

# Worcester Classic Rules of Competition

**COMPETITOR:** Each competitor must present him/herself to the head official suitably attired with proper uniform and equipment. Competitors must be both mentally and physically prepared to compete. All competitors must have filled out an entry form and signed the tournament waiver (a parent or legal guardian must sign if competitor is under 18 years of age).

**RANK RULE:** Competitors must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in the martial arts at the time of the competition. A competitor can never compete in a division of which he/she had not earned that rank. A competitor can never compete in a lower belt division than the level of belt he/she has earned. The only exception is if the tournament promoter combines multiple divisions into one. Once a competitor competes as a black belt, he/she must always compete as a black belt.

**COMPETITOR'S AGE:** For Division assignments, a competitor's age is the age he/she is on the day of the tournament.

I.P.P.O.N.E. Competitors check the age rules for carrying points throughout the year with the I.P.P.O.N.E. Director.

**UNIFORM:** All competitors and officials must wear a complete (top and bottom) traditional or professional sport karate (Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, etc.) uniform in a good state of repair. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. T-shirts and shoes are allowed if they are part of the school's official uniform.

**COMPETITOR RESPONSIBILITIES:** It is the responsibility of the competitor to know the rules and be ready for competition when called to do so. All competitors are responsible for obtaining a ring assignment list. The tournament will proceed in order of ring assignments. Competitors should have an idea if divisions in front of their assigned division will go fast or slow. He/she must be suitably attired and at the appropriate ring when competition begins. Three calls will be made for competition at ringside. If the competitor is not at his/her ring ready to compete when competition begins, he/she will not be able to compete. If a competitor leaves the ring after the competition begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, he/she will be disqualified.

**LATE ENTRIES:** Once a division has started (i.e. the first competitor has started his/her form/weapon routine or the first divisional fight has started) no competitor/s can be added to that division. **BE ON TIME! The only exception to this rule is the "Fairness Rule" at the end of this rules summary.**

**REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED SAFETY EQUIPMENT:** Soft-padded hands, feet, headgear and mouthpiece are mandatory in all fighting divisions. Protective groin cup is mandatory for all male competitors. All competitors must provide their own equipment.

**Hand Pads:** Soft padded surface must cover the fingers, thumb, wrist and any striking surface of the hand.

**Foot Pads:** A foam-dipped soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel of the foot. The bottom of the foot does not have to be padded. \***Ringstar** shoes are allowed in **adult black belt divisions only**, but must also comply with the previously stated conditions.

**Head Gear:** The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface. A face shield is not required.

**Optional:** Shin and forearm pads, if worn, must be soft and may be made of cloth or foam.

**HEAD OFFICIAL:** The head official is chosen by the tournament promoters based on his/her history of fair judging, vast experience and knowledge of the rules of the competition. He/she promotes the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. To this end, he/she starts and stops the match, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administrates the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper, and announces the winner of each match.

**Added Powers of the Head Official:**

- 1) Match starts and ends only with his/her command (not the command of the timekeeper);
- 2) Has final decision on any disputes on score;
- 3) Automatically has power to disqualify a competitor who receives 2 penalty points in any given match;
- 4) Has power to issue a medical time-out. Competitors will only be granted medical time-outs for necessary reasons.

**Head Officials CAN NOT:** Override the majority rule decisions of the other judges. **The disqualification of a competitor, where disqualification is not automatic, is determined only by a majority vote of the judges.**

**PROTEST:** A competitor has the right to protest an infraction of the rules or if a possible mistake was made (not a judgment call). If a competitor wishes to protest, he/she should first let the head official know he/she believes there has been an infraction of the rules or a mistake has been made. The head official will first consider the evidence of the violation and determine a possible resolution at ringside. If the offending party does not agree with the head official's decision, he/she may request a tournament promoter to the ring. The tournament promoter's decision shall be final. **All protests must be made in an orderly, proper and sportsmanlike manner. All protests must be made immediately. Protests are not allowed once competition has resumed (after the fact protest). A competitor may be penalized or even disqualified if he/she is protesting improperly or without proper cause.**

**OFFICIALS:** Each ring should have a **HEAD OFFICIAL**, two to four **JUDGES**, and a **TIMEKEEPER/SCOREKEEPER**. The judges call points and rule infractions as they see them. They also vote on disqualifications. The head official also calls points and rules infractions but is also in complete control of the ring and ring personnel. Head officials make all final decisions on penalty points and warnings (based on majority rule) but can consult judges before making their decisions. The majority vote of the judges and referee determines a scoring point and/or a competitor's disqualification.

**THE RING:** The size of the fighting and forms adult black belt rings shall be approximately 18' x 18'. Starting lines should be marked approximately five feet apart in the middle of the ring. Additionally, each ring should be posted with a ring number visible to competitors, officials, and medical personnel from across the floor. No out of bounds lines will be placed.

**Weapons/forms Divisions:** If a competitor requires space beyond the chairs of the officials, he should advise the head official. No points will be deducted but safety of other competitors will be noted.

**Fighting Divisions:** Competitors will be encouraged by the head official to remain in bounds. A warning may be issued if the majority of the judges believe that a competitor is moving beyond the corner judges to avoid being hit.

#### **ORDER OF COMPETITION:**

**Forms:** Once the final call for the form and weapon divisions has been made at ringside the competition cards will be collected and shuffled thoroughly. The competitor cards will then be drawn randomly for the order of competition. Depending on the number of competitors, the head official may decide to watch the first three competitors or whole division without scoring. Then the first competitor will return to the ring and receive a score. This allows the judges to create a range of scores in which the rest of the competitors will fall within or out of that range depending on their performance.

**Sparring:** Once the final call for the sparring division are made at ringside the division is ready to be set up. The competition cards should be collected and counted (if competition cards are not used, count the competitors) to see if byes are needed. If byes are needed, they will be picked randomly. When at all possible, consideration should be given so that competitors who are from the same school or team will not fight each other in the first round. Outside of this consideration, matches should be selected randomly. It may happen that competitors from the same school will fight each other on the random card pick.

## **FORM RULES:**

**TIME LIMIT:** There is no official time limit. Please try to keep weapons and open hand forms to 3 minutes or less.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Competitors have the option of introducing themselves to the head official. No points will be deducted or added for those competitors that opt to announce his/her form and begin. If an introduction is issued, it should remain as brief as possible.

**SCORES:** The range of the scores are based on I.P.P.O.N.E. standards. Blackbelts: 9.0-10.0; Advanced: 8.0-9.0; Intermediate: 7.0-8.0; Novice: 6.0-7.0. Only a .05 may be added to the hundredth position (8.05) at the discretion of the judge. The range for divisions with combined levels will be at the discretion of the head official. In the case of three (3) judges, the scores will be added. In the case of five (5) judges, the lowest and highest of the five scores will be dropped. The remaining three scores will be added.

**Weapons:** Only martial arts weapons shall be performed. Weapons forms will be judged on the mastery of the weapon, focus, balance, power/fluidity and spirit. **Any competitor that drops any of his/her weapons will cease his/her performance and be disqualified.**

**Forms:** Forms will be judged on focus, balance, power/fluidity and spirit.

**TIES:** Ties will be broken based on the number of judges. If there are three (3) judges, the head official will determine the manner of breaking the tie. Options include: looking at the scores to see which competitor received two judges' higher opinion or taking a vote amongst the judges. They may be asked to do a different form. If there are five (5) judges, the low score will be added back in. If this does not break the tie, then the high score will be added back in. If they are still tied, the head official will determine the method of breaking the tie.

**STARTING A FORM OVER:** If a competitor starts his/her form over because of a memory lapse or any other reason due to his/her own negligence, he/she may perform the form again. The judges will deduct points and can decide individually the amount of the deduction. A competitor can only start over one time for scoring. If a competitor must start over not due to his/her negligence, he/she will not be penalized on the start over.

## **SPARRING RULES:**

**LENGTH OF MATCH:** There is no time limit for the matches. The head official does have the right to place a one-minute time limit if he/she feels that the competitors are not being productive.

**POINT VALUES AND WINNER DETERMINATION:** All black belt matches will be the first competitor to achieve five (5) points. Under black belt matches will be determined by the first competitor to achieve three (3) points. All legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. All legal kicking techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point. All techniques are one (1) point. If a competitor goes down to the ground, the upright competitor may attempt to score a

point. The competitor on the ground **may not** score a point from the ground. Down is when any part of your body is touching the competition floor except your feet and/or one hand.

**Out of bounds:** Boundaries are considered beyond the chairs of the corner judges. Competitors will not be penalized for stepping out of bounds but encouraged to maintain competition within the boundaries. Competitors beyond the boundaries may not score a point. Competitors within the ring may score on a competitor out of bounds. A warning may be issued if a competitor intentionally goes out of bounds to avoid contact.

**MAJORITY VOTE:** Points are awarded by a majority vote of all judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. A “No See” call is part of the majority vote.

**WHAT IS A POINT:** A point is a sport karate technique that is scored by a competitor in-bounds and up-right (not considered down) that strikes a competitor on a legal target area. 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 martial arts concepts.

A technique in which the scoring individual does not maintain balance should not be award.

A hand technique must be pulled back after it lands to be awarded a point.

Any scoring technique should make contact and stop on a target area. A glancing blow should not be awarded a point. Exceptions: See Correct Distance

**Correct attitude** - a non-malicious attitude of great concentration obvious during delivery of the scoring technique.

**Vigorous application** - defines the power, speed and controlled delivery of the technique, with the purpose of succeeding.

**Correct distance** - delivering a technique at the precise distance where it will have the greatest potential effect. A technique that is thrown to the head and is uncontested does not have to land as long as the technique would have connected if the competitor chose to continue the attack. A technique that is fully extended but misses should not receive a point.

**LEGAL TARGET AREAS:** Head gear (minus top of head), face shield, ribs, chest, abdomen, collarbone and kidneys. Face is a legal area if no contact is made but the competitor exhibits that he could have scored if the technique was fully executed. Usually the competitor must come within an inch of the face.

**ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS:** Contact to the face, Spine, neck, throat, groin, legs, and knees

**NON-TARGET AREAS:** Top of head, hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet.

**LEGAL TECHNIQUES:** Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques attempted by means of hands or feet.

**ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES:** Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs on a hard surface floor, ground fighting on a hard surface, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled blind techniques, any throws, takedowns and any other uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.

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

**SWEEPS, TAKEDOWNS, GRABS AND GROUND FIGHTING:** Sweeps not to take down an opponent, but only to obstruct the balance so as to follow up with a sport karate technique can only be executed to the back of the front leg at mid-calf or below. A sweep must be deemed a proper sweep and not a kick, to be legal. Controlled Takedowns and sweeps that are meant to take down an opponent are not allowed. A point is awarded only when the legal sweep or takedown is followed up effectively legally and **immediately** with an appropriate sport karate technique. No spinning or blind sweeps are allowed.

**LIGHT TOUCH CONTACT:** Means there is no penetration or visible movement of the competitor because of the contact. Light touch is required to all legal target areas in all black belt sparring divisions. The face shield of a headgear along with the headgear is a legal target area.

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

**EXCESSIVE TOUCH CONTACT:** Means penetration of the target area causing dynamic movement. Excessive contact is not allowed to any area.

**WARNINGS AND PENALTIES:** This first warning issued for any violation will cause a (1) point to be awarded to the opponent. A second warning will mean disqualification. Warnings do not have to be for the same violation for disqualification. Two warnings regardless of the violations will be cause for disqualification. The only violation to receive one verbal warning (no point issued) is the first official warning for running out of a ring to avoid contact.

**SPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT:** All competitors, coaches, and spectators are to exhibit the utmost professional and sportsmanship while on the tournament grounds. A martial arts attitude is expected at all times. Head officials, judges, timekeepers/scorekeepers **shall** be treated with respect

at all times. Swearing, malicious coaching, fist-pumping or acknowledging the point, poor attitudes and negatively referring to an official, competitor or coach will not be tolerated and may result in penalization.

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

**DISQUALIFICATION:** Requires a majority vote by all officials, unless it is an automatic disqualification.

**Excessive Contact:** A competitor may be disqualified for malicious or intentional excessive contact without warning.

**Wrong Division:** If any competitor competes in a division he/she does not qualify to compete in due to age, weight, rank, or gender, he/she will be disqualified.

**CALLS AN OFFICIAL MAY MAKE:** When the head official believes there has been a significant exchange of techniques, or when signaled to do so by a corner a judge/s, he/she shall call out the word, **“STOP!” (or suitable common equivalent – “Yame!” for example)** in a loud voice. The head official shall then return the competitors to their starting marks and addresses the judges by saying **“JUDGES CALL!”** or suitable equivalent. All judges and the head official cast their votes simultaneously and assertively in the following manner.

- 1) Point Calling – When signaled by the “Judges Call”, a judge raises the appropriate color (red or white) of the competitor who scores the point.
- 2) No Point Scored – An official crosses his/her wrist at waist level or holds both colors down to indicate that he/she believes that a point was not scored.
- 3) Did Not See If a Point Was Scored – The official holds his/her hand or flags over his/her eyes indicating that he/she could not see whether a point was scored or not. This indicates the official was not in position to see if a point scored. (When using this signal, it has the same effect as saying “no point”, but it indicates to the referee, competitors and fans the reason why you are not calling the point).
- 4) Clash – Officials hold flags horizontal and lining up with each other, indicating that both competitors scored at the same time.
- 5) Penalty – The judge waves the color of the offending competitor in a small circular motion.
- 6) Point and Penalty – The official will raise the color of the flag which scores the point. He/she will also circle the flag of the penalized competitor. This call rarely occurs and is the

combination of a clash, point and penalty. It will only occur when there are two simultaneous contacts in which one is a point and the other is a penalty. The majority of all the flags are taken into consideration and a competitor may receive two points during this situation.

- 7) Disqualification – The judge waves the color of the offending competitor in a large circular motion

**LATE CALLS:** The head official may disregard a call if the corner judge is intentionally withholding his call until the other judges have made their decision.

**CHANGING A CALL:** The honest mistake of raising the wrong color should be taken into consideration not to disqualify the call or judge

**COACHING:** A **Coach** is defined as anyone who is trying to help one competitor in anyway. A coach could be but is not limited to a friend, parent, teammate, or an official coach. The head official can issue a warning to a competitor for each time his/her coach is interfering with a match or disrupting fair play between contestants. A head official can ask for a disqualification of a contest, but requires a majority vote of all judges. All competitors will be treated with respect. Coaching is allowed but only under the following guidelines:

1. Never, at any time, can a coach enter the ring without the referee's permission
2. Only positive coaching is allowed. No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching
3. Competitors are not allowed to confer with the coaches and must remain in the ring
4. Coaches cannot ask for a time out unless they are protesting a rules violation
5. Coaches can never, at any time, interfere with the proper running of the ring or the decisions of the judges.

**FAIRNESS RULE:** If a question arises that is not completely covered by this rule book, the tournament promoter will be considered the official rules arbitrator and may at his/her discretion, overrule, modify or change a delineated rule if he/she believes that enforcing such a rule would result in an inherently unfair outcome to a competitor. However, the rules arbitrator should overrule, modify or change a delineated rule only in extreme cases.

**LOCATION OF RULES:** A copy of these rules may be reviewed upon request to the tournament promoter.