



*Member
United States Olympic Committee*

USA KARATE

RULES OF KUMITE COMPETITION

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USA KARATE RULES FOR KUMITE COMPETITION

The rules of Kumite competition for all tournaments, matches, and competitions sanctioned by USA KARATE shall be as stated herein. These rules shall be used in all sanctioned competitions, without modification or amendment except as allowed by these rules. These rules are based upon the rules adopted by the World Karate Federation (WKF) for use in international competition. In any competition utilized to select competitors for the United States National Karate Team, the international rules without modification shall be used to conduct all such team selection divisions. These rules, or any part thereof, may be modified or amended by USA KARATE at any time.

Whenever a specific rule is in conflict with a more general rule, the specific rule takes precedence. Exceptions to these rules may be made only with the prior approval of the Referee Committee of USA KARATE for special circumstances attendant to a particular event, tournament, match or competition. A written request for exception should be submitted no less than thirty days prior to the date of the event.

Kumite competition shall be divided into appropriate categories or divisions based upon age, gender, weight and experience.

USA KARATE may elect to offer optional divisions for senior male and/or female athletes who are over the age of thirty-five years.

The number of divisions that may be established, and the age categories thereof, shall be determined and set at the discretion of USA KARATE according to interest and the number of competitors who may elect to compete in such divisions. USA KARATE reserves the right to create categories or divisions for physically and/or mentally challenged competitors, consistent with their abilities and training.

Age Categories for USA KARATE Kumite Competition:

USA BRACKET	AGE	WEIGHT	DURATION
Child(ren)	11 years & younger	N/A	1 ½ Minutes
Junior Cadet	12-13 years old	N/A	2 Minutes
Cadet	14-15 years old	N/A	2 Minutes
Junior	16-17 years old	N/A	2 Minutes
Senior (Female)	18 years & up	N/A	2 Minutes
Senior (Male)	18 years & up	N/A	3 Minutes
Masters	35 years & up	N/A	2 Minutes
Masters	35 years & up	N/A	2 Minutes

*All USA KARATE divisions, **except** USA Team Trials/International Divisions, age/weight/duration are subject to change or modification by the National Event Staff for the particular event.*

The experience categories for USA KARATE Kumite competition shall be as follows:

Beginner	0 – 1 year of training
Novice	1 – 2 years of training
Intermediate	2 – 3 years of training
Advanced	3 + years of training
Elite	Divisions that qualify athletes for the USA National Team

A contestant with the rank of brown belt or above may not compete in the Beginner or Novice category; a black belt may compete only in the Advanced and/or Elite category.

At the USA KARATE Open Championship, the Junior Olympics & Master's Championships, and the National Championships, a competitor may compete as a Beginner, Novice, or Intermediate, however they must move up in divisions based upon the rank criteria set forth herein.

No competitor may compete in a division designated for members of the opposite sex.

These rules shall apply to all entrants, officials, administrators, and other personnel for all competitions sanctioned by USA KARATE.

USA KARATE may authorize additional special rules as needed for a particular event, tournament, match or competition, or may promulgate unique or novel rules to meet unusual circumstances in accordance with the rules of USA KARATE, and as such must be approved by the Tournament Director and the Chief Referee for the event.

In the event that these rules are broken, then USA KARATE, by and through its duly authorized representatives, may impose one or more of the following sanctions verbal reprimand, written warning, monetary fine, disqualification or suspension. All such disciplinary sanctions imposed shall be subject to review according to the Bylaws of this Federation but shall be effective immediately upon imposition. Any athlete who is disqualified for violation of any regulations of prohibited substances or drugs shall forfeit any titles and/or honors awarded and shall promptly return any medal and/or other awards. Examples of prohibited behaviors that would merit the imposition of sanctions include making a false or fraudulent statement regarding age or experience, entering under an assumed name, grossly unsportsmanlike conduct, theft, or any other act contrary to the recognized principals of karate-do.

Age Categories for PKF Kumite/USA Team Trial Competition:

PKF BRACKET	AGE	(Kilo) WEIGHT	DURATION
Jr. Cadet Individual	12-13	Male: -35, -40, -45, -50, +50 Female: -35, -40, -45, +45	2 Minutes
Cadet Individual	14-15	Male: -52, -57, -63, -70 +70 Female: -47, -54, +54	2 Minutes
Junior Individual	16-17	Male: -55, -61, -68, -76, +76 Female: -48, -53, -59, +59	2 Minutes
Under 21	18, 19, 20	Male: -68, -78, +78 Female: -53, -60, +60	2 Minutes
Senior Individual	+18 years old	Male: -60, -67, -75, -84, +84 Female: -50, -55, -61, -68, +68	3 Minutes 2 Minutes
Male Team	+18		3 Minutes
Female Team	+18		2 Minutes

For more details, see APPENDIX 8 Chart: World Championships; Conditions and Categories

Age Categories for WKF Kumite/USA Team Trial Competition:

WKF BRACKET	AGE	(Kilo) WEIGHT	DURATION
Cadet Individual	14-15	Male: -52, -57, -63, -70 +70 Female: -47, -54, +54	2 Minutes
Junior Individual	16-17	Male: -55, -61, -68, -76, +76 Female: -48, -53, -59, +59	2 Minutes
Under 21	18, 19, 20	Male: -68, -78, +78 Female: -53, -60, +60	2 Minutes
Senior Individual	+18 years old	Male: -60, -67, -75, -84, +84 Female: -50, -55, -61, -68, +68	3 Minutes 2 Minutes
Male Team	+18		3 Minutes
Female Team	+18		2 Minutes

For more details, see APPENDIX 8 Chart: World Championships; Conditions and Categories

* ALL PERSONS WHO ELECT TO COMPETE IN ANY EVENT AUTHORIZED UNDER THESE RULES AND SANCTIONED BY USA KARATE DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK, RECOGNIZING THAT KARATE COMPETITION NECESSARILY INVOLVES SOME RISK OF SERIOUS, PERMANENT PHYSICAL INJURY OR DEATH. NO LIABILITY FOR ANY LOSS, INJURY OF ANY KIND, OR DEATH, SHALL ATTACH TO USA KARATE OR ANY OF ITS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, MEMBERS OR EMPLOYEES, ETC. FOR ANY CAUSE OF REASON ARISING OUT OF, OR SUSTAINED IN ANY COMPETITION CONDUCTED HEREUNDER, INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR GROSS NEGLIGENCE.

KUMITE RULES

ARTICLE 1: KUMITE COMPETITION AREA

- 1.1 The competition area must be flat and devoid of hazard.
- 1.2 The competition area must be a matted square in all USA Team Trials competitions for selection of competitors for a United States National Team; for other tournaments or events the use of mats is optional.
- 1.3 The area shall be a matted square with sides of eight meters (measured from the outside), with an additional minimum of one meter on all sides as a safety area. Where mats are not used, the competition area may be defined by marking the boundaries with colored tape of appropriate thickness. The area may be elevated to a height of up to one meter above floor level. The elevated platform should measure at least twelve meters to a side in order to include both the competition and safety area.
- 1.4 A line one-half meter long must be drawn two meters from the center of the competition area for positioning the Referee. Such lines may be laid down with colored tape of appropriate thickness.
- 1.5 Two parallel lines, each one meter long and at right angles to the Referee's line, must be drawn at a distance of one and one half meters from the center of the competition area for positioning the competitors. Such lines may be laid down with colored tape of appropriate thickness.
- 1.6 A line must be drawn one meter on the inside of the competition area. The area enclosed by this line may be a different color, or the line itself may be broken. Such lines may be laid down with colored tape of appropriate thickness.
- 1.7 Each judge will be seated at the corners on the mat in the safety area. The Referee may move around the entire tatami, including the safety area where the judges are seated. Each judge will be equipped with a red and a blue flag.
- 1.8 The Match Supervisor shall be seated just outside the safety area, behind and to the left or the right of the Referee. The Match Supervisor shall be equipped with a flag and a whistle.
- 1.9 Coaches will be seated outside the safety area, on their respective sides at the side of the tatami towards the official table
- 1.10 The terms and abbreviations as detailed in Appendix 4 shall be used by all scorekeepers and Match Supervisors for recording the progress, points, warnings and penalties in any match conducted according to these rules.

EXPLANATION:

1. *The mats used at any USA Team Trials competition must be substantially similar to those mats used in sanctioned international competition and should be non-slip where they contact the floor proper, but have a low coefficient of friction on the upper surface. They should not be as thick as "Judo" mats, since these impede karate movement. The Referee must ensure that mat modules do not move apart during the competition, since gaps constitute a hazard and may cause injuries.*
2. *The Coach shall be assigned a specific place by the Referee Committee in conjunction with the Tournament Organizing Officials. This area shall be close to*

the competition area and the Coach allowed a free and uninterrupted access to contestants between bouts. To assist the contestants, a visible scoreboard must be employed that can be viewed by Coaches and contestants.

ARTICLE 2: OFFICIAL DRESS

2.1.1 All officials, contestants and their coaches must wear the official uniform as herein defined.

2.1.2 The Referee Committee may disbar any official or competitor who does not comply with this regulation. In cases of a minor deviation from the official uniform, the Referee Committee may allow participation of the official or competitor, provided that the deviation does not distract from the dignity of the competition or prejudice any other official or competitor.

2.2.0 REFEREES

2.2.1 Referees and Judges must wear the official uniform designated by the Referee Committee. This uniform must be worn at and during all tournaments and courses. No person shall officiate in any competition wearing a gi or any part thereof.

2.2.2 The official uniform for Referees and judges shall be as follows:

A single breasted navy blue blazer bearing two silver buttons and USA KARATE patch

A white shirt with short sleeves

An official tie worn without tie pin

Plain light gray trousers without cuffs

Un-patterned dark blue or black socks and black slip-on shoes for use on match area

Female Referees and Judges may wear a hair clip

2.3.0 CONTESTANTS

- 2.3.1 All contestants must wear a white unmarked Karate gi without stripes or piping. At the USA KARATE Signature Events and at any United States Team Trials Competition(s), only the approved USA KARATE patch or emblem may be worn. This must be on the left breast of the jacket and shall not exceed an overall size of ten centimeters square (100mm by 100mm). Only the original manufacturer's labels may be displayed on the gi and in the normally accepted locations.

For all other tournaments and competitions, a contestant may wear a single patch or emblem identifying their respective karate organization, school or system on the left breast pocket of the jacket. Such patch or emblem shall not exceed an overall size of ten centimeters square, and shall not be of a design or symbol that is offensive to the dignity of the match, unsportsmanlike, or contrary to the principles of Karate-do.

In addition, an identifying number issued by the National Event Staff may be worn on the back, sleeve or breast area of the gi jacket, as established by the Event Staff.

One contestant must wear a red belt and the other a blue belt. The red and blue belts must be around five centimeters wide and of a length sufficient to allow fifteen centimeters free on each side of the knot and not extend below the knees.

- 2.3.2 Notwithstanding paragraph 2.3.1 above, USA KARATE may authorize the display of special labels or trademarks of approved sponsors.
- 2.3.3 The gi jacket, when tightened around the waist with the belt, must be of minimum length that covers the hips, but must not be more than three-quarters thigh length. Female competitors may wear a plain white T-shirt or leotard beneath the karate jacket. Male contestants may not wear any shirt of any kind or color underneath the gi jacket without the prior consent of the Referee Committee.
- 2.3.4 The maximum length of the gi jacket sleeves must be no longer than the bend of the wrist and no shorter than halfway down the forearm. Jacket sleeves may not be rolled up either on the outside or inside of the sleeve.
- 2.3.5 The gi trousers must be long enough to cover at least two thirds of the shin, must not reach below the ankle bone, and may not be rolled up either on the outside or inside of the leg.
- 2.3.6 Contestants must keep their hair clean and cut to a length that does not obstruct smooth bout conduct or present a safety hazard to competitors. Hachimaki (head band) of any kind shall not be allowed. Should the Referee consider any contestant's hair too long and/or unclean, the Referee may disqualify the contestant from the bout. Hair slides ("scrunchies") are prohibited, as are metal hair grips ("barrettes"). A discreet rubber band or pony tail retainer is permitted. Ribbons and other decorations are prohibited.
- 2.3.7 Contestants must have short fingernails and must not wear jewelry or other object(s) that might injure their opponents. The use of orthodontic appliances or braces must be approved by the Referee and the Official Doctor. The contestant accepts full responsibility for any injury.

- 2.3.8 Approved fist pads are compulsory in all divisions. At the USA KARATE Signature Events and at any United States Team Trials competition(s), USA KARATE fist pads must be worn. Competitors shall supply one pair of fist pads in red and one pair in blue.
- 2.3.9 Gum shields are compulsory in all divisions.
- 2.3.10 Groin protectors are compulsory in all division for male competitors, including international and USA Team Trial divisions.
- 2.3.11 Approved shin pads and instep protectors are compulsory in all divisions. WKF-approved red and blue shin pads and instep protectors are required in all international and USA Team trial divisions. In all other divisions this equipment may be of either the USA KARATE-approved or WKF-approved type.
- 2.3.12 Glasses are forbidden (soft contact lenses may be worn at the contestant's own discretion). In all divisions except International and USA Team Trial Kumite divisions, an athlete may elect to wear shatter-proof, athletic safety goggles of an approved design.
- 2.3.13
- (a) Women may wear authorized protective equipment for the chest area. However, in international and USA Team Trial divisions women must wear protective equipment for the chest, which equipment must be WKF-approved.
 - (b) Male and female competitors age 15 years and younger also may wear USA KARATE-approved or WKF-approved face masks and protective equipment for the chest area.
 - (c) In USA Team Trial divisions, Cadet competitors must wear a WKF-approved face mask and WKF-approved body protector.
- 2.3.14 Any protective equipment must meet USA KARATE specifications and be of a USA KARATE approved design, except where WKF-approved equipment is permitted or required.
- 2.3.15 The use of bandages, padding, or supports because of injury must be approved by the Referee on the advice of the Official Doctor. No braces that include any metallic parts shall be used. The Referee shall make the final decision as to the permitted use of items or products applied or adhered to the competitor, related to medical treatment, such as tape or other supportive or corrective materials.
- 2.3.16 In all divisions except advanced and international and USA Team Trial divisions, a competitor may elect to use a soft foam head protector, provided that such protector is a solid color and of an approved design, that does not impede the ability of the athlete to score or be scored upon. However, the *aka* competitor may not wear a blue head protector, and *ao* may not wear a read protector.

2.4.0 COACHES

2.4.1 The coach shall at all times during the tournament wear a tracksuit and display official identification.

EXPLANATION:

1. *The contestant must wear a single belt. This shall be red for “Aka” and blue for “Ao.” Belts of grade should not be worn during the bout.*
2. *Red or blue protective mitts (fist-pads) approved by USA KARATE, with an uncovered thumb must be worn. The padding must not be capable of displacement.*
3. *The design of any mitts must be approved by the USA KARATE Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Medical Committee and the Referee Committee, except where WKF-approved mitts are required or permitted.*
4. *Gum shields (mouth guards) must be properly fitted by a dentist.*
5. *If a contestant comes into the match area inappropriately dressed, he/she shall not be immediately disqualified; instead, the competitor shall be given one minute to remedy matters.*
6. *If the Referee Committee agrees, refereeing officials may be allowed to remove their blazers.*
7. *The wearing of unauthorized clothing or equipment is forbidden.*

ARTICLE 3: ORGANIZATION OF KUMITE COMPETITIONS

- 3.1 A karate tournament may comprise Kumite competition and/or Kata competition, including Kobudo divisions. The Kumite competition may be further divided into the team match and the individual match. The individual match may be further divided into weight divisions. Weight divisions are divided ultimately into bouts. The term “bout” also describes the individual Kumite competitions between opposing pairs of team members.
- 3.2 No contestant may be replaced by another in an individual match.
- 3.3 Individual contestants or teams that do not present themselves when called shall be disqualified (Kiken) from that category.
- 3.4 The contestants area all members of a team. There are no fixed reserves.
- 3.5 Before each match a team representative must hand into the official table an official form defining the names and fighting order of the competing team members. The fighting order may be changed for each round, but once notified it may not be changed.
- 3.6 A team shall be disqualified if any of its members or its coach changes the team’s composition without submitting the written fighting order.

EXPLANATION:

1. *A “round” is a discrete stage in a competition leading to the eventual identification of finalists. In a Kumite competition, a round eliminates fifty percent of contestants within it, counting byes as contestants. In this context, the round may apply equally to a stage in either primary elimination or repechage. In a matrix, or “round robin” competition, a round allows all contestants in a pool to fight once.*
2. *The use of contestants’ names causes problems of pronunciation and identification. Tournament numbers may be allotted and used.*
3. *When lining up before a match, a team shall present the actual fighters. The unused fighter(s) and the Coach shall not be included and shall sit in an area set aside for them.*
4. *In order to compete, male teams must present at least three competitors, and female teams must present at least two competitors. A team with less than the required number of competitors shall forfeit the match (Kiken).*
5. *The fighting order form must be presented by the Coach or a nominated contestant from the team. If the Coach hands in the form, she/he must be clearly identifiable as such, otherwise the form may be rejected. The list must include the name of the country, club, the belt color allotted to the team for that match and the fighting order of the team members. Both the fighters’ names and their tournament numbers must be listed and the form signed by the Coach or nominated person.*
6. *If through an error in charting the wrong contestants compete, then regardless of the outcome, that bout/match shall be declared null and void. To reduce such errors the winner of each bout/match must confirm victory with the control table before leaving the area.*

ARTICLE 4: THE REFEREE PANEL

- 4.1 The Referee Panel for each match shall consist of one Referee (Shushin), four Judges (Fukushin), and one Match Supervisor (Kansa).
- 4.2 In addition, for the purpose of facilitating the operation of matches, several timekeepers, caller-announcers, and record keepers shall be appointed.

EXPLANATION:

1. *At the start of a Kumite match the Referee stands on the outside edge of the match area facing toward the center of the mat. On the Referee’s left stands Judges numbers 1 and 2, and on the right stands Judges numbers 3 and 4.*
2. *After the formal exchange of bows by the contestants and the Referee Panel, the Referee takes a step back and the Judges turn inward and all bow together. All then take up their positions.*
3. *When changing the entire referee panel the departing officials take one step forward, turn around and face the incoming panel. They bow to each other and on the command of the incoming Referee and in one line (facing the same direction) leave the competition area.*

4. *When individual judges change, the incoming judge goes to the outgoing judge, they bow together and change positions.*
5. *In the finals of team matches, the officials serving as Referee, Judges and Match Supervisor shall rotate positions after each bout.*
6. *Officials may not referee a competitor who is from the official's dojo, karate organization or Approved Sports Organization (ASO).*

ARTICLE 5: DURATION OF A BOUT

- 5.1 Duration of the kumite bout shall be two minutes for ages 12 and over, and one and a half minutes for ages 11 and under, except in the following divisions: In senior international and USA Team Trial divisions the kumite bout shall be three minutes for men, but four minutes in the bouts for medals; and two minutes for women, but three minutes in the bouts for medals.
- 5.2 The timing of the bout starts when the Referee gives the signal to start, and stops each time the Referee calls "Yame."
- 5.3 The timekeeper shall give signals by a clearly audible gong or buzzer indicating "10 seconds to go" or "time up." The "time up" signal marks the end of the bout.

ARTICLE 6: SCORING

- 6.1 Scores are as follows:
 - a) **IPPON** Three Points
 - b) **WAZA-ARI** Two Points
 - c) **YUKO** One Point
- 6.2 A score is awarded when a technique is performed according to the following criteria to a scoring area:
 - a) Good Form
 - b) Sporting Attitude
 - c) Vigorous Application
 - d) Awareness (Zanshin)
 - e) Good Timing
 - f) Correct Distance
- 6.3 **IPPON** is awarded for:
 - a) Jodan kicks.
 - b) Any scoring technique delivered on a thrown or fallen opponent.

6.4 **WAZA-ARI** is awarded for:

- a) Chudan kicks.

6.5 **YUKO** is awarded for:

- a) Chudan or Jodan Tsuki
- b) Chudan or Jodan Uchi

6.6 Attacks are limited to the following areas:

- a) Head
- b) Face
- c) Neck
- d) Abdomen
- e) Chest
- f) Back
- g) Side

6.7 A victory over an opponent who has been given a Hansoku or Shikkaku shall be worth Kachi. If a contestant is absent or is withdrawn, the opponent shall be credited with a win by Kiken.

6.8 An effective technique delivered at the same time that the end of the bout is signaled is considered valid. A technique, even if effective, delivered after an order to suspend or stop the bout shall not be scored and may result in a warning or penalty being imposed on the offender.

6.9 No technique, even if technically correct, shall be scored if it is delivered when the two contestants are outside the competition area. However, if one of the contestants delivers an effective technique while still inside the competition area and before the Referee calls “Yame”, the technique shall be scored.

6.10 If two contestants hit each other at the exact same time, the scoring criterion of “good timing” has by definition not been met, and the correct judgment is to not award a point. Both contestants may however receive points for their respective scores if they each have two flags in their favor, and the scores both happen before “Yame” – and the time signal.

EXPLANATION:

Vocabulary	Technical Criteria
IPPON (3 points) is awarded for:	1. Jodan kicks. Jodan being defined as the face, head and neck. 2. Any scoring technique which is delivered on an opponent who has been thrown, has fallen of their feet on their own accord, or is otherwise off their feet.
WAZA-ARI (2 points) is awarded for:	Chudan kicks. Chudan being defined as the abdomen, chest, back and side.
YUKO (1 point) is awarded for:	1. Any punch (Tsuki) delivered to any of the seven scoring areas. 2. Any strike (Uchi) delivered to any of the seven scoring areas.

1. *In order to score, a technique must be applied to a scoring area as defined in paragraph 6.6 above. The technique must be appropriately controlled with regard to the area being attacked and must satisfy all six scoring criteria in paragraph 6.2 above.*
2. *For reasons of safety, throws where the opponent is being grabbed below the waist, thrown without being held onto, or thrown dangerously, or where the pivot point is above the thrower's belt level, are prohibited and shall incur a warning or penalty. Exceptions are conventional karate leg sweeping techniques that do not require the opponent to be held while executing the sweep, such as ashi-barai, kouchi-gari, kani waza, etc.*
3. *When a contestant is thrown according to the rules, slips, falls, or is otherwise off their feet and is scored upon by the opponent, the score shall be IPPON.*
4. *A technique with **good form** is said to have characteristics conferring probable effectiveness within the framework of traditional karate concepts.*
5. ***Sporting Attitude** is a component of good form and refers to a non-malicious attitude of great concentration obvious during delivery of the scoring technique.*
6. ***Vigorous Application** defines the power and speed of the technique and the palpable will for it to succeed.*
7. ***Awareness (Zanshin)** is that criteria most often missed when a score is assessed. It is the state of continued commitment in which the contestant maintains total concentration, observation, and awareness of the opponent's potentiality to counter-attack. He does not turn his/her face away during delivery of the technique, and remains facing the opponent afterwards.*
8. ***Good Timing** means delivering a technique when it will have the greatest potential effect.*

9. **Correct Distance** similarly means delivering a technique at the precise distance where it will have the greatest potential effect. Thus if the technique is delivered on an opponent who is rapidly moving away, the potential effect of that blow is reduced.
10. Distancing also relates to the point at which the completed technique comes to rest on or near the target. A punch or kick that comes somewhere between skin touch and 5 centimeters from the face, head, or neck may be said to have the correct distance. However, Jodan techniques, which come within 5 centimeters distance of the target and which the opponent makes no attempt to block or avoid will be scored, provided the technique meets the other criteria. In 17 and younger competition divisions, no contact to the head, face or neck (or face mask) is allowed other than a very light touch (previously known as a “skin touch”) for Jodan kicks, and the scoring distance is increased up to 10 centimeters.
11. A worthless technique is a worthless technique – regardless of where and how it is delivered. A technique that is badly deficient in good form, or lacking in power, shall score nothing.
12. Techniques which land below the belt may score, as long as they are above the pubic bone.
13. The neck is a target and so is the throat. However, no contact to the throat is permitted, although a score may be awarded for a properly controlled technique which does not touch.
14. A technique that lands on the shoulder blades may score. The non-scoring part of the shoulder is the junction of the upper bone of the arm with the shoulder blades and collarbones.
15. The time-up bell signals the end of scoring possibilities in that bout, even though the Referee may inadvertently not halt the bout immediately. The time-up bell does not however mean that warnings or penalties cannot be imposed. Penalties can be imposed by the Refereeing Panel up to the point where the contestants leave that area after the bout’s conclusion. Penalties can be imposed after that, but then only by the Referee Committee.
16. If two contestants hit each other at the exact same time, the scoring criterion of “good timing” has by definition not been met, and the correct judgment is to not award a point. Both contestants may however receive points for their respective scores if they each have two flags in their favor and the scores both happen before “yame” – and the time signal.
17. If a contestant scores with more than one consecutive technique before the bout has been stopped, the contestant will be awarded the successful scoring technique of the higher point value, regardless of in which sequence the techniques scored. Example: If a kick followed a successful punch, the point for the kick would be awarded regardless if the punch scored first – as the kick has a higher point value.

ARTICLE 7: CRITERIA FOR DECISION

7.0 The result of a bout is determined by a contestant obtaining a clear lead of eight points, or at time-up, having the highest number of points, obtaining a decision (HANTEI) or by a HANSOKU, SHIKKAKU OR KIKEN, imposed against the contestant.

In USA Team Trial and International Divisions the result of a bout is determined by a contestant obtaining a clear lead of eight points or, at time-up, having the highest number of points, or obtaining a decision (HANTEI), or by HANSOKU, SHIKKAKU, OR KIKEN imposed against a contestant.

7.1 No individual bout can be declared a tie. Only in team competition, when a bout ends with equal scores, or no scores, will the Referee announce a tie (HIKIWAKI).

7.2 In individual bouts, if after full time there are no scores, or scores are equal, the decision will be made by a final vote of the four judges and the Referee, each casting their vote. A decision in favor of one or the other competitor is obligatory and is taken on the basis of the following criteria.

- a) The attitude, fighting spirit, and strength demonstrated by the contestants.
- b) The superiority of tactics and techniques displayed.
- c) Which of the contestants has initiated the majority of the actions.

7.3 The winning team is the one with the most bout victories. Should the two teams have the same number of bout victories then the winning team will be the one with the most points, taking both winning and losing bouts into account. The maximum point *difference* or lead recorded in any bout will be eight.

7.4 If the two teams have the same number of bout victories and points, then a deciding bout will be held. Each team may nominate any one contestant of their team for purpose of fighting the extra bout, regardless if that person already has fought in a previous bout between the two teams. If the extra bout does not produce a winner based on superiority on points, the extra bout will be decided based on HANTEI according to the same procedure as for individual bouts. The result of the HANTEI for the extra bout will then also determine the result of the team match.

7.5 In team matches when a team has won sufficient bout victories or scored sufficient points as to be established the winner then the match is declared over and no further bouts will take place.

EXPLANATION:

1. *When deciding the outcome of a bout by vote (HANTEI) at the end of an inconclusive bout, the Referee will move to the match area perimeter and call "HANTEI" followed by*

a two-tone blast of the whistle. The Judges will indicate their opinions by means of their flags and the Referee will at the same time signal hi/hers vote by hand signal. The Referee will then give a short blast on his/her whistle, return to his/her original position and announce the decision and will then indicate the winner in the normal way.

ARTICLE 8: PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

8.0 There are two categories of prohibited behavior, Category 1 and Category 2.

8.1 CATEGORY 1:

1. Techniques which make excessive contact, having regard to the scoring area attacked, and techniques which make contact with the throat.
2. Attacks to the arms or legs, groin, joints, or instep.
3. Attacks to the face with open hand techniques.
4. Dangerous or forbidden throwing techniques.

8.2 CATEGORY 2:

1. Feigning or exaggerating injury.
2. Exit from the competition area (JOGAI) not caused by the opponent.
3. Self-Endangerment by indulging in behavior which exposes the contestant to injury by the opponent, or failing to take adequate measures for self-protection.
4. Avoiding combat as a means of preventing the opponent having the opportunity to score.
5. Passivity – not attempting to engage in combat.
6. Clinching, wrestling, pushing, seizing or standing chest to chest, without attempting a throw or other technique.
7. Techniques which by their nature cannot be controlled for the safety of the opponent and dangerous and uncontrolled attacks.
8. Simulated attacks with the head, knees or elbows.
9. Talking to, or goading the opponent, failing to obey the orders of the Referee, discourteous behavior towards the Refereeing officials, or other breaches of etiquette.

EXPLANATION:

1. *Karate competition is a sport and for that reason some of the most dangerous techniques are banned and all techniques must be controlled. Trained senior competitors can absorb relatively powerful blows on muscled areas such as the abdomen, but the fact remains that the head, face, neck, groin and joints are particularly susceptible to injury. Therefore any technique, which results injury may be warned or penalized unless caused by the recipient. The contestants must perform all techniques with control and good form. If they cannot, then regardless of the technique misused, a warning or penalty must be imposed. Particular care must be exercised in Cadet and Junior competition.*

2. FACE CONTACT

(A) Seniors Age 18 and over

*Non-injurious, light controlled “touch” contact to the face, head and neck is allowed (but not to the throat) with the **hand and foot**. Where contact is deemed by the Referee to be too strong, but does not diminish the competitor’s chances of winning, a warning (CHUKOKU) may be given. A second contact under the same circumstances will result in KEIKOKU. A further offense will result in HANSOKU CHUI. Any further contact, although not significant enough to influence the opponent’s chances of winning, will still result in HANSOKU.*

(B) Youth Ages 17 and under

***No touch or contact to the head, face, and neck (including face mask) is allowed with hand techniques.** Any contact, no matter how light will receive a warning or penalty, as in the paragraph above, unless caused by the recipient (MUBOBI). Jodan kicks may make the lightest touch (“skin touch”) and still score. Any more than a skin touch will require a warning or penalty unless caused by the recipient (MUBOBI).*

3. *The Referee must constantly observe the injured contestant. A short delay in giving a judgment allows injury symptoms such as a nosebleed to develop. Observation will also reveal any efforts by the contestant to aggravate slight injury for tactical advantage. Examples of this are blowing violently through an injured nose, or rubbing the face roughly.*
4. *Pre-existing injury can produce symptoms out of proportion to the degree of contact used, and referees must take this into account when considering warnings or penalties for seemingly excessive contact. For example, what appears to be a relatively light contact could result in a competitor being unable to continue due to the cumulative effect of injury sustained in an earlier bout. Before the start of a match or bout, the Tatami Manager must examine the medical cards and ensure that the contestants are fit to fight. The Referee must be informed if a contestant has been treated for injury.*
5. *Contestants who over-react to light contact, in an effort to have the Referee warn or penalize their opponent such as holding the face and staggering about or falling unnecessarily, will be immediately warned or penalized themselves.*
6. *Feigning an injury which does not exist, is a serious infraction of the rules. SHIKKAKU will be imposed on the contestant feigning injury, i.e., when such things as collapse and rolling about on the floor are not supported by evidence of commensurate injury as reported by a neutral doctor.*

Exaggerating the effect of an actual injury is less serious but still regarded as unacceptable behavior and therefore the first instance of exaggeration will receive a

minimum warning of HANSOKU CHUI. More serious exaggeration such as staggering around, falling on the floor, standing up and falling down again and so on may receive HANSOKU directly depending on the severity of the offense.

7. *Competitors who receive SHIKKAKU for feigning injury will be taken from the competition area and put directly into the hands of the USA KARATE Tournament Doctor or Medical Staff, who will carry out an immediate examination of the competitor. The Tournament Doctor or Medical Staff will submit a report before the end of the Championship for the consideration of the Referee Committee. Competitors who feign injury will be subject to the strongest warnings or penalties, up to and including suspension for life for repeated offenses.*
8. *The throat is a particularly vulnerable area and even the slightest contact will be warned or penalized unless it is the recipient's own fault.*
9. *Throwing techniques are divided into two types.*
 - (1) *The established "conventional" karate leg sweeping techniques such as de ashi bari, ki uchi gari, etc., where the opponent is swept off balance or thrown without being grabbed first.*
 - (2) *Those throws requiring that the opponent be grabbed or held as the throw is executed. The pivotal point of the throw must not be above the thrower's belt level and the opponent must be held onto throughout so that a safe landing can be made. Over the shoulder throws such as seoi nage, kata guroma etc., are expressly forbidden, as are so-called "sacrifice" throws such as tomoe nage, sumi gaeshi, etc. It is also forbidden to grab the opponent below the waist and lift and throw them or to reach down to pull the legs from under them. If a contestant is injured as a result of a throwing technique, the Judges will decide whether a warning or penalty is called for.*
10. *Foot sweeps that land high on the leg can cause knee injury. The Referee must assess the validity of any sweep-attack to the leg; an ineffectual but painful attack of this sort should be immediately warned or penalized.*
11. *When assessing the contact force used, the Referee must take all circumstances into account. Did the opponent exacerbate the impact of an otherwise controlled technique by an injudicious movement? This is the reason most often given for scoring what would otherwise appear to be excessive contact, but it must not be used as a justification for a bad assessment. The Referee must also consider the effects of a marked disparity in size between contestants which occurs in team matches and open weight divisions.*
12. *Open hand techniques to the face are forbidden due to the danger to the contestant's sight.*

The face is defined as an area that begins one centimeter above the eyebrows, extending down and including the temples, narrowing from the cheekbones, and finishing just under the chin.

13. *JOGAI relates to a situation where a contestant's foot, or any other part of the body touches the floor outside of the match area. An exception is when the contestant is physically pushed or thrown from the area by the opponent. **The definition for JOGAI is no longer "repeated exits" but merely "exit not caused by the opponent."***
14. *A contestant who delivers a scoring technique and then exits the area before the Referee calls "YAME" will be given the value of the score and Jogai will not be imposed. If the contestant's attempt to score is unsuccessful the exit will be recorded as a Jogai.*
15. *If AO exits just after AKA scores with a successful attack, then "YAME" will occur immediately on the score and AO's exit will not be recorded. If AO exits, or has exited as AKA's score is made (with AKA remaining within the area), then both AKA's score will be awarded and AO's Jogai will be imposed.*
16. *It is important to understand that "AVOIDING COMBAT" refers to a situation where a competitor attempts to prevent the opponent having the opportunity to score by using time-wasting behavior. The contestant who constantly retreats without effective counter, who holds, clinches, or exits the area rather than allow the opponent an opportunity to score must be warned or penalized. This often occurs during the closing seconds of a bout. If the offense occurs with ten seconds or more of the bout time remaining, and the contestant has no previous C2 warning, the Referee will warn the offender by imposing CHUKOKU. If there has been a previous Category 2 offense(s), this will result in KEIKOKU being imposed. If however, there is less than ten seconds to go, the Referee will directly impose HANSOKU CHUI on the offender (whether there has been a previous Category 2 KEIKOKU or not). If there has been a previous Category 2 HANSOKU CHUI the Referee will penalize the offender with HANSOKU and award the bout to the opponent. However the Referee must ensure that the contestant's behavior is not a defensive measure due to the opponent acting in a reckless or dangerous manner, in which case the attacker should be warned or penalized.*
17. *Passivity refers to situations where one or both of the contestants do not attempt to exchange techniques over an extended period of time.*
18. *Warnings or penalties for Mubobi can be assessed only when contact occurs. An example of MUBOBI is the instance in which the contestant launches a committed attack without regard for personal safety. Some contestants throw themselves into a long reverse punch, and are unable to block a counter. Such open attacks constitute an act of Mubobi and cannot score. As a tactical theatrical move, some fighters turn away immediately in a mock display of dominance to demonstrate a scored point. They drop their guard and lapse awareness of the opponent. The purpose of the turn-away is to draw the Referee's attention to their technique. This is also a clear act of Mubobi. Should the offender*

receive an excessive contact and/or sustain an injury the Referee will issue a Category 2 warning or penalty and decline to give a warning or penalty to the opponent.

19. *Any discourteous behavior from a member of an official delegation can earn the disqualification of a competitor, the entire team, or delegation from the tournament.*

ARTICLE 9: WARNINGS & PENALTIES

CHUKOKU: CHUKOKU is imposed for the first instance of a minor infraction for the applicable category.

KEIKOKU: KEIKOKU is imposed for the second instance of a minor infraction for that category, or for infractions not sufficiently serious to merit HANSOKU CHUI.

HANSOKU CHUI: This is a warning of disqualification usually imposed for infractions for which a KEIKOKU has previously been given in that bout although it may be imposed directly for serious infringements, which do not merit HANSOKU.

HANSOKU: This is a penalty of disqualification following a very serious infraction or when a HANSOKU CHUI has already been given. In team matches the fouled competitor's score will be set at eight points and the offender's score will be zeroed.

SHIKKAKU: This is a disqualification from the actual tournament, competition, or match. In order to define the limit of SHIKKAKU, the Referee Committee must be consulted. SHIKKAKU may be invoked when a contestant fails to obey the orders of the Referee, acts maliciously, or commits an act which harms the prestige and honor of Karate-do, or when other actions are considered to violate the rules and spirit of the tournament. In team matches the fouled competitor's score will be set at eight points and the offender's score will be zeroed.

EXPLANATION:

1. *There are three degrees of warning: CHUKOKU, KEIKOKU and HANSOKU CHUI. A warning is a correction given to the contestant making it clear that the contestant is in violation of the competition rules, but without imposing an immediate penalty.*
2. *There are two degrees of penalties: HANSOKU and SHIKKAKU, both causing the contestant violating the rules to be disqualified from (i) the bout (HANSOKU); or (ii) from the entire tournament (SHIKKAKU) with a possible suspension from competition for an additional time period.*

3. *Category 1 and Category 2 warnings do not cross-accumulate.*
4. *A warning can be directly imposed for a rules infraction but once given, repeats of that category of infraction must be accompanied by an increase in severity of warning or penalty imposed. It is not, for example, possible to give a warning or penalty for excessive contact then give another warning of the same degree for a second instance of excessive contact.*
5. *CHUKOKU is normally imposed for the first instance of an offense that has not reduced a competitor's chances of winning by the opponent's foul.*
6. *KEIKOKU is normally imposed where the contestant's potential for winning is slightly diminished (in the opinion of the Judges) by the opponent's foul.*
7. *A HANSOKU CHUI may be imposed directly, or following a KEIKOKU and is used where the contestant's potential for winning has been seriously reduced (in the opinion of the Judges) by the opponent's foul.*
8. *A HANSOKU is imposed for cumulative warnings but can also be imposed directly for serious rules infractions. It is used when the contestant's potential for winning has been reduced virtually to zero (in the opinion of the Judges) by the opponent's foul.*
9. *Any competitor who receives HANSOKU for causing injury, and who has in the opinion of the judges and Tatami Manager, acted recklessly or dangerously or who is considered not to have the requisite control skills necessary for USA KARATE competition, will be reported to the Referee Committee. The Referee Committee will decide if that competitor shall be suspended from the rest of that competition and/or subsequent competitions.*
10. *A SHIKKAKU can be directly imposed without warnings of any kind. The contestant need have done nothing to merit it – it is sufficient if the Coach or non-combatant member(s) of the contestant's delegation behave in such a way as to harm the prestige and honor of Karate-do. If the Referee believes that a contestant has acted maliciously, regardless of whether or not actual physical injury has been caused, SHIKKAKU and not HANSOKU is the correct penalty.*
11. *A public announcement of SHIKKAKU may be made based upon the decision of the Referee Committee .*

ARTICLE 10: INURIES AND ACCIDENTS IN COMPETITION

- 10.1 KIKEN or forfeiture is the decision given, when a contestant or contestants fail to present themselves when called, are unable to continue, abandon the bout, or are withdrawn on the order of the Referee. The grounds for abandonment may include injury not ascribable to the opponent's actions.

- 10.2 If two contestants injure each other or are suffering from the effects of previously incurred injury, and are declared by the Tournament Doctor to be unable to continue, the bout is awarded to the contestant who has amassed the most points. In Individual Matches if the points score is equal, then a vote (HANTEI) will decide the outcome of the bout. In Team Matches, the Referee will announce a tie (HIKIWAKE). Should the situation occur in an extra bout for deciding a Team Match, then a vote (HANTEI) will determine the outcome.
- 10.3 An injured contestant who has been declared unfit to fight by the tournament doctor cannot fight again in that competition.
- 10.4 An injured contestant who wins a bout through disqualification due to injury is not allowed to fight again in the competition without permission from the doctor. If she/he is injured, he may win a second bout by disqualification but is immediately withdrawn from further Kumite competition in that tournament.
- 10.5 When a contestant is injured, the Referee shall at once halt the bout and call the doctor. The doctor is authorized to diagnose and treat injury only.
- 10.6 A competitor who is injured during a bout in progress and requires medical treatment will be allowed three minutes in which to receive it. If treatment is not completed within the time allowed, the Referee will decide if the competitor shall be declared unfit to fight, or whether an extension of treatment time shall be given.
- 10.7 Except in divisions for ages 11 and younger, any competitor who falls, is thrown or knocked down and does not fully regain his/her feet within ten seconds is considered unfit to continue fighting and shall be automatically withdrawn from all Kumite events in that tournament. In the event that a competitor falls, is thrown or knocked down and does not regain his/her feet immediately, the Referee shall signal to the timekeeper to start the ten second count-down by a blast on the whistle, raising his/her hand and then calling out for the doctor. The timekeeper will stop the clock when the competitor stands fully upright and the Referee raises his/her arm. In all cases where the 10 second clock has been started the doctor will be asked to examine the contestant. For incidents falling under this 10 second rule, the contestant may be examined on the mat.

EXPLANATION:

1. *When the doctor declares the contestant unfit, the appropriate entry must be made on the contestant's monitoring card. The extent of unfitness must be made clear to other Referee Panels.*
2. *A contestant may win through disqualification of the opponent for accumulated minor Category 1 infractions. Perhaps the winner has sustained no significant injury. A second win on the same grounds must lead to withdrawal even though the contestant may be physically able to continue.*
3. *Self-inflicted injury and those injuries caused by the athlete are easy to deal with, but when assessing an injury caused by the opponent's technique, the Referee Panel should consider whether the technique was valid. Was it properly applied to the proper target area at the correct time and with the correct degree of control? Consideration of this will assist the Referee Panel in deciding whether the injured contestant should be declared the loser by Kiken, or whether the opponent should be warned or penalized for a foul.*
4. *The Referee should call the doctor when a contestant is injured and needs medical treatment by raising his/her hand and verbally calling out "doctor."*
5. *If physically able to do so, the injured contestant should be directed off the mat for examination and treatment by the doctor.*
6. *The doctor is obliged to make safety recommendations only as they relate to the proper medical management of that particular injured contestant.*
7. *When applying the "Ten Second Rule" the time will be kept by a timekeeper appointed for this specific purpose. A warning will be sounded at seven seconds followed by the final bell at ten seconds. The timekeeper will start the clock only on the Referee's signal. The timekeeper will stop the clock when the competitor stands fully upright and the Referee raises his/her arm.*
8. *The Judges will decide the winner on the basis of HANSOKU, KIKEN, or SHIKKAKU as the case may be.*
9. *In team matches, should a team member receive KIKEN, or be disqualified (HANSOKU or SHIKKAKU) their score for that bout, if any, will be zeroed and the opponent's score will be set at eight points.*

ARTICLE 11: OFFICIAL PROTEST

- 11.1 No one may protest about a judgment to the members of the Refereeing Panel.

- 11.2 If a refereeing procedure appears to contravene the rules, an official club representative is the only one allowed to make a protest. In international competition, the President of the Federation or its official representative is the only one allowed to make a protest.
- 11.3 The protest shall take the form of a written report submitted immediately after the bout in which the protest was generated. (The sole exception is when the protest concerns an administrative malfunction. The Tatami Manager should be notified immediately if/when the administrative malfunction is detected).
- 11.4 Any protest concerning application of the rules must be made in accordance with the complaints procedure defined by USA KARATE. It must be submitted in writing on an approved form and signed by the official representative of the team or contestant(s).
- 11.5 The complainant must deposit a protest fee, in an amount as shall be established by USA KARATE, with the Tournament Director and a duplicate receipt shall be issued. The protest plus a copy of the receipt must be lodged with a member of the Referee Committee.
- 11.6 The protest must be submitted to a representative of the Referee Committee. In due course the Referee Committee shall review the circumstances leading to the protested decision. Having considered all the facts available, the Committee shall produce a report and shall be empowered to take such action as may be called for.
- 11.7 If the decision of the Referee Committee is to be appealed, the protest shall be reviewed by the Appeals Jury consisting of three senior referees appointed by the Referee Committee.

EXPLANATION:

1. *The protest must give the names of the contestant(s), the Referee Panel officiating, and the **precise details of what is being protested**. No general claims about overall standards shall be accepted as a legitimate protest. The burden of proving the validity of the protest lies with the complainant.*
2. *The protest shall be reviewed by the Referee Committee, and as part of this review the Referee Committee shall study the evidence submitted in support of the protest. The Referee Committee may also study videos and question officials in an effort to objectively examine the protest's validity.*
3. *If the protest is held by the Referee Committee to be valid, the appropriate action shall be taken. In addition, all such measures shall be taken to avoid a recurrence in future competitions. The Tournament Director shall refund the deposit paid.*
4. *If the protest is held by the Referee Committee to be invalid, it shall be rejected and the deposit is forfeited to USA KARATE.*

5. *Ensuing matches or bouts will not be delayed even if an official protest is being prepared. It is the responsibility of the Tatami Manager to ensure that the match has been conducted in accordance with the Rules of Competition.*
6. *In case of an administrative malfunction during a match in progress, the Coach may notify the Tatami Manager directly. In turn the Tatami Manager shall notify the Referee.*

ARTICLE 12: POWERS AND DUTIES

REFEREE COMMITTEE

- 12.1.0 The Referee Committee's powers and duties shall be as follows:
- 12.1.1 To ensure the correct preparation for each given tournament in consultation with the National Event Staff, with regard to, , match operation and supervision, safety precautions, etc.
- 12.1.2. To appoint and deploy the Tatami Managers to their respective areas and to act upon and take such action as may be required by the reports of the Tatami Managers.
- 12.1.3 To supervise and coordinate the overall performance of the refereeing officials.
- 12.1.4 To nominate substitute officials where such are required. The composition of a panel of officials may not be changed at the discretion of the Match Supervisor, Referee, or Judge.
- 12.1.5 To investigate and render judgment on matters of a technical nature that may arise during a given match and for which there are no stipulations in the rules.
- 12.1.6 To pass the final judgment on matters of a technical nature that may arise during a given match and for which there are no stipulations in the rules.

TATAMI MANAGERS

- 12.2.0 The Tatami Managers powers and duties shall be as follows:
- 12.2.1 To delegate, appoint, and supervise the Referees and Judges for all matches in areas under their control.
- 12.2.2 To oversee the performance of the Referees and Judges in their areas, and to ensure that the officials appointed are capable of the tasks allotted them.
- 12.2.3 To order the Referee to halt the match when the Match Supervisor signals a contravention of the Rules of Competition.

12.2.4 To prepare a daily written report on the performance of each official under their supervision, together with their recommendations, if any, to the Referee Committee.

REFEREES

12.3.0 The Referee's powers shall be as follows:

12.3.1 The Referee (Shushin) shall have the power to conduct matches including announcing the start, the suspension and the end of the match.

12.3.2 To award points based on decision of the judges.

12.3.3 To explain to the Tatami Manager, Referee Committee or Appeals Jury, if necessary, the basis for giving a judgment.

12.3.4 To impose penalties and to issue warnings before, during or after the bout.

12.3.5 To obtain and act upon the opinion(s) of the Judges.

12.3.6 To announce and start an extra bout when required in team matches.

12.3.7 To conduct voting (HANTEI) of the Referee Panel and announce the result.

12.3.8 To announce the winner.

12.3.9 The authority of the Referee is not confined to the competition area but also to all of its immediate perimeter.

12.3.10 The Referee shall give all commands and make all announcements.

12.3.11 When the Judges signal, the Referee must consider their opinions and render a judgment.

12.3.12 To request confirmation of the Judges' verdict in instances where there may, in the Referee's opinion, be grounds for the judges to re-evaluate their call for warning or penalty.

12.3.13 To stop the match when in the Referee's opinion, there has been a point scored, a foul committed, or to ensure the safety of the contestants.

12.3.14 To resolve ties.

JUDGES

12.4.0 The Judges' (FUKUSHIN) powers shall be as follows:

12.4.1 To signal point(s) scored, warnings and penalties.

12.4.2 To exercise their right to vote on any decision to be taken.

The Judges shall carefully observe the actions of the contestants and signal to the Referee an opinion in the following cases:

1. When a score is observed.
2. When a contestant has committed a prohibited act and/or technique(s).
3. When an injury, illness or inability of a contestant to continue is noticed.
4. When both or either of the contestants have moved out of the competition area (JOGAI).
5. In other cases when it is deemed necessary to call the attention of the Referee.

MATCH SUPERVISORS

12.5 The Match Supervisor (KANSA) will assist the Tatami Manager by overseeing the match or bout in progress. Should decisions of the Referee and/or Judges, not be in accordance with the Rules of Competition, the Match Supervisor will immediately raise the red flag and blow a whistle. The Tatami Manager will instruct the Referee to halt the match or bout and correct the irregularity. Records kept of the match shall become official records subject to the approval of the Match Supervisor. Before the start of each match or bout, the Match Supervisor will ensure that the contestants are wearing approved equipment.

SCORE SUPERVISORS

12.6 The score Supervisor shall keep a separate record of the scores awarded by the Referee and at the same time oversee the actions of the appointed timekeepers and scorekeepers.

EXPLANATION:

1. *When two or more Judges give the same signal, or indicate a score for the same competitor, the Referee will stop the bout and render the decision accordingly. Should the Referee fail to stop the bout the Match Supervisor will raise the red flag and blow his/her whistle.*
2. *When two or more Judges give the same signal, or indicate a score for the same competitor the Referee must stop the bout and announce the decision taken by the judges.*
3. *When the Referee decides to halt the bout for any other reason than a signal given by two, or more, of the judges he/she will call "YAME" at the same time use the required hand signal. The Judges will then signal their opinions and the Referee will render the decision for which there is agreement between two or more judges.*

4. *In the event that both contestants have a score, warning, or penalty indicated by two or more judges, both contestants will be awarded their respective points, warnings or penalties.*
5. *If one contestant has a score, warning, or penalty indicated by more than one judge and the score, warning or penalty is different between the judges, the lower score, warning or penalty, will be applied if there is not a majority for one level of score, warning or penalty.*
6. *If there is a majority, but dissent among the judges for one level of score, warning or penalty, the majority opinion will overrule the principle of applying the lowest score, warning or penalty.*
7. *At HANTEI the four Judges and the referee each have one vote.*
8. *The role of the Match Supervisor is to ensure that the match or bout is conducted in accordance with the Rules of Competition. He/she is not there as an additional Judge. He/she has no vote, nor any authority in matters of judgment, such as whether a score was valid or if JOGAI occurred. His/her sole responsibility is in matters of procedure.*
9. *In the event that the Referee does not hear the time-up bell, the Score Supervisor will blow his/her whistle.*
10. *When explaining the basis for a judgment after the match, the judges may speak to the Tatami Manager, the Referee Committee, or the Appeals Jury. They will explain themselves to no one else.*
11. *The good Referee will not halt the smooth flow of the bout unless it is necessary to do so. All halts with no outcome, such as “Yame – Torimassen” must be avoided.*

ARTICLE 13: STARTING, SUSPENDING AND ENDING OF MATCHES

- 13.1 The terms and gestures to be used by the Referee and judges in the operation of a match shall be as specified in Appendices 1, 2, and 3.
- 13.2 The Referee and Judges shall take up their prescribed positions and following an exchange of bows between the contestants, the Referee will announce “SHOBU HAJIME” and the bout will commence.
- 13.3 The Referee will stop the bout by announcing “YAME”. If necessary, the Referee will order the contestants to take up their original positions (MOTO NO ICHI).
- 13.4 The Referee returns to the starting position and the Judges will indicate their opinions by means of a signal. In the case of a score to be awarded the Referee identifies the contestant (AKA or AO), the area attacked, and then awards the relevant score using the

prescribed gesture. The Referee then restarts the bout by calling “TSUZUKETE HAJIME.”

- 13.5 In USA Team Trial and International Kumite Divisions, when a contestant has established a clear lead of eight points during a bout, the Referee shall call “YAME” and order the contestants back to their starting lines as he/she returns to the starting position. The winner is then indicated by the Referee raising a hand on the side of the winner and declaring “AO/AKA NO KACHI”. The bout is ended at this point. In all other Kumite divisions, the first contestant to accumulate eight points shall be declared the winner.
- 13.6 When time is up, the contestant who has the most point is declared the winner, indicated by the Referee raising a hand on the side of the winner, and declaring “AKA/AO NO KACHI”. The bout is ended at this point.
- 13.7 In the event of a tied vote at the end of an inconclusive bout the Referee Panel (Referee and four Judges) will decide the match by HANTEI.
- 13.8 When faced with the following situations, the referee shall call “YAME” and halt the bout temporarily:
 1. When either or both contestants are out of the match area.
 2. When a Referee orders a contestant to adjust the karate-gi or protective equipment.
 3. When a contestant has contravened the rules.
 4. When the Referee considers that one or both of the contestants cannot continue with the bout due to injuries, illness or other causes. Heeding the tournament doctor’s opinion, the Referee shall decide whether the bout should be continued.
 5. When a contestant seizes the opponent and does not perform an immediate technique or throw within two seconds.
 6. When one or both contestants fall or are thrown and no effective techniques are made within two seconds.
 7. When one or both contestants are off their feet following a fall or attempted throw and begin to wrestle.
 8. When both competitors seize or clinch with each other without attempting a throw or technique within two seconds.
 9. When both competitors stand chest to chest without attempting a throw or other technique within two seconds.
 10. When a score or foul is indicated by two or more judges for the same competitor.
 11. When in the opinion of the Referee, there has been a point scored or foul committed – or the situation calls for halting the match for safety reasons.
 12. When requested to do so by the Tatami Manager.

EXPLANATION:

1. *When beginning a bout, the Referee first calls the contestants to their starting lines. If a contestant enters the area prematurely they must be motioned off. The contestants must bow properly to each other – a quick nod is both discourteous*

and insufficient. The Referee can call for a bow where none is volunteered by motioning as shown in Appendix 2 of the Rules of Kumite Competition.

2. *When restarting the bout, the Referee should check that both contestants are on their lines and properly composed. Contestants jumping up and down or otherwise fidgeting must be stilled before combat can recommence. The Referee must restart the bout with the minimum of delay.*
3. *Contestants will bow to each other at the start and end of each bout.*

ARTICLE 14: MODIFICATIONS

- 14.0 Only the USA KARATE Referee Committee, with the approval of the Board of Directors, may alter or modify these rules.
-

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USA KARATE
1631 Mesa Avenue, Suite A-1
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
(719)477-6925

APPENDIX 1: THE TERMINOLOGY		
SHOBU HAJIME	Start the Match or Bout	After the announcement, the Referee takes a step back.
ATOSHI BARAKU	A little more time left	An audible signal will be given by the timekeeper 10 seconds before the actual end of the bout and the Referee will announce “Atoshi Baraku.”
YAME	Stop	Interruption, or end of the bout. As he makes the announcement, the Referee makes a downward chopping motion with his/her hand.
MOTO NO ICHI	Original position	Contestants and Referee return to their starting positions.
TSUZUKETE	Fight on	Resumption of fighting ordered when an unauthorized interruption occurs.
TSUZUKETE HAJIME	Resume fighting – Begin	The Referee stands in a forward stance. As he/she says “Tsuzukete” he extends his arms, palms outwards towards the contestants. As he/she says “Hajime” he turns the palms and brings them rapidly towards one another, at the same time stepping back.
SHUGO	Judges Called	The Referee calls the judges at the end of the match or bout, or to recommend SHIKKAKU.
HANTEI	Decision	Referee calls for a decision at the end of an inconclusive match. After a short blast of the whistle, the Judges render their vote by flag signal and the Referee indicates the outcome by raising his/her arm.
HIKIWAKE	Draw	In case of a tied bout, the Referee crosses his/her arms, then extends them with the palms showing to the front.
TORIMASEN	No score or foul rendered by the judges	The Referee crosses his/her arms then makes a cutting motion, palms downward.
AKA (AO) NO KACHI	Red (Blue) wins	The Referee obliquely raises his/her arm on the side of the winner.
AKA (AO) IPPON	Red (Blue) scores three points	The Referee raises his arm up at 45 degrees on the side of the scorer.
AKA (AO) WAZA-ARI	Red (Blue) scores two points	The Referee extends his/her arm at shoulder level on the side of the scorer.
AKA (AO) YUKO	Red (Blue) scores one point	The Referee extends his/her arm downward at 45 degrees on the side of the scorer.
CHUKOKU	Warning	The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense.

KEIKOKU	Warning	The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his/her finger downwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender.
HANSOKU CHUI	Warning of disqualification	The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his/her index finger horizontally in the direction of the offender.
HANSOKU	Disqualification	The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his index finger upwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender, and announces a win for the opponent.
JOGAI	Exit from the match area not caused by the opponent	The Referee points his index finger on the side of the offender to indicate to the Judges that the contestant has moved out of the area.
SHIKKAKU	Disqualification "Leave the Area"	The Referee points first upwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender then motions out and behind with the announcement "AKA (AO) SHIKKAKU!" He/she then announces a win for the opponent.
KIKEN	Renunciation	The Referee points downwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the contestant's starting line.
MUBOBI	Self Endangerment	The Referee touches his/her face then turning his/her hand edge forward moves it back and forth to indicate to the Judges that the contestant endangered himself.

APPENDIX 2: ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GESTURES OF THE REFEREE

SHOMEN-NI-REI



The Referee extends his arms to the front.

OTAGAI-NI-REI



The Referee motions to the contestants to bow to each other.

SHOBU HAJIME



“Start the Match”

After the announcement, the Referee takes a step back.

YAME



“Stop”

Interruption or end of a match or bout. As the Referee makes the announcement, s/he makes a downward chopping motion with his hand.

TSUZUKETE HAJIME



“Resume Fighting”

AS the Referee says, *“Tszukete”*, and standing in a forward stance, the Referee extends his/her arms outward with palms facing the contestants. As he/she says *“Hajime”* he/she turns the palms and brings them rapidly towards one another at the same time stepping back.

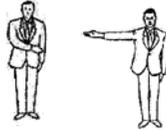
YUKO



One (1) Point

The Referee extends his/her arm downward at 45 degrees on the side of the scorer.

WAZA-ARI



Two (2) Points

The Referee extends his/her arm at shoulder level on the side of the scorer.

IPPON



Three (3) Points

The Referee extends his/her arm upward at 45 degrees on the side of the scorer.

CANCEL LAST DECISION



When an award or penalty has been given in error

Referee turns towards the contestant, announces “AKA” or “AO”, crosses his/her arms, then makes a cutting motion, palms downward, to indicate that the last decision has been cancelled.

NO KACHI



Win

At the end of the match or bout, announcing “AKA” (or AO) *No Kachi*” the Referee extends his/her arm upward at 45 degrees on the side of the winner.

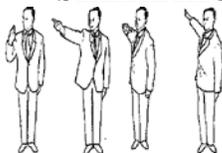
KIKEN



“Renunciation”

The Referee points with the index finger towards the renouncing contestant’s line, then announces a win to the opponent.

SHIKKAKU



“Disqualification, Leave the Area”

The Referee points first upwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender, then motions out and behind with the announcement *“AKA (AO) SHIKKAKU!”*. The Referee then announces a win for the opponent.

HIKIWAKE



“Draw”

(Only applicable to team matches)

When time is up and scores are equal, or no scores have been awarded the Referee crosses his arms then extends them with the palms showing to the front.

CATEGORY 1 OFFENSE

(used without further signal for CHUKOKU)



The Referee crosses his/her open hands with the edge of one wrist on the edge of the other at chest level.

CATEGORY 2 OFFENSE

(used without further signal for CHUKOKU)



The Referee points with a bent arm at the face of the offender.

KEIKOKU



“Warning”

The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his index finger downwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender.

HANSOKU CHUI



“Warning of Disqualification”

The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his index finger horizontally in the direction of the offender.

HANSOKU



“Disqualification”

The Referee indicates a Category 1 or 2 offense then points with his/her index finger upwards at 45 degrees in the direction of the offender, and awards a win to the opponent.

PASSIVITY



The Referee rotates his/her fist around each other in front of his chest to indicate a Category 2 offense.

TORIMASEN



“No score, warning or penalty”

The Referee crosses his/her arms then makes a cutting motion, palms downward.

TECHNIQUE BLOCKED OR OFF TARGET



The Referee places an open hand over the other arm to indicate to the Judges that the technique was blocked or hit a non-scoring area.

TECHNIQUE MISSED



The Referee moves the clenched fist across the body to indicate to the Judges that the technique missed or glanced off the scoring area.

EXCESSIVE CONTACT



The Referee indicates to the Judges that there has been excessive contact or other Category 1 offense.

JOGAI



“Exit from the Match Area”

The Referee indicates an exit to the Judges by pointing with the index finger to the match area boundary on the side of the offender.

MUBOBI



(Self Endangerment)

The Referee touches his/her face then turning the hand edge forward, moves it back and forth to indicate to the Judges that the contestant has endangered himself.

AVOIDING COMBAT



The Referee makes a circling motion with the down turned index finger to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

PUSHING, SEIZING OR STANDING CHEST TO CHEST WITHOUT ATTEMPTING A TECHNIQUE WITHIN 2 SECONDS



The Referee holds both clenched fists at shoulder level or makes a pushing motion with both open hands to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

FEIGNING OR EXAGGERATING INJURY



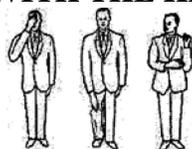
The Referee holds both hands to his/her face to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

DANGEROUS AND UNCONTROLLED ATTACKS



The Referee brings his clenched fist past the side of his head to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

SIMULATED ATTACKS WITH THE HEAD KNEES OR ELBOWS



The Referee touches his/her forehead, knee, or elbow with the open hand to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

TALKING TO OR GOADING THE OPPONENT AND DISCOURTEOUS BEHAVIOR



The Referee places his index finger to his/her lips to indicate to the Judges a Category 2 offense.

SHUGO



“Judges Called”

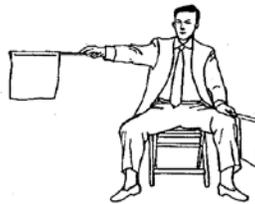
The Referee calls the Judges at the end of the match or bout or to recommend SHIKKAKU.

YUKO



One (1) Point

WAZA-ARI



Two (2) Points

IPPON



Three (3) Points

FAULT



Warning of a foul.

The appropriate flag is waved in a circle, then a Category 1 or 2 signal is made.

CATEGORY 1 OFFENSE



The flags are crossed and extended with the arms straight.

CATEGORY 2 OFFENSE



The Judge points the flag with the arm bent.

JOGAI



Tapping the floor with the flag.

KEIKOKU



HANSOKU CHUI



HANSOKU



PASSIVITY



The flags are rotated around each other in front of the chest.

APPENDIX 4:
SCOREKEEPERS' MARKS

● [≡] ○	IPPON	Three Points Score
○ [≡] ○	WAZA-ARI	Two Points Score
○	YUKO	One Point Score
□	KACHI	Winner
X	MAKE	Loser
▲	HIKIWAKE	Draw (Tie)
C1C	Category 1 Foul - CHUKOKU	Warning
C1K	Category 1 Foul – KEIKOKU	Warning
C1HC	Category 1 Foul – HANSOKU CHUI	Warning of Disqualification
C1H	Category 1 Foul – HANSOKU	Disqualification
C2C	Category 2 Foul - CHUKOKU	Warning
C2K	Category 2 Foul – KEIKOKU	Warning
C2HC	Category 2 Foul – HANSOKU CHUI	Warning of Disqualification
C2H	Category 2 Foul – HANSOKU	Disqualification
KK	KIKEN	Forfeiture
S	SHIKKAKU	Serious Disqualification

APPENDIX 5: OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR REFEREES AND JUDGES

This Appendix is intended to give assistance to Referees and Judges where there may be no obvious guidance in the Rules or Explanation.

EXCESSIVE CONTACT

When a contestant makes a scoring technique immediately followed by another which makes excessive contact the Judges do not award the score and instead issues a Category 1 warning or penalty (unless it is the recipient's own fault).

EXCESSIVE CONTACT AND EXAGGERATION

Karate is a Martial Art and high standard of behavior is expected from competitors. It is unacceptable that competitors, who receive a light contact, rub their faces, walk or stagger around, bend over, pull or spit out their gum-shields, and otherwise pretend that the contact is severe in order to convince the Referee to give a higher warning or penalty to the opponent. This kind of behavior is cheating and demeans our sport; it should be quickly warned or penalized.

When a competitor makes pretense of having received an excessive contact and the Judges decides instead that the technique in question was controlled, satisfying all six scoring criteria, then a score will be awarded and a Category 2 warning or penalty for feigning or exaggeration will be issued. (Always taking into account that severe cases of feigning injury may warrant a Shikakku).

More difficult situations occur when a competitor receives a stronger contact and falls to the floor, sometimes standing up (in order to stop the 10 second clock) and then falling down again. The Referees and Judges must remember that a jodan kick is worth 3 points and as the number of teams and individual competitors receiving financial reward for winning medals increases, the temptation to stoop to unethical behavior becomes stronger. It is important to recognize this and apply the appropriate warnings or penalties.

MUBOBI

A warning or penalty for Mubobi is given when a competitor is hit or injured through his or her own fault or negligence. This may be caused by turning their back on the opponent, attacking with a long, low gyaku tsuki chudan without regard for the opponent's jodan counter attack, stopping fighting before the referee calls "Yame", dropping their guard or concentration and repeated failure or refusal to block the opponent's attacks. Explanation 18 of Article 8 states:

Should the offender receive an excessive contact and/or sustain an injury the Referee will issue a Category 2 warning or penalty and decline to give a warning or penalty to the opponent.

A contestant who is hit through their own fault and exaggerates the effect in order to mislead the Judges may receive a warning or penalty for Mubobi as well as an additional warning or penalty for exaggeration, since two offenses have been committed.

It should be noted that there are no circumstances in which a technique that has made excessive contact can be given a score.

ZANSHIN

Zanshin is described as a state of continued commitment in which the contestant maintains total concentration, observation, and awareness of the opponent's potentiality to counter-attack. Some contestant after delivering a technique will turn their body partially away from the opponent but are still watching and ready to continue the action. The Judges must be able to distinguish between this continued state of readiness and one where the contestant has turned away, dropped their guard and concentration, and in effect has ceased fighting.

CATCHING A CHUDAN KICK

Should the Judges award a score when the contestant delivers a chudan kick and the opponent then catches the leg before it can be withdrawn?

Provided that the kicking contestant maintains ZANSHIN there is no reason why this technique cannot score provided that it contains all six of the scoring criteria. Theoretically, in a real fight scenario, a full power kick would be deemed to have disabled the opponent and therefore the leg would not be grabbed. Appropriate control, the target area, and satisfaction of all six criteria, are the deciding factors as to whether any technique can be awarded a score or not.

THROWING AND INJURIES

Since grabbing hold of the opponent and throwing is allowed under certain conditions it is incumbent upon all coaches to ensure that their competitors are trained in and are able to use break-fall/safe landing techniques.

A competitor who attempts a throwing technique must comply with the conditions imposed in the Explanations in Article 6 and Article 8. If a competitor throws their opponent in full compliance with the stated requirements and an injury results due to the opponent failing to make a proper break-fall land on an extended arm or elbow, or holds onto the thrower and pulls them down on top of themselves.

A potentially dangerous situation occurs when a contestant grabs both legs to throw the opponent onto their back or when a contestant ducks down a bodily lifts the opponent up before throwing him. The Article 8, Explanation 9 (2) states: .. and the opponent must be held onto throughout so that a safe landing can be made. Since it is difficult to ensure a safe landing, throws such as this fall into the prohibited category.

SCORING ON A FALLEN OPPONENT

When a contestant is thrown or swept off their feet and is scored upon when their torso (upper body or trunk) is on the tatami then the score will be IPPON.

Should the contestant be hit by a technique while still actually falling, the judges will take into account the direction of falling since if the contestant is falling away from the technique it will be considered ineffective and will not be scored.

Should the contestant's upper body not be on the tatami when an effective, scoring technique is made, then the points awarded will be as stated in Article 6. therefore the point(s) awarded when a contestant is scored upon in the act of falling, sitting kneeling, standing or jumping in the air, and all situations where their torso is not on the tatami will be as follows:

1. Jodan kicks, three points (IPPON)
2. Chudan kicks, two points (WAZA-ARI)
3. Tsuki and Uchi, one point (YUKO)

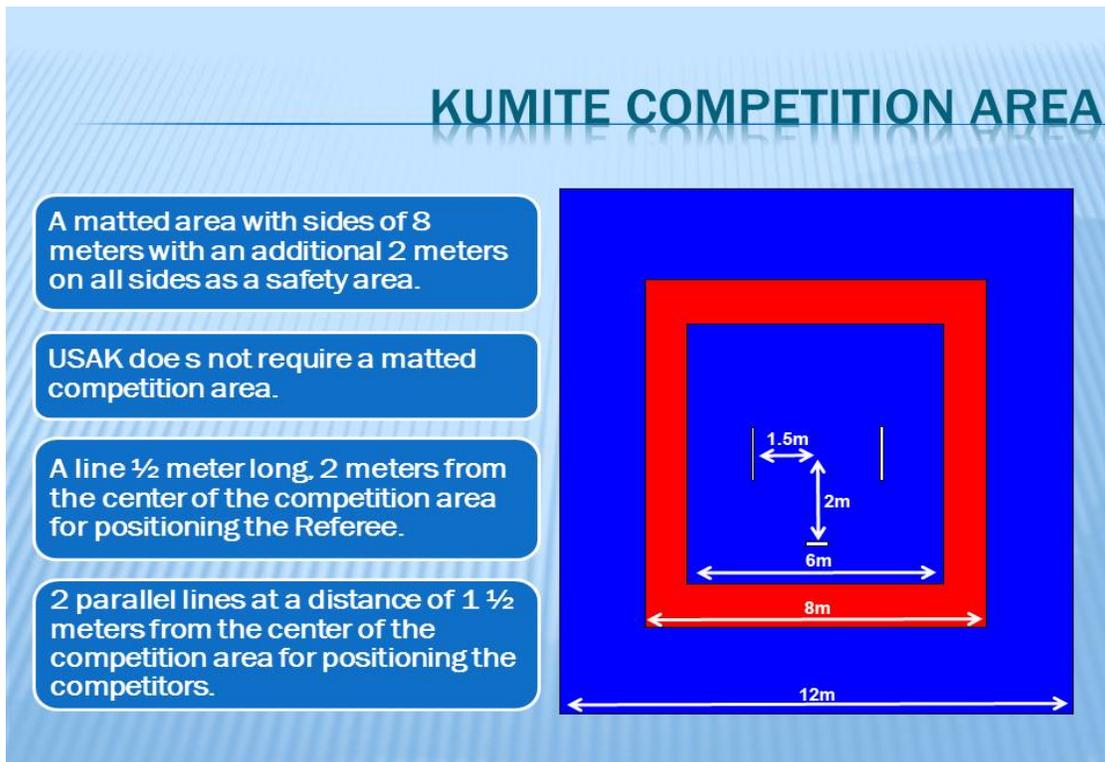
JOGAI

Judges must remember that when indicating Jogai they are required to tap the floor with the appropriate flag. As the Referee stops the bout and returns to his position they will signal their opinion indicating a Category 2 infringement.

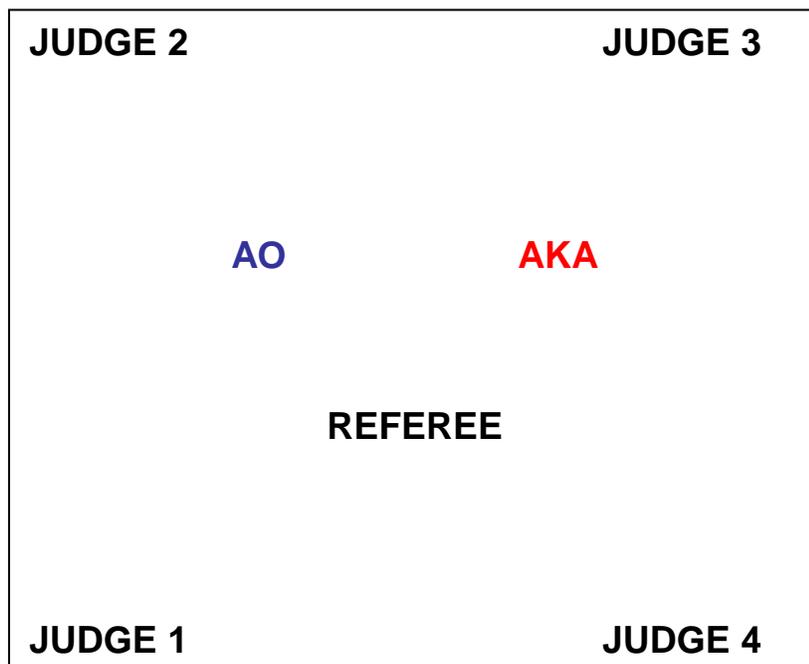
INDICATION OF RULES INFRINGEMENTS

For Category 1 infringements Judges should first circle with the appropriate colored flag then extend the crossed flags to their left for AKA, putting the red flag in front, and to their right for AO, putting the blue flag in front. This enables the Referee to clearly see which competitor is regarded as the offender.

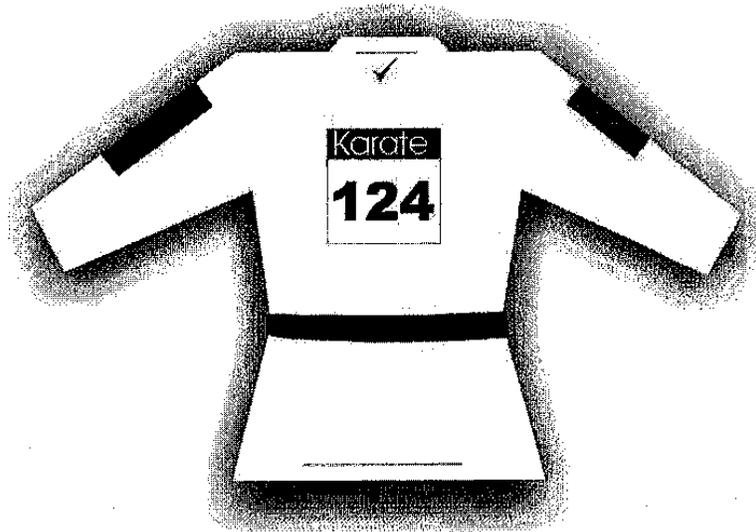
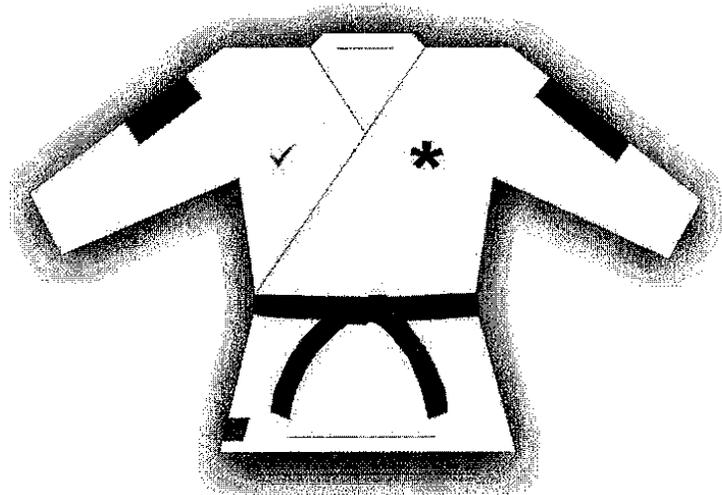
APPENDIX 6: LAYOUT OF THE KUMITE COMPETITION AREA



* **SAFETY AREA:** USA KARATE Signature Events require a minimum of one (1) meter safety area on all sides of the competition area



APPENDIX 7: THE KARATE-GI



ADVERTISING SPACE FOR THE WKF OF 20 x 10 cm



ADVERTISING SPACE FOR THE N.F. OF 15 x 10 cm



BACK RESERVED FOR THE ORGANISING FEDERATION OF 30 x 30 cm



EMBLEM OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF 12 x 8 cm



SPACES FOR THE MANUFACTURERS TRADEMARK OF 5 x 4 cm

APPENDIX 8: WKF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS: CONDITIONS & CATEGORIES

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (updated June 2010)					
WORLD CADET, JUNIOR & UNDER 21 CHAMPIONSHIPS		WORLD SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS			
GENERAL		GENERAL			
CATEGORIES		CATEGORIES			
UNDER 21	CADET	JUNIOR	Individual Kata (age +16)		
<p>Individual Kata (age 18, 19, 20)</p> <p>Male Female</p> <p>Male Individual Kumite (ages 18, 19, 20)</p> <p>-68 Kg -78 Kg +78 Kg</p> <p>Female Individual Kumite (ages 18, 19, 20)</p> <p>-53 Kg -60 Kg +60 Kg</p>	<p>Individual Kata (age 14, 15)</p> <p>Male Female</p> <p>Male Individual Kumite (ages 14, 15)</p> <p>-52 Kg -57 Kg -63 Kg -70 Kg +70 Kg</p> <p>Female Individual Kumite (ages 14, 15)</p> <p>-47 Kg -54 Kg +54 Kg</p>	<p>Individual Kata (age 16, 17)</p> <p>Male Female</p> <p>Male Individual Kumite (ages 16, 17)</p> <p>-55 Kg -61 Kg -68 Kg -76Kg +76 Kg</p> <p>Female Individual Kumite (ages 16, 17)</p> <p>-48 Kg -53 Kg -59 Kg +59 Kg</p> <p>Team Kata (ages 14-17)</p> <p>Male Female</p>	<p>Male Female</p> <p>Male Individual Kumite (age +18)</p> <p>-60 Kg -67 Kg -75 Kg -84 Kg +84 Kg</p> <p>Female Individual Kumite (age +18)</p> <p>-50 Kg -55 Kg -61 Kg -68 Kg +68 Kg</p> <p>Team Kata (age +16)</p> <p>Male Female</p> <p>Team Kumite (age +18)</p> <p>Male Female</p>		
<p>* The competition will last for 4 days.</p> <p>* Each National Federation can register one (1) competitor per category.</p> <p>* At the draw, the four finalists of the previous Championships will be split as much as possible. (The competitors in the case of individual events and the National Federations in the case of the team events).</p> <p>* The Championships will be displayed in five (5) or six (6) competition areas, depending on the stadium's features.</p> <p>* Kumite bouts duration will be in all cases 2 minutes for Cadet and Junior and for female under 21 and 3 minutes for male under 21.</p> <p>* Bunkai in Kata team (male & female) to be performed in the final and bouts when the round is to determine the winner of a medal.</p>		<p>* The competition will last for five (5) days.</p> <p>* Team Kumite eliminations will be held after the individual eliminations.</p> <p>* Each National Federation can register one (1) competitor per category.</p> <p>* At the draw, the four finalists of the previous Championships will be split as much as possible. (The competitors in the case of individual events and the National Federation in the case of team events).</p> <p>* The Championships will be displayed in four (4) competition areas in line (3 days) and in one (1) elevated area for the medal bouts and the finals (2 days).</p> <p>* For catering service of referees and officials, specific areas and timetables must be provided.</p> <p>* Kumite bouts duration will be 3 minutes for male and 2 minutes for female categories, except for individual finals and individual bouts when the round is to determine the winner of a medal, whose duration will be 4 minutes for male and 3 minutes for female categories.</p> <p>* Bunkai in Kata team (male & female) to be performed in the final and bouts when the round is to determine the winner of a medal.</p>			
TOTAL:		8	10	13	16