

# INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CHANBARA ASSOCIATION

## RULES & REGULATIONS

A message for the Referee

Chanbara helps each combatant build and cultivate character through the way of the sword. A referee should not put too much importance on the fight itself. It is critically important that he/she should judge the match with enthusiasm paying careful attention to the combatant's attitude, zeal and pride. The referee determines point-winning strikes from three basic elements; *quickness, strength and accuracy*.

The referee plays an important role in showing the best way to compete in Chanbara matches. He assumes considerable responsibility by putting himself into the combatant's shoes to make correct judgments on and off the court. The referee should give his 100% undivided attention, train to make quick decisions and deliver clear signals with a loud voice.

The whole body is a target with 5 major areas that receive strike winning-points.

- 1: Mein (the head and the face)
- 2: Kote- (the area from the fingers up to the shoulder)
- 3: Do- (the trunk of the body, chest and stomach)
- 4: Ashi- (the area from the hips to the feet)
- 5: Tsuki- (the area from the neck down to the chest)

Technique must be practical. Chanbara matches aim to help combatants improve these techniques. Therefore, Chanbara's full-contact weapons should be regarded as real and dangerous weapons. This helps the combatant understand the importance and seriousness of real fighting.

Matches are to be carried out by qualified referees, who strictly keep indifference. Referees must not be affected by any partiality. Through careful observation, they are to deliver judgment that is understood by everyone. Never feel hesitant to consult with fellow judges in order to make educated and appropriate decisions.

Referees are to be trained, tested by the ISCA Federation. A match involves three referees, one of whom is chief or center referee and the other two as assistant referees. If only two referees are available they must sufficiently fulfill their roles as chief and assistant referees. Each referee must have complete knowledge to judge matches.

**(ISCA)**  
**International Sports Chanbara Association**  
**Sparring Rules and Regulations**  
*Japanese Summarized Translation*

*The ISCA has established licensing requirements for tournament competition officials to allow for fair and impartial judging. Listed below are the requirements to obtain certification as tournament officials. The individual seeking certification must meet or exceed these minimum requirements.*

**REFEREE:**

A referee is qualified to direct (center) a kumite ring or kihon kata judging panel at local, regional, national or world championship events.

The duties of an ISCA Referee are set forth below and may be amended from time to time by the ISCA Rules and Referee Committee. The duties of an ISCA Referee are to:

- 1 Exercise general supervision over the activities of the competitors;
- 2 Attend periodic technical training instruction in conjunction with the Rules and Referee Examining Board and be re-certified every 2 years.
- 3 Interpret, explain or define any provision of the Rules to any person requesting such assistance;
- 4 Enforce all provisions of the Rules at any ISCA sanctioned tournament; and,
- 5 Apprise the ISCA Rules and Referee Committee of any matter or activity as it pertains to the interpretation or enforcement of the Rules; and,
- 6 Inform other ISCA licensed referees and judges within their respective region of all changes to methods, rules, policies or procedures as provided by the ISCA Rules and Referee Committee.
- 7 In the event that more than one (1) ISCA Referee should attend the same tournament, the line of authority shall be the ISCA Officers, Rules and Referee Committee Chairman, highest ranking member of the Rules and Referee Committee, and then the highest ranking Referee.
- 8 The candidate for referee must have obtained a minimum rank of 1<sup>st</sup> Dan, be at least eighteen (18) years old, attended at least two (2) ISCA sanctioned referee seminars, and successfully passed the examination conducted under the authority of the ISCA Rules and Referee Committee.
- 9 All licensed ISCA tournament officials shall wear a martial arts uniform or a white shirt, light gray or white trousers, a single breasted navy blazer, a plain blue tie and dark slip-on shoes.
- 10 The referee determines point-winning strikes from three basic elements; *quickness, strength and accuracy*.
- 11 Combatants of different heights and weights frequently miss one of these elements. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance the referee is ready at all times to oversee and effectively judge Chanbara matches.
- 12 The chief and assistant referees have equal judging authority; the majority of the same color flag make the point decision.
- 13 Referees are authorized to make swift and educated decisions which are delivered by using red and white flags.

**REFEREE PANEL**

- 1 The Referee panel for sparring divisions shall consist of one (1) Center Referee and two (2) Assistant Referees. Two (2) Assistant Referees are recommended for all divisions if a sufficient number of qualified referees are available
- 2 The Referee Panel for kihon kata divisions shall consist of a Center Referee and a minimum of two (2) other referees. The total Referee Panel for kihon kata divisions shall be comprised of an

odd number between three (3) and seven (7) qualified referees. Five (5) referees are recommended if a sufficient number of qualified referees are available.

- 3 Brown belts may be used on a Referee Panel in the event an insufficient number of black belt are unavailable. In no event may brown belts judge black belt divisions.

### **CENTER REFEREE**

- 1 The Center Referee shall have complete control and authority over all actions within the ring, including starting, suspending, extending, and ending of the matches. The Center Referee shall award points, provide explanations of point awards, determine the majority vote for point awards, impose penalties or warnings (before or during the match) and request options of Assistant Referees or Arbitrator.
- 2 When an Assistant Referee indicates a point has been scored or an infraction of the rules has occurred, the Assistant Referee must inform the Center Referee. The Center Referee is responsible for acknowledging the center referee's call.
- 3 The Center Referee may disqualify a competitor if there is blood, or unsportsmanlike conduct, without the majority vote of the Assistant Referees, provided that the appointed arbitrator for the tournament concurs with the Center Referee's decision.

### **ASSISTANT REFEREE**

- 1 The Assistant Referee shall assist the Center Referee at all times during the match. The Assistant Referee shall indicate whether a point has been scored, or an infraction of the Rules has occurred, and shall consult with the Center Referee, when so requested by the Center Referee.

### **ARBITRATOR**

An Arbitrator is appointed to every formal match so as to check that the match is carried out in a safe, fair manner. He is to respond, sincerely and promptly, to questions from contestants, and determined to seek the accuracy of judgment through correcting wrong decisions. To this end, he should not feel hesitant even if the majority of referees agree on a different decision from his own. He has to carefully observe the psychology of the contestants, and refer to them about the details of actions where necessary. Thus, impartial, fair and explainable decisions are to be made.

- 1 Arbitrator(s) shall be appointed by the tournament director and shall oversee the operation and actions of the competitors, referees, and coaches so as to enforce the ISCA Rules. The Arbitrator must have a current certification with the ISCA as a referee.
- 2 If a controversy arises, the Arbitrator shall advise on technical issues and rule enforcement.
- 3 The Arbitrator will make the final ruling on all protests at the tournament site.
- 4 Claim of objection. A contestant can claim his objection concerning a judgment by holding their hand up, and ask the Arbitrator to make a judgement. The contestant must then follow the decision made by the Arbitrator.

### **TIME KEEPER**

- 1 The Time Keeper will receive instructions from the Center Referee.
- 2 During sparring, the Time keeper shall tell the Center Referee when time has expired.
- 3 Time allowed for matches in individual competition shall be two(2) minutes running time.
- 4 Time allowed for matches in team competition shall be two (2) minutes running time.

### **SCORE KEEPER**

- 1 The Score Keeper will receive instructions from the Center Referee.
- 2 During sparring, the Score Keeper shall keep track of the points awarded to each competitor and tell the Center Referee when the maximum number of points has been awarded to the competitor.

- 3 During kihon, if there are three referees on the panel, the Score Keeper shall add all three scores to determine a competitor's total score. If there are five referees on the panel, the Score Keeper shall strike the high and low score for each competitor and add remaining three scores to determine the competitor's total score.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- 1 The events in any ISCA sanctioned tournament will consist of sparring and kihon kata. Competitors may enter as many events as they desire, provided the competitor meets the requirements for that particular event; however, they may enter only one kihon kata and one type of weapon per division for sparring that meets the requirements for an ISCA competition. For example, a competitor may enter his/her age group or a colored belt division with the Kodachi sword, but may not enter in a different age group or enter a black belt division of the Kodachi sword. Any competitor or team member who is not present when called for his/her event will be disqualified and will not be allowed to compete in that particular event.
- 2 If the competitor enters a division which is more advanced than the competitor's rank, such competitor must compete in the more advanced division from that point forward in the future ISCA tournaments.

### **SPARRING**

- 1 At any ISCA tournament there shall be individual sparring and there may be team sparring.
- 2 Individuals or teams who are not present when their competition event has been called will be disqualified from the event and will not be allowed to compete in that particular event.
- 3 Scoring for team competition will be the same as utilized during individual competition, with the exception of overtime.
- 4 The winner of a match will be the competitor who has scored one (1) to three (3) points depending on the tournament and the country it is being held in.  
The competitor is awarded the match because his opponent failed to arrive at the ring when the event was called, or the opponent is disqualified or injured and is unable to compete.
- 5 Individual sparring competition shall be divided into adult and youth categories. It is further divided into belt ranks and age divisions, with possible gender divisions within each rank category as provided for in Tournament Divisions.
- 6 The duration of a match is three minutes with an allowance of extra two minutes for an extension of the match. When the match cannot be decided by an extension, further extensions will be followed.

### **KIHON KATA**

Kihon competition shall be divided into adult and youth categories. It is further divided into belt ranks for adults and belt ranks and age divisions for the youth. All Kihon kata competitors are divided into tots, youth, teen, adult kyu, black belt men, and black belt women.

### **TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS**

#### **ADULT**

Adult men and women divisions are comprised of competitors sixteen (16) years and older. Senior divisions are comprised of competitors 35 years and older. The divisions are divided by rank for both men and women with novice (white/yellow) belt), colored belt, brown belt and black belt divisions. Sparring may also be divided into separate gender classifications for men and women.

## YOUTH

Beginning children competitors who are within their first three ranks. Advanced children competitors who are ranked higher than the first three ranks; an intermediate is a colored belt or ranked higher than their first two ranks, but under a brown belt; and an advanced student is a brown or black belt. Each division must have at least three (3) competitors in order to have beginning, intermediate and advanced divisions.

## DIVISIONS

|                       |                     |                          |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Kodachi (short sword) | Choken (long sword) | Nito-Ryu (double swords) |
| 5& under              | 8 ~ 9               | 8 ~ 9                    |
| 6 ~ 7                 | 10 ~ 11             | 10 ~ 11                  |
| 8 ~ 9                 | 12 ~ 13             | 12 ~ 13                  |
| 10 ~ 11               | 14 ~ 15             | 14 ~ 15                  |
| 12 ~ 13               | 16 ~ 17             | 16 ~ 17                  |
| Adult Kyu             | Adult Kyu           | Adult Kyu                |
| Black Belt            | Black Belt          | Black Belt               |

|            |               |               |
|------------|---------------|---------------|
| Bo (staff) | Yari ( spear) | Shoto (knife) |
| 8 ~ 9      | 8 ~ 9         | 8 ~ 9         |
| 10 ~ 11    | 10 ~ 11       | 10 ~ 11       |
| 12 ~ 13    | 12 ~ 13       | 12 ~ 13       |
| 14 ~ 15    | 14 ~ 15       | 14 ~ 15       |
| 16 ~ 17    | 16 ~ 17       | 16 ~ 17       |
| Adult Kyu  | Adult Kyu     | Adult Kyu     |
| Black Belt | Black Belt    | Black Belt    |

## COMPETITORS

- 1 Competitors will wear a clean and appropriate martial arts uniform. When competing in sparring divisions a uniform top must be worn.
- 2 All competitors shall present themselves in a clean and safe manner.
- 3 The following objects are prohibited from wear during competition: metal hair clips, jewelry or other metallic objects.
- 4 If, in the opinion of the Center Referee, and in consultation with the arbitrator, any competitor's attire violates this section the Center Referee may declare the competitor ineligible for further competition until such attire has been corrected.

## PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- 1 The purpose of competitors' use of protective equipment is to minimize injuries to the competitors. The key to safety and prevention of injuries in any sparring competition does not lie solely in utilizing safety equipment, but also in the competitors' control and attitude.
- 2 If there is a conflict between these Rules and any local or state law, rule or regulation, such local or state law, rule or regulation shall supersede ISCA Rules.
- 3 The following is a list of mandatory protective equipment at all ISCA tournaments; approved headgear, hand gear and mouth guards for all divisions and groin cups for all male divisions. If local law, rule or regulation requires additional equipment, such additional equipment will be required.
- 4 Metal arm and leg braces and bandages must be approved and authorized by the Chief Arbitrator prior to any competition by the competitor requesting its approval.

## **INJURY**

- 1 In the event of an injury of a contestant, referees will immediately suspend the match.
- 2 If the degree of the injury is considerable to the extent that it disturbs the further continuation of the match, the referees will decide that the injured contestant has lost the match.
- 3 If his opponent has caused the injury, the person responsible will be disqualified. In this case, another player can substitute the contestant.

## **COMPETITION AREA**

- 1 The competition area (ring) shall be flat and devoid of any potential hazard to the competitors or ring officials. It shall include the individual ring and the competitor waiting area. A separate warm-up area may be provided; however, such warm-up area will not be within a close proximity of the ring in order to avoid disruption of the tournament.
- 2 The only authorized personnel within the ring shall be the referees and competitors involved in the actual match in progress. The Assistant Referee shall move slightly within their respective corners. The Arbitrator, Score Keeper and Time Keeper shall remain outside of the ring.
- 3 The ring will be square, no less than eighteen (18) feet nor more than twenty-seven (27) feet on each side. The recommended ring size is twenty (20) by twenty (20) feet. The ring may be elevated no more than three (3) feet above the floor and must have sufficient space to prevent competitors from falling.
- 4 The center referee line shall be two (2) feet in length and will be placed six (6) feet from the center of the ring. Two parallel lines, opposite each other, two (2) feet in length and each four (4) feet from the center point of the ring at right angles to the referee line will be placed for the competitors (one for the white side and one for the red side).
- 5 The red side of contestants is placed on the right and the white side on the left, facing the joseki tournament officials).
- 6 The host is allowed to make some alterations in the contest area, taking into consideration things like the size of the area or the number of participants.
- 7 There is to be a distance of 1.5 meters or more between each contest area. The border is lined by five to ten-cm-wide white lines. Each starting line is set 1.5 meters from the center of the area, thus having three meters to one another.

## **BRACKETS**

- 1 Utilization of the bye system and “luck of the draw” will select the competitors.
- 2 Contestants from the same school or team will be separated from each other as much as possible during the elimination. The coach must inform the Center Referee or Arbitrator for such action to be taken.
- 3 If there are three (3) competitors in a division, a modified bye system will be utilized. All three (3) competitors will draw to determine a division. The competitor which receives the bye (Competitor “C”) will fight the loser of the two (2) competitors who did not receive the bye (Competitors “A” and “B”). If A wins, B will compete against C; then, if C wins, A and C will compete for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and B will be 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, if B wins, A will be 1<sup>st</sup>, B will be 2<sup>nd</sup>, C will be 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **STARTING OF A MATCH**

- 1 The competitors will stand outside of the ring directly in front of their indicated starting positions.
- 2 Upon the direction of the Center Referee, the competitors shall bow into the ring and shall walk forward to their respective starting positions. The Center Referee will instruct the competitors to

- face the Center Referee and will instruct the competitors to bow. The Center Referee will then instruct the competitors to face each other and bow.
- 3 The Center Referee will give the command to begin the match and the match will commence.

### **VIOLATIONS**

- 1 An act of infringing the personality or dignity of contestants, referees, or people concerned, or disturbing the smooth procedure of the match. **(Not Showing Respect)**
- 2 When both the feet of a contestant are outside the contest area.
- 3 When any equipment that is not set by the ISCA Rules and Regulation Committee is used.
- 4 Other acts that fall short of fair and proper manner. **(Not Showing Respect)**
- 5 Rude and violent acts. **(Not Showing Respect)**

### **SCORING OF A MATCH**

- 1 The Center Referee, who has determined the majority vote, shall award scoring. The Center Referee and the Assistant Referees are the only officials authorized to cast votes for points.
- 2 The Center and Assistant Referees will be provided with a red and a white flag, with which to score points for the competitor.
- 3 When either the Center Referee or the Assistant Referees have observed an effective technique, the Center Referee will stop the match.
- 4 The Center Referee shall then call for score from the Assistant Referees.

### **REFEREE'S CALL AND SIGNALS**

- 1 The Center referee shall utilize ISCA calls and related signs.
- 2 The Center Referee will give the command "Begin (hajime)"; at such time the match shall begin.
- 3 The Center Referee will give the command "'Stop (Yame)"; at such time the match shall stop.
- 4 After the Center Referee has stopped the match and has awarded the point or called for a warning or penalty, the Center Referee will restart the match by giving the command "Continue" or "Begin" and at such time the match will resume.
- 5 When the Center Referee or Assistant Referee determines a score has been made by the competitor against his opponent, the Center Referee will stop the match and will direct the competitors to return to their starting positions. The Center Referee will award the point.
- 6 When the Center Referee or Assistant Referee indicates a penalty is justified by waving their flag, the Center Referee shall stop time and call the referees to the side for a conference. When the majority vote has determined a penalty is justified, the Center Referee will then award a warning, a point, or a disqualification.
- 7 Claim of objection. A contestant can claim his objection concerning a judgment by holding their hand up, and ask the Arbitrator to make a judgement. The contestant must then follow the decision made by the Arbitrator.
- 8 When a competitor has received one (1) or three (3) points or has been awarded the most points to expiration of time. The Center Referee will give the command "Winner" and simultaneously raise his arm on the side of the competitor who won.
- 9 Assistant Referees may call score. When an Assistant Referee observes a point being scored, he shall immediately raise the red or white flag at a 45-degree angle.
- 10 All flags indicating score must be raised immediately. An Untimely call will not be tabulated.
- 11 To indicate a score the Referee will raise the appropriate color flag to indicate the winner of the point.
- 12 The Center Referee or Assistant Referees will raise both flags above their heads to indicate a penalty, the Center Referee will call the command "Stop" (yame).

- 13 The Center Referee or Assistant Referees will raise both flags above their heads to indicate an out of bounds by the competitor, the Center Referee will call the command "Stop" (yame).
- 14 Both feet have to go outside the boundary line to be call "out of bounds".
- 15 A point will be awarded by successfully scoring at the precise moment of the opponent's attack.
- 16 Deflecting an attack and simultaneously scoring on the opponent's unguarded area.

### **SCORING AREAS**

- 1 The scoring areas at ISCA tournaments shall be in five (5) basic areas.
- 2 Head (mein)
- 3 Wrist (kote)
- 4 Stomach area (do)
- 5 Leg (ashi)
- 6 Thrust to the chest (tsuki)

### **REFEREE MANDATE**

- 1 Referees maintain fairness and dignity during all competition.
- 2 Judgment is carried out in a precise, proper and prompt manner.
- 3 Aiuchi (clash), are valid strikes and regarded as a double out with both sides losing.
- 4 When a referee recognizes a valid point-winning strike, the other referees have to also signal if it is valid or invalid, an aiuchi, or nothing at all.
- 5 Point-winning decisions can be made if 2 referees raise the same color flag.
- 6 Referees promptly express "chushi" (suspension) of the match in the event of danger, misconduct of a contestant, or running out of time. This decision is immediately effective. The Center Referee declares the chushi, following the Assistant Referee's recognition, and instructs the contestants to retreat to the starting lines to resume the match.
- 7 On recognizing a foul, referees have to suspend the match for consultation. The chief referee shows the signal of the foul to the contestant who has made it. If the violation of the rule is obvious, consultation can be omitted.
- 8 The match is not suspended when either of the contestants falls down. A valid stroke during such an occasion is counted as ippon (one point). If the contestant who has fallen down is injured, this rule is not applied.
- 9 When a judgment is made without a signal by the Center Referee, he declares the decision in the provided place according to the judgment. (*Summarized Japanese translation*)
- 11 Kabaite accounts for half a point. The contestant who has been beaten receives a warning of "kabaite" (hand was struck and must be put behind the competitors back). Two strokes on the kabaite make an ippon. In the two-hand handling, a stroke on either of the arms is valid.
- 12 The match continues if either of the contestants drops his sword. A stroke made during such an occasion is valid. (Revised on April 4, 1992.)
- 13 Two fouls outside the contest area account for an ippon.
- 14 Two flags red, one and white one, to use for judgment. The chief referee holds a red flag in his right hand, and a white one in his left hand. The assistant referees stand with a red flag in their left hands, and a white flag in their right hands.

### **CHANBARA REFERENCE (Japanese terminology)**

- \* Ippon-shobu is a match that is decided by one valid strike.
- \* Sanbon-shobu is a match that is decided by the first two points gained by a single contestant.
- \* Enchonai-shobu is a match that is decided in an extension by one valid stroke.
- \* An individual match is basically carried out by sanbon-shobu, and a team match by ippon-shobu.
- \* In an ippon-shobu, an aiuchi makes the both sides lose. In a sambon-shobu, a first aiuchi allows one point for each side. If there is another aiuchi for the second time, the both sides will lose.
- \* Commence of the match --Hajime
- \* Voice hajime from the provided place. Take the basic posture.
- \* Voice ha-nare or wa-kare, holding the both flags up in line with the shoulder.

- \* Assistant referees position. Take the basic posture.
- \* Advance to the starting line. Hold back in the posture of chudan.
- \* Be poised in the posture of chudan with a one-meter interval between the points.
- \* Suspension of match Chushi, mate or yame.
- \* Voice chushi, mate or yame and uphold the flags straight above the head, returning to the provided place.
- \* Uphold the flag above the head, and return to the provided place.
- \* Return to the starting line to the poised in the posture of chudan
- \* Valid strike... Voice the ki-ai yoshi.
- \* Yoshi. Flag raised on the winner's side at a 45 degree angle.
- \* Return to the provided place.
- \* When a score is taken Center Referee ki-ais the strike with Men ari, kata ari, do ari, kote ari, ashi and tsuki ari.
- \* Chief referees call an ippon shobu, call shobu ari, and yame.

### **AIUCHI & ATOUCHI**

Aiuchi is the action by which both sides lose the match. It is not recommended as a means of self-defense, where the prevention of injury weigh importance A slight lapse between two strokes made by each side can also be neglected, and instead regarded that an aiuchi has been made. To take an example, a player could be hit on his men right after he sweeps the opponent's leg. On judging these movements, the men-uchi would be taken seriously, as it involves a potential for a fatal injury, while the ashiuchi would only result in a mere injury It would be, therefore, questioned whether it is really appropriate to judge it as an aiuchi. The damage on the leg weighs only little compared with that on the face. The problem here is how to see each attack, in other words, whether the ashiuchi, which was made slightly prior to the men-uchi, should be counted as one point, or the effect of the men uchi, though later than the ashiuchi, should mean more. It would be most proper, however, to settle on an aiuchi with the respect of both sides being almost simultaneously beaten. Conventionally, the ashiuchi has been frequently involved in the aiuchi as the first stroke. A player would bear in mind that he is then in for a subsequent big repayment from his action. An instructor then needs an effort to facilitate training for learners in dealing with things like that. Atouchi is a delayed blow, which should not be regarded as a respectable play. It is also called kenka -waza. A beginner or person with short-temper would be prone to this action so that he should be trained to avoid it. Meanwhile, if it is observed in a match as an intentional action, the player will lose the match for his misconduct. (*Japanese translated information*)

This rules and regulations summary is from the International Sports Chanbara Association's official handbook, pages 215 to 332.

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