

# Northland Karate Association Summary of Rules

Revised: February 4, 2016

## Tournament Sparring

### Ethics <sup>1</sup>

1. Know the rules. If you have questions concerning a call, approach the center referee.
2. Make all decisions quickly and decisively in a confident manner.
3. Call only what you see clearly, not what you heard or thought you saw.
4. Give each match your full, focused attention.
5. Stay out of the way of the competitors.

**Length of Match:** An elimination match shall last a total of two (2) minutes running time unless a contestant is disqualified, a contestant gains a five (5) point advantage over the other contestant (7 points for black belt division), or the match ends in a tie. In the event of a tie, there will be a one-minute rest and then another two-minute round. The rounds will continue until a player scores the winning point.

**Point Values:** All legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. All legal-kicking techniques that score will be awarded two (2) points. All penalty points awarded will be a one- (1) point value.

**What Makes Up A Point?** A point is a controlled legal sport karate technique scored by a player in bounds that strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of focused contact to a legal target area.

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

**Moderate Touch Contact:** Slight penetration or slight target movement is allowed. This will be referred to as moderate touch contact. Moderate touch may be made to all legal target areas except the head and face.

### Touch Contact Requirements:

1. All adult black belts may make light touch contact to the face or head (headgear) but it is not necessary to score a point and moderate touch contact to the body to score a point. Adult brown belts may make touch contact to the head but it is not necessary to score a point.
2. Youth black belts under the age of 18 may make touch contact to the head but it is not necessary to score a point. However, light or moderate contact to the body is required to score a point.
3. No face, head or headgear touch contact is allowed in any divisions (youth or adult) under brown belt, but delivering a well-focused controlled technique approximately one inch from the face or headgear will count as a point. However, all contestants must make light or moderate touch contact to the body to score a point.

**Legal Target Areas:** Entire head (including face), ribs, chest, abdomen, collarbone and kidneys.

**Illegal Target Areas:** Spine, back of neck, throat, sides of the neck, groin, legs, knees and back. Contact to these areas could result in warning and/or penalty points.

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

**Legal sport karate technique:** Jabs, reverse punch, back fist (head only), all kicks using the foot only, spinning techniques only if they are not blind, no elbows and knees.

**Sweeps:** Sweeps can only be executed to the back of the front foot (boot-to-boot), not to take down an opponent, but only to obstruct the balance. These sweeps are legal if they are only to force the opponent off balance so as to execute a technique to an upright opponent. If the sweep were considered to have knocked down the opponent, then it would be illegal. A player may grab the uniform top of his/her opponent in an attempt to score, but only for one second.

**Penalties:** One and only one warning is given for breaking the rules. A penalty point is awarded to the opponent on each and every infraction of the rules after the first warning is given. If a contestant receives three penalty points in any one match, he/she is automatically disqualified and their opponent is declared the winner. If the result of the first rules infraction is considered by the referee to be severe enough, he/she can omit the first warning and issue a penalty point automatically. In doing so, the referee is omitting any first warning to the offending player. A penalty point can determine the winner of a match.

1. A player cannot be penalized and receive a point on the same call. A penalty always overrules a point by the same player.
2. A player can receive a point because his/her opponent was penalized and at the same time receive a point or points for a score.
3. If a player scores a point and then proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point technique, the warning for breaking the rules voids the point.

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**Excessive Contact**<sup>ii</sup>: Is made when an opponent strikes with force in excess of that necessary to have scored a point. Though it is largely a judgment call, indications that contact has been excessive may be assessed by the following reactions:

1. Visible snapping back of competitor's head from the force of a blow.
2. A knockdown of an opponent (not recklessly charging into a technique or occurring in instances where the fallen party neither fell, slipped, nor was off balance).
3. A knockout of an opponent.
4. The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding. (Bleeding or other obvious external injury may itself be grounds for excessive contact if it is considered the fault of a contestant).
5. The distortion or injury of the body from the force of a blow to the body.

## **S-K-I-D Rule**

- Snap back of head from strike
- Knockdown or knockout from strike
- Intensive swelling or bleeding from strike
- Distortion to body from body strike

**Disqualification for Excessive Contact:** In the event a contestant is disqualified for excessive contact, he/she will not be permitted to compete in the next NKA sanctioned tournament. If the contestant is disqualified a second time within twelve months of their previous disqualification, he/she will not be permitted to compete in the next six NKA sanctioned tournaments.

**Out-of-Bounds:** A player is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one foot touching inside or on the boundary line. Stepping out-of-bounds does not immediately stop the match. The referee is the only one who can stop the match. An out-of-bounds player may be scored on by his/her opponent so long as the in-bounds player has at least one foot in-bounds and the referee has not signaled to stop. In the event of a jumping technique, the player must land with one foot in-bounds in order to score. A warning or penalty point may be given if a player continues to step out-of-bounds to avoid contact with his/her opponent.

**Arbitrator:** The tournament arbitrator will be the person promoting the event. The arbitrator will make all final decisions and enforce penalties in regard to rule violations and protests. He/she cannot, however, reverse or pass judgement on judges scoring unless their scoring violates a rule.

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## Tournament Form & Weapons Competition

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

**Execution:** The act or process of performing (executing) the techniques of the form or weapon routine. The execution stage of judging is the most critical and should weigh the most in the judge's final score. **Elements of execution:** balance, power, speed, stability, proper technique, coordination, stamina, timing, skill, etc.

**Presentation:** The image or impression of the competitor as reflected in his/her performance of the form or weapon routine. The presentation stage is the second most important or critical and should weigh accordingly in the judge's final score. **Elements of presentation:** Confidence, poise, determination, commitment, imagery, respect, sportsmanship, realism, concentration, spirit, showmanship, appearance, imagination, etc.

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

**The Scoring Point Range:** when using the 7.00 to 10.00 point range, the referee will establish the average score of the belt level division you are scoring. Finals can be moved up one percentage point making the average score 9.90. If a division has only two competitors or if there is a tie, the winner may be determined by the wave of the judges' hands.

**Starting a Form Over:** Competitors under the age of 18 and under adult brown belt may start over without penalty in the event of an unrecoverable mistake.

**Use of Gymnastics Movements: Is limited to the Creative/Musical Form.** Using gymnastic movement may or may not have an inherent value to the martial arts. It is the judge's decision as to what value the gymnastic movements have to the form and to the martial arts. If a competitor performs a sub par gymnastic movement, the movement should be scored down. If the gymnastic movement is performed well, but is not of value to the martial arts, the movement may be scored down or ignored. If the gymnastic movement has an inherent value to the martial arts as perceived by the judges, it should be scored as any other technique (i.e., execution, presentation and difficulty).

**Dropping a Weapon:** Below brown belt, see the rule regarding starting a form over. Brown and black belts may exercise one of two options: 1). Continue and have each official's score reduced by 1/2 point, or, 2). Start over and have the combined score reduced by 1 point.

**Creative/Musical Form:** Can be performed with or without a weapon. All the rules of form apply to this division. There will be a two-minute time limit on each contestant. It is the responsibility of the competitors to provide their own source of music and must not be of objectionable content. If there is a music malfunction and it is no fault of the tournament, the contestant will be downgraded.

**Traditional Weapon Form:** All the rules of form apply to this division. The form presented has to be part of the regular curriculum of the contestant's school and use a traditional weapon (metal or wood, bo minimum one inch diameter, no sharp edged weapons). No release of weapon or single hand bo techniques are allowed.

**Open Weapon Form:** All the rules of form apply to this division. The form presented has to be part of the regular curriculum of the contestant's school. All types of competition weapons can be used. No movements that would be associated with acrobatics.

**Open Form:** All the rules of form apply to this division. The form presented has to be part of the regular curriculum of the contestant's school. No gymnastics or multiple (3 or more) kicks without setting down.

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## Officials

**Referee:** The referee should be the most experienced official in the ring and be thoroughly versed on the rules. He/she is in complete charge of the ring and the match. He/she promotes the safety of the contestants, enforces the rules and insures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administrates the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper and announces the winner of each match. The referee shall announce in a loud, clear voice all official decisions, and shall indicate with voice and gesture, the contestant affected by the official decision. The referee may issue warnings and/or penalty points for head contact or excessive contact without a majority call.

### Responsibilities of the Referee

1. Has the responsibility to control the flow of the fight. Only the referee can start and stop the match.
2. Has the responsibility to issue warnings when necessary and may do so without a majority for illegal contact.
3. Has the responsibility to disqualify the contestant who receives three (3) penalty points.
4. Has the responsibility to issue time out when necessary.

**Judges:** The appointed helpers to observe the exchange of techniques between the players and offer their opinion on whether a player scored or not at the direction of the center referee. During a match, a judge indicates and communicates to the center referee that they saw a point, foul, etc. Judges motions must not interfere with the motions of the fighters or referee.

1. Judges may call for a vote when they see point or penalty scores by calling out "Point!" in a loud voice. However, the judge may not indicate his/her opinion until the center referee calls for the vote by calling out, "Judges Score!"
2. All judges are to cast their votes simultaneously at the command of the referee.
3. For a kick or hand technique that scores the judge will point in the direction of the scoring player.
4. If a judge does not see the point called he/she will indicate this by covering the eyes. A "no see" call removes the judges vote.
5. If a judge sees the call but does not believe a point was scored he/she indicates this by crossing the wrists at waist level.
6. If a judge believes that both contestants scored at the same time he/she will hit both fists together and no point will be awarded.
7. When illegal contact is made the judges will indicate this by hitting the back of the hand in the palm of the other hand.

**Timekeeper:** The appointed helper to keep time. He/she will start and stop time at the command of the center referee and will inform the center referee when the two minutes for sparring has expired.

**Scorekeeper:** The appointed helper to keep score. The scorekeeper will record the points awarded by the center referee by writing "1" for hand techniques and "2" for kicks. The scorekeeper will also record any warnings and/or penalty points issued by the center referee by writing "w". Writing "w" will indicate warnings and penalty points will be circled.

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<sup>i</sup> Much of what is presented in this summary of rules has been taken from the Official JRA Rule Book. Therefore, the Northland Karate Association wishes to express gratitude to the Judge and Referee Alliance for its contribution to the martial arts community and bringing to our tournaments a concerted and conscientious effort to provide safety for each competitor and equity in judging. Special recognition is given to Dr. Terry Warner for his personal contribution to the martial arts and to everyone who has had the privilege of knowing him. He has been relentless in his pursuit of making tournaments a meaningful experience for each competitor as well as the spectators.

<sup>ii</sup> The excessive contact rule and S-K-I-D acronym has been taken from the Official JRA Rule Book.