

## COMPETITOR RULES

**LEGAL AGE RULE:** All competitors have the option of competing in the same division all year long for rating purposes, by establishing a legal competition age for the year. For rating purposes, the age that a competitor is on January 1st of the current competition year is their legal competition age for that year. They can compete all year at that age so he/she can earn rating points in one age division all year. A competitor can always choose to compete in his/her chronological age and will be awarded points in that division when doing so. All points stay in the division the competitor earned them in and do not go with the competitor if the competitor changes divisions.

**PROOF OF AGE RULE:** All competitors must be able to provide proof of age. If there is a legitimate reason to question a competitor's age, he/she must be able to present a proof of age (birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents) to prove his/her age.

**RANK RULE:** A competitor must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts. A competitor can never compete in a lower belt division than the highest level of belt he/she has earned. All competitors have the option to compete in the same division all year long for rating purposes by establishing a legal competition rank for the year. If, because of a projected rank promotion during the year, a competitor wants to compete all year in a higher rank division in order to keep their points in one division, then the competitor can move up a rank division and earn rating points in that rank division all year. A competitor can always choose to compete at his/her current rank and will be awarded points in that division when doing so. All points stay in the division the competitor earned them in and do not go with the competitor if the competitor changes divisions. Once a competitor competes as a black belt legally, he/she must always compete as a black belt.

**COMPETITOR RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is the responsibility of the competitor to know the rules and be ready for competition when called. He/she must be at the appropriate ring when competition begins. Three calls will be made for competition at ringside. If the competitor is not at his/her ring ready to compete when competition begins, he/she will not be permitted to enter the division. If a competitor leaves the ring after the competition begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, his/her name will be called three times at ringside. If he/she is still not present he/she will be disqualified.

**UNIFORMS:** All competitors must wear a complete traditional or professional sport karate uniform. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. T-shirts are allowed if they are part of the competitor's official school uniform. Shoes may be worn in form and weapon divisions if they do not damage or mark the competition floor. Shoes may not be worn for sparring competition.

**ORDER OF COMPETITION:** Once the final call for a division is made at ringside, competitors will be selected randomly for the order of competition. The first three competitors will perform before any scores are awarded. After the third competitor is finished, the first competitor will be called back up for scoring, followed by the second and third competitors. This provides the judges a sampling of the quality of the competitors. For forms and weapons divisions with 3 or fewer competitors, the judges may choose to score at the end of each performance.

**LATE ENTRIES:** Once a division has started (the first competitor has started or first bout has started) no competitor(s) can be added to that division.

**FORM AND WEAPON DIVISION SCORING:** The MMA will have two scoring ranges for all form and weapon divisions.

**RING SIZE/MARKINGS:** The size of the fighting and form rings shall be determined by each promoter with consideration to the venue size and available space.

**TIED SCORES:** If there is a tie for first, second or third place, the competitors must perform and be scored again to break the tie.

**WEAPON DIVISIONS:** A competitor who drops his/her weapon or whose weapon breaks or comes apart, or has a gross loss of control during his/her routine is automatically disqualified.

**STARTING A FORM OVER:** Under Black Belt competitors may start his/her form over because of a memory lapse or any other reason due to his/her own failure, he/she may perform the form again. The judges will score as though there was not a mistake.

**PROTEST:** A competitor has the right to protest a rules violation or if a possible mistake has been made (not a judgment call). If a competitor wishes to protest, he/she should first let the center judge know he/she believes there has been a violation of the rules or a mistake has been made. The center judge will first attempt to settle the disagreement. If the center judge cannot settle the disagreement, the arbitrator will make the final call. All protests must be made immediately. Protests are not allowed once competition has resumed.

**REQUIRED EQUIPMENT:** MMA approved headgear; hand and foot pads, mouthpiece and groin cups (for male competitors only) are mandatory for all competitors in sparring divisions. The center judge will check all competitors equipment. If it is deemed unsafe, he/she will be asked to change the equipment before he/she can compete. **Hand Pads:** A soft padded surface must cover the fingers, wrist and any striking surface of the hand. **Foot Pads:** A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel of the foot. The bottom of the foot does not have to be padded. **Head Gear:** The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface and must be firmly secured. Insufficiently padded gloves, foot and head gear will not be allowed. Equipment must be in a good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury.

**ORDER OF COMPETITION (SPARRING):** Once the final call for a sparring division has been made at ringside. If byes are needed, they will be picked randomly. Same school competitors may be separated from each other in the first round if possible. (Competitors cannot pick whom they want or do not want to fight.)

**NUMBER OF JUDGES:** Five judges are required in all black belt form and weapon divisions. At least three judges are required in all sparring divisions and under black belt form and weapon divisions.

REMOVAL OF JUDGES: If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from division for good reason, he/she must protest before the division begins to the arbitrator. It is totally up to the rules arbitrator to determine if an official should be removed.

CENTER JUDGE: Each ring should have an MMA promoter as a center judge. The center judge is the head official and is thoroughly versed on the rules and order of competition. He/she promotes the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. 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.

Center Judge Responsibilities:

Match starts and ends only with his/her command (not the command of the timekeeper);

Has final decision on any disputes on score;

Has the ability to issue warnings and award penalties

• Can overrule a majority call only to issue a warning or a penalty point;

• Can issue time-outs.

• The disqualification of a competitor, where disqualification is not automatic, is determined only by a majority vote of the judges.

CORNER JUDGES: Corner judges call points as they see them. The center judge may consult with a corner judge to help in determining penalties or warnings, although the judge alone has the power to issue them. They will be asked to vote on disqualification rulings. It is the majority vote of the judges that determines a scoring point.

LENGTH OF MATCH: Matches will run two minutes or until five points are scored, whichever occurs first. If no competitor scores five points before time expires, the competitor with the most points during the two minutes is declared the winner. If a match is tied at the end of two minutes, sudden victory (first person to score a point) overtime period will determine the winner.

WARNINGS AND PENALTIES: Only two (2) face contacts will be tolerated. The first face contact will result in a penalty point. The second face contact will result in a disqualification. If the center judge deems the first face contact is too severe the offender will be disqualified.

NO BLOOD RULE- If any judge sees contact and a competitor is injured and has flowing blood then the offending competitor is automatically disqualified.

Penalty Points: A competitor **cannot** be penalized and still receive a point on the same call.

If, in the opinion of the judge, a competitor cannot continue because of an injury caused by an illegal penalized attack executed by his/her competitor, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified.

## Defining Divisions for Competition

*In the event that a tournament does not have separate Creative and Extreme divisions the creative and Extreme divisions would be combined and the division would be open to Any Non-traditional Performance. If only one empty hand or weapons division is offered then the competition is considered Open and all competitors compete in the same division with NO deduction for the rules defining Traditional, Creative and Extreme.*

**1. Traditional Forms and Weapons** – These forms must capture the essence of classic martial arts movements, showcasing the traditional techniques, stances, footwork, and weapons. Emphasis is placed on execution of technique, application of technique, balance, speed, power, solid stances, and focus. Forms may be unmodified or modified from what a system or school considers to be the original version of the form; however, performance of the following movements will result in a downgrade of the form, or upon unanimous vote of the judges, a "no score" as a form inappropriate for the division: more than two kicks with the same leg without putting the foot down in between; front or back flips; cartwheels; front or side leg splits; releases of the weapon other than simple hand switches; or any other gymnastic movements or extreme exhibitions of flexibility or agility with the body or weapon that are deemed in the opinion of the judges to be inappropriate for the division pursuant to the general guidelines set forth here.

*Commentary: There has been a great deal of debate among reputable martial artists regarding whether a form or series of moves are outside of the bounds of the Traditional Division. Because MMA is a tournament circuit open to all styles and schools (across the nation and around the world) and from which judges are utilized, each competitor must make his or her own decision regarding whether to include movements which might be to be objectionable for the Traditional Division.*

**2. Creative Forms and Weapons** – The Creative Division allows forms to include contemporary martial arts techniques that have evolved over the last 30 years. These may be added to traditional form, or the form may be devised in its entirety by the competitor. The Creative Division was formerly known as the Open and before that the *American* Division. A form in the Creative Division must **ONLY** include techniques which originate from martial arts and like the Traditional Division, emphasis will be placed on execution of the techniques, application of the techniques, balance, speed, power, solid stances, and focus. Spinning kicks, jump spinning kicks, flying kicks, multiple kicks, splits, weapon twirls, weapon releases, and other creative martial arts techniques are permitted. Movements that involve more than a 360 degree spin, require the body to be inverted more than parallel to the floor, or are similar to movements found in gymnastics and/or non martial arts disciplines, or forms that meet the above definition of strictly traditional forms, will result in a downgrade by the judges or, upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a "no score" as a form inappropriate for the division. Unless the Extreme division is not offered, where creative would include extreme movements.

*Commentary: The Creative Division is intended for those competitors who do not wish to compete with a strictly traditional form, and/or do not wish to compete against other participants who execute extreme gymnastic-type movements. Over the past several years, it was often observed that judging these "creative" forms in the same division with forms including extreme martial arts "tricks" was essentially comparing apples and oranges, and to be more fair to the participants these divisions should be separated. NASKA has therefore created a separate "Extreme Division", as detailed below, separate and distinct from the Creative Division, thus allowing the Creative Division to include only those forms with movements that originate more inherently from the classic martial arts systems.*

*Regarding the Creative Weapons Divisions, it is important to note that any particular weapons movement shall NOT be a factor in determining whether the weapons form constitutes a Creative or Extreme Form. The determining factor shall be the particular body movements as defined below in the Extreme Divisions. Consequently, a Creative Weapons competitor is permitted to perform weapons move (i.e., twirls, releases, spins, etc.), but is not permitted to perform "Extreme" body movements (i.e., flips, 540 and above spins or any inverted body moves, etc.).*

**3. Extreme Forms and Weapons** – The Extreme Divisions allow the competitor to perform any movements whether they originate from traditional or contemporary martial arts systems or otherwise. However, (1) at least half of the form must originate from martial arts techniques, and (2) the competitor must execute at least one technique that involves an inverted move or greater than 360 degree spin. Emphasis is placed on the quality of execution of techniques and movements, martial arts skills, balance, speed, power, degree of difficulty, and showmanship. In addition, only those movements that portray a definite offensive or defensive martial arts purpose, or are included to illustrate extreme flexibility or agility, are allowed. Inclusion of other movements, or the performance of a form or weapons form meeting the criteria above for a Traditional or Creative form, will result in a downgrade by the judges, or upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a "no score" as a form inappropriate for the division.

*Commentary: As martial arts evolves from the Traditional to Creative to Extreme, this category allows for the integration of techniques and movements from all martial art styles, gymnastics, acrobatics, dance, and athletic disciplines. If a competitor wishes to participate in a division with moves not permitted in the Traditional and Creative Divisions but meeting the guidelines described here, the competitor should compete in the Extreme Division.*

**4. Musical Forms and Weapons:** The Musical Divisions requires a form or weapons form meeting the above criteria for a Traditional, Creative, and Extreme form, choreographed in a general sense to the beats or rhythm of music chosen and provided by the competitor. Primary emphasis shall be placed on innovative choreography of moves to the music, however, the basic criteria listed above for all forms must also be observed. Simply performing a Traditional, Creative, or Extreme form with background music, or a form not meeting the basic criteria for all forms above, will result in a downgrade by the judges, or upon unanimous vote of the judges, a "no score" as a form inappropriate for the division.

Each competitor must provide a music player of reasonable and non-intrusive size at ringside to play his or her music, and an attendant at the player who must be present at all times during the performance. As each form begins, a music volume check must be made, during which time the player attendant will look to the center judge for a nod of approval or a signal to lower the volume. Once this volume is set, it may not be increased during the performance of the form.

*Commentary. Because such divisions are not Musical Divisions by the above definition, choreography to the beats or rhythm of the music is not required. Likewise, because the Grand Championships are not considered Musical Divisions, choreography to the beats or rhythm of the music is not required. Please note that even though your form does not have to be choreography to the beats and rhythm of the music in the above circumstances, if a competitor decides to use music, the music will be judged as part of their form or weapon form performance.*

*Commentary: If a competitor receives a "no score" decision by the judges because they feel the competitor's form is not appropriate for the division, the competitor is not allowed to redo his/her form or weapon form in that division. It is the responsibility of the competitor to read and understand the rules of the division he/she is competing in before competition starts.*

## SPARRING RULES

**LENGTH OF MATCH:** Two minute running time unless five points are scored before time has expired. If a match is tied at the end of two minutes, sudden victory (first person to score a point) overtime period will determine the match.

**POINT VALUES AND WINNER DETERMINATION:** 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 awarded one (1) point. The competitor who earns five (5) points by the end of the two minutes or whoever is ahead at the end of the two minutes is declared the winner.

**MARJORITY VOTE:** Points are awarded by a majority vote of all judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. A majority of the judges calling the point must call a two (2)-point kick before two points can be awarded. Otherwise only one point is awarded.

**WHAT IS A POINT:** A point is a controlled legal sport karate technique scored by a competitor in-bounds and up-right (not considered down) without time being called that strikes a competitor with the allowable amount of focused touch contact to a legal target area.

**LEGAL TARGET AREAS:** Entire head and (face only in Black belt division), ribs, chest, abdomen, collarbone and kidneys. **ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS:** Spine, back of neck, throat, sides of the neck, groin, legs, knees and back. **NON-TARGET AREAS:** Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet. **LEGAL TECHNIQUES:** Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques, except those listed as illegal. **ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES:** Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs on a hard surface floor, ground fighting on a hard surface, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed competitor, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled blind techniques, any uncontrolled throws, takedowns or sweeps and any other uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.

**GRABBING:** A competitor may grab the uniform top of his/her opponent in an attempt to score with a sport karate technique for only one second (**immediately**), after which time he/she must release the uniform. Likewise, the uniform pants may be grabbed for one second to an upright opponent in an attempt to score.

**SWEEPS, TAKEDOWNS, GRABS AND GROUND FIGHTING:** Sweeps not to take down an opponent, but only to obstruct the balance so as to follow up with a sport karate technique can only be executed to the back of the front leg at mid-calf or below. A sweep must be deemed a proper sweep and not a kick, to be legal. Controlled Takedowns and sweeps that are meant to take down an opponent are allowed only a declared approved padded surface. A point is only given when the legal sweep or takedown is effectively and legally followed up with an appropriate sport karate technique **immediately**. Only a hand technique will be allowed on a downed competitor. Never, under any circumstances, may a competitor stomp or kick a downed competitor.

**LIGHT TOUCH CONTACT:** Means there is no penetration or visible movement of the competitor as a result of the contact. Light touch is required to all legal target areas in all black belt sparring.

**MODERATE TOUCH CONTACT:** Means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch contact may be made to all legal target areas except the headgear and face.

**WARNINGS AND PENALTIES:** One and only one warning is allowed for breaking the rules before a penalty point is awarded. After the first warning is given, a penalty point is awarded for each and every rules violation. If a competitor receives four warnings (three penalty points) in any one match, he/she will be disqualified. If the severity of the first rules violation is deemed by the referee to be too severe, a penalty point can be issued immediately.

**Other Penalty Rules:** A competitor cannot be penalized and still receive a point on the same call. A competitor can receive a point for a proper technique and another point from a penalty call against his/her competitor (two points awarded). If, in the opinion of the referee and/or the medical personnel, a competitor cannot continue because of an injury caused by an illegal penalized attack executed by his/her competitor, the offending competitor shall be automatically disqualified.

**Other Cause for Penalization:** Attacking illegal and non-target areas, using illegal techniques, running out of the ring to avoid fighting, falling to the floor to avoid fighting, continuing after being ordered to stop, excessive stalling, blind, negligent or reckless attacks, uncontrolled techniques, showing unsportsmanlike behavior by the competitor, his/her coaches, friends, etc., excessive contact, and delay of time are examples of possible penalization.

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Requires a majority vote by all officials, unless it is an automatic disqualification. **Non-Competing Penalty:** If, in the majority opinion of the officials, it is considered that the competitors are not making an obvious attempt to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be warned and if it continues, will be disqualified. **Wrong Division:** If any competitor competes in a division he/she does not qualify to compete in due to age, weight, rank, gender, style, etc., he/she will be disqualified.

**COACHING:** The luxury of having a coach is something that most competitors do not have access to. Therefore, it sometimes can become an unfair advantage over a competitor who does not have a coach. The rules are made and enforced so no one competitor has an advantage or disadvantage over another competitor. Therefore, coaching is allowed but only under the following guidelines:

1. Never, at any time, can a coach enter the ring without the referee's permission, 2. No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching; Coaches cannot shout directions (specific techniques); 3. Coaches cannot ask for a time out (only the competitor may ask for a time out), 4. Coaches can never, at any time, interfere with the proper running of the ring or the decisions of the judges. A **Coach** is defined as anyone who is trying to help one competitor in anyway. A coach could be but is not limited to a friend, parent, team mate or official coach. The center referee can issue a warning to a competitor for each time his/her coach is interfering with a match or disrupting fair play between contestants. A referee can ask for a disqualification of a contest, but requires a majority vote of all judges.

**OUT-OF-BOUNDS:** A competitor is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one foot touching inside or on the boundary line. An out of bounds competitor cannot score a point while out of bounds. In bounds competitor can score on an out of bounds competitor if the center referee has not called stop.