

GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND RULES

REFEREE QUALIFICATIONS:

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

The duties of an USCF Referee are set forth below and may be amended from time to time by the USCF Rules and Referee Committee. The duties of an USCF 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 USCF sanctioned tournament; and,
- 5 Apprise the USCF Rules and Referee Committee of any matter or activity as it pertains to the interpretation or enforcement of the rules.
- 6 Inform other USCF licensed referees and judges within their respective region of all changes to methods, rules, policies or procedures as provided by the USCF Rules and Referee Committee.
- 7 In the event that more than one (1) USCF Referee should attend the same tournament, the line of authority shall be the USCF 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 1st Dan, be at least eighteen (18) years old, attended at least two (2) USCF sanctioned referee seminars, and successfully passed the examination conducted under the authority of the USCF Rules and Referee Committee.
- 9 All licensed USCF 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.

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

- 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 USCF Rules. The Arbitrator must have a current certification with the USCF 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1 The events in any USCF 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 USCF 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 USCF tournaments.

SPARRING

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.

TOURNAMENT DIVISIONS

ADULT

Adult men and women divisions are comprised of competitors eighteen (18) 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
14 ~ 15	Adult Kyu	Adult Kyu
16 ~ 17	Black Belt	Black Belt
Adult Kyu		
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 USCF rules.

- 3 The following is a list of mandatory protective equipment at all USCF tournaments; approved headgear, hand gear 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.

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 Corner 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).

Judging Regulation

Article 1: Referees are to be trained, tested by the Federation.

Article 2: A match involves three referees, one of which is chief referee and the other two are assistant referees. If only two referees are available they must sufficiently fulfill their roles as chief and assistant referees

(1) Referees are authorized to make swift and educated decisions which are delivered by using red and white flags. 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.

(2) The chief referee is responsible for the conduct, supervision and morale of a match.

(3) The chief and assistant referees have equal judging authority; the majority of the same color flag make the point decision.

(4) Each referee must have complete knowledge to judge matches.

Referee Mandate

(1) Referees maintain fairness and dignity in the contest hall.

(2) Judgment is carried out in a precise, proper and prompt manner.

(3) Aiuchi, 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. Point-winning decisions can be made if 2 referees raise the same color flag.

(5) 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 chief referee declares the chushi, following the assistant referee's recognition, and instructs the contestants to retreat to the starting lines to resume the match.

(6) 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.

(7) The match is not suspended when either of the contestants falls down. A valid stroke during such an occasion is counted as ippon. If the contestant who has fallen down is injured, this rule is not applied.

(8) The assistant referees remain in the basic position when a judgment is made outside his

responsibility. When a judgment is made without a signal by the chief referee, he declares the decision in the provided place according to the judgment.

(9) Kabaite accounts for half a point. The contestant who has been beaten receives a warning of kabaite. Two strokes on the kabaite make an ippon. In the two-hand handling, a stroke on either of the arms is valid.

(10) The match continues if either of the contestants drops his sword. A stroke made during such an occasion is valid.

(11) Two fouls outside the contest area account for an ippon.

Match Rules:

- (1) The duration of a match is two minutes. When the match cannot be decided by the end of the two minutes over time shall be granted with no running time. First valid strike wins the match.
 - (2) Ippon-shobu is a match that is decided by one valid stroke.
 - (3) Sanbon-shobu is a match that is decided by the first three points gained by a single contestant.
 - (4) Enchonai-shobu is a match that is decided in an extension by one valid stroke.
 - (5) An individual match is basically carried out by sanbon-shobu, and a team match by ippon-shobu.
 - (6) In an ippon-shobu, an aiuchi makes the both sides lose. In a sanbon-shobu, a first aiuchi allows one point for each side. If there is another aiuchi for the second time, the both sides will lose.
 - (7) Contestants may dispute the judges call by standing at their line and raising their hand above their head. The center referee will then call for time out. In a calm and respectful manner they may advise the center referee on whether the call was valid and give their reason why it shouldn't be a point. The center referee may then ask the other contestant if they are in agreement or not. If it is agreed upon then time will be called in and the match will resume.
- The following are regarded as violations.** (Article 9)

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

Penalty

- (1) A contestant of an act s discussed in Article 9 section 1 will be disqualified, making the opponent win the match.
- (2) Each act of Article 9 section 2 is to be clearly signaled, and the second violation by a contestant will give the opponent ippon.
- (3) Acts of Article 9 section 3 to 5 are to be put to consultation to be decided either as a foul or a disqualification. Any violation can be decided as disqualification or suspension from the participation of matches if the contestant's intention or the degree of the act is considerably serious.

Injury

- (1) In the event of an injury of a contestant, referees will immediately suspend the match so as to take an appropriate treatment.
- (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. If the injury has been caused by his opponent, the person responsible will be disqualified. In this case, the contestant can be substituted by another player.

Article 12:

Claim of objection A contestant can claim his objection concerning a judgment by holding their hand up, and ask examiners for deliberation. The contestant must then follow the decision made by the examiners.

Vocalizing and Declaration

- *Center referee takes position at the center line. Assistant referees take position in then corners facing the center referee.
- *Commence of the match – from the center line hold both flags at contestant’s chest level and voice “Three point match, begin!”
- *All referees stand with the flags at their sides.
- *Suspension of match Chushi, mate or yame.
- *To stop the match the center referee voices stop, mate, yame or yoshi and holds the color of the flag of the contestant that has made a valid strike over his/her straight above the head, and returns to the center line.
- *Return to the starting line to the poised in the posture of chudan
- *Valid stroke voice yoshi while upholding the flag of the winner’s side at 45 degrees from the vertical line.
- *Return to the provided place.
- *Call of valid strike uphold the flag stroke Men ari, to a 45 degree kata ari, do ari, position at the kote ari, ashi
- *Chief referees ari. Also hiji position, and call an ippon-shobu, call shobu ari, and yame.

Examiner

An examiner is appointed to every formal match so as to check that the match is carried out in a safe and fair manner. He is to respond, sincerely and promptly, to questions from contestants, and is 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.

Contest area

- (1) A contest area is to be a flat square with six to nine meters in each side, including the borderlines.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The red side of contestants is placed on the right, and the white side on the left, facing the joseki.

Warning Against Aiuchi and 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's 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.