up one arm if colors are not being used. At the same time, he/she yells out the word "CALL!" in a loud, clear voice to let the referee know he/she has a call.
- Point Calling - When signaled by the referee, a judge raises the appropriate color (red or white usually — if colors are being used) or points to the competitor who scores the point. When a competitor scores a two-point technique, the officials should hold up or point with two fingers (index and middle fingers). If a one-point technique is called, the judge should point with only one finger (Index finger).
- No Point Scored – To indicate that he/she believes that no point was scored, the official crosses his/her wrist at waist level or holds both colors down.
- Did Not See If A Point Was Scored - The official holds his/her hand over his/her eyes indicating that he/she could not see whether a point was scored or not. This is also used to indicate the official was not in a position to see if a point scored. (This signal has the same effect as saying "no point", but it indicates to the referee, competitors and fans the reason why no point is called).
- Clash - Officials make a motion as though they are hitting both fists together, indicating that both competitors scored at the same time.
- Penalty - The official waves the color of the offending competitor in a circular motion. If no colors are used the official waves the hand and arm in a circular motion while pointing at the offending competitor.
- Disqualification - A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the referee will say, "JUDGES CALL". The judges will then hold up the colored flag of or point to the competitor who is to be disqualified. If a judge does not feel the competitor should be disqualified, he/she crosses his/her wrist or holds both colors down at waist level.

LEGAL TARGET AREAS: Entire headgear and face, ribs, chest, abdomen, collarbone and kidneys.

Exception: No face contact allowed in youth or under adult brown belt divisions.

- ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS: Spine, neck and/or throat, groin, legs, knees and back.
- NON-TARGET AREAS: Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet.
- LEGAL TECHNIQUES: All controlled sport karate techniques except those listed below as illegal.
- ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES: Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs on a hard surface floor, ground fighting on a hard surface, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed competitor, 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.

**BLOOD RULE:** If any judge sees contact and a competitor is injured and has flowing blood then the offending competitor is automatically disqualified.

**LIGHT TOUCH CONTACT:** Means there is no penetration or visible movement of the competitor as a result of the contact. Light touch is allowed to all legal target areas.

**MODERATE TOUCH CONTACT:** Means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch contact may be made to all legal target areas except the headgear and face.

**DELAY OF TIME PENALTY (SPARRING):** An automatic warning will be issued to any competitor not ready to compete when called. A penalty point will be issued for each minute the competitor is not properly ready to compete. Upon 3 penalty points for delay of time the offending competitor will be disqualified.

**OUT-OF-BOUNDS:** A competitor is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she steps outside the boundary line. An in-bounds or out-of-bounds competitor can score until the center referee has called stop. The center referee can call the competitors out of bounds and not ask for a score.

**LATE ENTRIES:** Once a division has started (the first divisional fight has started) no competitor(s) can be added to that division. BE ON TIME!

**LATE SCORING CALLS:** All officials should make their calls at the same time. If, in the opinion of the referee, the corner judges are making a late call intentionally, the referee can disqualify the call. (Noise not allowing the judges to hear the referee or honest mistakes such as raising the wrong color flag or pointing at the wrong competitor should be taken into consideration in disqualifying a call). The judge may change their call to correct an error.

**POINT VALUES:** Legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. Legal kicking techniques that score will be awarded two (2) points. Penalty points will be awarded one (1) point.

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

**LENGTH OF MATCH/WINNER DETERMINATION:** Matches will run two minutes or until five points are scored, whichever occurs first. If no competitor scores five points before time expires, the competitor receiving the most points during the two minutes is declared the winner. If a match is tied at the end of two minutes, sudden victory (first person to score a point) overtime period will determine the winner. All grand championship matches will run for two minutes regardless of points scored. The competitor with the most total points at the end of the match will be declared the winner.

**GRABBING:** In an attempt to immediately score with a sport karate technique competitors may grab the uniform top of his/her opponent. Likewise the uniform pants of an upright opponent may be grabbed in an attempt to score. Grabs may not exceed one second after which time the competitor must release the uniform of their opponent.

**SWEEPS, TAKEDOWNS, GRABS AND GROUND FIGHTING:** Controlled takedowns and sweeps that are meant to take down an opponent are not allowed. Sweeps used to unbalance an opponent (not to take them down) may be used when the intent is to follow up with a sport karate technique. Legal sweeps for the purpose of unbalancing an opponent can only be executed to the back of the front leg at mid-calf or below. A sweep must be deemed a proper sweep and not a kick, to be legal. A point is only given

when the legal sweep is effectively, legally, and immediately followed up with an appropriate sport karate technique.

**WARNINGS AND PENALTIES:** No warnings will be issued for breaking any of the rules. A penalty point will be awarded for each and every rules violation. If a competitor receives three penalty points in any one match, he/she will be disqualified. If the referee deems the severity of the first rules violation warrants it, the competitor can be disqualified. Only two (2) face contacts will be tolerated. The first face contact will result in a penalty point. The second face contact will result in a disqualification. If the center referee deems the first face contact is too severe the offender will be disqualified.

**Other Penalty Rules:** A competitor cannot be penalized and still receive a point on the same call. A competitor can receive points for a proper technique and an additional point from a penalty call against his/her competitor (maximum of three points awarded). If, in the opinion of the referee and/or the medical personnel, a competitor cannot continue because of an injury caused by an illegal penalized attack executed by his/her competitor, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified.

**Other Cause for Penalization:** Penalties may also be assessed for attacking illegal or non-target areas, using illegal techniques, excessive contact, delay of time, running out of the ring to avoid fighting, falling to the floor to avoid fighting, continuing after being ordered to stop, excessive stalling, uncontrolled techniques, or blind, negligent or reckless attacks. Unsportsmanlike-like behavior by the competitor, as well as his/her coaches, friends or family, may result in a penalty against the competitor. The referee may also penalize a competitor for receiving coaching assistance from ring-side.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Requires a majority vote by all officials, unless it is an automatic disqualification. **Non-Competing Penalty:** If, in the majority opinion of the officials, it is considered that the competitors are not making an obvious attempt to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be warned and if it continues, will be disqualified. **Wrong Division:** If any competitor competes in a division he/she does not qualify to compete in due to age, weight, rank, gender, style, etc., he/she will be disqualified.

**NO COACHING:** Coaching is a luxury that most competitors do not have access to. Therefore, it sometimes can become an unfair advantage over a competitor who does not have coaching. The rules are made and enforced so no one competitor has an advantage or disadvantage over another competitor. Excessive coaching will result in a warning or penalty point.

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