

AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR INCLUSIVE KARATE COMPETITION



SECTION 1. AAU/USA KARATE RULES FOR INCLUSIVE KARATE COMPETITION

ARTICLE 1. GENERAL GUIDELINE

- The rules of inclusive karate competition for all tournaments, matches, and competitions licensed by AAU/USA KARATE shall be as stated herein. These rules shall be used in all licensed competitions, without modification or amendment for events which qualify athletes for further 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 conflicts 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 is worn without a tie pin.
- Plain light gray trousers without cuffs.
- An official badge.
- Un-patterned dark blue or black socks.
- Black shoes for use in 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 - Coaches shall always wear the official uniform as prescribed during the course of the tournament. The official uniform for coaches shall be as follows:

- Black pants/slacks, 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 on 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 always 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 always 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.
- Logos – Only acceptable logo on uniform is an AAU logo unless approved by the AAU executive committee.
- The official AAU patch shall be worn on the uniform jacket and must be securely attached. 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 ankle bone. 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 trademarks 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 competitors 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, unless medically required

Any modifications of the official attire must be approved by the medical staff as necessary and appropriate for the inclusive athlete.

ARTICLE 4. INCLUSIVE DIVISIONS

At the discretion of the tournament director Inclusive Division will be divided by Inclusive Category, Age, Gender, and Experience Levels. To foster and promote competition, the tournament director may elect to forego dividing competitors by Age, Gender, and Experience Levels.

Inclusive Categories

- A. Cognitive Disabilities (Category 1)
 - a. Intellectual Disabilities w/o Downs
 - b. Downs Syndrome
 - c. ADHD & other
 - d. Traumatic Brain Injury*
- B. Autism (Category 2)
 - a. Low
 - b. Moderate
 - c. High
- C. Sensory Impaired (Category 3)
 - a. Blind/ Visually Impaired (full, one eye, legally blind) - competitors must wear a blind fold*
 - b. Deaf/ Profound Hearing Loss*
- D. Physical Disabilities (Category 4)
 - a. Wheelchair*
 - b. Walking Aids, including Crutches*
 - c. Amputee/ Congenital Amputee*
- E. Ambulatory (Category 5)
 - a. Physical disability but able to walk unaided*
 - b. Dwarfism
- F. Neurological Disorder (Category 6)
 - a. Epilepsy
 - b. Tourette's
 - c. Multiple Sclerosis
 - d. Stroke
 - e. Cerebral Palsy
 - f. Parkinson's
 - g. Other

* - Category for both Inclusive and Heroes & Veterans Division

Athletes can only select one inclusive category, irrespective of whether they have multiple disabilities.

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.
- Age groups will be split into five age groups:
 - o 8 & Under
 - o 9-12
 - o 13-18
 - o 19-40
 - o 41 & Over

Gender

- Groups may be separated into male and female competitors

Experience

- Groups may be separated by rank as follows
 - o 7 kyu and below
 - o 6th through 4th Kyu
 - o 3rd through 1st Kyu
 - o Any Dan rank

Heroes and Veterans

- Open to all veterans and first responders who have been impaired in the line of duty. Age groups for the Heroes and Veterans will be:
 - o 19-40
 - o 41 & Over

Participation in non-inclusive divisions

- A coach may petition the tournament director to allow an inclusive karateka to compete in the non-inclusive divisions. It is at the discretion of the tournament director to allow a karateka to compete in both the inclusive and non-inclusive divisions.

ARTICLE 5. COMPETITION

Inclusive Karate competitors will be able to compete in Kata, Kobudo, and Kihon

Individual Kata Regulations

- Competitors may select any kata
- Competitors may be restricted to one athlete at a time
- Sequence and movements may be modified by the athlete to adapt to their impairment.

Unified Team Kata

- A team will be composed of an inclusive athlete and a non inclusive athlete. The two athletes will perform a kata together.
- Team will compete one at a time.
- Team will be judged using a scoring system.

- Sequence and movements may be modified by the inclusive athlete to adapt to their impairment.

Individual Kobudo Regulations

- Competitors may select any kobudo.
- Competitors may be restricted to one athlete at a time
- Sequence and movements may be modified by the athlete to adapt to their impairment.
- If a modified kobudo weapon is used by inclusive athletes, it shall be examined and approved by the referee in charge of the tatami before the start of the division.

Individual Kihon Regulations

- Competitors will be expected to perform a sequence of forward moving basics, and backwards moving basic listed in Appendix A. Competitors will be able to select which forward moving and backwards moving sequence they prefer.
- Competitors may be restricted to one athlete at a time
- Sequence and movements may be modified by the athlete to adapt to their impairment.

ARTICLE 6. INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION – JUDGING

At the discretion of the tournament director, either a flag system or an individual scoring system will be used to judge the inclusive divisions.

Individual Flag System

- By the approval of the AAU/USA Karate Committee, the flag judgment system may be incorporated for all inclusive divisions with two or more competitors.
- Organization of Individual Competition for the flag judgment system shall be Free/Open Selection for Kata or Kobudo. For Kihon, the referee will select from the previously ascribed lists.
- 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 the flag judgment system.

Flag Judgment System First Round Procedure:

- At the beginning of the division all competitors will sit on the Aka side of the 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.
- Competitors will compete individually, the first competitors will be designated Aka, and second competitor will be designated Shiro.
- The first competitor (AKA) will bow before entering the match area and the next competitor will stand up and be on deck.
- The competitor will bow and announce their Kata/Kobudo (or the referee will announce Kihon). They shall commence their performance at the sound of the whistle by the Referee.
- On completion of their Kata/ Kobudo/ Kihon, the referee will acknowledge the completion, and the competitor will back out of the ring.
- The second competitor (SHIRO) will perform their Kata/ Kobudo/ Kihon in a similar manner.
- The two competitors shall stand side-by-side, bow in, and enter the match area, and await the decision from the Panel.
- 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/kobudo/kihon 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 the ring.
- All competitors will remain seated in a prescribed order.
- The order of seating MAY NOT be altered. Competitors will compete individually, the first competitors will be designated Aka, and second competitor will be designated Shiro.
- The first competitor (AKA) will bow before entering the match area and the next competitor will stand up and be on deck.
- The competitor will bow and announce their Kata/Kobudo (or the referee will announce Kihon). They shall commence their performance at the sound of the whistle by the Referee.
- On completion of their Kata/ Kobudo/ Kihon, the referee will acknowledge the completion, and the competitor will back out of the ring.
- The second competitor (SHIRO) will perform their Kata/ Kobudo/ Kihon in a similar manner.
- The two competitors shall stand side-by-side, bow in, and enter the match area, and await the decision from the Panel.
- 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/kobudo/kihon 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 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.

In the event there is only one competitor in a division or at the discretion of the tournament director, the competitor(s) will be scored. For 4th kyu and below competitors the score range for Novice competitors will be used (5.5-7.5). For 3rd kyu and above competitors the score range of Advanced competitors will be used (6.5-8.5).

Individual Scoring System

- A. In the 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.

- B. In addition, a scorekeeper, caller/announcer and when necessary, an expeditor shall be appointed.
- C. One round of competition shall determine the winners in the individual scoring system.
- D. When all competitors have performed, the highest total scores shall determine the first, second, third, and if applicable, fourth place winners.
- E. The following scoring range shall be used for the specified experience levels:
 - a. 4th Kyu and Below: 5.5 - 7.5
 - b. 3rd Kyu and Above: 6.5 - 8.5

Individual Scoring System Procedure:

- A. 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.
- B. The Referee will clearly repeat the name of the Kata to be performed.
- C. The participant(s) will then commence their performance, and upon completion, will return to their original position(s) and await the Judge's decision.
- D. 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.
- F. 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.
- G. 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:
 - a. Seven Scores – delete the highest and lowest and add all the remainder.
 - b. Five Scores - delete the highest and lowest and add all the remainder.
 - c. Three Scores - add all three scores.
- H. After checking that the scores of both the Jury Table Judge and the Scorekeeper agree, the Announcer shall announce the total score.
- I. The participant will bow to the Referee and leave the match area.

ARTICLE 7 – JUDGING CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

Any kata/kobudo performed may be an adaptation of the kata/kobudo selected, as long as such is traditional in nature and philosophy.

The kata/kobudo **MUST** have recognizable content and characteristics of the original form. While some deviation may be accepted, in accordance with the competitor's impairment, the criteria as set out below must be fulfilled.

- The performance of the kata/kobudo must adhere to the essence of the original form
- Any kata/kobudo performed must adhere to the original 'directional' pattern of the form.
- The kata/ kobudo competitor must demonstrate the **BASIC** and **ADVANCED** performance points/requirements
- For all kata/ kobudo/ kihon competitors, based on their impairment, they must attempt to demonstrate:
 - Proper Stance (Impairment Group A and B only, does not apply to Group C)
 - Proper Posture
 - Proper Balance
 - Proper Eye Vector
 - Proper flow of stance and technique
 - Proper Breathing
 - Proper Kiai on last technique – forward and backward
 - Proper Performance Line (Embusan)

Correct martial arts application must be shown to clearly demonstrate the competitor's ability and skills.

Wheelchair: Further consideration should be given to the application, dexterity, control, and maneuverability of the wheelchair in order to execute the techniques within the form.

Excessive use of break during the kata/kobudo:

Points will be deducted by the judges where a competitor has been deemed to use the break/ pause 'excessively.' The form should be performed with minimal interruption and maintain a natural flow throughout.

Article 8 - Participation in Non-Inclusive Divisions:

A parent or a coach may petition that an athlete be allowed to compete in both the inclusive and the non-inclusive divisions. It is at the discretion of the tournament director to allow these athletes to participate in both divisions. In the advent that an inclusive athlete participates in the non-inclusive divisions they are required to follow the same requirements for experience levels:

Non-Inclusive Division Experience Levels:

- A. Beginner division – less than 1 year of training.
- B. Novice division – 1 to 2 years of training.
- C. Intermediate division – 2 to 4 years of training.
- D. Advanced division – greater than 4 years of training.

APPENDIX A: KIHON TECHNIQUES FOR INCLUSIVE KARATE

Inclusive Athletes will be allowed to select from any of the following techniques in the kihon divisions, each round they will need to select from one set of techniques moving forward and one set of techniques moving backward.

4th Kyu and Lower (Four Basics forward and backward):

Forward Movement

- a) 4x Front Punch in Front Stance – Moving Forward
- b) 4x Downward Block in Front Stance – Moving Forward
- c) 4x Front Snap Kick with back leg and step forward in Front Stance – Moving Forward

Backward Movement:

- a) 4x Rising/Upward Block in Front Stance – Moving Backward
- b) 4x Inward Block (Block moving from outside to inside) in Front Stance – Moving Backward
- c) 4x Outward Block (Block moving from inside to outside) in Front Stance – Moving Backward

4th Kyu and below may only select from the above list of kihon techniques.

3rd Kyu and above (Four Basics forward and backward):

Forward Movement

- a) 4x Front Punch with reverse punch in Front Stance – Moving Forward
- b) 4x Downward Block with reverse punch in Front Stance – Moving Forward
- c) 4x Front Snap Kick with back leg and step forward in Front Stance with reverse punch – Moving Forward

Backward Movement:

- a) 4x Rising/Upward Block with reverse punch in Front Stance – Moving Backward
- b) 4x Inward Block (Block moving from outside to inside) with reverse punch in Front Stance – Moving Backward
- c) 4x Outward Block (Block moving from inside to outside) with reverse punch in Front Stance – Moving Backward

3rd Kyu and above may select techniques from either the 4th kyu and below list or the 3rd Kyu and above list

Wheelchair Competitors – 4th Kyu and Lower

Forward Movement:

- a) 4x Front Punches – Moving Forward
- b) 4x Downward Block – Moving Forward
- c) 4x Triple punch – Moving Forward

Backward Movement:

- a) 4x Outward Block (Block moving from inside to outside) – Moving Backward
- b) 4x Inward Block (Block moving from outside to inside) – Moving Backward
- c) 4x Rising/Upward Block – Moving Backward

4th Kyu and below wheelchair competitors may only select from the above list of kihon techniques.

Wheelchair Competitors – 3rd Kyu and Above

Forward Movement:

- a) 4x Double Punches (front punch and reverse punch) – Moving Forward
- b) 4x Downward Block with reverse punch – Moving Forward
- c) 4x Triple punch – Moving Forward

Backward Movement:

- a) 4x Outward Block (Block moving from inside to outside) with reverse punch – Moving Backward
- b) 4x Inward Block (Block moving from outside to inside) with reverse punch– Moving Backward
- c) 4x Rising/Upward Block with reverse punch– Moving Backward

3rd Kyu and above wheelchair competitors may select techniques from either the 4th kyu and below list or the 3rd Kyu and above list.