

# WKF COMPETITION RULES BULLETIN

Competition Rules Revision effective from 1.1.2026

December 2025

Dear fellow karateka,

Effective from 1.1.2026 there are some changes to the WKF Competition Rules. This is mostly adjustment of the language and alignment between the documents describing each type of event and the actual competition rules. Nevertheless, there are several points that require the attention of athletes and coaches:



## **New system for kata competition**

The winner of a Kata bout or Match will be determined by number of votes in favor of the winner. The points will still be used to distinguish the winner by each judge, but there is no summation of points. This will eliminate the problem of our previous system where the winner in some cases only had the support of the minority of judges, just because one judge consistently used very high or very low scores.

## **Theatrics in Kata**

In the spirit of preserving the nature of kata, some adjustments have been done to reduce needless theatrics. The Athletes will be expected to announce the name kata in a recognizable way, use correct kiai rather than simply yelling, and will also run the risk of disqualification in the case of persistent and obvious repetition of theatrics, such as stamping the feet, slapping the chest, arms, or karategi, or inappropriate exhalation.

## **Attire and protective equipment**

The karategi must not be altered or manipulated to change its shape. If you arrive at the tatami with a starched ducktail or puffed up chest, you should expect to be asked to remedy this as you would be for any other irregularity of attire. Prescription sport glasses will now be allowed in kata competition.

## **Scoring on a downed opponent**

The most important change in Kumite is that only hand techniques will be allowed towards a downed opponent. Kicking a downed opponent will thus be a foul.

**Enforcement of all scoring criteria**

For some time the scoring criteria of maintaining attention at the opponent after a technique has often been ignored. The importance of this criteria will now be emphasized. If you turn away after landing a punch, or fall down after a kick, do not expect to get a score!

**Skin touch in all Kumite categories**

So called “skin touch”, defined as touching without transferring energy into the target, being the head or helmet, will be allowed in all official kumite categories. This does of course demand the full respect of all organizers to strictly enforce the use of the protective helmet for athletes under 14 years of age, who will still be given scores for hand techniques 5 cm short of target and foot techniques 10 cm short of target.

**Simplification of Jogai**

You will also find the rules for Jogai simplified. If you score and then exit no Jogai will be given. If you are scored on while in Jogai, you will not get Joagi in addition to the point against you.

**Video review**

When requesting video review, the coach will now use the designated button for 1, 2 or 3 points, and the Video Review Judge will only be required to look for the score requested.

**Mixed Team Kumite**

Although not on the WKF official program, a number of NFs have arranged mixed team Kumite competitions. We have therefore found it convenient to include this in our competition rules to give some guidance. Teams will always have an equal number of athletes of each gender. Every other bout will always be of the opposite gender. The draw will determine which gender will compete first. Teams can be 2 + 2 without weight categories or 3 + 3 with weight categories as used for multi-sport events.

**Para Karate**

There is not a great deal of change in the Para Karate at these crossroads. For K10 (Visually Impaired Athletes), blindfolds moving out of the correct position so that they partially or fully uncover one or both eyes during the performance will now be considered ground for disqualification. There is also a revision of the definition of the foul of losing balance versus falls that constitutes grounds for disqualification.



Gunnar Nordahl  
Chairman

WKF Rules & World Ranking Commission