



Official Competition Rulebook

Weapons, Forms & Point Fighting

"To be the benchmark for excellence in Sport Karate Competition."

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Section 1: Divisions & Age

1A — Age Determination

An athlete's age division is determined by their age on June 30 of the current competition year. Competitors whose birthday falls on or before June 30 must compete in the age division they will be in on that date. If an athlete competes in the wrong age division, any points accumulated will be nullified. Competitors must be able to provide a birth certificate upon request.

1B — Experience Levels

Two factors determine an athlete's experience level: years of training and belt color. School instructors must register their belt colors and corresponding experience levels with USA Sport Karate. In the event of a belt rank question, years of training takes precedence over belt color.

The competitor must always compete at the highest belt rank they have achieved, even if they have changed styles. The rank achieved at their school determines their starting competition level, even at their first event.

Whatever belt rank an athlete holds on November 30 is the rank they must compete at for the entire year. Entering the correct experience and age division is the responsibility of the athlete and/or their coach.

Any athlete who competes at the wrong experience level will be moved to the correct division and will forfeit points accumulated to that point. Any athlete who knowingly enters the wrong division may be disqualified from all future competitions. USA Sport Karate reserves the right to move competitors into their proper division at any time.

Black Belt Rule: Competitors with a Black Belt in any style are required to compete in the Black Belt division, even if they have started a new style. Black Belt takes precedence over all other ranks in competition.

1C — Competition Belt Colors

The following belt colors are used during USA Sport Karate events. These do not affect belt colors used within your school. Lower belt colors are permitted in higher experience levels. Higher belt colors are not permitted in lower experience levels.

Experience Level	Training Duration	Belt Colors
First Timer	First competition experience	Any Beginner Belt Color
Beginner	1 year or less	White, Yellow, Orange, Gold
Intermediate	Up to 2 years	Green, Blue, Purple

Advanced	Over 2 years	Red, Brown Belt or Sash
Black Belt	Determined by belt color only	Black Belt

1D — First Timers

First Timer is an introductory experience level available to athletes 13 years old and under who are competing for the first time. First Timer divisions are offered in two events only:

- Forms: Athletes may perform any form of their choosing.
- Point Fighting: Athletes receive one match. Opponents are matched as closely as possible for safety.
- All First Timer athletes receive the same participation award regardless of placing. No rankings points are awarded in First Timer divisions.

1E — Age Divisions by Event Type

Age divisions vary by event type. The following tables define the official age brackets for each division category.

Traditional Weapons & Traditional Forms

Age Division
5 & Under
6 - 7
8 - 9
10 - 11
12 - 13
14 - 17
18 - 29 (Adult)
30 - 39 (Adult)
40 & Over (Adult)

Extreme Weapons, Creative Weapons, Extreme Forms & Creative Forms

Age Division
9 & Under
10 - 13
14 - 17
18 & Over (Adult)

Point Fighting

Age Division	Notes
5 & Under	All Belts
6 - 7	Beginner, Intermediate
8 - 9	Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced
10 - 11	Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Black Belt
12 - 13	Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Black Belt
14 - 15	Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Black Belt
16 - 17	Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, Black Belt
18 - 29 (Under Black Belt Adult)	
30 & Over (Under Black Belt Adult)	
18 - 20 (Black Belt Adult)	
21 - 29 (Black Belt Adult)	Weight classes apply — see Section 3B
30 - 39 (Black Belt Adult)	Weight classes apply — see Section 3B
40 & Over (Black Belt Adult)	Weight classes apply — see Section 3B

1F — Division Size

USA Sport Karate reserves the right to split divisions with more than 15 athletes in Weapons and Forms, though this is not mandatory. Splits may occur with fewer athletes to ensure fair and balanced competition. Splits may be made based on age, gender, height, school affiliation, or other relevant factors.

Section 2: Weapons & Forms Rules

2A — General Protocol

- Athletes are only required to bow when entering and exiting the performance area.
- Scoring occurs after all athletes in the division have performed.
- Athletes have 3 minutes to enter, perform, and complete their form. Time begins when the athlete enters the performance area and stops when they finish and bow.
- The rules apply as soon as the athlete enters the performance area.
- Weapons may not strike the floor at any time.

2B — Scoring

After all athletes have performed, they will stand and line up in their original order of performance. Athletes will step forward one at a time to receive their score. Judges award scores as follows:

Score	Place
9.99	1st Place
9.98	2nd Place
9.97	3rd Place
9.96	4th Place
9.91 - 9.95	All other competitors (multiples allowed)

Each judge may award each score value only once per division. If there are only 2 athletes, a show of hands will determine the winner. True ties may also be resolved by a show of hands.

2C — Deductions

Penalties are assessed as 1-point deductions from the athlete's total score as part of the scoring procedure. The following deductions apply across all divisions:

- Exceeding the 3-minute time limit
- Any extreme loss of balance resulting in a fall or an unintentional body part touching the floor
- Restarting a form or performance

Traditional Weapons Deductions

Weapons-Related:

- Dropping the weapon
- Striking the floor with the weapon
- Releasing the weapon

- Loss of control of the weapon
- Use of a non-traditional weapon

Movement-Related:

- Inversions
- Any technique involving more than a 360-degree turn
- More than the allowed number of kicks without lowering the foot (varies by experience level)
- Stepping outside the performance area

Traditional Forms Deductions

- Inversions
- Any technique involving more than a 360-degree turn
- More than the allowed number of kicks without lowering the foot (varies by experience level)
- Stepping outside the performance area

Extreme Weapons Deductions

Weapons-Related:

- Dropping the weapon
- Striking the floor with the weapon
- No release of the weapon (at least one full release is required)
- Loss of control of the weapon
- Movements performed without a weapon in hand

Movement-Related:

- No inversion (at least one full inversion is required)

Extreme Forms Deductions

Same as Extreme Weapons deductions, excluding weapons-related items.

- No inversion (at least one full inversion is required)

2D — Division Definitions

Traditional Weapons

A pre-arranged series of movements using a clearly identified traditional weapon. The weapon may not strike the floor at any time. Judging is based on manipulation and control of the weapon.

- No music or gymnastics allowed.
- No overly creative weapon manipulation.
- Weapons must be traditional in construction.
- Techniques may not involve more than a 360-degree turn.
- Beginners: no more than 1 kick in any direction without touching the foot to the floor.

- Intermediates: no more than 2 kicks without touching the foot to the floor.
- Advanced & Black Belt: up to 3 kicks before touching the foot to the floor.

Approved Traditional Weapons:

Weapon	Construction Requirements
Bo	Natural wood only. No balsa, graphite, or lightweight materials. Natural wood color only. Height must be no less than 6 inches below or above the athlete's height.
Kama	Handle must be natural wood. No metal protrusions or holes in blade.
Nunchaku	Natural wood construction with cord or chain only.
Sai	Solid metal construction. No aluminum or lightweight composites. Must extend to the elbow at minimum.
Japanese Sword	Solid metal. Must have clearly defined separate blade, handle, blade guard, and sheath.

Other weapons may be disallowed at USA Sport Karate's discretion. USASK reserves the right to move any athlete using non-conforming weapons into a different division.

Extreme Weapons

A pre-arranged series of movements using a clearly identified weapon. Multiple weapon types may be used. A weapon must always be in the athlete's hands, except for at least one full release. The form must include at least one full inversion where both legs go over the head. A forward or backward roll is not considered an inversion. All movements and gymnastics are allowed.

- Music is optional. Competitors must bring their own device and music. No electrical power is guaranteed.
- USA Sport Karate reserves the right to disallow music containing profanity, violence, or inappropriate content.

Creative Weapons

A pre-arranged series of movements using a clearly identified weapon. Judging is based on use, manipulation, and control of the weapon. Lightweight competition weapons are allowed. Creative weapon manipulation is permitted.

- At least one release of the weapon is required.
- No music allowed.
- Techniques may not involve more than a 360-degree turn.
- No inversions allowed.

CMX Weapons

CMX is a combined Creative and Extreme division. It is used in place of separate Creative and Extreme divisions where applicable.

- Music is optional.
- Inversions are allowed but not required.

- Acrobatics are allowed.
- Moves greater than 360 degrees are allowed but not required.
- At least one full release of the weapon is required.

Traditional Forms

A pre-arranged series of empty-handed movements performed without music. Gymnastics, acrobatics, splits, and freestyle movements are not allowed. Forward and backward rolls are permitted.

- Techniques may not involve more than a 360-degree turn.
- Beginners: no more than 1 kick without touching the foot to the floor.
- Intermediates: no more than 2 kicks without touching the foot to the floor.
- Advanced & Black Belt: up to 3 kicks before touching the foot to the floor.
- Athletes must remain within the performance area throughout their form.

Extreme Forms

A pre-arranged series of empty-handed movements that may include music, gymnastics, acrobatics, splits, or freestyle movements. The form must include at least one full inversion where both legs go over the head. Forward and backward rolls are not considered inversions.

- Music is optional. Competitors must bring their own device and music. No electrical power is guaranteed.
- Athletes are allowed to step outside the performance area.
- USA Sport Karate reserves the right to disallow music containing profanity, violence, or inappropriate content.

Creative Forms

A pre-arranged series of freestyle empty-handed movements. No music is allowed. Techniques may not involve more than a 360-degree turn. No inversions are allowed. Athletes may step outside the performance area.

CMX Forms

CMX is a combined Creative and Extreme division. It is used in place of separate Creative and Extreme divisions where applicable.

- Music is optional.
- Inversions are allowed but not required.
- Acrobatics are allowed.
- Moves greater than 360 degrees are allowed but not required.

2E — Arbitration (Weapons & Forms)

Coaches and athletes have the right to request a review of scoring or penalties. The following procedures apply:

Additional Errors:

If an error is discovered before awards are given, the paperwork will be corrected and proper awards issued. If awards have already been given and competitors have left the ring, competitors will be called to the award table and given their proper awards. Only higher place awards will be re-issued.

Improper Penalty:

If a penalty was incorrectly assessed, the deduction will be added back into the total and the correct award will be given. If a penalty was applicable but not assessed, the deduction will be applied to the competitor's total.

Requesting a Review:

Either the coach or the athlete may respectfully request a review. The request must be made before the division's awards are finalized. The USA Sport Karate Coordinator serves as the final arbitrator. All decisions are final once rendered.

Section 3: Point Fighting Rules

3A — Required Equipment

All fighters must be dressed in a proper uniform representing their school or team and must wear their proper belt indicating their experience level.

The following safety equipment is required for all point fighting divisions:

- Mouthpiece
- Headgear
- Hand pads
- Foot pads
- Elbow pads
- Males must also wear groin protection

The following equipment is optional but strongly recommended:

- Face shields (highly recommended)
- Chest protectors

Equipment Standards:

- WAKO-approved fighting gear is recommended. The minimum accepted standard is vinyl foam-dipped type gear (e.g., Macho, Century).
- Enclosed gloves are allowed.
- All equipment must be in good condition. Taped or torn equipment is not allowed.
- Training shoes, sneakers, cloth gear, boxing gloves, or gloves with individually articulated fingers are not allowed.
- Any competitor without proper equipment will not be allowed to compete.
- USA Sport Karate reserves the right to disallow any equipment deemed unsafe.

3B — Divisions

Junior divisions (17 and under) are separated by age only. Adult under-black-belt divisions are separated by age. Adult Black Belt divisions are separated by age and weight class. Weight classes for Adult Black Belt divisions are to be determined and announced per event.

3C — Ring Officials

Each ring will have 3 officials: 1 Center Referee and 2 Corner Judges.

Center Referee Procedure:

Step	Action
1	Review bullet points with fighters and their coaches.

2	Confirm the bracket has been shuffled.
3	Call the first two fighters and place them according to the screen.
4	Verify the correct fighters are on the correct sides.
5	Confirm the scorekeeper and referees are ready.
6	Ask fighters to bow, give the ready signal, and call Fight.
7	Call Stop when a point, violation, or timeout occurs.
8	Call Call — all referees should have their signals ready.
9	If 2 or more judges confirm a point, call the number of points and point to the awarded fighter. For violations, indicate the violation and award the point to the opposing fighter.
10	Continue until time expires, a 10-point spread is reached, 3 penalty points are accumulated, or a DQ occurs.
11	In the event of a tie, the next point scored wins the match.

Corner Referee Procedure:

- Corner Referees line up on each corner opposite the Center Referee.
- Corner Referees should move around the ring to maintain proper positioning.
- When a Corner Referee sees a point or penalty, they yell CALL.
- When the Center Referee stops the match, Corner Referees use the proper hand signal to indicate a point, penalty, or no call.
- If a Corner Referee has a question, they may request a private conference with the Center Referee using the proper hand signal.

3D — Scoring

A point is defined as a controlled legal technique, executed to a legal target area, making light contact. Punches must show a minimum extension and 3-inch retraction.

Technique	Points
All punches	1
Kicks to body	1
Jumping kick to body (must be airborne on contact)	2
Kick to head	2
Jumping kick to head	3

- A majority of judges must confirm a point for it to be awarded.
- Double elimination matches: 90 seconds. Single elimination matches: 2 minutes.
- The competitor with the most points at the end of regulation wins.
- If a 10-point spread is reached at any time, the match ends.
- In the event of a tie with no warnings, the next point scored wins the match.

3E — Open Rank Point Fighting

Open Rank Point Fighting follows the same rules and penalties as standard Point Fighting with the following exceptions:

- No belts are worn. The top must be tucked in to designate the waist.
- Single elimination format only.
- No rank divisions. Age divisions only.

3E.1 — Coach Timeout

Each coach is permitted one timeout per match. The timeout is 10 seconds in duration.

This rule applies in the following divisions:

- Points sparring
- Open-ranked sparring

A timeout may only be called during a break in action. A break in action is defined as a moment in which neither fighter is throwing techniques, moving, or taking any action to advance position or adjust the score.

A coach may verbally call for a timeout during a break in action. If no coach is present, the fighter may call the timeout. Only the center official has the authority to stop the match and acknowledge the timeout. The match does not pause until the center official recognizes and stops the action.

Timeouts called during active engagement will not be acknowledged. The center official will use discretion to determine whether a break in action exists before stopping the match.

Each match allows one timeout. Once used, it is not restored.

3F — Legal Target Areas

Light Contact Allowed:

Light contact is defined as a technique touching a legal target area with minimum force. It should not cause excessive movement or bodily harm. If a body part moves in an extreme manner due to force, the technique is considered unsafe and illegal.

- The Head: All parts of the head.
- The Back: The area on either side of the spine above the waist and below the neck.

Moderate Contact Allowed:

Moderate contact is defined as a technique with enough force to generate some directional movement of the body. Force sufficient to physically damage the person is ruled excessive.

- Front Upper Torso: The area from the shoulders to the waist, not including the arms.
- Side Upper Torso: The side of the upper torso from the armpit to the waist.

Illegal Target Areas:

Contact does not need to be made to incur a penalty if a technique is directed toward an illegal area.

- Upper Torso: Spine, top of shoulders, neck.

- Lower Torso: The complete area from the waist down.

3G — Legal Techniques

Legal techniques must be executed with focus and start and finish on balance.

Category	Techniques
Closed Hand	Vertical Punch, Reverse Punch, Side Punch, Lunge Punch, Back Fist, Hammer Fist, Jab
Open Hand	Inner Knife, Outer Knife, Ridge Hand
Kicking	Roundhouse, Front, Side, Hook, Inner Crescent, Outer Crescent, Axe, Back Kick
Grabbing	Allowed if followed within 2 seconds by a legal technique
Spinning	Hand and leg techniques may be done with a spin provided the athlete is looking at their opponent
Jumping	Leg techniques may be done with a jump, skip, or double fake

3H — Illegal Techniques

Use of an illegal technique results in a contact warning. Illegal techniques include:

- Fingertip strikes, palm heel, scratch
- Elbows, knees
- Leg sweeps or checks
- Takedowns, throws, chokes
- Arm locks, leg locks
- Spinning back fist
- Blind techniques: any technique executed while not looking at the opponent

3I — Non-Techniques

Non-techniques do not count as a point or a penalty, even when directed at a legal target area. These include:

- Slaps with the front or back of the hand to any part of the body
- Bops with a closed fist palm down
- Any technique where either fighter's hand is touching the ground

3J — General Fighting Rule

Any athlete who bows out completely in the first round of any fighting division is automatically disqualified and no place is awarded.

3K — Warnings & Penalties

Exit Warning

An exit warning is issued when a fighter steps out of bounds to escape an opponent or avoid fighting without physical contact being made to force them out. Any physical contact that forces a fighter out of bounds does not result in a warning or penalty.

Contact Warning

A contact warning covers the following infractions: heavy face or head contact, excessive contact to any legal target area, contact to any non-target area, low punches or kicks, blind techniques, throws or takedowns, and illegal hand or leg techniques.

Offense	Penalty
1st contact warning	1 point awarded to opponent
2nd contact warning	1 point awarded to opponent
3rd contact warning	Disqualification

The Center Referee reserves the right to escalate all penalties.

Additional Penalties

Infraction	Penalty
Not ready to fight when called	1 point to opposing fighter
Intentional avoidance of fighting	1 point to opposing fighter
Coach calls arbitration and loses	1 point to opposing fighter
Coach not wearing required shirt	1 point to opposing fighter
Coach directly addresses an official	1 point to opposing athlete
Negative coaching (unsportsmanlike conduct by coach, parent, or associated party)	1 point to opposing fighter. Continued behavior may result in competitor DQ and expulsion from event.
Unsportsmanlike behavior by athlete	Warning, point to opponent, match DQ, or tournament DQ depending on severity

3L — Arbitration (Fighting)

Only coaches may initiate an arbitration in fighting divisions.

- Coaches may not step into the ring to dispute or arbitrate a call.
- Coaches must respectfully raise their flag or hand while remaining seated.
- The Center Referee is required to acknowledge the request by the next stop in the match.

- If the Center Referee does not see the request, the corner may respectfully remind them.
- Once the arbitrator renders a decision, it is final. The match will continue in a respectful manner.
- If no designated arbitrator is present, the USA Sport Karate Coordinator serves as the arbitrator.
- If a coach calls an arbitration and the call is not overturned, 1 point is awarded to the opposing fighter.

Section 4: Code of Conduct

USA Sport Karate events are built on the values of respect, integrity, and athlete development. Every person present at a USA Sport Karate event is expected to uphold the standards that protect the athlete experience and represent the sport with dignity.

4A — Athletes

- Compete with integrity. Respect your opponent, your coaches, and all officials.
- Accept all decisions made by USA Sport Karate officials with sportsmanship.
- Represent your school with conduct that reflects the values of martial arts.
- Do not publicly challenge or disrespect official decisions.
- Profanity, vulgarity, or physical displays of disrespect are not tolerated and may result in disqualification.
- Athletes who engage in negative or disrespectful conduct may result in points being awarded to the opposing athlete or removal from the competition floor.

4B — Coaches

- You are responsible for the behavior of your athletes and their families at all times.
- Remain seated in the designated coaching area during matches.
- Address all concerns through the proper arbitration process only.
- Do not directly address officials during competition.
- Wear your coach identification at all times on the competition floor.
- Coaches who engage in negative or disrespectful conduct may result in points being awarded to the opposing athlete or removal from the competition floor.

4C — Parents & Spectators

- Support your athletes with encouragement and respect.
- Do not interfere with competition, officials, or the flow of the event. Including staying off the entire competition floor.
- Negative, disrespectful, or disruptive behavior may result in removal from the venue.
- Trust the process. USA Sport Karate standards exist to protect every athlete in the building.
- Spectators who engage in negative or disrespectful conduct may result in points being awarded to the opposing athlete or removal from the competition floor.

Any person whose behavior negatively impacts the athlete experience, or the integrity of competition may be removed from the event at the sole discretion of USA Sport Karate leadership.

Section 5: Registration & Check-In

5A — Online Registration

All competitors must register in advance through the USA Sport Karate online registration portal at myuventex.com. Registration details, deadlines, and event-specific instructions are available through the portal and on the USA Sport Karate event page.

- Athletes are responsible for registering in the correct age and experience divisions.
- Coaches must ensure all athletes are registered accurately before the registration deadline.
- Late registration policies vary by event and will be communicated by the promoter.

5B — Event Check-In

All competitors must check in at the event before competition begins. Check-in is required to:

- Verify division placement and start times.
- Confirm athlete eligibility and equipment compliance.
- Receive any updated schedule or bracket information.

Failure to check in may result in removal from a division. Athletes are encouraged to check in early. USA Sport Karate is not responsible for missed divisions due to failure to check in.

Section 6: National Rankings & Points

USA Sport Karate maintains a national ranking system that tracks athlete performance across all sanctioned events. Rankings are updated following each event and reflect accumulated points throughout the season. Athletes can view current rankings and qualify for the USA Sport Karate International Championships.

Points are awarded based on the star rating of each event. The following table shows point values by placement and event rating:

Event Rating	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th-8th Place	Grand Champion
5 Star	1800	1300	1000	800	500	250
4 Star	1400	1000	800	600	400	200
3 Star	700	500	400	300	200	150
2 Star	500	300	250	200	150	100
1 Star	250	150	125	100	75	50
Online Event	125	75	60	50	40	25

First Timer divisions do not earn ranking points. All other divisions accumulate points toward national, district, state, and regional rankings.

Current rankings and event information are available at usasportkarate.com/ranking