

Karate Dream Festival 2026 International Championship

Kumite Competition Rules

Judging Criteria

- The five referees including the Main Referee shall judge the competition. However, the final decision rests with the Main Referee.
- Since the decision should be a majority decision, in the case of "IPPON", "WAZA-ARI", "HANSOKU", "JOGAI", "HANTEI", etc., the decision is valid if at least three out of the five referees support it. A decision not supported by the majority, that is less than three of the referees, or a decision supported by only the Main Referee is not valid. However, any of the five referees has the right to make a protest against a decision and claim further discussions. In the discussions, a monitor (videotape-recording image) might be used as a reference.
- Weighing by the Executive Committee shall be done for the competitors who are in the weight division categories before the competition. If a competitor's weight exceeds the regulation, the competitor will be disqualified.
- If there is a weight difference of 7 kilograms or more between the weight in the entry application and the weight checked at the weighing by the Executive Committee, the competitor will be disqualified.
- In case a competitor cannot continue the bout due to his opponent's "YUKO WAZA (effective attack)", "HANSOKU WAZA (foul attack)" etc., the tournament doctor may give a so-called 'doctor's stop (request to stop the fight)' after consulting with the five referees or the Main Referee.
 - In case of "HANSOKU WAZA", the competitor who made the foul attack loses the bout. The opponent will be the winner of the bout, but will not be able to continue to the next bout.
 - In case of "YUKO WAZA (effective attack)", if the opponent is so seriously damaged by the attack that he/she will not be able to continue the bout, he/she will lose.
- The 1st and the 2nd places shall be decided by bouts. There will not be any 3rd place play-offs.
- The tournament schedule is to be strictly followed, but in case of an unavoidable situation, the Executive Committee Chairman may, after consultation with the Main Referee, decide to change the tournament schedule.

Kumite Rules

- Time of one bout:

①All-Japan Championship

Category	Main Bout	Extension Bout
Young Boys/Girls	1 min.	1 min.
Elementary Boys/Girls	1 min. 30sec.	1 min. 30sec.
Junior High Boys/Girls	1 min. 30sec.	1 min. 30sec.
Highschool Men/ Women	2min.	2min.
Student Men	2min.	2min.
U25 Women	2min.	2min.
Senior Men (under 65 years old)	1 min. 30sec.	1 min. 30sec.
Senior Women (under 60 years old)		
Senior Men (65 years old to 71 years old)	1 min.	1 min.
Senior Women (60 years old to 71 years old)		

②Rookie Tournament

Category	Main Bout	Extension Bout
Young Boys/Girls	1 min.	1 min.
Elementary Boys/Girls	1 min.	1 min.
Junior High Boys/Girls	1 min. 30sec.	1 min. 30sec.
Highschool Men/Women	1 min. 30sec.	1 min. 30sec.
Senior Men/Women	1 min.	1 min.

* ①、② will not have a decision by weight or Tameshiwari. There will be an Extension Bout if the decisions are not made in the main bout (must-decide). There is a possibility of the time being changed (organizer's decision).

2. Use of Protector: Refer to the Protector Guidelines
3. Victory is awarded to the competitor who has scored one full point (IPPON), the one who has won by decision (including 'WAZA-ARI' - half point), the one whose opponent has been charged with a foul, or whose opponent has been disqualified.
4. The competitors shall enter the competition mat from opposite sides and stand by two lines, red and white, respectively in the center of the fighting area, taking postures of "FUDODACHI", facing the front.
Looking at them from the front (official seats), the competitor for "AKA" - Red - should stand on the left side (the one whose entry number is smaller) and the competitor for "SHIRO" - White - should be on the right side (the one whose entry number is larger).
5. The bout starts with the Main Referee's command "HAJIME" and ends with the Main Referee's command "YAME".
6. In case of any accident during the fight, the Main Referee may stop the bout.
7. When the Main Referee makes the sign of "Time", the bout shall stop for a moment, and when he makes the sign of "ZOKKOU" (continue), the bout shall start again.

IPPON-GACHI (full point victory)

- a) A thrust (TSUKI), kick (KERI), and elbow strike (HIJI UCHI) or any other technique, excluding actions listed as fouls, which vigorously downs the opponent for three or more seconds.
- b) If the opponent has lost his will to fight for three or more seconds.
- c) When having obtained two WAZA-ARI (half-points), which results in one IPPON (full-point).
- d) The "Safety Rules" will be applied to the kumite competitions (excluding Student categories) and Rookie Tournament. See the section "Safety Rules". In the last page.

WAZA-ARI (half-point)

- a) When a thrust (TSUKI), kick (KERI), elbow strike (HIJI UCHI), etc., excluding actions listed as fouls, downs the opponent for less than three seconds, but he stands up and resumes the fight.
- b) If the opponent has lost his will to fight but resumes the fight within three seconds.
- c) If the opponent has received so much damage that he loses his balance, but not that he falls down.
- d) When a well-focused GEDAN TSUKI (downward punch) is followed immediately in good timing after either downing the opponent with foot sweeps (ASHI-BARAI) or dodging the opponent's DOMAWASHI-KAITEN-GERI (rolling kick).
- e) The "Safety Rules" will be applied to the Young Boys/Girls, Elementary, Junior High, Highschool, and Senior Categories in Kumite.

Criteria of HANTEI (decision)

- a) In case there is neither IPPON nor disqualification, the decision supported by three or more out of the five referees (one Main Referee, four Corner Referees) is valid.
- b) In case of one of the competitors having a WAZA-ARI, the WAZA-ARI will be the first priority in a decision.
- c) In case of no WAZA-ARI, the amount of damage will be the first priority in a decision.
- d) In case of no damages, the amount of YUKO-DA (effective techniques, but not enough for being a WAZA-ARI) will be the criterion for decision.
- e) In case of the same amount of YUKO-DA, the referees shall give priority to the competitor with more techniques (punch, kick, etc.).
- f) In case of the same number of techniques, the referees shall make their decision based on which competitor has the initiative (fighting spirit, moving forward, attacking first) in the bout. The more aggressive competitor shall win.
- g) For the final extension, the referees must make a decision based on the dominance of either fighter.
- h) If a CHUI (warning) is given to either of the competitors, the referees shall follow the criteria stated in "Judging Criteria" (in the last section).

Extension (ENCHO-SEN)

- i) If three or more out of the five referees do not make a decision upon the command "HANTEI", the bout shall end in a draw, and an extension bout shall follow.
- j) If there is no decision after the extension, there will be a final extension. After this extension, a decision must be made.

JOGAI (step outside the competition area)

- a) If either of the competitors has stepped outside the area line completely with both feet, it will be judged as JOGAI.
- b) "JOGAI" will be concluded upon the Main Referee's command "YAME".

HANSOKU (fouls)

- a) Attacks with techniques using hands or elbows (such as Ken, Shuto, Nukite, Elbow strike, etc.) to the opponent's face or neck. Even a slight touch may result in HANSOKU. However, making feints to the face is allowed.
- b) Attacks to the groin (vital points).
- c) ZU-TSUKI (head thrusts).
- d) TSUKAMI (grabbing of the opponent's dogi or hand/foot).
- e) Holding opponent's leg
Catching a front kick or roundhouse kick from the outside is a foul, even momentarily. Deflecting the kick from the inside is permitted; however, holding the leg for too long is a foul.
- f) KAKE (hooking). (To grapple or hook the opponent's neck, head, shoulders, etc.)
- g) OSHI (pushing). (Pushing with open hands, closed hands, or with the body is not allowed. Basically, it will be considered as HANSOKU even if you push only with one hand.)
- h) OSAE (holding). (to hold the opponent with the hand or arm)
Holding an opponent's arm with both hands is a foul. However, controlling the opponent's forearm with one hand is permitted.
- i) KAKAEKOMI (hugging and holding). (The person who puts his arms around the other one first will be given a foul.)
- j) To Attack whilst leaning the head or body against the opponent.
- k) Attacks from the back.
- l) To attack an opponent who is already down.
- m) KAKENIGE (run-away attack). (Pretend to attack whilst actually running away from the opponent.)
- n) Kicks to the knee joint
Attacks to the knee joint with the CHU-SOKU (instep) or SOKU-TOU (knife-edge of the foot), from either the front or the side, are fouls.

- o) Throwing.
- p) Running away by repeatedly doing JOGAI. (Step outside the area.)
- q) When a competitor avoids engagement for more than 10 seconds and fails to resume fighting promptly after the command "ZOKKOU".
- r) Any action that may be considered a bad attitude towards the competition.
- s) Attack after the command "YAME".
- t) Attack with the HIJI-UCHI-OROSHI technique to the shoulder or collarbone.
- u) Any other actions that the referees may regard as fouls.

MITOMEZU (No count)

When IPPON (one full point), WAZA-ARI (one-half point), HANSOKU (fouls), etc. is not approved of, it will be judged as MITOMEZU (no count).

CHUI (warning)

- a) A foul is charged with one warning "CHUI ICHI".
- b) When any action is considered as a deliberate or malicious foul, or when severe damage has been caused by a foul, a CHUI NI (two warnings) may be given at the first time.
- c) CHUI YON (fourth penalty) results in SHIKKAKU (disqualification).

SHIKKAKU (disqualification)

The following cases result in SHIKKAKU (disqualification);

- a) Failing to obey the referee's instructions during the bout.
- b) Being late for a bout or failing to appear.
- c) Facing each other for more than one minute without engaging in a fight. This shall be regarded as a lack of will to fight, and both competitors shall be disqualified.
- d) Any actions considered as sheer violence, seriously deliberate fouls, or deliberate bad attitude towards the competition.
- e) When the competitor vomits during the bout (after the HAJIME command, and before the HANTEI).
- f) In case of CHUI YON.

[IMPORTANT] Additional points of CHUI and SHIKKAKU

- A) If the worn protector of legs and arms, chest, and vital areas (Foul Cup/ Under Guard) comes off, it is the Main Referee's decision to give the competitor CHUI ICHI. If it keeps coming off, CHUI will be added. Head Gear does not count.
- B) CHUI does not attribute the pants falling off.
- C) A competitor who was attacked with a foul technique should not point it out (appeal) in unnatural behavior. If the behavior is judged as an appeal, he/she can be given a CHUI ICHI.
- D) A competitor will be disqualified if his/her protector is judged deteriorated or modified (pad removed, the pad being too thin, using a chest guard that protects the abdomen, etc.).
- E) Competitors must manage their matches and attend the matches themselves. A competitor will be disqualified if he/she does not make it to the court on time or goes to the wrong court. However, if it is an error clearly caused by the staff (ex. wrong call of names), the referee in charge will take action on a case-by-case basis.
- F) Competitors without all red items (red belt and red mark for headgear) will be disqualified.
- G) Competitors in white will be disqualified if he/she wears all red items.
- H) Competitors not wearing a designated protector will be disqualified.
- I) Competitors late for the match will be disqualified.
- J) Competitors who bring phones, rings, necklaces, and other metal objects into the court will be disqualified.
*There was a case where a competitor had a phone in their Dogi and started a match
- K) Competitors who lack any red items will be given CHUI ICHI.
- L) Competitors wearing a foul cup over their Dogis will be given CHUI ICHI
- M) The CHUI given for the lack of red items or deficiencies of supporters will not reset in the extension bout.
- N) Competitors who bring cloth or papers into the court will be disqualified.
* There was a case where a competitor had ID passes and masks in their Dogi and started a match

Giving up Competition

Anyone who fails to take part in the bout as scheduled without any good reason shall be fined no more than 150,000 Japanese Yen. However, the following circumstances are exceptions;

- a) When the Tournament Doctor has, after medical examination, made a decision that the competitor cannot continue the bout.
- b) If any unforeseen misfortune to anyone closely related to the competitor (such as family members, etc.) happens immediately before or during the bout, permission to leave the competition area will be given after consultation between the Head Judge and the Executive Committee Chairman.

Standard Actions of Referees

Requests to Referees

1. The most important thing for the referees is to respect the life of the competitors and give it the highest priority during the bout. In case of any accident during the bout, the referee shall have the ability to stay calm and to see the situation clearly to take quick and appropriate actions.
2. The Referees must not be biased in judging but must have the ability to make fair judgments.
3. The Referees must give signs and actions clearly and promptly.

KUMITE (fighting)

Start of Bout

- Both competitors will be called to enter the competition mat by the tournament assistant.
- The Main Referee shall stand in the center between both competitors, and give the commands “SHOMEN NI REI” (Bow to front), “SHUSHIN NI REI” (Bow to Main Referee), “OTAGAI NI REI” (Bow to each other), and then the bout will start with his commands “KAMAETE” (Take fighting position) and “HAJIME (Start).”

During the Bout

- The Corner Referees shall show IPPON, WAZA-ARI, HANSOKU, and JOGAI by blowing the whistle and showing those judgments with flags. The Main Referee shall give the command “YAME” (stop) and instruct both competitors to go back to their initial positions and show the judgment results both verbally and physically.
- The signals to be given by the Corner Referees both by whistles and flags, and the judgments and actions to be given by the Main Referee are as follows:
 - IPPON**
Corner Referee – Shall raise diagonally upwards the flag with the color corresponding to the competitor who got the IPPON and at the same time blow a single long and loud blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall stop the bout by the command “YAME”, state the color of the raised flags and count them, including himself in the count, state the technique that resulted in IPPON, and raise upwards his arm of the winner’s side and declare “IPPON”.
 - WAZA-ARI**
Corner Referee – Shall raise horizontally the flag of the competitor who took the WAZA-ARI, giving a single loud blast on the whistle strongly once.
Main Referee – Shall stop the bout by the command “YAME”, state the color of the raised flags and count them, including himself in the count, state the technique that resulted in WAZA-ARI, and raise horizontally his arm of the winner’s side and declare “WAZA-ARI”.
 - From WAZA-ARI to IPPON**
 If the competitor does not stand up within three seconds or does not regain his will to fight within three seconds;
Corner Referee – Shall change the flag position from WAZA-ARI to IPPON, and at the same time blow a single long and loud blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall state “IPPON” if the majority of the referees, including himself (three or more) has made such a judgment. If less than three referees give IPPON, the judgment will remain “WAZA-ARI”.
 - HANSOKU**
Corner Referee – Shall wave diagonally downwards the flag with the color corresponding to the competitor who made a foul, and at the same time blow several short, sharp blasts on the whistle.
Main Referee – In case of a foul being equal to “CHUI”, he shall stop the bout by giving the command “YAME”, state the color of the waved flags, count the number of flags including himself, and then he shall state the actions that resulted in HANSOKU, pointing with his forefinger at the competitor who got the CHUI and declare “CHUI ICHI.” The same action shall be taken in case of CHUI NI. (In case of directly giving CHUI NI or SHIKKAKU at one foul, the Main Referee must consult with the Corner Referees first.)
 - TSUKAMI-AI, KAKAEKOMI (grappling and clinching each other at the same time)**
Corner Referee – Shall wave both flags diagonally downwards and at the same time blow several short, sharp blasts on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall stop the bout by giving the command “YAME”, separate both competitors and start the bout again by the command “ZOKKOU” (continue). Depending on the way of grappling, both competitors may be given CHUI ICHI respectively.
 - JOGAI (out of bounds)**
Corner Referee – Tapping the floor several times with the flag of the side of the competitor who got JOGAI, he shall blow several short, sharp blasts on the whistle.
Main Referee – He shall immediately give the command “YAME” and call “JOGAI”, and then bring back the competitors to the center of the fighting area, start the bout again with the command “ZOKKOU”.
 - FUMEI (unclear)**
Corner Referee – Shall cross two flags in front of his face, and blow a single short sharp blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall let the bout go on without any interruption.
 - MITOMEZU (no count)**
Corner Referee – Shall Cross the two flags and wave them back and forth and blow a single long and loud blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Depending on the situation, he may declare MITOMEZU.
 - HANTEI-GACHI (victory by decision)**
Corner Referee – Shall raise diagonally upwards the flag with the color corresponding to the competitor who is considered to be the winner, and at the same time blow a single long, loud blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall ask the Corner Referees for their decisions by stating “HANTEI O TORIMASU” (take a decision) and “HANTEI” (decision), declare the color of the flag of the winner, count the number of flags including himself, raise his arm diagonally upwards and declare the color of the flag of the winner.
 (The number of flags for a draw and for the opponent shall also be counted, even though the number is not enough for a majority decision.)
 - HIKI-WAKE (draw)**
Corner Referee – Shall cross the flags in front of his knees, and at the same time blow a single long, loud blast on the whistle.
Main Referee – Shall count the number of flags indicating a draw and cross diagonally downwards his arms in front of himself, and declare “HIKI-WAKE”. (The number of raised flags shall also be counted, even though they are not enough for a majority decision.)
 - SHIKKAKU (disqualified)**
Corner Referee – Especially for seriously vicious fouls, the Corner Referee shall request the Main Referee for consultation.
Main Referee – Shall raise diagonally upwards his arm on the side of the competitor who has been disqualified, and then point with his finger in the direction outside the competition mat and declare “SHIKKAKU”.

- In case the dogi of the competitor comes into disorder during the bout, the Main Referee may stop the bout, bring back the competitors to their original positions, and adjust the dogi of the competitor or have him adjust it by himself.

End of Bout

- In case of IPPON or SHIKKAKU;

The Main Referee shall stop the bout and make both competitors face to the front and declare IPPON or SHIKKAKU, and give commands "SHOMEN NI REI" (Bow to the front), "SHUSHIN NI REI" (Bow to Main Referee), and "OTAGAI NI REI" (Bow towards each other). And then instruct the competitors to leave the competition mat.

- In case of no IPPON nor SHIKKAKU;

Corner Referee – Shall, at the same time as the signal for ending the bout, blow a single long, loud blast on the whistle.

Main Referee– Shall give the command "YAME" and stop the bout immediately, get the competitors back to their original positions, make them face to the front, and request the Corner Referees for their decisions by stating "HANTEI O TORIMASU" and "HANTEI".

Corner Referee – When asked by the Main Referee for "HANTEI", he shall raise diagonally upwards the flag on the side of the considered winner and at the same time blow his whistle strongly once. In case the bout is a draw, he shall cross the two flags in front of his knees and at the same time blow a single short, sharp blast on the whistle.

Main Referee – Shall declare the color of the flag on the winner's side, count the number of raised flags including himself, and raise his arm diagonally upwards, declaring the winner if the number of flags of the same color gets the majority. (The number of flags for a draw and for the opponent shall also be counted.)

An example (1): "AKA (red) ICHI (1), NI (2) SAN (3), SHI (4) and GO (5)" "AKA (red)"

An example (2): "HIKIWAKE (draw) ICHI (1), NI (2), "AKA (red) ICHI (1), NI (2) and SAN (3)" "AKA (red)"

In case of a draw, the Main Referee shall count the numbers for a draw, crossing his arms diagonally downwards in his front and declare "HIKIWAKE (draw)". And he shall proceed to an Extension or "Decision by Weight".

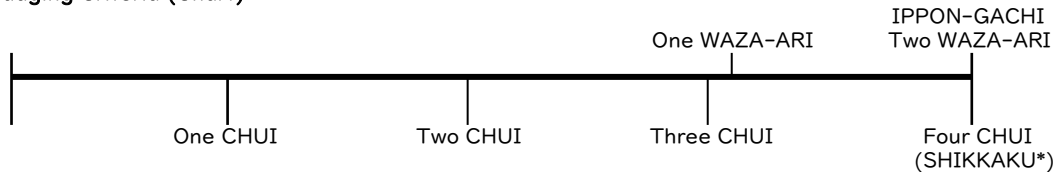
An example: "AKA (red) ICHI (1)", "HIKIWAKE (draw) ICHI (1), NI (2), SAN (3) and SHI (4)" "HIKIWAKE (draw)"

- The Main Referee shall declare the winner, and give the commands "SHOMEN NI REI", "SHUSHIN NI REI", "OTAGAI NI REI" and instruct the competitors to leave the competition mat.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Below is a description of the relation between CHUI (warning) and WAZA-ARI (half-point), which of the two shall be the decisive part in different situations.

I. Judging Criteria (Chart)



* disqualification due to foul

2. Judging Criteria (Description)

① WAZA-ARI and IPPON

0 < One WAZA-ARI < IPPON (Two WAZA-ARI)

② In case there is no CHUI nor WAZA-ARI, and the bout is close

O) Damages shall be given the first priority in judging the winner.

P) In case no damage is seen in both competitors, the first priority for judging shall be given to the number of YUKO-DA (effective techniques).

Q) In case the number of YUKO-DA is the same, priority should be given to the number of techniques (punches and kicks, etc.).

R) In case there is no difference in the number of techniques between the two competitors, the one who shows more initiative (fighting spirit, moving forward, attacking first) will win the bout.

S) For the final extension, the referees must make a decision based on the dominance of either fighter.

IPPON > WAZA-ARI > Damage > YUKO-DA > Number of Techniques > Initiative (fighting spirit, moving forward, attacking first)

③ In case one competitor has one CHUI more than the other, this does not influence the decision much. The decision shall be made mainly on the contents of the bout. However, in case of a final extension, if there is no difference in the fighting between the two competitors, the one with one CHUI will lose the bout.

< 0 = One CHUI = Two CHUI = Three CHUI > Four CHUI
>

④ In case of a difference of two CHUI, the one who has two more CHUI will lose. However, if he/she is obviously leading his opponent (on a scale of 6:4 or more), it is possible to make a draw. In the final extension bout, a competitor who is behind by two CHUI shall be declared to lose, regardless of any apparent advantage in the match, unless he/she scores a Waza-ari or Ippon.

0 ≧ Two CHUI
One CHUI ≧ Three CHUI

⑤ In case of a difference of three CHUI, the one who has three more CHUI will lose, no matter how much he is leading the bout.

0 > Three CHUI

⑥ When one competitor has both WAZA-ARI and CHUI, the WAZA-ARI is prioritized, and that competitor will win. However, depending on the number of CHUI and content, it may be judged like down below:

- 0 < WAZA-ARI + One CHUI
- 0 < WAZA-ARI + Two CHUI
- 0 ≧ WAZA-ARI + Three CHUI

In principle, the competitor holding one WAZA-ARI and three CHUI is the winner, but if the opponent is leading the bout

very clearly (on a scale of 6:4 or more), it is possible to give a draw.

d) 0 > WAZA-ARI + Four CHUI

Even if one has one WAZA-ARI, Four CHUI will disqualify the competitor.

Safety Rules

*For All-Japan Kumite competitions (excluding the Student Men categories, U-25 Women category), and Rookie Tournament

IPPON-GACHI (full point victory)

- a) A thrust (TSUKI), kick (KERI), and elbow strike (HIJI UCHI) or any other technique, excluding actions listed as fouls, which vigorously downs the opponent or if he backs down to his knees. Even if the opponent stands up within three seconds, it is still regarded as an Ippon.
- b) When a well-focused downward punch (GEDAN TSUKI) is followed immediately in good timing after making the opponent float in midair and downing the opponent with the combination of foot sweeps (ASHI-BARAI) and/or low kick (GEDAN-MAWASHI-GERI).
- c) If the opponent has lost his will to fight for three or more seconds.
- d) When having obtained two WAZA-ARI (half-points), which results in one IPPON (full-point).

WAZA-ARI (half-point)

- a) When a thrust (TSUKI), kick (KERI), elbow strike (HIJI UCHI), etc., excluding actions listed as fouls, loses the opponent's balance or stop the opponent's movements.
- b) When a kick hits the opponent's unguarded upper body (above the neck). Not valid for pushed, touched, and/or grazed kicks.
- c) When an attack makes the opponent float in midair and down the opponent with the combination of foot sweeps (ASHI-BARAI) and/or low kicks (GEDAN-MAWASHI-GERI) as well as other kicks like front kicks (MAE GERI) and roundhouse kicks (MAWASHI GERI).
- d) When a well-focused downward punch (GEDAN TSUKI) is followed immediately in good timing after avoiding the opponent's "sacrifice technique" (SUTEMI WAZA), which would include the DOMAWASHI-KAITEN-GERI (rolling kick).
- e) If the opponent has lost his will to fight but resumes the fight within three seconds.