



# OFFICIAL RULE BOOK

UPDATED: 3/1/2024

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Competitor Responsibilities**

It is each competitor's responsibility to read and know the rules contained in this handbook. All competitors must present themselves at their designated ring suitably attired and physically prepared to compete. Jewelry or any object that the referee feels might endanger the competitor is not allowed to be worn in competition.

The competitor must be ready when called to compete. If he/she is not suitably attired or physically prepared to compete as deemed by the referee, the competitor may be penalized for delay of the contest.

Three (3) calls will be made for competition - A first call, a second call, and a final call. If a competitor is not at his/her ring when competition begins, he/she may not be allowed to compete.

If a competitor leaves the ring after the competition begins and is not present when his/ her name is called to compete, the name will be called three (3) times at ringside to compete. If he/she is not present to compete on the third call, he/she may be disqualified if the referee feels it is appropriate.

### **Rank Rule**

A competitor may never compete in a division at a rank that he/she has not earned. Once a competitor competes as a black belt, he/she must always compete as a black belt.

#### Rank Guidelines:

Beginner: White, Gold, Orange, and Green Belts

Intermediate: Blue and Purple Belts

Advanced: Red, Brown, and Black Stripes

Black Belt: All levels of Black Belts

### **The Ring**

The size of the adult fighting and form rings shall be no smaller than 15' X 15'. During team form competition, team members may use as much space as the promoter deems appropriate.

The borders of each ring shall be marked and designated with a ring number in a manner visible to competitors, officials, and medical personnel from across the floor.

### **Division Size**

All Beginner & Intermediate (including sparring) with more than eight (8) competitors will be split into separate divisions.

Advanced Belt & Black Belt divisions (including sparring) with more than twelve (12) competitors will be split.

## **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 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 compete in his/her chronological age if they chose.

A competitor who will turn 18 on or before June 30th of the competition season, may compete the entire season as an adult in the 18+ division. The competitor still has the option to compete in the 16-17 year old divisions until his or her birthday.

**However, once the competitor turns 18, he or she MUST compete as an adult in the 18+ division.**

NEW FOR 2024: 17-year-old competitors may choose to compete in the 18+ forms and weapons divisions for the entire year, even if their birthday is after the June 30th cut-off date. Once a competitor moves up to the 18+ forms and weapons division they can't switch back to the 16-17 divisions and their ratings points can't be transferred or moved once they compete in the 18+ division.

A 17-year-old competitor could compete in the 18+ forms and weapons divisions and the 16-17 year old sparring divisions at the same tournament since sparring is excluded from this new rule update. (A competitor whose 18th birthday occurs in the calendar competition year may choose to compete in the 18+ Forms and Weapons divisions for the entire year. If a competitor does not move up early, he/she must move up as soon as he/she turns 18)

\*If a competitor chooses to move up to the 18+ Forms and Weapons divisions while they are 17, it is the competitors' responsibility to be present at all of their divisions. Divisions as well as grand championship divisions will not be held for competitors competing in another age group.

All adult Black Belts competitors 30+ have the option to compete down in age. (Example: Any 30+, 40+, and 50+ year old competitors can compete in any younger adult Black Belt Division.) A competitor cannot compete up in an age division.

An adult competitor can choose to compete down in age. If the competitor elects to compete in more than 1 age group / separate ages for Sparring, Forms, or Weapons, they must be aware that divisions cannot be held for them to move from one age group to another. They will be subject to disqualification if they cannot make their divisions on time. They should always check the tournament schedule before committing to compete in more than one age group.

## **Black Belt Ratings**

Black Belts who choose to change age division's mid-season will be awarded points in the new age bracket. Points from before the competitor changed divisions will not be carried over into the new age bracket, causing the competitor to be ranked in two age brackets.

## **Black Belt Points Points will now be automated through the MAT Action System**

Points are tabulated throughout the season for all Black Belt competitors and posted at [www.MATAction.com/NCKA](http://www.MATAction.com/NCKA) Black Belt sparring divisions with only one competitor will award 1st place to the sole competitor after which the competitor may fight a demo match with a competitor from an older/ taller division.

**The NCKA Finals will host the Award Ceremony at the end of the season. Results from The NCKA Finals WILL BE INCLUDED in the point tabulation.**

Awards will be given to the top three competitors in each category. Competitors must compete in at least three NCKA tournaments and place in that category to be eligible for an award.

### **Uniform**

All competitors must wear a complete traditional or professional sport karate (Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, etc.) uniform in a good state of repair (top and bottom). Uniform tops must have sleeves that reach to at least the middle of the bicep.

A competitor with offensive artwork and/or words on the uniform may be denied the privilege of participation.

The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition.

**T-shirts, sweats or tank tops are not allowed in either sparring or form competitions.**

## **REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED SAFETY EQUIPMENT**

Required, Recommended and Illegal Gear

NCKA approved hand and foot pads, headgear, face shield/cage (optional for adult black belts), mouthpieces, shin, elbow and groin cups (male competitors only) are mandatory for all competitors in all sparring divisions. Each competitor's equipment will be checked to see if it is safe for use. If it is deemed unsafe, he/she will be asked to change the equipment before he/she may compete.

The following is a list of important and required features of NCKA approved safety equipment:

Hand Pads - A soft padded surface must cover the fingers, wrist and any striking surface of the hand. The striking areas such as the ridge of the hand, side of the hand, back of the fist and knuckles must be covered.

Foot Pads - A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel. Footpads need to fit the competitor properly and cannot be excessively oversized for a competitor to gain advantage.

Head Gear - The forehead, sides and back of the head must be covered by a padded surface.

Face Shield/Cage - A face shield or cage that covers the front opening of the competitor's head gear must be securely attached to the head gear in order to compete. Optional for Adult Black Belts.

Chest protectors - All sparring competitors 17 years of age and younger must wear a full chest guard.

Soft Shin Guards & Soft Elbow Pads are required for all competitors.

\*Illegal equipment - Boxing, other contact sport equipment and gear with too many seams will not be allowed.

**No shoes are allowed in any sparring divisions including RINGSTARS.**

Insufficiently padded equipment will also not be allowed. All equipment must be in good repair and free from tears, heavy taping or any other repairs that may cause injury.

## **SPARRING RULES**

### **Length of Match**

An elimination match shall last a total of two (2) minutes unless a competitor earns enough points to be declared the winner before the two (2) minutes have expired.

The clock will continue to run during point calls etc., unless the center referee calls for a time-out. During unusually long calls, equipment adjustments, rule clarifications etc., the center referee may stop time.

If at the end of two (2) minutes the match is tied, the match will continue into a two (2) minute sudden victory overtime period.

**The first competitor to score a point will be 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 Grand Champion. Ties will be settled as above.

### **POINT VALUES AND WINNER DETERMINATION**

One (1) point for all legal hand techniques that scores.

Two (2) points for all legal kicking techniques that scores.

Three (3) points for all jump spinning kicks to the head that scores.

All penalty points will be valued at one (1) point.

**In all Black Belt sparring competition the first competitor to establish a ten (10) point advantage over his/her opponent will be declared the winner regardless of whether or not the two minutes have expired.** If neither competitor has scored a ten (10) point advantage at the end of the two minutes, the competitor with the most points will be declared the winner.

**Under Black Belt sparring divisions will have a seven (7) point spread.**

### **Head Contact**

Light touch head contact is allowed in all red belt and higher sparring divisions. Any hard or malicious head contact will result in the offending competitor being penalized or disqualified.

If a division includes even one competitor ranked lower than red belt, the "no head touch" rule will apply.

### **Awarding Of Points**

Points are awarded by a majority vote of judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the specific technique being scored, only that a point was indeed scored.

Judges will indicate whether it was a one (1), two (2) point, or three (3) point technique by holding up that number of fingers representing the technique that was seen. A majority of judges must agree that a kick was scored in order for two (2) points to be awarded. If a majority of judges agree that a technique was scored, but disagree on whether it was a hand technique or kick, one (1) point will be 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 a competitor's scoring technique, but one sees a hand technique and the other sees a kick, the competitor receives one point.

Please see the Penalty Points section for information on receiving penalty points and scoring points at the same time.

## **Points Defined**

A point is a legal Sport Karate technique scored by a competitor who is in bounds that strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of focused touch or focused control to a legal target area.

### **Officials use the following criteria to determine a point:**

- Was it a legitimate and legal Sport Karate technique?
- Was it delivered with the required focused control or allowed focused touch contact to the legal area?
- Was the competitor who scored the point in bounds?
- Was the competitor who scored the point looking at the other competitor?
- Had the center referee stopped the match before the point was delivered?
- Was either competitor down at the time the point was scored?
- Did the competitor who scored stay on their feet?
- NO front hand "jabs" to the body will be awarded points

### **Legal, Illegal and Non-Target Areas**

Legal target areas are the entire head and face, side of the neck, ribs, chest, abdomen, collarbone and kidneys.

Illegal target areas are the spine, back of the neck, throat, groin, legs and upper back. Any attacks to these areas could result in a warning and/or penalty points.

Non-target areas are Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms and feet. Points may not be scored to these areas. If it is deemed that a competitor is actually deliberately attacking these areas a warning and/or penalty point may be awarded.

### **Legal and Illegal Techniques**

Legal techniques are considered all controlled Sport Karate techniques except for those listed specifically as "illegal." When determining the legality of a technique, the official considers if the technique is a legitimate controlled Sport Karate technique that obeys all the other rules governing Sport Karate.

Illegal techniques include head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, ground fighting, attacks to a downed opponent, grabbing\*, slapping, uncontrolled blind techniques, any throws or take downs, spinning backfists and any other uncontrolled or dangerous technique that is deemed unsafe by the tournament arbitrator. (\*trapping of the opponent's front arm for one (1) second is allowed)

### **Sweeps**

Sweeps not meant to take an opponent down, but merely to disrupt balance are allowed to the back of the front leg at mid-calf and below. These are legal on all types of fighting surfaces. If the sweep is responsible for knocking down an opponent it would be considered an illegal technique and may result in a warning and/or penalty point.

It is important to note that sweeps do not make it legal to kick at an opponent's legs.

## **Touch Contact Defined**

**Touch Contact:** Any contact regardless of how light.

**Light Touch Contact:** No visible movement of any part of the opponent's body as a result of the technique.

**Moderate Touch Contact:** Slight penetration or slight target movement on contact with opponent.

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

- Visible snapping back of a competitor's head from the force of a blow.
- Knocking down of an opponent (not including when the opponent was off balance or has slipped).
- The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding.
- The distortion or injury of the body from the force of a blow to the body or head.

## **Methods of Penalization**

**A penalty point is awarded to the opponent on each and every infraction.**

If a under black belt that is not allowed head contact receives three penalties for head contact in any one match, he/she will be automatically disqualified and their opponent is declared the winner.

If the first infraction of the rules is deemed serious enough by the referee, he/she may choose to omit the first warning and issue a penalty point automatically.

**A penalty point can determine the winner of a match.**

## **Other Penalty Rules**

**Delay of Contest Penalty** - If a competitor does not present him/herself suitably attired 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 three (3) penalty points, the offending competitor will be disqualified.

**A competitor cannot be penalized for an infraction and receive a point on the same call. A penalty always overrules a point by the same competitor.**

A competitor can receive a point because his/her opponent was penalized and at the same time receive a point or points for scoring a technique. For example: Competitor "A" receives three (3) points because he/she scored a kick to competitor "B" and at the same time competitor "B" hit competitor "A" with excessive contact, receiving a penalty. Competitor "A" receives two (2) points for his/her kick and one (1) point for the penalty, totaling three (3) points.

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. 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 (ex: ducking into a knee, butting heads, etc.). In the event a fighter is unable to continue due to 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.

If a competitor scores a point and then proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point technique, the warning for breaking the rule voids the point (penalties and warnings overrule points.).

### **Causes for Penalization**

Reasons include but are not limited to:

- Attacking illegal and non-target areas
- Using illegal techniques
- Running out of the ring to avoid fighting
- Falling to the floor to avoid fighting
- Continuing to fight after the center judge calls break
- Any head, face, or headgear touch where head contact is not allowed
- Blind, negligent, or reckless techniques
- Uncontrolled techniques
- Excessive contact
- Grabbing the arm or legs of a competitor for more than one second
- **ANY UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR from the COMPETITOR, or their coaches, friends, family, ect.**
- **ANY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR from the COMPETITOR, or their coaches, friends, family, ect**
- Not being prepared or ready to compete when it is time to compete (See "delay of contest" penalty and "Competitor Responsibilities"

### **Disqualification**

When a competitor is disqualified, it is proper to notify the tournament rules arbitrator. All awards and rating points for that division are forfeited. An exception to this is if the competitor bows out due to a substantiated injury verified by the tournament medical personnel.

### **Out of Bounds**

A competitor is out of bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one (1) foot touching inside or on the boundary line. Stepping out of bounds does not immediately stop the match. An out of bounds competitor may be scored upon by his/her opponent so long as the opponent has at least one foot in bounds and the referee has not signaled to stop.

### **Sparring Definitions**

**Point:** A controlled legal Sport Karate Technique scored by a competitor while in-bounds that strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of focused touch contact or focused control to a legal target area.

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

**Focused Touch:** Light, medium and excessive (see section on "Touch Contact Defined."

**Focused Control:** In areas where no contact is allowed, but the technique must be focused approximately one inch from the "no touch" target area.



## **Coaching**

PARENTS/COACHES/FRIENDS – PLEASE, NO COACHING!

So that the competitors and officials may conduct sparring matches to the best of their ability and as fairly as possible, the following rules have been established regarding coaching:

- Never, at any time, may a coach, friend, team member, or parent enter the ring without the center referee's permission. Only officials, competitors, and medical personal are allowed to enter the ring.
- No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching is allowed.
- At no time should parents, friends, or coaches demonstrate any type of negative cheering or try to influence or intimidate the judges.
- A coach, cannot I ask for a time out, only the competitors may
- A Coach can never, at any time, interfere with a proper running of the ring, or the decisions of the judges.
- The center referee issues penalties to the competitor for any of the above infractions

## **Timekeepers and Scorekeepers**

Timekeepers are responsible for keeping time during the match. He/she will start and stop time at the command of the center referee and will inform the center referee when the two (2) minutes for sparring matches have expired. The timekeeper does not start or stop the match, his/her only duty is keeping time for the center referee.

Scorekeepers are responsible for keeping accurate score. He/she will record the score at the command of the center referee. The scorekeeper should inform the center referee when a fighter has enough points to win the match. The scorekeeper should listen very closely to the center referee and keep an accurate score. The center referee, not the scorekeeper, will make the final score decision.

## **Sparring Judges**

Judges will call points as they see them. The majority vote of the judges and referee (center judge) determines who is awarded the point. To help in determining penalties or warnings, a center referee may consult the judges, though the referee has the power to issue them alone.

When the referee believes that there has been a significant exchange of technique, or when signaled to do so by a corner judge, he/she will call out the word "CALL" in a loud, clear voice. The referee will then return the competitors to their starting positions and address the judges by saying "Ready, CALL." All judges and the center referee cast their votes simultaneously as follows:

### **Point scored:**

When a judge sees a point scored, he/she will hold up both hands. At that time he/she should yell the word "CALL" in a loud clear voice, indicating that a point was seen.

When asked, the judge will point 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 of the other hand at the same time. If a one point punch is being called, only the flag is raised.

If no flags are being used, the judge will point with his/her hand at the competitor who he/she feels scored the point and point with two fingers if a kick is being called.

**No point scored:** The judge will cross flags if used, or put arms at his/her waist.

**Contact:** If a judge sees illegal or excessive contact, he/she will raise the flag of the person *who was struck* while simultaneously striking the palm of his/her hand with the fist of the other hand.

**Disqualification:** A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the center referee will say "Ready, CALL." A judge will then hold the flag color of the competitor he/she thinks should be disqualified. If he/ she does not believe there should be a disqualification, no flag should be raised.

**Please note that the center referee has the authority to overrule judges awarding a point and to issue a penalty, warning and/or disqualification.**

### **Judging Considerations**

- Was it a legal, legitimate sport karate technique?
- Was it focused to a legal target area?
- Did it have the required legal control or focused control in the execution of the technique?
- Was it a clash (competitors scoring at the same time)?
- Were there any rules violations immediately following the scoring technique (a competitor may not receive a point and penalty on the same call)?
- Was either competitor on the ground when the point was scored?
- Had time expired?

### **How to Be a Good Judge**

- You should know and understand the rules in their entirety
- Make all of your decisions quickly, decisively, and in a confident manner
- Call **only what you clearly see, not** what you heard or thought you saw
- Give each match your full, focused attention. Do not let outsiders distract you from your duty (coaches, other judges, competitors, or fans)
- Stay out of the way of the competitors

#### **Referee/Center Judge**

The referee or center judge is the highest authority during a sparring match. When setting up a match, the referee must position themselves so they can see the scorekeeper.

The powers of the referee/center judge are outlined below.

- Is given the power to issue warnings, award penalty points and disqualify a competitor without a majority decision.
- May overrule a majority point call to issue a penalty point.
- Is to call "STOP" when a competitor goes out of bounds.
- Is the only one who can stop the match.

### **Positioning of Competitors**

When determining the competitor to be "red", the referee will if possible, choose the competitor that is wearing a large amount of red gear. If both competitors are wearing colored gear, the referee will choose the competitor wearing the most red. If neither competitor is wearing red, the referee will choose. Both competitors will be returned to their starting positions before the referee asks for a point call, and also at the end of a match.

### **Protests**

To protest or ask for a rule clarification, the competitor must ask the referee to stop the match and have the arbitrator and/or promoter give a ruling. Any protests must be made immediately - no protest will be allowed after the competition has resumed.

## **Change of Officials**

A sparring official can be changed at any time during a division once a match has been stopped.

## **TEAM SPARRING RULES**

**Junior 3-Boy Sparring Teams and Junior 2-Girl Sparring Teams:** A younger age category competitor can compete up 1 age category older (Example: a 13 & younger age category can compete up into the 14-15 age category and/or a 14-15 age category competitor can compete up into the 16-17 team age category). Same for Girl's age categories as well.

**Substitutes Team Players/Members (Extra Team Member):** Since there are only 3 individual team rounds for boys and 2 individual team rounds for girls. A boys' team that has 4 members and a girls' team that has 3 members have an additional substitute player.

\*Any player on a 4-man team or a 3-woman team can be used equally but can only fight once in a team round (Exception: see ties and overtime period).

The substitute (extra player) can be used as a strategy in any round during a match, but the 4 men team members and 3 women team members must be declared when the teams are called to the mat, at the start of the first team round. The competitors must match the names presented on the team card, at the start of the competition.

After the start of the team's first round only the team fighters that are declared can be used in any additional rounds at a single tournament. A specific team player does not have to be named the substitute since any 4 players on men's teams and any 3 players on women's teams can be used equally in the 3 men fights and 2 women fights.

**Match Rules:** A flip of a coin will determine who sends out the first competitor. The winner of the coin flip can decide to send out the first competitor or have the other team send out first. After the first competitors, the teams then alternate who must send out a fighter first to be matched by the other team.

All rounds are 2 minutes long.

The competitor who earns a 10-point spread or is ahead at the end of 2 minutes is declared the winner of the first 2 rounds (first round only in 2-women teams). If either or both of the first 2 rounds end in a tie, they remained tied. No run-off of ties in the first 2 rounds (or match 1 of 2-women)

The final round is total points match using the full 2 minutes. The team with the most accumulated points wins. If at the end of the final round the accumulated score is a tie, the match continues using the sudden victory rule (first competitor to score wins).

A coin toss will determine who will send out a fighter to break the tie. The winner of the coin flip can decide to send out first or have the other team send out first. A point cannot be scored by a down competitor and a downed competitor cannot be scored on. If an upright competitor strikes a down competitor, they can be penalized.

A competitor who leaves their feet while in-bounds, must land with at least one foot in bounds to score a point.

All scoring techniques to regular legal targets will be:

- 1 point for any hand technique
- 2 points for kicking techniques

3 points for jump spin kicks to the head

#### Injured Competitor

If a competitor is injured they are allowed a max of 4 minutes to determine if they can continue. After the 4-minute time has expired, the injured competitor must continue or will be declared unable to continue. If they are declared unable to continue, confirmed by the event's medical staff, the substitute competitor can complete the sparring match in progress.

A competitor can only request an injury timeout 2 times, on a third injury timeout request, the injured competitor must be replaced with the substitute and cannot be used as a substitute in future rounds on that single match. That competitor, with medical staff approval, can be used if there are additional teams to compete against.

New: If a team competitor is judged "faking an injury", as determined by a unanimous vote of the judges and the professional information provided by the medical personnel, the competitor can be disqualified.

Should the medical staff, at a later day or time, release the competitor for competition, then the injured competitor may compete in a future match.

If a competitor cannot continue in a round that is not the last round because of an injury where there is no penalty call and the team does not have a substitute competitor to continue the round, the uninjured competitor automatically wins that round. If the uninjured competitor is ahead when the injury occurs.

## **FORM RULES**

NCKA separates forms and weapons competition into following four categories: (1) Traditional; (2) Creative; and (3) Musical.

**Traditional Forms and Weapons** – These forms must capture the essence of classic martial arts movements, displaying the traditional techniques, stances, footwork, and weapons. Emphasis is placed on execution of technique, application of technique, balance, speed, power, solid stances, and focus. Forms may be unmodified or modified from what a system or school considers to be the original version of the form; however, performance of the following movements will result in a downgrade of the form, or upon unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division: Movements that involve more than a 360 degree spin, require the body to be inverted more than parallel to the floor, more than two kicks with the same leg without putting the foot down in between; front or back flips; cartwheels; front or side leg splits; releases of the weapon other than simple hand switches; or any other gymnastic movements or extreme exhibitions of flexibility or agility with the body or weapon that are deemed in the opinion of the judges to be inappropriate for the division pursuant to the general guidelines set forth here. (Exception: \*\*Forward Roll is a legal Traditional Technique.)

**Creative Forms and Weapons** – The Creative Division allows forms to include contemporary martial arts techniques that have evolved over the last 30 years. These may be added to a traditional form, or the form may be devised in its entirety by the competitor. NCKA allows Extreme Martial Arts techniques in creative forms in divisions with the exception of The Diamond Nationals. The Diamond Nationals offers a separate division for Extreme Martial Arts (See NASKA Rule Book)

Creative forms and weapons divisions allow the competitor to perform any movements whether they originate from traditional or contemporary martial arts systems or otherwise. However, at least half of the form must originate from martial arts techniques. 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.

**Musical Forms and Weapons:** The Musical Divisions requires an empty hand form or weapons form to meet all the above criteria for a Traditional, Creative, and Extreme form, and additionally meet the requirements of the “Divisional Music Rule” below.

New “Divisional Music Rule”: Music Choreography should be judged as follows:

- 1) The movements of the form must be accented by and performed in conjunction with specific beats, notes, or words in the music. Simply performing your form to the same rhythm or cadence of a song is not satisfactory.
- 2) If sound effects are added to the music, the form should not solely be choreographed to
- 3) Music and sound effects should appropriately match each other, and set the overall mood for each performance.
- 4) Overall, all music, and sound effects used, must compliment the form, and both the form and music should be judged together and viewed as an overall performance, not simply as a form performed with music playing.

Each competitor must provide a music player of reasonable and non-intrusive size at ringside to play his or her music, and an attendant at the player who must be present at all times during the performance (unless it is advertised that music players will be supplied). As each form begins, a music volume check must be made, during which time the player attendant will look to the center judge for a nod of approval or a

signal to lower the volume. Once this volume is set, it may not be increased during the performance of the form.

All competitors must present themselves suitably attired (as described in the "General Information" section of the rule book) and ready to compete. The competitors may be divided into separate divisions based on style, sex, age and/or origin of the form. To enter an adult division, you must be at least 18 years of age or older. Seniors may choose to enter the regular adult division or the senior division, but not both.

The order of performance will be by random draw or selection, shuffling cards, computer selection, etc. Switching the order of performances is not allowed between competitors. If there is a good reason to believe that competitors have switched order they will be disqualified.

It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at their ring prior to the time that their division is scheduled to start. If a competitor comes late, he/she may compete but must compete immediately.

All competitors will perform before any scores are given out. This change is to allow the judges to score more fairly, having seen each performance before locking in any scores. Once all competitors have performed the judges will have the group line up and call each competitor up in the order of performance for scoring. See page 23 for more about scoring and maximum deviation.

External Aids No props, weapons, music, etc. may be used in any division except musical, weapons or team. No aids that would damage or render the competition area unsafe for other competitors, spectators or judges may be used in these divisions.

### **Form Penalties**

If a competitor starts his/her form over for reasons not due to his/her own negligence, the competitor may start over without penalization.

If, however, 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 still perform again but with penalty points. A competitor may only start a form over one time. If the competitor does not finish the form on the second attempt he/she will be disqualified.

It is important that the referee discuss penalization procedures with the judges and scorekeeper. The referee will instruct the scorekeeper to deduct **0.20** points from the offending competitor's final score.

### **Traditional Forms**

A traditional form is one that places emphasis on stances and basic martial arts techniques. In a traditional form, the following techniques are NOT allowed: Flips, Gymnastics, Splits, Multiple Spins, Jump Kicks that exceed 360 degrees.

### **Traditional Weapons**

Traditional weapon forms are subject to the same requirements as above, and are also **not allowed to do:**

- Release Moves, Palm Spins, Knuckle Rolls, Spinning of the weapon
- Single figure-8 moves not followed immediately by a legal strike

## **Musical Forms**

The musical division allows music and the use of martial arts weaponry - there is no separation of empty hand and weapon musical forms. Music must be used in this division and is prohibited from containing lyrics that are profane. A competitor may be subject to disqualification if such music is used. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide their own battery operated player for their music. If the competitor must start their form over because of sound equipment malfunctions due to no fault of the tournament and its coordinators, the competitor will be downgraded by the judges (see penalties section).

## **Creative Forms /Creative Weapons**

These divisions allow competitors to show off their creative side and "extreme" talents. Restrictions placed on traditional divisions do not apply to the creative divisions-if you have moves in a traditional form that might be questionable please ask the center judge before competition begins.

## **Weapons Divisions**

When judging a weapon performance the judges will focus primarily on the effective use and control of the weapon. All other aspects of form competition will also be judged, though the weapon is the primary point of judging. Rules that are specific to weapon divisions are listed below:

Referees should check all weapons for safety. Weapons are subject to referee approval. No sharp weapons are allowed in competition.

Referees should make sure all spectators and competitors are at a safe distance from the competition.

Safety is a major concern. Therefore, the competitor's control of his/her weapon is paramount. If a competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses his/her weapon, he/she may be penalized or disqualified.

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

If a competitor (individual OR team form) drops his/her weapon once he/she has entered the ring (including their walk-up), he/she will be disqualified (all belt levels).

## **Team Forms**

Team form competition is a chance for competitors to their talents at choreography and teamwork. Teams must consist of two to nine competitors. Each team member will need to pay for their event registration to enter this division

## **Mega Teams**

Teams with more than ten competitors are considered "mega teams." So that ranking points may be given to the correct team, each mega team competing in a season must select a team name and keep the name for the remainder of the season. Team members may be changed throughout the season, but the name of the team will be rated. If a team competes in the advanced division at one tournament and the beginner division at another, points will be awarded in the appropriate category for the team (it is possible for a team to win an award in both beginner and advanced divisions at the NCKA Finals).

Beginner mega teams must have a majority of competitors under the rank of Brown Belt. If a team has 50% or more of its members at Brown Belt or above, they will be in the advanced division. If a team competes in the wrong division it will be subject to penalty or disqualification.

Mega teams will be judged on the following criteria:

Number of people on the team will have some impact on judging (see bonus points above). Team size is used as a tie breaker. If teams are very similar in ability, the larger team gets a higher score.

Synchronization - The "tighter" teams are, the higher their scores will be. Teams who perform "on count" will not be scored as highly as teams who do not.

Execution - The individual performances of team members should be judged as they would in individual competition.

Difficulty - More difficult forms, performed well, will score higher than easier forms that are performed equally well.

Presentation - The entry and exit of the competition area, as well as the level of discipline, will be considered in scoring. In mega team divisions, a dropped weapon does not disqualify the team.

Mega teams will be scored as normal and if a weapon was dropped 0.10 will be deducted from the team's final score.

If 5 or more judges are being used in a division, the scorekeeper will eliminate the high and low scores when calculating final scores. In the case of a tie, the high and low scores will be added back in to determine the higher score (only in divisions with 5 judges or more).



### **Judging Criteria (all form divisions)**

When judging form and/or weapons competitors, judges are actually comparing the various competitors in the division against each other to arrive at the top competitors in that division.

**Each form or weapon routine is judged on execution, presentation and difficulty (in that order).**

**Execution** is the act or process of performing the techniques of the form. The **execution stage is the most critical** and should weigh the most in the judge's final score.

Elements of execution include balance, technique, stability, coordination, flexibility, stamina, timing, power, and speed.

**Presentation** is the image or impression of the competitors as reflected in his/her performance of the form. The presentation stage is the **second most important** and should weigh accordingly in the judge's final score.

Elements of presentation include confidence, poise, determination, commitment, imagery, respect, sportsmanship, realism, concentration, spirit, showmanship, appearance and imagination.

**Difficulty** is 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 if a judge feels that two competitors are equally as good in the execution and presentation categories.

Value should never be awarded for a technique performed poorly. Difficulty alone without proper execution should always be downgraded.

Elements of difficulty include complexity and versatility of techniques

### **Scoring of Form Competitors and Ties (all form divisions)**

The center referee will establish a scoring range before each division begins. All judges will award scores within the established range using hundredths. To limit the impact of a single judge's score on the overall outcome of a division, the "Maximum Deviation Rule" will be used. When a performance is ready to be scored the center judge will say "Ready...check," at which point the judges will show their scores to each other only. A **maximum deviation of 0.02 above or below the median score** will be checked for by the center judge, and adjustments will be made if needed.

When 5 or more judges are being used, the high and low scores should be eliminated before totaling scores.

**In the case of a tie, the competitor who received the majority vote (top score of the judges) will break the tie. If there is still a tie all competitors who tied will be awarded the same place.**

**To break a tie in a grand championship division,** the high and low scores will be added back to determine the winner. If there is a second tie, the competitor who received the majority vote will be the winner. If a tie remains, all tied competitors will be awarded Grand Champion.

### **Change of Officials**

Judges may not be removed from a form division until the division has completed the competition.