



***National
&
Regional***

Tournament Rules

A. DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

1) Tournament Director:

The duty of the Tournament Director is the general supervision of the event. Floor Directors, Center judges and Corner Judges are under the Tournament Director's jurisdiction.

2) Floor Director:

The responsibility of the Floor Director is to generally oversee an assigned number of rings. Checking the proper division splits, checking the bye systems, pre staging divisions prior to competition and mediating the rules system are all a part of the Floor Directors duties. The Floor Director works directly with the Tournament Director to keep the competition in each ring full and continual as well as monitoring the judge's skill level. It is the intent of the Floor Director's position to help insure a higher level of safety and fairness for the competitor as well as a better level of judging quality.

3) The Center Judge:

Must be 18 years old and possess the rank of 2nd Degree Black Belt and above. Judges must participate in a Regional or National rules clinics to qualify for certification. The Center Judge will be responsible for designing each competition bracket. This will include establishing the proper bye structure (*approval from the Floor Director is advised for consistent accuracy of division breakdown*). This is to include the variable of avoiding students from the same school, rated competitor, and other variables that constitute the utmost fairness of play. The Center Judge is responsible for starting and ending each match. He/She has complete authority over both contestants. He/She may award points and inform the score keeper and contestant when there has been an infraction. They may award penalty points for rules violations. He/she also has the power to disqualify a contestant at any time. When the winner is announced, the match referee will hold up the winner's hand to complete the match. The Center Judge also conducts the forms competition. It is his responsibility to see that the results are taken to the officials' table. The Center judge announces the names of the winners at the end of the competition and makes the presentation of the awards in each division. The Center Judge works closely with the Floor Director to provide a positive and enthusiastic experience for the competitors.

4) Corner Judges:

The corner judges score each match according to the rules in part "c" below. The safety of the competitor is the main concern as well as enforcing the fairest possible rulings for each competitor. It is the intention of the entire officiating team to offer the fairest and most positive experience possible for the competitors. Center Judges, like all of the officiating team should be dressed in either traditional white uniform or suit and tie or judges' polo shirt (or female equivalent).

B. COMPETITION

1) **Rings for Competition:**

Rings for competition shall be square, and shall be 18 to 22 feet per side. Each shall be clearly numbered and have clear boundaries and center marks for sparring.

2) **Officials' General Orders:**

All officials must remain in their ring until form and sparring competition and concluding paperwork are complete. Judges will show no prejudice in judging students as it is the Philosophy of the AMA that when competing, all schools come together and become one school. The Center Judge will explain rules to competitors before each competition. He will then answer any questions. Officials should not talk among themselves during forms as a matter of courtesy towards competitors.

3) **Judging own Students:**

If the judge has a student competing in his ring, then that judge must inform the center judge of that situation. Final determination will be left up to the center judge. And if the center judge has a student in his ring then he must inform the Floor director so that he can make a decision.

4) **Form Variations:**

Center Judges will instruct corner Judges to recognize differences in form styles and techniques by students from different schools and regions. The AMA has grown and consequently, differences in styles and technique may exist. Therefore, judges should score on general forms criteria.

5) **Sparring & Forms "Bye" System:**

The proper Bye System should be set up before any sparring begins. If the Center Judge has difficulty, he should ask the Floor Director or Tournament Director for assistance. Entries should be closed and byes picked five minutes after last call.

6) **Paperwork required:**

The Center Judge is responsible for turning in result sheets and entry cards to the Tournament Director's operation table immediately after the competition. Result sheets **MUST BE COMPLETE, CORRECT, AND LEGIBLE**. Judges should spell students name phonically in prentices beside there name if the pronunciation of there name is difficult. The Center Judge should present awards to the winners in the center of the ring immediately after each division competition unless other wise instructed. He will also congratulate each winner while shaking their hand.

C. FORM COMPETITION RULES

1) Competitor Ethic's:

Each competitor will answer "Yes Sir!" or "Ma'am" loudly and with enthusiasm when his name is called. The competitor will first bow into the ring, and then run to the mark in the center of the ring. They will stand at attention with their feet together and hands down at his side as in class. He/she will at all times follow the directions of the Center Judge and Corner Judges. The Center Judge will give him the command to begin the form on his (the competitor) own count.

2) Forms contest:

To officially start the division, the competitors will line up and bow in to the assigned judges. He/she should "fire-up" the competitors and insure that everyone understands the rules and procedures. Prior to the initial bow-in and introductions, one of the judges should have collected all the competitor registration cards. The center judge will turn the cards face down and shuffle them. To begin form competition, he/she will draw one card at a time and call the competitor's name. He/she will hand the card to the scorekeeper so the scorekeeper can record the name. When their name is called, the competitors will answer, "Yes, Sir/Ma'am," run to the center of the ring, and stand at attention to wait for the judges' directions. They will follow the judges' instructions, and when given the command to begin, will demonstrate their form on their own count. They will hold the position of the last movement until given the command to return and will not leave the ring until dismissed.

The first three competitors will complete their form before being scored. This gives the judges a base for their scores. Each judge will give a score ranging from 5.0 through 9.5. An incomplete form is defined as a competitor leaving out at least an entire segment or stopping any time during the form and not finishing. At times, some competitors may leave out a technique or two, turn the wrong direction, or may do an incorrect technique. This would NOT be classified as an incomplete form. Because the emphasis of the organization's teaching is on quality of technique rather than solely memorization, an incomplete form will receive a score of 5.0 from each judge. If a competitor leaves out a technique or two, turns the wrong direction, or does an incorrect technique, he/she should receive score reductions from each judge.

During form competition, the center judge may assist a colored belt competitor complete their form through verbal cues and possible physical demonstrations if the competitor is unable to complete their form. This is done solely to help the self-esteem of the competitor by giving them the opportunity to finish their form in front of their peers and audience. The center judge must then score the form as if it were incomplete (with the score of 5.0) which would be the same as if the judge did not offer assistance and the competitor had not completed their form. Cheering and offering encouragement is indeed allowed and encouraged.

Judges are encouraged to make the best decision possible when scoring. The scores of all judges will be added to determine the winners of the elimination rounds. The top four scores will make it to the final round to determine the overall winner of the form competition. The Center Judge will take the top four winners and place them into a bracket for matched forms. The highest score will go against the fourth highest score and the second highest score will go against the third highest score. The winner of each round will be advanced to the finals and the losers will compete for third and fourth place. All colored belts are allowed two chances to complete their form except in the final matched form competition. The highest score they may receive on the second

attempt is 8.5. Each judge should deduct one point from the form from what the form would have been scored (if it is performed on the second round.) Black Belts are not given the opportunity of a second try. If any black belt competitor fails to complete the form, he/she should receive a score of 5.0 from the Judges.

There are no boundary restrictions during forms competition. Competitors will not be penalized for stepping beyond the ring boundaries, nor will they be penalized for adjusting their position to avoid obstacles, people, or the ring boundaries. Competitors may not realize that they will not be penalized for stepping beyond the ring boundaries and may adjust to prevent this. It is also possible that equipment bags, spectators, etc., may be in their way and they should be permitted to adjust to avoid these obstacles. There are no specific time restrictions during traditional forms competition.

3) Score Keeper:

The Center Judge will make sure the score keeper records the proper winner by writing their name on the advancing bracket of the form's competition sheet.

4) Patterns:

Competitors must execute an approved form for their own rank level or one belt rank below their current rank level that is generally accepted in Traditional Taekwon-Do competition.

5) Awards:

The judges will determine the winner when the competitors have finished their patterns and all score are tallied. At the completion of the division the Center Judge will have the competitor's line up and stand at attention. The Center Judge will then call names of the winners beginning with the Third Place. The contestant's will bow to the judges after the awards have been presented. The Center Judge will then dismiss them.

6) Determining Ties:

Ties are to be run off rather than decided in conference. If there is a tie in the forms competition, the tied competitors will be asked to do their form again. The forms will be done individually, not at the same time. If there is a tie for more than one place, the judges will decide the highest place first.

Example: There is a two way tie for first place and a two way tie for third place. The center judge would have the two competitors tied for first place demonstrate their forms again and a decision would be made as to the victor. Then the two that tied for third place would perform next and a decision made. All the judges will now be judging the entire form overall rather than their original assignments. After all the tied competitors (for that place) have done their form, they will line up facing the judges. On the command of the center judge, all judges will point at the competitor they felt did the best. If at least two judges pick the same person, that person wins and will receive that place in the competition. If more than one more place was at stake, the judges will immediately decide the next best form, and so on, until all the positions are filled. If all three judges point to different competitors, those three will step forward one step. Next, the two competitors on the right (the judges' left) will take one more step forward. The center judge will now ask the judges to pick the better form from those two. This winner now steps forward with the competitor on the left; and the judges will again point to the better form. This person is the winner.

If more than one place was at stake, those competitors eliminated by the original vote will now be brought back and the judges will point to the one they felt deserved the next place. This procedure will be used until all places have been determined.

D. SPARRING COMPETITION RULES

1) Competitor Ethic's:

Each competitor will answer "Yes Sir!" loudly with enthusiasm when his name is called. He/She will first bow into the ring, then run to the mark indicated by the Center Judge in the center of the ring. The competitors will then follow any instructions from the Center Judge. In accordance with proper etiquette, no taunting, mocking, or overzealous celebration to influence the judge's call is allowed. Example: Raising the hand after a near back fist point is considered influencing in a negative manner.

2) White Belt Drills

All white (Beginner) ranks are allowed to compete with technical drills instead of one-step sparring, set sparring or free-sparring. In each round, two competitors will compete against each other in a bracketed system. Two players will be called up and bowed in to the judges. One competitor will be given a red flag to wear on the back of their belt. The Center Judge will ask both players to perform Drill Number One three times each. The Center Judge will then bring the competitors to attention facing the judges and ask the judges to indicate the winner of the first drill by raising their red flag or the white flag. The competitor who receives at least two flags from the judges will be the winner of Drill Round One. The Center Judge will then ask the competitors to perform Drill Number Two in the same fashion. If one player wins both Drill Rounds, then the match is stopped and that player will be considered the winner and will go on to the next round of competition. If the other competitor wins, making it one round for white and one round for red, then the Center Judge will ask both players to perform Drill Number Three. The winner of this Drill Round will be declared the winner and will advance to the next round of competition.

Drill Number One: From a middle stance, advance by stepping behind and performing a side kick then landing in a middle stance while performing a knife hand strike. (Note: The competitor may determine which side they will have forward.)

Drill Number Two: From a back stance, advance by performing a turning round kick then land in a back stance and perform a back fist strike. (The competitor may determine which side they have forward.)

Drill Number Three: From a front stance, advance by performing a rear leg front kick then landing forward in a front stance while performing a reverse punch. (The competitor may determine which side they have forward.)

3) One-Steps

All orange and yellow belts (Beginner) ranks are allowed to compete with one-step sparring or set sparring instead of free-sparring. One-steps must be done without a "partner" but against another competitor at the same time and facing the judges. One-step sparring matches use the same bye system as bracketed competition. The set of one-steps a competitor may do will follow the same criteria as described for forms. A competitor must be prepared to perform at least three different one steps in this competition. In each round, two competitors will compete against each other in a bracketed system just as the sparring bracket. Two players will be called up and bowed in to the judges. One competitor will be given a red flag to wear on the back of their belt. The Center Judge will ask both players to perform their one step number one three times each. The competitors will facing the judges and perform their one steps independently from each other (not as partners). The Center Judge will then bring the competitors to attention and ask the judges to indicate the winner of the first drill by raising their red flag or the white flag. The competitor who gets at least two flags will win that one step round. The Center Judge will then ask the competitors to perform One

Step Number Two in the same fashion. If one player wins both one step rounds, then the match is stopped and that player is considered the winner and will go on to the next round of competition. If the other competitor wins, making it one round for white and one round for red, then the Center Judge will ask both competitors to perform One Step Number Three. The winner of this Drill round will be declared the winner and will advance to the next round of competition. The selection of one-steps shall be determined by the competitor. One-steps must be from the testing material used at the competitors' school for testing purposes at the beginner levels and not engineered from advanced material.

Yellow and orange belts will compete with One-step sparring drills and **will not** be allowed to go to the green belt division to spar.

4) Green thru Black Belts:

Free Sparring competition as outlined below:

The most points scored at the end of a two minute round will determine the winner. Five (5) points automatically wins. Time will run continuously unless a judge should indicate otherwise; such as, time out for a verification on a call in question, an injury, an equipment adjustment, or a warning. Ties will be determined by a "sudden victory;" first point wins. In overtime, a point must be confirmed by at least two Judges before a victory point is awarded.

5) Out of Bounds:

A competitor that is clearly in the ring may score a point on his/her opponent even when the opponent is out of the ring as long as the Judges have not called for the break. If the competitor that scores a point has one foot on the out of bounds line than it is a no point.

6) Scoring points:

Awarding points shall be done by placing hand and foot techniques on or in the legal target area – with varying criteria on technique depending on rank and division and competitors. Black belts must make light contact with control. There are three point classifications: one–point, two–point, and three– point techniques:

a) Hand techniques:

Hand techniques to legal target areas will be awarded one (1) point. Legal hand techniques include punches, back fists, ridge or knife hand strikes to the head or torso. Green and blue belts may not use hand techniques to the head. Red thru Black Belts may score two (2) points for a well executed jump reverse punch to the head with the reverse (rear) hand only. The competitor executing the jump reverse punch must have the majority of the judges verifying that both feet were off the ground and the punching hand was in the reverse position at the point of delivery. Legal target areas are defined below.

b) Foot Techniques:

One point will awarded to and legal target area in the torso. Two (2) points will be awarded for any kicking technique scoring head, face, or back of neck from shoulders up (side of neck and throat are illegal targets). Jumping kick to legal body target areas shall also score two (2) points. Jumping kicks to the "head" target areas shall be awarded three (3) points. But the competitor must land on his/her feet with good balance and without falling down after execution of technique. There shall be no minimum distance from the ground to qualify jumping kicks or jumping punches. The only requirement is that the non–kicking leg be off the ground initiated while in bounds.

7) **Target Areas:**

The front and sides of the body above the "belt" are legal for hand and foot techniques in all divisions. The side of body is defined, as the center seam line under the arm pit down to the hip where the belt would normally be worn. The head face, and back of the neck above the shoulders are legal for kicks in all divisions. Hand techniques to the head and face are legal in Red, Brown, and Black Belt divisions only. All other parts of the body except arm and leg blocking areas are illegal target areas. Points are scored only for techniques to legal target areas.

8) **Penalties:**

Contact rules are relative to the division. In colored belt competition, students are encouraged to score face kicks without contact. If a competitor makes accidental light contact, a point may still be awarded. However, if the referee thinks the contact is too hard, he may award penalty points or disqualify the attacker. Other body contact however may be light to medium. Hand contact to the face will result in penalty points or disqualification in Green, Blue and Purple Belt divisions. Normally, infractions will: draw a warning for negligence or malicious attacks on illegal or dangerous target areas (groin, standing knee, throat, etc.); awarding of penalty points or disqualification, depending on the situation, as determined by proper officials. If a competitor is injured, the opponent should turn his back and kneel down in a show of courtesy and respect for the injured opponent.

NOTE: The Center judges warn competitors against pretending pain as a device to improve competition standing or to gain judges' sympathy. They should always set examples for spectators on how Taekwon-Do develops integrity and a sense of toughness. Competitor's complaints of contact, blood, or tears, have no bearing on whether too much contact was made. The decision is simply whether too much power or penetration was used by the attacker.

9) **Out of bounds:**

Rulings depend on whether the competitors have "fought" out or "run" out of the ring. A competitor who runs out of bounds to escape the attacker may be issued a warning. Persons "fighting" out or ejected from the ring by their opponent will not be warned or penalized. If that happens, or if a competitor inadvertently steps out of bounds, the referee calls both competitors back to the center of the ring. Falling down or turning the back to avoid attack will be judged as running out of bounds. However, the competitor that is out of the ring will not be allowed to score on the opponent in the ring. When both competitors are out of bounds, no points should be scored and both players should be returned to the center of the ring.

10) **Awarding of penalty point or disqualification (judges decision):**

For every three warnings there will be 1 point issued to the other competitor.

Below are possible warnings

- a) Excessive contact, explained above
- b) Running out of bounds, turning the back or falling to avoid attack
- c) Grabbing an opponent or his uniform
- d) Tripping, throwing, or foot sweeping an opponent
- e) Fingertip or similar "spearing" techniques
- f) Attacking other than legal targets
- g) Causing injury from unclipped fingernails or toenails
- h) Attitude (Exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct at any time before, during, or after the match while under direction of the referee. Also the conduct of the student's

friends, family, and instructor while the match is going on such conduct elsewhere may draw other AMA action as deemed appropriate by officials).

E. SPARRING EQUIPMENT

Competitors will wear clean, pressed white uniforms to tournaments. Males must wear protective groin cups. Mouthpieces are mandatory in all divisions. Women's use of breast protectors is recommended but optional. All sparring gear must be dipped foam rubber and be approved by the AMA Center judge and/or the Tournament Director. The safety gear on the hands must cover the top portion of the hand extending downward from above the wrist to within one (1) inch from the end of the finger tips (the thumb is included). The safety gear on the feet must cover the entire top of the feet, including the heels and all toes. Head gear for all divisions is "MANDATORY." The head gear must cover the entire hair line and be made of an approved dipped foam. Protective equipment such as shin, arm, rib, or other guards or braces must be approved by the Center Judge and/or the Tournament Director (criteria includes opponents safety, intent of the 'guards" and students special needs or problem).

NOTE: Head gear is required for all divisions, regardless of age or gender. In our pursuit for fun and fair competition, the competitors' safety is first and foremost. Boxing gloves are not allowed in point sparring competition.

F. JUDGING ETHICS

Demonstrations of prejudice, lack of ring attentiveness, etc., shall be cause for warning from higher officials at any AMA tournament. Any such warnings shall become part of the judge's permanent record. Three warnings within a 12-month period will bring a mandatory two-year suspension from all official activities including judging or participating in tournaments or testing events.

G. ADDITIONAL RULINGS

Center Judges or Corner Judges having difficulties in resolving a given situation should ask the tournament director or the floor director for rulings.

H. COMPLAINTS

Instructor or student complaints or appeals during the tournament are not allowed by the competitors. An official protest may be brought forward by the student's Instructor in a proper fashion. This official protest should first be brought to the Center Judge who will then consult with the immediate Floor director. Each party (Instructor & Center Judge) will present the facts of the disputed situation to the Floor director, Tournament Director, and appointed Senior Instructors as deemed. This committee of uninvolved Senior Instructors will determine the proper course of decision. This ruling will be considered the fairest decision for all parties and the final ruling will be respectfully accepted by all involved.

I. OFFICIALS DRESS

Instructors, judges, and others identified as officials shall be properly dressed in uniforms or coat and tie (or women's equivalent) or the AMA official judging shirt. This is required for all judging activities. It is important for the total image of the association that the competition day is special for the competitor. The adherence to the dress code will provide the correct feedback to both competitors and spectators that AMA events are professionally operated. It is strongly suggested that all black belts follow this dress code philosophy and wear the proper dress. If a judge does not comply with the official AMA dress code they will be asked to leave the competition area and will forfeit any potential compensation.

AMA Competition Rating System

The AMA National Competition Rating Program will be governed by the following guidelines:

Black Belt competitors will be monitored and rated by a point value system to be totaled after the last tournament of the competition Season. The point value will be determined by awards from Traditional Forms Competitions, Sparring Competition, Weapons, and Musical and Extreme divisions. All divisions will be totaled as separate divisions. The point values per finishing position are as follows:

Regional Tournament Value:

Any First Place Form or Sparring	3 Points
Any Second Place Form or Sparring	2 Points
Any Third Place Form or Sparring	1 Point

National Tournament Value:

Any First Place Form or Sparring	6 Points
Any Second Place Form or Sparring	4 Points
Any Third Place Form or Sparring	2 Points

Upon completing the competition program, special recognition and awards will be given to the top competitor in each division. That of which will be an official "National Title" within their competition division. The "National Champion" will be eligible to have special jacket lettering privileges that are exclusive for that honor. Exact lettering specifications are available through the AMA headquarters offices.

- 1) Black belt sparring champion: Red thread.
- 2) All Forms Champion (Traditional, musical, weapons or extreme): Blue thread.
- 3) Combination of two or more national titles in the same year: Purple thread.

The primary competition objective for competing Black Belts is to compete within their designated region in the scheduled series of AMA tournaments. All National tournaments are worth double point value as the degree of difficulty will be increased due to the increased number of competitors. The top four (4) rated competitors in each region and division will receive a special invitation to the "National Finals". This is a special invitation by qualification only. A competitor may qualify in the traditional patterns competition, sparring, musical, weapons or extreme divisions separately. The top four (4) rated competitors from each region will compete among themselves to determine the regional champion in each respective event. The regional champions will then compete against each other to determine the "National Champion".

Due to the expansion of AMA schools within various parts of the country, regions will be clearly defined by the start of each competition season. Due to the growth and school density some regions may have anywhere from three (2) to six (5) tournaments within a given region's season. The season generally begins in November and concludes by the end of October with the National Finals being held each November.

Point standings will be posted on the website announcing the current standings of each division. For immediate up to date listings of current AMA Black Belt ratings check the AMA web site.

Rules for the AMA Competition Rating System are as follows:

- 1) Must be a current certified AMA Black Belt member in good standing.
- 2) Must be at least six (6) years of age.
- 3) In the event of a birthday that changes the competitor's age after March 1st the student needs to bump up to the next division at the start of the Nov. tournament season.
- 4) If a student anticipates a rank change that would put them in a different division before March 1, that student should bump up to that division at the start of the November tournament season.
- 5) Once the student bumps up, they can not come back down during the tournament season.
- 6) Collected points do not transfer up to the next division should a student bump up after the competition season has began.
- 7) Competitors must bring honor and esteem to the AMA with the utmost courtesy and sportsmanship-like conduct. Any un-sportsmanship-like conduct will result in immediate disqualification from the competition program. This also includes any un-sportsmanship conduct from a student's friends, family, or Instructor.
- 8) Due to the nature of the judging system, involving the human factor, all decisions made by the Center Judge must be honored and if any need for clarification will be conducted by the Tournament Director or Floor Director.

TEAM DEMONSTRATION GUIDELINES

- 1) **NUMBER OF COMPETITORS ALLOWED ON A TEAM:**
There is no limit to the number of competitors allowed on a demonstration competition team but must a minimum of three members to constitute a team.
- 2) **TIME LIMIT:**
There will be a seven (7) minute time limit once the plane of the competition area is broken. A minus point will accompany each minute beyond this time limit.
- 3) **MUSIC:**
Music is recommended to help mark time and energize a demonstration. No profanity will be allowed. The music must be provided by your team with a designated person responsible for starting and stopping your music. All music must be “cued up” and ready to go prior to the competition. No vulgar or obscene music will be allowed.
- 4) **CREATIVE UNIFORMS AND COSTUMES:**
Special uniforms and costumes that are appropriate will be allowed, if congruent with the martial art theme. Special colored uniforms will be allowed during this competition event only, returning to the traditional white uniform for the rest of the tournament.
- 5) **WEAPONS:**
Weapons may be used in accordance with the theme of the demonstration. However, the safety of participants and spectators are priority. No projectile weapons will be allowed. No live or sharpened blades or edged weapons will be allowed. All weapons must be inspected for safety by the Center Judge before competition begins.
- 6) **SELF-DEFENSE:**
Self defense demonstration should be included in every performance.
- 7) **BOARD BREAKING:**
Board breaking should be included within each demo; however there is only one try per break to avoid a dead time. Teams are responsible for bringing their own breaking material. If concrete is to be used a suitable floor covering is expected to protect the floor and to minimize messes.
- 8) **COMEDY:**
Comedy is a very entertaining element when used in good taste.
- 9) **CONTENT AND SCORING:**
There are many themes that can be used to demonstrate competitively. The judges will be scoring on the following scale of value:
 - a. **General Appearance - 1 POINT**
Clean and neat uniforms and appearance of choreographed entry and exit.
 - b. **Skill Level - 2 POINTS**
The talent and skill level of the entire team will be averaged out.
 - c. **Choreography - 2 POINTS**
The choreographed scenes will be graded on intricacy and timing.
 - d. **Music - 1 POINT**
The timing of the team’s movements to the music will be evaluated.
 - e. **Creativity - 2 POINTS**
The unique theme and creativity of the demonstration.
 - f. **Energy - 2 POINTS**
The energy or the feeling of excitement that the team brings to the audience and judges.