

2018 AAU Karate Handbook



2018 AAU Karate Handbook – General Rules

SECTION 1. AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR COMPETITION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL GUIDELINE

- The rules of competition for all tournaments, matches, and competitions sanctioned by AAU/USA KARATE shall be as stated herein. These rules shall be used in all sanctioned competitions, without modification or amendment for events which qualify athletes for further competition.
- These rules are based upon the rules adopted by the different International Federations (IF) for competition. These rules, or any part thereof, may be modified or amended by AAU/USA KARATE National Executive Committee at any time. Whenever a specific rule is in conflict with a more general rule, the specific rule shall take precedence.
- International Federation rules without modification shall be used in team selection procedure. Modifications without AAU/USA Karate Committee approval may not be made for any competition to select competitors for the AAU/USA National Karate Team.
- Under special circumstances exceptions to these rules may be made with the prior approval of the National Executive Committee, with consultation with the Referee Council.
- All exceptions to these rules, National competition or International Team selection, in whole or part must be approved by the AAU/USA Karate Executive Committee.

ARTICLE 2. COMPETITION AREA

- The competition area must be flat and devoid of hazard. The area shall be a matted square of suitable size. Where mats are not used, the competition area may be defined by marking the boundaries with colored tape of appropriate thickness. The area may be elevated to a height of up to one meter above floor level. The elevated platform should be of suitable size to allow safe competition without restriction.
- The competition area in principle must be a matted square in all AAU/USA National Championships and AAU/USA Team Trials. The mats used at any AAU/USA National Championships or Team Trials competition must be substantially similar to those mats used at international competitions, and should be non-slip where they contact the floor proper, but have a low coefficient of friction on the upper surface.

ARTICLE 3. OFFICIAL ATTIRE

- All officials, contestants and coaches must wear the official uniform as prescribed. The National Referee Council, Referee Panel may disbar any coach or competitor who does not comply with this regulation. In cases of a minor deviation from the official uniform, the National Referee Council (National events) or Chief Referee (Regional and District events) may allow participation of the official, coach or competitor.

Referee, Judges and Officials - Referees and Judges must wear the official uniform designated by the Referee Committee. This uniform must be worn at and during all tournaments and courses.

The official uniform for Referees and judges shall be as follows:

- A single breasted navy blue blazer, bearing two silver buttons.
- A white shirt with long or short sleeves.
- The official AAU tie worn without tie pin.
- Plain light gray trousers without cuffs.

- An official badge.
- Un-patterned dark blue or black socks.
- Black slip-on shoes for use on the match area.
- A whistle attached to a white chord.
- Referees and Judges may wear a clip or elastic to secure long hair.
- All officials must present their license credentials to the Chief Referee or Council of Referees prior to the commencement of the opening ceremonies.
- Jewelry of any kind is not allowed, including watches, wedding rings and stud earrings.

If the Referee Committee agrees, refereeing officials may be allowed to remove their blazers. However, should the referee committee allow the removal of the official's blazers; all officials must remove their blazers.

Coaches - Coach shall at all times wear the official uniform as prescribed during the course of the tournament.

The official uniform for coaches shall be as follows:

- White Gi pants, white athletic shoes, an official coach's shirt and an identifying credential placed around their neck.
- Coaches shall not wear their own team, organization or club jackets.
- Coaches must be current members of AAU in good standing.
- No coach shall have another person substitute or act in his behalf. Those in violation will not be able to coach for a minimum of two years.

National Coaching Staff - AAU/USA National coaching staff shall at all times during the tournament wear the official AAU/USA tracksuit and display official identification.

- National Coaching staff shall comply with all rules and regulations applicable to all coaches.

Contestants - Contestants shall at all times wear the official uniform as prescribed during the course of the tournament. The National Referee Council, Referee Panel may disbar any contestant or who does not comply with this regulation.

The official uniform for competitors shall be as follows:

- All contestants must wear a white unmarked Karate gi without stripes or piping.
- The official AAU patch shall be worn on the uniform jacket and must be properly sewn on. This must be on the left breast of the jacket and shall not exceed an overall size of 10cm by 10cm.
- The Karate Gi jacket, when tightened around the waist with the belt, must be of minimum length that covers the hips, but no longer than three quarters of thigh. The Gi jacket must be of kimono style (left side over right), not V-neck style.
- Gi sleeves may not be rolled either on the outside or inside of the sleeve. The sleeves of the Gi jacket must come, in principle, at least halfway down the forearm. The maximum length of the Gi jacket sleeves must be no longer than the bend of the wrist.
- The Gi trousers must be long enough to cover at least two thirds of the shin. The maximum length of the Gi trousers must not exceed below the anklebone. Gi trousers may not be rolled up either on the outside or inside of the leg.
- All contestants must wear a belt. The belts must be near 5 centimeters wide and of a length sufficient to allow 15 centimeters free on each side of the knot ends after it has been properly tied around the waist, but not to hang lower than the knee.

- Uniforms may not bear unreasonably sized trademark or name of a product or manufacturer, and may not bear the name of a club or organization. Only the original manufacturer's labels may be displayed on the gi and in the normally accepted locations.
- An identifying number issued by the organizing committee may be worn on the back, sleeve or breast area of the gi jacket.
- The National Executive Committee may authorize the display of special labels or trademarks of approved sponsors.
- For non-qualifying tournaments and competitions, the organizing committee may allow contestants to wear a single patch or emblem identifying their respective karate organization, school or system on the left breast pocket of the jacket. Such patch or emblem shall not exceed an overall size of 10cm x 10cm, and shall not be of a design or symbol that is offensive to the dignity of the match, unsportsmanlike, or contrary to the principles of Karate-do.
- Female competitor may wear a plain white T-shirt or white sports bra beneath the Karate Gi jacket.
- Contestants must keep their hair clean and cut to a length that does not obstruct competition, performance or present a safety hazard to competitors.
- Long hair may be secured by an elastic band. Hair slides ("scrunchies"), metal hair grips ("barrettes"), Ribbons or other hair decorations and Hachimaki (head band) of any kind shall not be allowed.
- Contestants must have short finger and toenails and must not wear jewelry or other object(s) that might injure their opponents.
- The use of orthodontic appliances or braces must be approved by the Referee Council and the Official Doctor. The contestant accepts full responsibility for any injury.
- Jewelry, hats, caps and sweatbands shall not be allowed.
- If a contestant comes into the match area inappropriately dressed, they shall be given one minute to remedy matters.

Additional Uniform Criteria for KATA Contestants:

- Glasses that are secured to the head are permitted in competition.
- Protective gear shall NOT be worn.

Additional Uniform Criteria for KOBUDO Contestants:

- The contestants may elect to wear a white, blue or black jacket and hakama. The jacket and hakama colors may differ. However, if the contestant chooses to wear a karate-gi, both the jacket and the trousers must be solid white without stripes or piping.
- The sleeves of the Gi jacket may be modified including rolled up, to facilitate safe progression of the performance.
- Glasses that are secured to the head are permitted in competition.
- Protective gear shall NOT be worn.

Additional Uniform Criteria for KUMITE Contestants:

- Standard glasses are forbidden in Kumite divisions. Only plastic safety glasses manufactured specifically for sport use are allowed for all athletes.
- In **Ippon and Sanbon** competition, one contestant must be designated as (Aka) red and the other as (Shiro) white. One contestant must wear a red belt and the other a white belt to designate Aka and Shiro respectively.
- As an alternative identification method for **Ippon and Sanbon** competition, one contestant designated as (Aka) red may wear a red cloth sash in their (Obi) belt as identification and the other side without a sash will be designated as (Shiro) white.

ARTICLE 4. EQUIPMENT

- **General-** Only AAU Karate approved equipment shall be allowed. In regard to contact rules, such protective equipment shall be considered an extension/part of the body.
- **Head Gear-** Kumite contestants' ages 5-17 must have AAU approved white head gear with plastic face shield. (such as Mizuno or Macho Warrior) **(Mandatory)**
- Headgear, with or without face shield is optional for contestants 18 years and older. **(Optional)**
- **Fist Guards-** Approved fist pads are compulsory in all divisions. **(Mandatory)**
- Approved white naugahyde fist guards for **Ippon** and **Sanbon** Kumite. **(Mandatory)**
- **Mouth Guards-** Gum shields are compulsory in all Kumite divisions. **(Mandatory)**
- **Groin Cups-** Groin protectors are compulsory in all Kumite division for male competitors. Groin Cups are to be worn under the Gi trousers. **(Mandatory)**
- **Chest Protectors-** All contestants may wear the authorized white or clear plastic breast protective equipment. Must be worn under the gi top. **(Optional)**
- **Shin Protectors (for Ippon)-** Shin pads and instep protectors are NOT allowed for Ippon kumite.
- **Shin Protectors (for Sanbon)-** Kumite contestants' ages 5-17 may have AAU approved (white cloth or naugahyde) shin pads and instep protectors (cloth or naugahyde). **(Optional)** All Kumite contestants (including adults) may have AAU approved (white cloth or naugahyde) shin pads that are completely covered by a pair of gi pants (3/4 length of the shin). **(Optional)**
- The use of bandages, padding, or supports due to injury must be approved by the Referee Council on the advice of the Official Doctor. No braces that include any metallic parts shall be used. The Referee shall make the final decision as to the permitted use of items or products applied or adhered to the competitor, related to medical treatment, such as tape or other supportive or corrective materials.
- The National executive committee may approve additional equipment.

ARTICLE 5. PROTESTS

- Only a Technical Coach may file a protest of an action or decision about his/her athlete.
- The protest must be submitted to the National Referee Council within 60 minutes of the incident or the decision in question.
- A protest may pertain to an infraction of a rule (for example, wrong range of scoring for kobudo, a point called and awarded after time's up) or an administrative error (for example, omission of an athlete after athlete had reported for competition at the ring).
- A protest shall not pertain to a difference in judgment by the referees and the coach, or used to persuade or lobby for a change in the results.

There shall be a fee of \$100 cash for filing a protest at the time of submitting the protest.

Protest submission procedure

- For an administrative protests, the technical coach should alert the ring coordinator by raising their credential.
- For all other protests:
 - Complete a protest form (see APPENDIX A)
 - Attach a fee of \$100 cash
 - Submit form and fee to the ring coordinator within 60 minutes of the incident
 - The referee council and/or executive committee will review the protest and render a decision

ARTICLE 6. REPECHAGE

- Single elimination brackets are used to determine the two athletes who will compete in the final for first and second place. The repechage bracket is built from each athlete (including any bye in the first round) who was eliminated by the finalists. The winners of the repechage round will be considered double third place winners.

ARTICLE 7. POWERS AND DUTIES

- Power and Duties of the Shushin (Referee), the Fukushin (judge) and the Kansa (Arbitrator) - For the purpose of ensuring strict fairness and uniformity of the methods of judging and thus enhancing the authority of judges, these responsibilities shall be applicable to matches held under the auspices of the National AAU Karate committee.
- The National Executive Committee may direct the National AAU Karate Referee Council and Technical Committee to modify these rules.
- Duties and roles listed below may be combined at competitions as necessary, except in the case of Referee (Shushin) and the Officials (Fukushin). There must be a minimum number of Referee and Officials as prescribed to ensure fairness.

Referee Council

The Referee Council's powers and duties shall be as follows:

- To ensure the correct preparation for each given tournament in consultation with the National Executive Committee and the Organizing Committee. This shall include preparations with regard to competition area arrangement, the provision and deployment of all equipment and necessary facilities, match operation and supervision, safety precautions.
- To appoint and deploy the Area Controllers (with approval of the National Executive Committee) to their respective areas and to act upon and take such action as may be required by the reports of the Area Controllers.
- To supervise, monitor and coordinate the overall performance of the refereeing officials.
- To nominate substitute officials when required. (The composition of a panel of officials may not be changed at the sole discretion of the Arbitrator, Referee or Judge in the ring).
- To investigate and render judgment on official protests.
- To investigate and pass the final judgment on matters of a technical nature which may arise during a given match and for which there are no stipulations in the rules, with consultation and approval of the National Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee shall establish duties that it finds necessary to the Referees Council as needed.

Area Controllers

The Area Controllers powers and duties shall be as follows:

- To supervise the Referees and judges, for all matches in areas under their control.
- To oversee the performance of the Referees and Judges in their areas and to ensure that the Officials appointed are capable of the tasks allotted them.
- To order the Referee to halt the match when the Arbitrator signals a contravention of the Rules of Competition.
- To prepare a daily, written report, on the performance of each official under their supervision, together with their recommendations, if any, to the Referee Council.

Referees

The Referee's powers shall be as follows:

- The Referee ("SHUSHIN") shall have the power to conduct matches (including announcing the start, the suspension, and the end of the match).
- Give all commands and make all announcements.
- To inspect equipment to ensure it is in compliance with requirements and possess no threat of injury to either competitor.
- To inspect equipment to ensure it presents no safety hazard or offer no significant competitive advantage.
- To award score for an accurate and decisive technique in accordance to guidelines and criteria set forth in these rules.
- To obtain and act upon the opinion(s) of the Judges.
- To conduct voting (HANTEI) of the Referee Panel and announce the result.
- To announce the winner.
- To resolve ties in accordance to prescribed rules.
- To announce and start an extra bout when required.
- When three or more judges signaled (by flags or whistle) indicating an effective technique delivered by one of the contestants, the referee must suspend the match, observe their opinion and render a decision on the match.
- To explain to the Area Controller or Referee Council, if necessary the basis for giving a judgment.
- To impose penalties and to issue warning (before, during, or after a bout).
- The authority of the Referee is not confined solely to the competition area but also to its entire immediate perimeter.
- To request confirmation of the Judges' verdict in instances where there may, in the Referee's opinion, be grounds for the judges to re-evaluate their call for warning or penalty.
- To stop the match when in the Referee's opinion, there has been a point scored, a foul committed, or to ensure the safety of the contestants.
- Has the power to call up the judges to discuss disqualification (Kata or Kumite Hansoku/Shikaku).

Judges

The judge(s) ("FUKUSHIN") powers shall be as follows:

- At the beginning of the match take up their positions at prescribed location outside the match area, carrying a pair of red and blue/white flags and a whistle.
- Signal their judgment regarding score or foul by means of flags and whistle.
- Shall carefully observe the actions of the contestants within his range of vision and in the following cases he shall at once signal the referee by means of whistle or flag correctly giving his opinion:
 - When he notices that a contestant is about to commit or had committed a prohibited act.
 - When both or either of the contestants have moved out of the competition area (JOGAI).
 - In all cases when he deems it necessary to bring something to the attention of the referee.
 - To exercise a right to vote on a decision to be taken.
 - When an injury, illness or inability of a contestant to continue is noticed.
 - In other cases when it is deemed necessary to call the attention of the Referee.

Arbitrator

The Arbitrator's (KANSA) powers shall be as follows:

- Supervise time and scorekeepers. Records kept of the match shall become official record subject to the approval of the Arbitrator (Kansa). See appendix **XX** for symbols. The Arbitrator shall keep a separate record of the scores awarded by the Referee and at the same time oversee the actions of the appointed timekeepers and scorekeepers.
- The Arbitrator (KANSA) will assist the Area Controllers by overseeing the match or bout in progress. Should decisions of the Referee and/or Judges, not be in accordance with the Rules of Competition, the Kansa will immediately raise the red flag and blow a whistle. The Area Controller will instruct the Referee to halt the match or bout and correct the irregularity. Records kept of the match shall become official records subject to the approval of the Arbitrator. Before the start of each match or bout, the Arbitrator will ensure that the contestants are wearing approved equipment.

Record Keeper

The Record Keeper's powers shall be as follows:

- Keep the individual match record and assist the Kansa.
- Keep track of each incident, and if required, the time of each occurrence.
- Make certain that records are properly filled and signed by all officials of that match.
- Responsible for proper charting of the elimination chart (including repechage), preparing the match scorecard for the scorekeeper and assist the Kansa. (See appendix **XX** for symbols)
- At all sanctioned competition, every effort shall be made to avoid first round competition between members of the same club or district.
- No chart may be altered from its original form, substituted for, or rewritten at National Championships and AAU Junior Olympic Games without the consent of those appointed for that specific event by the National Chairman who shall attest to its fairness and accuracy.
- List all the winners as well as qualifiers whenever applicable and assure that the official charts are delivered to the proper Administrative Committee member.

Match Expediter

Shall assume such duties as necessary to ensure the proper order of the competition including but not limited to:

- Summoning the tournament medical person when necessary.
- Seeing that each (Youth) competitor is properly identified and that the Gi, safety gear, red sash, and head guard are fixed correctly.
- Ensure that the match is run precisely and with minimum delay.
- Directing winners of each bout to confirm victory with the Control Table.

Announcer

- Shall announce the competing contestants (designating Aka and Shiro/Ao), the competitors who are on deck and shall announce the winners unless otherwise instructed.

Considerations

- When explaining the basis for a judgment after the match, the Referee may speak to the Area Controller or the Referee Council. The Referee will explain to no one else.
- The good Referee will not halt the smooth flow of the bout unless it is necessary to do so. All halts with no outcome such as "Yame-Torimasen" must be avoided.
- All consultations between the referee panel must be kept as brief as possible. Whenever possible, discussion should be strenuously avoided and reliance placed upon the prescribed signals and gestures, as given in the appendix, to communicate views.

- Every effort should be made to utilize "R" officials for advanced divisions.
- The Referee need not halt a bout when the Judges signal, if convinced the signals are incorrect. The Referee's judgment in this instance is made on the move. Before over-ruling the Judges signal the Referee must consider whether the Judges were better sighted. Judges will signal only by flag gesture.
- When, however, the match has been halted and the judges have different opinion to that of the Referee then the majority decision will prevail.
- The Judges must only score what they actually see. If they are not sure that a technique actually reached a scoring area they should signal "Mienai".
- In the event that the Referee does not hear the time-up bell, the Arbitrator will blow his whistle.
- Judges may signal the referee by raising their flag in a circular motion for administrative errors, safety issues or violations by coaches, athletes, volunteers or spectators.
- When restarting the bout, the Referee should check that both contestants are on their lines and properly composed. Contestants jumping up and down or otherwise moving excessively must be stilled before combat can recommence. The Referee must restart the bout with the minimum of delay.
- When halting a bout, the Referee does not merely call "YAME!". He/she also makes the appropriate signal. The Referee must first identify the scoring opponent ("Aka" or "Ao/Shiro"), then the scoring area attacked ("Chudan, Jodan'). This followed by the general classification of scoring techniques used ("Tsuki", "Uchi" or "Keri") and finally the score awarded.

ARTICLE 8. DETERMINATION OF AGE

- Athletes must compete and/or qualify in their proper age division.
- An athlete's age is determined by their age on July 1st of the calendar year of the National Championships.
- Whatever the age that athlete will be on July 1st, shall constitute their competition age category.
- Athletes must compete in that age division for the entire calendar year.

ARTICLE 9. QUALIFICATION PROCEDURE

District and Regional Qualifiers

- All athletes must compete at the District and/or Regional level qualifier.
- District events
 - Shall qualify the top 16 athletes from each appropriate age category to participate at the regional level.
- Regional events
 - Shall qualify the top 16 athletes from each appropriate age category to participate at the National Championships.
 - Shall qualify the top 8 athletes in the junior divisions (ages 20 and under category) to participate at the Junior Olympic Games.

National Championships

- Shall qualify the top 16 athletes in the junior divisions (ages 20 and under category) to participate at the Junior Olympic Games.

Special Qualifiers:

- The AAU/USA Karate Executive Committee shall have the right to qualify an athlete to the National Karate Championships and the Junior Olympic Games from any District or Region within the AAU.
- The number of athletes qualifying directly to the National Championships and the Junior Olympic Games shall be determined the the AAU/USA Karate Executive Committee.

License (Sanction)

- For each tournament to be valid, the appropriate license (sanction) for the event must be secured, and all competitors must be properly registered. All athletes must be current members of the AAU in good standing.

Deadlines

- A List of all athletes who have qualified to participate at the National Championships and Junior Olympic Games must be received by the National Karate office no later than thirty (30) days prior to the opening ceremonies of these events.

Financial

- All financial statements, copies of sanction, appropriate per competitor participation fee and any other financial obligations must be received by the National AAU Karate Treasurer ten (10) days after closing ceremonies of the qualifying event. Failure to do so shall result in an additional \$5.00 per athlete late penalty fee.
- Unreported events may disqualify any athletes from that qualifying competition or to participate in and to receive any awards at the AAU National Karate Championships.
- Future awards for qualifiers and sanctions will be withheld for any organizations or individuals who fail to meet this requirement.
- For District level qualifying events, a \$5.00 per competitor participation fee and any other financial obligations must be received by the National AAU Karate Treasurer ten days after closing ceremonies of the qualifying event. Failure to do so shall result in an additional \$5.00 per athlete late penalty fee.
- For Regional level qualifying events, a \$10.00 per competitor participation fee and any other financial obligations must be received by the National AAU Karate Treasurer ten days after closing ceremonies of the qualifying event. Failure to do so shall result in an additional \$10.00 per athlete late penalty fee.

Exceptions

- Upon petition to the AAU National Committee, the District Chairman or the Regional Director may for an individual on a case by case basis ask to waive certain or all requirements for participation at the AAU National Championships. The National AAU Karate Executive Committee may consider to waive in part some requirements for qualification procedures to these National Championships. A written request must be received, by the National Chairman no later than (30) days prior to commencement of these championships for consideration. Waivers are limited to one per athlete per year.
- District or Regional Directors may petition in writing to the AAU National Committee requesting an increase in the number of qualifiers in their district or region.
- Athletes who are granted a waiver must forward the appropriate application and fee for that qualifier waived through to the tournament director. This is in fairness for all participating athletes.

APPENDIX A: Protest Form

Event: _____

Division: _____

Referee Panel:

Shushin: _____

Fukushin: _____

Fukushin: _____

Fukushin: _____

Fukushin: _____

Athletes Involved:

Aka: _____

Shiro: _____

Team name: _____

Team name: _____

Description of incident you are protesting:

Submitted by*: _____

Date: _____

(*must be a registered AAU karate technical coach)

Submit with protest fee (\$100 cash) to a member of the AAU Karate Referee Council

2018 AAU Karate Handbook –Kumite Rules

SECTION 2. AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR KUMITE COMPETITION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 1.
- Kumite divisions may be divided into weight divisions as prescribed in APPENDIX B.
- Adult Black Belt Sanbon division will be divided into weight classes as prescribed in APPENDIX B.

ARTICLE 2. COMPETITION AREA

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 2.
- Two parallel lines, each one meter long must be drawn at a distance of one and one half meters from the center of the competition area for positioning the competitors.
- A one-meter wide border inside the prescribed fighting area shall be the warning area. The line should be of a different color than the rest of the surface (floor or mat).

POSITION OF OFFICIALS/COACHES IN COMPETITION AREA

- **Referee**-The Referee may move around the entire tatami (when 4 corner judges are used), including the safety area where judges are seated.
- **Judges**- Each judge will be seated at the corners on the mat in the safety area. Each judge will be equipped with appropriate equipment for the conduct of that match.
- **Arbitrator**- the Arbitrator and or the Match Supervisor shall be seated just outside the safety area, behind and to the left or the right of the Referee.
- **Coaches**- Coaches will be seated outside the safety area, on their respective sides at the side of the tatami towards the official table. The Coach may be assigned a specific place by the Referee Committee in conjunction with the Tournament Organizing Officials. This area shall be close to the competition area and the Coach allowed a free and uninterrupted access to contestants between bouts.

ARTICLE 3. REFEREE/OFFICIAL PANEL

- The Referee Panel shall consist of one Referee (Shushin), two, three or four Judges (Fukushin), and one Match Supervisor (Kansa).
- In addition, for the purpose of facilitating the operation of matches, several timekeepers, caller-announcers, and record keepers shall be appointed.

ARTICLE 4. OFFICIAL ATTIRE

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 3.

ARTICLE 5. EQUIPMENT

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 4.

ARTICLE 6. SCORING AREA

The scoring areas shall be limited to the following:

- Head
- Face
- Neck (including throat, but not touching the throat)
- Abdomen
- Chest
- Side
- Back

ARTICLE 7. CRITERIA FOR SCORING

A score is awarded when a technique is performed to a scoring area and according to the following criteria:

- **Good form** - a technique with good form is said to have characteristics conferring probable effectiveness within the framework of traditional karate concepts.
- **Correct attitude** - a non-malicious attitude of great concentration obvious during delivery of the scoring technique within the framework of traditional Karate concepts.
- **Vigorous application** - defines the power, speed and controlled delivery of the technique, with the purpose of succeeding.
- **Zanshin** - a continued state of awareness and commitment which endures after the technique has landed. The contestant with Zanshin maintains total concentration and awareness of the opponent's potential to counter attack and the ability to continue with proper form other continuing techniques.
- **Proper timing** - delivering a technique when it will have the greatest potential effect. Proper timing is carrying out a technique at the optimum moment in time to achieve the greatest result.
- **Correct distance** - delivering a technique at the precise distance where it will have the greatest potential effect.

ARTICLE 8. PENALTIES

- There are no points awarded to the opponent for penalties.
- A Hansoku or Kiken (disqualification or loss of match due to penalties) will count as the full score (Ippon, Sanbon) for the opponent.

Penalty Categories

- Hansoku – Prohibited actions and behaviors. Contact and non-contact penalties.
- Jogai - Out of bounds
- Mubobi – defenseless behavior.
- Shikkaku (disqualification or expulsion from the event/competition)

Penalty Levels

- Levels of penalty – for each of the penalty categories (Hansoku, Jogai, Mubobi) there are 3 levels:
 - Chukoku (warning)
 - Hansoku Chui (penalty)
 - Hansoku (disqualification)
- Penalty categories DO NOT cross accumulate

Prohibited behavior

- Face Contact –
 - All divisions (hand technique): Contact is not allowed, and may be penalized.
 - All Divisions (kick): “skin touch” is allowed, but excessive transfer of energy to the target area is prohibited and will be penalized.
 - All Black Belts Divisions (kick/hand technique): “skin touch” is allowed, but excessive transfer of energy to the target area is prohibited and will be penalized.
- Any excessive contact regarding the target area.
- Attacks and contact to the joints, throat, below the pubic bone or groin, and legs are not considered points and may result in a penalty.

- A sweep of the ankle or foot must be followed up with an attempt to score to one of the scoring targets otherwise may result in a penalty.
- Exiting the ring during the match (Jogai).
- Avoiding the opponent, running around the ring and generally disengaging from the match is a non-contact violation and may result in a penalty.
- When SHIKKAKU is imposed, the severity of the penalty is decided by the Referee Council and Executive Committee (disqualification from the actual tournament, competition, or match).

ARTICLE 9: INJURIES

- An injured contestant who has been declared unfit to fight by the tournament doctor cannot fight again in that competition.
- A competitor who is injured during a bout in progress and requires medical treatment will be allowed three minutes in which to receive it. If treatment is not completed within the time allowed, the Referee will decide if the competitor shall be declared unfit to fight, or whether an extension of treatment time shall be given.
- An injured contestant who wins a bout through disqualification due to injury is not allowed to fight again in the competition without permission from the doctor. If they are injured, they may win a second bout by disqualification but are then immediately withdrawn from further Kumite competition in that tournament.
- A contestant who wins two matches in a single division thru disqualification will not be allowed to continue.

FEIGNING INJURY

- In order that the credibility of the sport is maintained, competitors who feign injury will be subject to the strongest penalties up to and including suspension for life for repeated offenses.
- Competitors who receive SHIKKAKU for feigning injury will be taken from the competition area and put directly into the hands of the tournament Medical Commission who will carry out an immediate examination of the competitor. The Medical Commission will submit its report before the end of the Championship, for the consideration of the Referee Council.

ARTICLE 10: 10 SECOND RULE

- Any competitor who falls, is thrown or knocked down and does not fully regain his/her feet within ten seconds is considered unfit to continue fighting and shall be automatically withdrawn from all Kumite events in that tournament.

ARTICLE 11: SHOBU IPPON KUMITE

Shobu Ippon Kumite is a sparring match where the goal is to score a full point (IPPON) or two half points (WAZARI) to equal a full point to win the match.

Scoring

- A full point is awarded to two techniques only: controlled kick to the head or face, break of balance / safe takedown immediately followed by a scoring technique.
- All other techniques including multiple scoring techniques (RENSOKU WAZA) to scoring areas will be awarded a half point.

Winning a Match

To win the match the following criteria is considered in this order:

- Earning a score of ippon during the allotted time.
- If an ippon is not reached during the allotted time of the match, the referee calls for HANTEI (judges decision). The judges vote plus the referee's silent vote/judgment will determine the winner or if there is a tie (HIKIWAKE).
- If HANTEI determines there is a tie (HIKIWAKE), the athletes will conduct a new match (SAI SHIAI), where no points, penalties, or memory of previous penalties will be considered in the new match.
- The winner of SAI SHIAI is the athlete who earns an ippon, or if no ippon is reached during the allotted time of the match, the referee calls for HANTEI. At this point, the judges must pick a winner (NO HIKIWAKE).

Duration of bout

- An ippon match will be 2 minutes for all divisions.
- Atoshibaraku announcement shall be when there are 30 seconds left in the allotted time.
- Duration of SAI SHIAI match will be 2 minutes for all divisions.

Penalties

- Penalties and prohibited behavior is described in ARTICLE 8.

Equipment

- Mandatory and elective equipment are described in ARTICLE 5.

ARTICLE 12. SHOBU SANBON

Shobu Sanbon Kumite is a sparring match where the goal is to score 3 full points to win the match.

Scoring

- A full point is awarded to two techniques only: controlled kick to the head or face, break of balance / safe takedown immediately followed by a scoring technique.
- All other techniques including multiple scoring techniques (RENSOKU WAZA) to scoring areas will be awarded a half point.

Winning a Match

To win the match the following criteria is considered in this order:

- Earning a score of sanbon (3) during the allotted time.
- Having the leading score at the end of the allotted time.
- If the score at the end of the allotted time is tied the referee calls for HANTEI (judges decision). The judges vote plus the referee's silent vote/judgment will determine the winner or if there is a tie (HIKIWAKE).
- If HANTEI determines there is a tie (HIKIWAKE), the athletes will conduct a match extension (ENCHOSEN), where no points are carried over. However, penalties will carry over and be considered in the match extension.
- The ENCHOSEN match is where the first competitor to score wins ("sudden death").
- If there is no score at the end of the allotted time of the match extension, the referee calls for HANTEI. At this point, the judges must pick a winner (NO HIKIWAKE).

Duration of bout

- A Sanbon match will be 2 minutes for all divisions except for male black belt 18-34 years old.
- Male Black belt 18-34 year old match will be 3 minutes.
- Atoshibaraku announcement shall be when there are 30 seconds left in the allotted time.
- Enchosen match is 1 minute for all divisions.

Penalties

- Penalties and prohibited behavior is described in ARTICLE 8.

Equipment

- Mandatory and elective equipment are described in ARTICLE 5.

Team competition:

- Kumite teams shall consist of 3 contestants on each team of the appropriate age and rank for the division. A fourth contestant as an alternate is permissible but not required.
- At the beginning of each team match, each team must submit in writing the order of contestants for that match and not vary from that order.
- Individual matches will use the same time/length and rules for Sanbon individual matches except in case of a tied score. No decision is rendered by the judging panel; a tie (HIKIWAKE) is recorded instead.
- The order of situations in determining the winning team shall be:
 - Number of Sanbon matches won. Kiken and Hansoku will be considered a loss of a match (the match score will be elevated to 3 ippons to the opposite team).
 - Total score accumulated (taking both winning and losing matches into account).
 - A tie breaker match ending with a winner or by HANTEI (NO HIKIWAKE). Contestant's name must be submitted to the table.
- In team matches, should a team member receive KIKEN, or be disqualified (contact HANSOKU or SHIKKAKU) their score will be reduced to zero and the opponent's score will be set to the maximum allowable score.

APPENDIX A. REFEREE PROCEDURES

Suspending Matches

- The Referee shall suspend the match by using the appropriate gesture and calling "Yame." When resuming the match, the Referee will announce "Tsuzukete Hajime".

Ending Matches

- The timekeeper shall give signals by a gong or buzzer indicating Atoshibaraku (a little time to go), using one sharp blast.
- Time-Up signal shall have two long blasts of the signaling equipment. At "time-up" the Referee will halt the match and announce "Soremade". He will then check the score, announce the decision and award the contest to the winner, or call Hantei.
- The Referee shall end the match with the formal exchange of bows by the contestants and Referee Panel (Otagai ni Rei - Shomen ni Rei) and at that stage the match is deemed to be over.

Match Procedure

- At the start of a Kumite match, the Referee stands on the outside edge of the match area facing toward the center of the mat. Judges shall stand to the left and right of the referee.
- After the formal exchange of bows by the contestants and the Referee Panel, the Referee takes a step back and the Judges turn inward and all bow together.
- The Referee and Judges shall take up their prescribed positions and following an exchange of bows between the contestants, the Referee will announce "SHOBU HAJIME" and the bout will commence.
- The Referee will stop the bout by announcing "YAME". If necessary, the Referee will order the contestants to take up their original positions (MOTO NO ICHI).
- The Referee returns to the starting position and the Judges will indicate their opinions by means of a signal. In the case of a score to be awarded the Referee identifies the contestant (AKA or SHIRO/AO), the area attacked, and then awards the relevant score using the prescribed gesture. The Referee then restarts the bout by calling "TSUZUKETE HAJIME".
- When a contestant has scored the maximum points as allowed during a bout, the Referee shall call "YAME!" and order the contestants back to their standing lines as he returns to his. The winner is then declared and indicated by the Referee raising a hand on the side of the winner and declaring "SHIRO/Ao (AKA) NO KACHI". The bout is ended at this point.
- When time is up and the scoring situation tied, the Referee shall call "YAME!" and return to his position. The Referee will call "HANTE!" and following his signal (by whistle) the judges will indicate their opinions. The majority decision will be taken. The judges and Referee have one vote each at HANTE.
- The Referee will award the decision and announce the winner, or give a draw ("HIKIWAKE") as allowed by appropriate rules.
- When changing the entire referee panel, the departing officials take one step forward, turn around and face the incoming panel. They bow to each other and on the command of the incoming Referee and in one line (facing the same direction) leave the competition area.
- When individual Judges change, the incoming judge goes to the outgoing judge, they bow together and change positions.
- Officials should not referee, when possible, a competitor who is from the official's dojo or karate organization.
- At the start of a Team Kumite match, the Referee stands on the outside edge of the fighting area. On his left and right sides stand the Judges. The Referee will call both teams (only the actual fighters, not the substitutes or coach), to line up in order, properly composed and proceed to initiate the formal exchange of bows by both contestants and officials (Shomen Ni Rei - Otagai Ni Rei). The Referee will then take one step back, the Judges will turn inwards towards the Referee and all bow together. The match shall start with the announcement by the Referee of "Shobu Hajime" and the bout will then commence.

SHIKKAKU Procedure

- Referee shall call up all of the judges (SHUGO).
- The judging panel discusses the offense. If the entire judging panel agrees to the SHIKKAKU, they write up a description of the offense and the agreed upon SHIKKAKU.
- Every judge on the panel signs the SHIKKAKU document.

- The referee then SHIKKAKU's the athlete and takes possession of their credential.
- The referee then continues with the division.
- The referee council and executive committee are notified and review the SHIKKAKU document.
- The referee council and executive committee determine the extent of the SHIKKAKU penalty (Shikkaku from the match, the division, the day, the tournament, the season, for life, etc.). They record the ruling on the credential and return it.
- A public announcement of the extent of the SHIKKAKU is made at the tournament.

10 Second Rule Procedure:

- In the event that a competitor falls, is thrown or knocked down and does not return to his feet immediately, the Referee shall signal to the timekeeper to start the ten second count-down by a blast on the whistle, raising his/her hand and then calling out for the doctor.
- The timekeeper will stop the clock when the competitor stands fully upright and the Referee raises his/her arm. In all cases where the 10 second clock has been started the doctor will be asked to examine the contestant. For incidents falling under this 10 second rule, the contestant may be examined on the mat.
- If the contestant does not regain their feet within the 10-seconds, the Referee Panel will decide on KIKEN, HANSOKU or SHIKKAKU as the case maybe.

Calling Doctor Procedure:

- The Referee should call the doctor when a contestant is injured and needs medical treatment by raising his/her hand and verbally calling out "doctor".
- If physically able to do so, the injured contestant should be directed off the mat for examination and treatment by the doctor.
- The doctor is obliged to make safety recommendations only as they relate to the proper medical management of that particular injured contestant.

Other Procedures for Suspending the Match:

When faced with the following situations, the referee shall call "YAME" and halt the bout temporarily:

- When both or either of the contestants are out of the match area (or when a Judge signals a JOGAI).
- When a Referee orders a contestant to adjust the karate-gi or protective equipment.
- When the Referee notices that a contestant appears about to contravene the rules.
- When the Referee notices that a contestant has contravened the rules.
- When the Referee considers that one or both of the contestants cannot continue with the bout due to injuries, illness or other causes. Heeding the tournament doctor's opinion, the Referee shall decide whether the bout should be continued.
- When a contestant seizes the opponent and does not perform an immediate technique or throw within two seconds.
- When one or both contestants fall or are thrown and no effective techniques are immediately forthcoming.
- When one or both contestants are off their feet following a fall or attempted throw and begin to wrestle.
- When both competitors seize or clinch each other without attempting a throw or score within two seconds.

- When both competitors stand chest to chest without attempting a throw or score within two seconds.
- When a score or foul is indicated by two or more judges for the same competitor.
- When in the opinion of the Referee, there has been a point scored or foul committed.
- When the situation calls for halting the match for safety reasons.
- When requested to do so by the Area Controller or Referee Council Member.

Table Procedure:

- The timing of the bout starts when the Referee gives the signal to start and stops each time the match is stopped (HAJIME/ YAME).
- The timekeeper shall give signals by a bell, gong or buzzer. A short signal indicates "thirty seconds remaining" ("atoshibaraku"), and a long signal indicating "time-up". When using a bell, one ding indicates "atoshibaraku", and several dings indicate "time-up".
- The timekeeper will also have available an additional stopwatch for the "10 second" rule.

APPENDIX B. WEIGHT DIVISIONS

Shobu Sanbon:

- Adult Black Belt Male (18-34 yrs)
 - < 150lbs
 - >= 150lbs and < 172lbs
 - >= 172lbs
 - Open Weight
- All Other Adult Male divisions
 - < 154lbs
 - >= 154lbs
- Adult Black Belt Female (18-34 yrs)
 - < 121lbs
 - >= 121lbs and <132lbs
 - > 132lbs
 - Open Weight
- All Other Adult Female divisions
 - < 132 lbs (<60kg)
 - >= 132 lbs (>=60kg)
- All Junior divisions may be divided into light and heavy weight
 - Lightweight (< median weight of competitors)
 - Heavyweight (>= median weight of competitors)

Shobu Ippon:

- Adult Black Belt Male / Female (18-34 yrs)
 - Lightweight
 - Heavyweight

APPENDIX C. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCORING

- No point shall be awarded if the competitor injures his opponent, even if the injury is only very minor. A warning or penalty may be imposed against the offender.
- Techniques which land below the belt may score, as long as they are above the pubic bone.
- The neck is a target area and so is the throat. No contact whatsoever to the throat is permitted but a score may be awarded for a properly controlled technique.
- A technique that lands on the shoulder blades may score. The non-scoring part of the shoulder is the junction of the upper bone of the arm with the shoulder blades and collarbones.
- The time-up bell signals the end of scoring possibilities in that bout, even though the Referee may inadvertently not halt the bout immediately. The time-up bell does not however mean that warnings or penalties cannot be imposed. Penalties can be imposed by the Refereeing Panel up to the point where the contestants leave that area after the bout's conclusion. Penalties can be imposed after that, but then only by the Referee Committee.
- Simultaneous effective scoring techniques (Aiuchi) delivered by both contestants shall not score. True AIUCHI's are rare. Not only must two techniques must land simultaneously but both must be valid scoring techniques each with good form etc. Two techniques may well land simultaneously, but seldom are both effective scores. The Referee must not dismiss as Aiuchi, a situation where only one of the simultaneous pair is actually a score. This is not Aiuchi.
- No technique will be scored if it is delivered after a penalty. If contestant one makes contact to contestant two's face just before contestant two scores, and the referee calls "Yame!" and penalizes contestant one, no score will be awarded to contestant two. However, if contestant two scores at the same time of contestant one's violation, both the score and penalty should be given.
- All penalties shall supersede scoring possibilities for that same contestant. Example: Contestant one scores with a Chudan Geri, the referee calls, "Yame!", and then that competitor accidentally makes contact to the opponents face. Contestant one will be penalized with no score for the Chudan Geri.
- Techniques in principle have the potential to score if they are delivered perpendicular to the scoring area and directed to the axis of the body.
- A victory over an opponent who has been given a Hansoku or Shikkaku shall be worth Kachi. If a contestant is absent or is withdrawn, the opponent shall be credited with a win by Kiken.
- If a contestant, whilst inside the fighting area delivers a scoring technique and then steps outside of the area, the technique shall score. For example:
 - If a contestant (Aka), whilst inside the fighting area delivers a technique that does not score and who then steps outside of the area, Jogai will be recorded against Aka.
 - If a contestant (Aka), whilst inside the fighting area delivers a scoring technique and Shiro steps outside of the area after it has scored, the technique shall score and Jogai shall not be recorded against Shiro.
 - If a contestant (Aka), whilst inside the fighting area delivers a scoring technique and Shiro has stepped out or steps outside the fighting area as Aka's technique is delivered, the technique shall score and Jogai shall be recorded against Shiro.
 - No technique, even if technically correct, shall be scored if it is delivered when the two contestants are outside the competition area. However, if one of the contestants delivers an effective technique while still inside the competition area and before the Referee calls "Yame", the technique shall be scored.

- The point at which “YAME” should have been called is helpful in determining if Jogai has occurred. For Jogai to occur a contestant’s foot or any other part of the body must touch the floor outside the fighting area. An exception to this is when the contestant is physically pushed or thrown from the area by the opponent.
- An effective technique delivered at the same time that the end of the bout is signaled is considered valid. A technique even if effective, delivered after an order to suspend or stop the bout shall not be scored and may result in a warning or a penalty being imposed on the offender.
- For reasons of safety, throws where the opponent is being grabbed below the waist, thrown without being held onto, or thrown dangerously, or where the pivot point is above the thrower’s belt level, are prohibited and shall incur a warning or penalty. Exceptions are conventional karate leg sweeping techniques that do not require the opponent to be held while executing the sweep, such as ashi-barai, kouchi-gari, kani waza, etc.
- A worthless technique is a worthless technique – regardless of where and how it is delivered. A technique that is badly deficient in good form, or lacking in power, shall not score.

APPENDIX D. INJURIES AND ACCIDENTS IN COMPETITION

- KIKEN or forfeiture is the decision given when a contestant or contestants are unable to continue, abandon the bout, or are withdrawn on the order of the Referee. The grounds for abandonment may include injury not ascribable to the opponent’s actions.
- If two contestants injure each other or are suffering from the effects of previously incurred injury, and are declared by the Tournament Doctor to be unable to continue, the bout is awarded to the contestant who has amassed the most points. In Individual Matches, if the points score is equal, then a vote (HANTEI) will decide the outcome of the bout.
- Self-inflicted injury and those injuries caused by the athlete are easy to deal with but when assessing an injury caused by the opponent's technique, the Panel must consider whether the technique was valid. Was it properly applied to the proper area at the correct time and with the correct degree of control. Consideration of this will assist the Referee Panel in deciding whether the injured contestant should be declared the loser by Kiken, or whether the opponent should be penalized for a foul.
- When a contestant is injured, the Referee shall at once halt the bout and call the doctor. The doctor is authorized to diagnose and treat the injury only.
- If the doctor declares the contestant unfit, the appropriate entry must be made on the monitoring record sheet. The extent of unfitness must be made clear to other Refereeing Panel.

2018 AAU Karate Handbook – Kobudo Rules

SECTION 4. AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR KOBUDO COMPETITION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL GUIDELINE

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 1.

ARTICLE 2. COMPETITION AREA

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 2.

ARTICLE 3. OFFICIAL ATTIRE

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 3.

ARTICLE 4. ORGANIZATION OF KOBUDO COMPETITION

- Kobudo competition consists of long and short-weapons competition.
- Kobudo competition takes the form of team and individual matches.
- Team Competition is conducted between three people in unison against each other.
- Individual match consists of individual performance in separate male and female divisions.
- In Kobudo competition the contestants must perform a traditional Kobudo kata.

ARTICLE 5. AAU/USA KARATE KOBUDO WEAPONS

Only the following weapons will be allowed in AAU/USA Kobudo competition:

- **BO** - The Bo shall be made of hardwood. The length shall be a minimum of the competitors height or longer. Competitors over 6 feet in height may use a standard 6 foot bo. Competitors under 5 feet in height may use a minimum diameter of 7/8 inches. Competitors over 5 feet in height must use a bo with minimum diameter of 1 inch. Adult competitors over 6 feet in height must use bo with minimum of 1 1/16 inches in diameter.
- **TONFA (pair)** - TONFA must be entirely made of hardwood with a minimum length, when grasped by the handle, to reach the end of the competitor's elbow. Two TONFA are used in AAU KOBUDO competition.
- **EKU (Kai-Bo)** - EKU must be made of hardwood and have a length of eye level or higher. In addition the EKU blade shall have a flat side and a rounded or beveled side, and the blade tip may not have a sharp point.
- **NUNCHAKU (pair)** - One pair of NUNCHAKU constitutes two hardwood handles connected by a cord. In principle a minimum handle length of 12".
- **SAI (pair)** - Two Sais must be used for AAU KOBUDO competitions (Sai KATAs that use one Sai or three Sais are not allowed). Sai must be made of steel and when grasped in the normal fashion, the tip shall at a minimum extend to the competitor's elbow.
- **KAMA (pair)** - Two Kamas are used in AAU KOBUDO competitions. Kama handles are made of hardwood and the blades of unsharpened steel. No rope, chord, string, etc. are permitted nor Kamas with holes in blades.

ARTICLE 6. AAU/USA KARATE KOBUDO GENERAL WEAPON GUIDELINES

- At the discretion of the National Committee, KOBUDO weapons may be furnished by the National Committee for use by all athletes during a competition. The use of these weapons shall be made mandatory for all competitors. Failure to use furnished KOBUDO weapons shall result in disqualification. Only KOBUDO weapons that are authorized and deemed as acceptable by the National Committee may be used during competition.
- All weapons shall be examined by an official prior to competition to ensure that they are of authentic design, construction and materials. Any weapon that, in the examiner's opinion, gives an unfair advantage to a competitor may not be used.
- An approved AAU stamp is required for all Bo competitors. The stamp is received after the bo passes inspection.
- Weapons must be of traditional design and any decision as to a weapon's eligibility will be made by the Chief Referee and/or the Referee Council.
- Grounds for rejecting a weapon include but are not limited to exceptionally lightweight, coating to improve grip, markings (including different color tones of wood) and non-standard construction.
- All wood on weapons must be hardwood. The Bo must be made of the dense hardwood (hickory, oak, ash or Purple Heart: no rat-tan), Ultra-light Bo's may be disqualified from the competition upon the inspection of the referee.
- In short weapons competition, the contestants must use the following traditional Okinawan weapons: Kama (2), Sai (2), Tonfa (2), or Nunchaku (1 or 2). No variations are allowed.

ARTICLE 7. INDIVIDUAL KOBUDO REGULATIONS

- Individual and Team Competitors shall compete in the same age and skill divisions that they would for Kumite.
- There shall be no weight divisions as described for KOBUDO competition.

ARTICLE 8. INDIVIDUAL KOBUDO COMPETITION

Individual Flag System

- By the approval of the AAU/USA Karate Committee, the flag judgment system may be incorporated for all Kobudo divisions.
- Organization of Individual Competition for flag judgment system shall be organized into a single round.
- In flag system if sufficient personnel are available, a panel of five judges for each match shall be designated by the Referee Council. Otherwise, a panel may consist of three judges.
- In addition a caller/announcer and when necessary, an expeditor shall be appointed.
- The competitors shall be charted in the same manner as Kumite.

Single Round Flag Judgment System Procedure:

- The contesting athletes shall be called to ring.
- Following a bow to the Judging Panel, Shiro shall then step back out of the match area.
- After moving to the starting position and a clear announcement of the name of the Kobudo Kata that is to be performed, Aka shall begin.
- On completion of the Kobudo Kata, Aka shall leave the area to await the performance of Shiro. After Shiro's Kobudo Kata has been completed, both shall return to the match area perimeter and await the decision from the Panel. The competitors shall stand side-by-side in the match area and await the decision from the Panel.
- The Chief Judge shall call for a decision (HANTEI) and blow a two-tone blast on the whistle. The flags shall be raised at the same time.

- The Chief Judge shall blow a further short blast on the whistle, whereupon the flags shall be lowered.
- The decision shall be for Aka or Shiro. No ties are permitted. The competitor who receives the majority of votes shall be declared the winner.
- The Referee will then raise the flag for the winner.
- The competitors will then bow to the judging panel and exit the match area.
- The winner shall advance and the loser shall be eliminated.
- The next two competitors will perform their Kobudo Kata in the same manner.
- The procedure outlined above, will continue until there is only one competitor remaining, who will be the gold medalist.
- The 2nd and double 3rd medalists will be determined via the chart, where the silver medalist will be the competitor who lost to the gold medalist in the final round, and the bronze medalists will be the competitors who lost in the semi-final rounds.

Individual Scoring System

- Shall be conducted in the same manner as the Kata individual scoring system, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 6: individual scoring system for details.

Individual Scoring System Procedure:

- Shall be conducted in the same manner as the Kata individual scoring system, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 6: individual scoring system procedure for details.

ARTICLE 8. TEAM KOBUDO COMPETITION

- Shall be conducted in the same manner as the Team Kata competition, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 7: Team Kata Competition for details.
- The competitors must use the same type of weapon.

ARTICLE 9. CRITERIA FOR DECISION FOR KOBUDO COMPETITION

- Shall be in the same manner as the Kata competition, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 9: Criteria for Decision for Kata Competition.
- The contestants must properly use the body and footwork to extend the power (energy) into the weapons.
- The contestants must always maintain control of the weapons during the performance.
- Correct and consistent Kihon of the style of Kobudo being demonstrated.

Additional Criteria for Team Kobudo

- The Kobudo Kata must not alter in rhythm or timing for the purpose of synchronization. It must demonstrate correct dynamics of the weapon as if performed by an individual.
- The members of the team must demonstrate competence in all aspects of the Kobudo performance, as well as synchronization.
- A mistake in synchronization of Team Kobudo requires the same numerical deduction as a technical mistake in individual Kobudo.

ARTICLE 10. BREAKING TIES FOR KOBUDO COMPETITION

- Shall be conducted in the same manner as the Kata competition, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 10: Breaking Ties for Kata Competition.
- Competitors may repeat the same Kobudo kata, except in the black belt division.
- In black belt division, the tie breaker kata MUST be a different kata. It may be of a different weapon, but must be stay within the long or short division.

ARTICLE 11. SCORING FOR KOBUDO COMPETITION

- Shall be conducted in the same manner as the Kata competition, please refer to Kata rules SECTION 3 ARTICLE 11: Scoring for Kata Competition.

Disqualification - Disqualification may be imposed for the following:

- A contestant shall be disqualified if he/she drops a weapon during the performance.
- A contestant shall be disqualified if he/she uses a dangerous technique that jeopardizes the safety of the Judges or other contestants.

ARTICLE 12. AAU/USA KARATE KOBUDO DIVISIONS

KOBUDO competition shall be conducted as follows:

- Junior Divisions ages 5 - 17, Beginners, Novice, intermediate and advanced.
- Adult Divisions ages 17 - 34 - Beginners, Novice, intermediate and advanced.
- Seniors Divisions ages 35 and above- Beginners, Novice, intermediate and advanced.

2018 AAU Karate Handbook – Kata Rules

SECTION 3. AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR KATA COMPETITION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL GUIDELINE

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 1.

ARTICLE 2. COMPETITION AREA

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 2.

ARTICLE 3. OFFICIAL ATTIRE

- See General Rules SECTION 1 ARTICLE 3.

ARTICLE 4. ORGANIZATION OF KATA COMPETITION

- Kata competition takes the form of team and individual matches.
- Team Competition is conducted between three people in unison against each other in separate male and female categories.
- Individual competition is where contestants compete against each other in separate male and female categories.
- Advanced male or female kata contestants 16 years and older may compete in the Compulsory Kata Competition as well their individual age categories.
- The National Referee Council may waive in part or in its entirety the requirements set forth with the approval of the National Executive Committee for specific competition or event. Allowance may be made to allow male and female athletes to compete in same categories or to suspend the requirement for compulsory Kata. The Referee Council may further combine and adjust divisions for enhancement of meaningful competition. However consideration must be taken to ensure that deviation does not distract from safety and the dignity of the competition.

ARTICLE 5. INDIVIDUAL KATA REGULATIONS

- Individual KATA Competitors shall compete in the same age and skill divisions that they would for Kumite.
- There shall be no weight divisions as described for KATA competition.
- Beginner athletes must use a basic (Kihon) Kata from their style.
- Novice athletes may use an intermediate or Kihon Kata from their style.
- Advanced and Intermediate athletes may use any Kata.

ARTICLE 6. INDIVIDUAL KATA COMPETITION

Individual Flag System

- By the approval of the AAU/USA Karate Committee, the flag judgment system may be incorporated for all kata divisions.
- Organization of Individual Competition for flag judgment system shall be Free Selection (TOKUI) or Open Selection Kata.
- In the flag system if sufficient personnel are available, a panel of five judges for each match shall be designated by the Referee Council. Otherwise, a panel may consist of three judges.
- In addition an expeditor and when necessary, a caller/announcer shall be appointed.
- Two rounds of competition shall determine the winners in flag judgment system.

Flag Judgment System First Round Procedure:

- At the beginning of the division all competitors will sit on Aka side of ring.
- All competitors will remain seated in a prescribed order.
- The order of seating may be altered by the Referee to avoid competitors from the same district competing against each other in the first round only.
- The first two competitors will bow before entering the match area and the next two competitors will stand up and be on deck.
- Both competitors shall enter the match area and space themselves so as to avoid collision or interference in the performance of their Kata.
- The competitors will bow and announce their Kata. They shall commence their performance at the sound of the whistle by the Referee.
- On completion of their Kata, the competitors shall stand side-by-side in the match area and await the decision from the Panel.
- If the Kata does not conform to the rules, or there is some other irregularity, the Referee may call the other Judges in order to reach a verdict.
- After completion of both Kata, the Referee shall call for a decision (HANTEI) and blow a two-tone blast on the whistle. The flags shall be raised at the same time.
- The Referee shall blow a further short blast on the whistle, whereupon the flags shall be lowered.
- The decision shall be for Aka or Shiro. No ties are permitted. The competitor who receives the majority of votes shall be declared the winner.
- The Referee will then raise the flag for the winner.
- The competitors will then bow to the judging panel and exit the match area.
- The winner will go to the end of the line on the Aka side.
- The defeated competitor will form a line on the Shiro side furthest from the Referee panel.
- The next two competitors will perform their kata in the same manner and will sit behind the previous competitor in the appropriate line (Winner to Aka side and defeated competitor to Shiro side).
- The procedure outlined above, will continue until there is only one competitor remaining in the first round line, who will be the gold medalist.
- The last two competitors remaining will be allowed a one-minute rest period, before beginning the final match.
- The gold medalist and the last competitor of the first round will sit on the Shiro side of the Referee panel and be exempt from the second round of elimination. The gold medalist will sit closest to the Referee panel.

Flag Judgment System Second Round Procedure:

- At the beginning of the second round all competitors will sit on the Shiro side of ring.
- All competitors will remain seated in a prescribed order.
- The order of seating MAY NOT be altered.
- The first two competitors will bow before entering the match area and the next two competitors will stand up and be on deck.
- Both competitors shall enter the match area and space themselves so as to avoid collision or interference in the performance of their Kata.
- The competitors will bow and announce their Kata. They shall commence their performance at the sound of the whistle by the Referee.
- On completion of their Kata, the competitors shall stand side-by-side in the match area and await the decision from the Panel.

- If the Kata does not conform to the rules, or there is some other irregularity, the Referee may call the other Judges in order to reach a verdict.
- After completion of both Kata, the Referee shall call for a decision (HANTEI) and blow a two-tone blast on the whistle. The flags shall be raised at the same time.
- The Referee shall blow a further short blast on the whistle, whereupon the flags shall be lowered.
- The decision shall be for Aka or Shiro. No ties are permitted. The competitor who receives the majority of votes shall be declared the winner.
- The Referee will then raise the flag for the winner.
- The competitors will then bow to the judging panel and exit the match area.
- The winner will go to the end of the line on the Shiro side.
- The defeated competitor will form a line on the Aka side furthest from the Referee panel.
- The next two competitors will perform their kata in the same manner and will sit behind the previous competitor in the appropriate line (Winner to Shiro side and defeated competitor to Aka side).
- The procedure outlined above, will continue until there is only one competitor remaining in the second round. At this juncture the remaining athlete will compete against the defeated competitor from the first round. There will be allowed a one minute rest period before the beginning of the final match. This match will determine the silver and bronze medalist.

Repechage Flag System

- By the approval of the AAU/USA Karate Committee, the repechage flag system may be incorporated for 16 years and older Black belt divisions.
- Organization of Individual Competition for flag judgment system shall be Free Selection (TOKUI) or Open Selection Kata.
- Each round the competitor must perform a different kata.
- In the repechage flag system, a panel of five judges for each match shall be designated by the Referee Council.
- In addition a caller/announcer and when necessary, an expeditor shall be appointed.
- A single round of competition shall determine the 1st and 2nd place winners.
- Repechage will be utilized in determining double 3rd.
- Repechage identifies the athletes who lost to the 1st/2nd place winners to compete in a second elimination round. The winners of this round will both receive 3rd place.
- The top 4 competitors from the previous year's nationals should be charted on different branches.
- The top 4 competitors from the previous year's nationals should get preference for any bye's.

Individual Scoring System

- In point system, if sufficient personnel are available, a panel of five judges for each match shall be designated by the Referee Council. Otherwise, a panel may consist of three judges.
- In addition, a scorekeeper, caller/announcer and when necessary, an expeditor shall be appointed.
- One round of competition shall determine the winners in individual scoring system.
- When all competitors have performed, the highest total scores shall determine the first, second, third, and if applicable, fourth place winners.

Individual Scoring System Procedure:

- When called upon by the announcer, the competitor(s) will proceed inside the match area, bow to the Referee and will announce the name of the Kata to be performed to the Judges.
- The Referee will clearly repeat the name of the Kata to be performed.
- The participant(s) will then commence their performance, and upon completion, will return to their original position(s) and await the Judge's decision.
- Once the Kata has been completed, the Referee shall call Hantei, for the corner Judge's decisions. All scoreboards will be raised simultaneously. The announcer will call out the scores given, Referee first and going in a clockwise direction at all times announcing all the scores of the corner Judges.
- After the score has been announced and recorded, the Referee shall give a signal (by means of a short whistle), to the Corner Judges to lower the scoreboards.
- The Administration Table Official and the Scorekeeper shall record the announced scores on separate Official Record Sheets and will separately calculate the final score as follows:
 - Seven Scores – delete the highest and lowest and add all the remainder.
 - Five Scores - delete the highest and lowest and add all the remainder.
 - Three Scores - add all three scores.
- After checking that the scores of both the Jury Table Judge and the Scorekeeper agree, the Announcer shall announce the total score.
- The participant will bow to the Referee and leave the match area.

ARTICLE 7. TEAM KATA COMPETITION

- In Team Kata, all three team members must start and end the Kata facing in the same direction and towards the Referee.
- They shall start and finish in a triangular formation.
- All three members shall perform the same kata.
- The performance must be synchronized.
- Team Kata uses the individual scoring system with the winner being the contestant (team) with the highest total score.
- One round of competition shall determine the winners in team kata.

ARTICLE 8. STYLE SPECIFIC COMPULSORY KATA COMPETITION

- A competitor in their specific style will be expected to perform in a "Mandatory Style Specific" Kata from the Shitei, Sentei and Tokui Kata list.
- Compulsory Kata shall be organized into three rounds of competition.
- Each round, a different kata must be performed.
- Scores do not accumulate between rounds.
- In Round 1 competitors must perform Shitei Kata. The 16 highest scoring competitors will proceed from Round 1 into Round 2.
- In Round 2 competitors must perform Sentei Kata. The 8 highest scoring competitors will proceed from Round 2 into Round 3.
- In Round 3 (Final), competitors must perform a Tokui Kata.
- The number of competitors will determine the number of rounds that will take place:
 - Seventeen (17) or More Competitors - Three Rounds of Competition Will Take Place. (Shitei, Sentei, Tokui)
 - Nine (9) to Sixteen (16) Competitors - Two Rounds of Competition Will Take Place. (Sentei, Tokui)
 - Eight (8) or Less - One Round of Competition Will Take Place. (Tokui)
- In case of a tie, a tiebreaker KATA must not be one already performed in the same or earlier round.

- KATAs used in the tie breaking process must be from the list, which is applicable for the specific round of competition. (Shitei, Sentei, Tokui).
- The order of performance in all three rounds shall be determined by random selection.
- Compulsory Style Specific Competition - shall be restricted to traditional Okinawan and Japanese based Karate Styles.
- Style Specific competition may be conducted in Shotokan, Shito Ryu, Shorin Ryu, Goju Ryu, Wado Ryu, and Isshinryu.
- Mandatory All Style division may be formed to accommodate specified styles that do not meet the entry requirements.
- In the "Mandatory All Style", a competitor will be expected to perform free selection (TOKUI) Katas.
- At the discretion of the national committee, Style Specific kata may be judged using the repechage flag system.

Requirements for a Style Specific Compulsory division:

- Petition submitted and approved by the National Karate Committee.
- There must be at least eight (8) athletes for the style division identified as such in writing competing at the National Championships.
- Furnish in writing no later than 30 days prior to the opening ceremonies of the National Championships a list of Shitei, Sentei, and Tokui Katas' specific to the style.
- Provide a minimum of five (5) qualified judges during the AAU Karate National Championships.
- All athletes that do not qualify for Style Specific or wish to participate in Mandatory Style Specific KATA divisions may participate in the Mandatory All Style KATA Division.
- Athletes may participate in only one category of Mandatory KATA. They cannot participate in both the All Style and Style Specific Divisions.

Compulsory Kata Grand Championship:

- The top two performers in each of the Style Specific and mandatory all style kata divisions will compete for the grand championship.
- Competition will be a single round flag scoring system.
- The first and second place competitors from each division will be charted in a different branch.

ARTICLE 9. CRITERIA FOR DECISION FOR KATA COMPETITION

- It is the responsibility of the Referee Council, the Referee to administrate the rules set forth. If the Kata does not conform to the rules, or there is some other irregularity, the Referee may call the other judges in order to reach a verdict.
- The Kata must be performed with competence, and must demonstrate a clear understanding of the traditional principles it contains. Kata is not a dance or theatrical performance. It must adhere to the traditional values and principles. It must be Budo based, realistic in fighting terms and display concentration, power, and potential impact in its techniques. It must demonstrate strength, power, and speed as well as grace, rhythm and balance.
- In assessing the performance of a contestant or team the Judges will look for:
 - Realistic performance of the Kata with correct attitude (REIGI).
 - Understanding of the application of the techniques being used (BUNKAI).
 - Good timing, rhythm, speed, and focus of power (KIME). Control of speed and rhythm.
 - Correct and proper use of breathing.
 - Correct focus of attention (CHAKUGAN) and concentration.
 - Correct stances (DACHI) with proper tension in the legs, and feet flat on the floor. Stability and balance.

- Proper tension in the abdomen (HARA) and no bobbing up and down of the hips when moving. Control of tension and contraction.
- Kata sequence (EMBUSEN).
- Correct form (KIHON) of the style being demonstrated.

Additional Criteria for Team Kata:

- Synchronization without external cues such as commands to start and stop the performance, stomping the feet, slapping the chest, arms or karate-gi, and inappropriate exhalation.
- The members of the team must demonstrate competence in all aspects of the Kata performance.

ARTICLE 10. BREAKING TIES FOR KATA COMPETITION

- In the event of a point score tie, the low score from the remaining scores shall be added into the final score. If the tie persists, the high score from the remaining scores is added into the final score.
- In the event of a continuing tie, the contestants must perform again. The athlete may repeat the same kata only in beginner division.
- If the point scores for the tiebreaker kata are tied, the Referee shall call for a decision by Hantei. A decision must be taken by the Panel of Judges (based only on the last Kata performed) at which time the judges shall each indicate their choice of either Aka or Shiro as the winner.

ARTICLE 11. SCORING FOR KATA COMPETITION

Deductions - In the smooth performance of the Kata points will be deducted from competitors score in accordance to the following schedule:

- 0.1 point shall be deducted from the final score for a quickly remedied momentary hesitation.
- 0.1 to 0.2 points shall be deducted for a momentary, but discernible pause.
- 0.2 to 0.3 points shall be deducted for a momentary imbalance, with barely a wobble quickly remedied.
- 0.3 to 0.4 points shall be deducted for actual instabilities where there is a distinct but recoverable loss of balance.

Disqualification may be imposed for the following:

- A contestant who varies the SHITEI Kata.
- A contestant who comes to a distinct halt during the performance of the SHITEI or TOKUI Kata or who performs a Kata different from that announced or as notified to the score table.
- A contestant who performs an ineligible Kata (mandatory) or repeats a Kata (when prohibited by rules) may be disqualified.
- If the contestant loses balance completely and/or falls over.

Point System Scoring Range

The following scoring range shall be used for the specified experience levels:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|
| ● Beginner: | 5.0 – 7.0 | ● Intermediate: | 6.0 – 8.0 |
| ● Novice: | 5.5 – 7.5 | ● Advanced: | 6.5 – 8.5 |

The following scoring range shall be used for the mandatory Kata divisions:

- Shitei: 6.5 – 8.5
- Sentei: 7.0 – 9.0
- Tokui: 7.5 – 9.5

Appendix A: Beginner Kata

In the beginner division the competitors will be restricted to performing a kata from the following:

- Any Kihon kata
- Heian / Pinan
- Gekisai

Appendix B: Style Specific Shitei, Sentei, Tokui Kata

Shotokan Shitei:

- Heian 1-5
- Tekki Shodan

Shotokan Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Bassai Dai
- Kanku Dai
- Jiin
- Jion
- Empi
- Hangetsu

Shotokan Tokui:

- Any Kata from Shitei/Sentei list
- Gankaku
- Tekki Nidan / Sandan
- Nijyushiho
- Chintei
- Sochin
- Meikyo
- Unsu
- Bassai Sho
- Kanku Sho
- Wankan
- Gojyushiho Sho/Dai

Shorin Ryu Shitei:

- Fukyugata Ichi/Ni
- Pinan 1-5
- Naihanchi Shodan
- Naihanchi Nidan
- Naihanchi Sandan

Shorin Ryu Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Wanshu
- Wankan (Hakutsuru)
- Rohai
- Jitte
- Sochin
- Ananku
- Kusanku Sho
- Passai Sho/Dai
- Seisan
- Niseishi

Shorin Ryu Tokui:

- Any Kata from Shitei/Sentei list
- Tomari Pasai
- Matsumura Kusanku
- Chatanyara Kusanku
- Chinto
- Chintei
- Gojushiho

Isshin Ryu Shitei:

- Seisan
- Wansu
- Naihanchi

Isshin Ryu Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Seienchin
- Chinto
- Ku San Ku
- Sunsui

Isshin Ryu Tokui:

- Any Kata from Shitei or Sentei list

Wado Ryu Shitei:

- Pinan 1-5
- Naihanchi Shodan
- Naihanchi Nidan

Wado Ryu Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Seishan
- Bassai
- Kushanku
- Wanshu
- Jion

Wado Ryu Tokui:

- Any Kata from Shitei/Sentei list
- Chinto
- Niseishi
- Jitte
- Rohai

Goju Ryu Shitei:

- Gekki Sai Dai Ichi/Ni
- Seienchin
- Shisochin
- Saifa

Goju Ryu Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Sanseru
- Kururunfa
- Sesan
- Suparinpe
- Seipai

Goju Ryu Tokui:

- Any kata from the Shitei or Sentei list above

Shito Ryu Shitei:

- Bassai Dai
- Jutte / Jitte
- Jyuroku
- Matsukaze
- Rohai (Matsumura)
- Jion
- Annanko
- Jiin
- Saifa
- Aoyanagi / Aoyagi
- Seienchin
- Naihanchin Shodan/Nidan/Sandan

Shito Ryu Sentei:

- Any Kata from Shitei list
- Bassai Sho
- Kosokun Dai / Sho
- Sochin
- Shisochin
- Nijyushiho
- Seipai
- Seisan
- Wanshu / Empi
- Shihokosokun
- Kururunfa
- Chinto
- Chintei

Shito Ryu Tokui:

- Any Kata from Shitei or Sentei list
- Suparinpei
- Nipaipo
- Gojushiho
- Tomari-Bassai
- Matsumura-Bassai
- Chatanyara-Kushanku
- Unshu
- Sanseiryu
- Heiku
- Anan

Mandatory All-Style Tokui:

- Any of the Style Specific Shitei / Sentei / Tokui list
- Any Traditional Okinawan or Japanese Kata