

MERCER COUNTY NATIONAL KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

**** General Tournament Sparring Rules ****

Uniform

- Competitors must wear a traditional, school or sport martial arts uniform which is not unsightly or with foul language on it.
- **T-shirts** are allowed - must show the school's logo and/or patch.

Note: Any uniform with foul language on it automatically disqualifies the competitor from competing.

Safety equipment

- **Mouthpiece** - required.
- **Groin Cup** - required (males only).
- **Hand Gear** - required and must cover the fingers and be free of repairs that could cause injury.
- **Foot Gear** - required and must cover the toes and be free of repairs that could cause injury.
- **Head Gear** - required and must be free of repairs that could cause injury.
- **Chest Protector** (optional)

Note: A competitor entering the ring or caught in the middle of the match without proper safety equipment will be given two - minutes to obtain the proper safety equipment. If he/she cannot obtain the necessary equipment, then he/she will be disqualified by the center referee.

Legal scoring areas

- top and sides of head gear. (for children, junior and adult divisions)
- ribs, chest, and abdomen area.
- *light facial touch (adult 18 yrs and over black belt divisions)*
- *for 10 - 17 yrs olds (black belts) with face shields, light touch is allowed to the shield.*

Non-scoring areas

- lower back of head, spinal area, shoulders, throat, arms, elbows, hips, buttocks, groin, legs, knees, feet or any other area not specifically accepted as a legal scoring area. However, the competitor could strike to a non-scoring area if the opponent intentionally used that area as a blocking area.

Legal techniques

- All kicks, punches, back-fists, knife hands, and ridge hands (they may be aerial, but controlled).
- Grabs are allowed to any frontal part of the body excluding the head, back, around the neck and groin area.
- **Grab(s)** can last no more than two seconds **and must be followed up** by a legal technique. Otherwise the competitor will receive a warning for his/her offense. The second offense will have one penalty point awarded to his/her opponent, and third infraction will result in disqualification.
- **Leg-checks** are permissible, however only to the front leg, and with only light contact. (*any contact other than light will result in a warning for 1st infraction, a point awarded to the opponent on 2nd infraction and disqualification on 3rd infraction.*)
- **Sweeps (Adult 18+ Black Belts Only)** may be with either the front or back leg to the back or side of opponent's lower (below the knee) **front leg only**. All techniques must be focused (the competitor must make and keep eye contact to the area that he/she is making contact to or striking toward before the completion of the technique.) **All sweeps must be followed up by a legal technique.** Otherwise, such contact will be deemed unnecessary, which will result in a warning for his/her offense. The second offense will have one penalty point awarded to his/her opponent, and third infraction will result in disqualification. A competitor maliciously/excessively using an illegal technique will be disqualified on his/her first offense.

Illegal techniques

- Head butts, hair pulls, biting, scratching, spear hands, palm heel strikes, all other open hand techniques, blind techniques, spinning hand techniques, elbow strikes, knee strikes, throws, take downs other than a legal sweep, rear leg sweeps, jumping on or, punching or kicking to the head of a downed opponent. That will include any and all uncontrolled hand/kick techniques. *A competitor excessively / maliciously using a legal or an illegal technique may be disqualified on his/her first offense.*

Contact

- **No Contact:** No contact to the opponent as a result of the technique.
- **Control Contact:** Controlled technique must be within a four-inch zone of the legal targeted area to be considered as a point.
- **Light Contact:** No penetration or movement of the opponent as a result of the technique(s). Just a touch. No blood can be drawn or discoloration to the facial area.
- **Moderate Contact:** Slight penetration or movement of the opponent (torso area only), as a result of the technique(s). No swelling or blood can be drawn to the body or face, or any discoloration to the facial area.
- **Excessive Contact:** An extreme penetration or movement of the opponent as a result of the technique(s) including redness of the body/facial area, swelling or bleeding (even if it was unseen by the judges). Or any technique which will cause a substantial risk of injury as a result of the contact.

Note: Blood or discolorations will not be deemed grounds for an immediate disqualification. Circumstantial factors will be taken into effect prior to making a disqualification call. However, any excessive/malicious legal or illegal technique may result in disqualification on the competitor's first offense.

Contact to score for point fighting

- All children, junior (including black belts under 18 yrs) and adult ranks must use either controlled or light contact to score to specific headgear scoring areas, excluding the facial area, and light or moderate contact to score to the body scoring areas.

Contact to score for point fighting

- Adults 18+ Black Belts may use light contact to score to a specific headgear scoring area. A touch is allowed to the facial area as long as no visible red markings or blood are seen. However, with the majority of the judges' call for point, a point may be awarded for control techniques to the facial area. Light or moderate contact to score to the body scoring areas.

Penalty - A competitor using more than the accepted amount of contact to a scoring area or any contact whatsoever to an illegal contact area will, by a majority vote of the judges, will receive a warning for his/her offense. The second offense will have one penalty point awarded to his/her opponent, and third infraction will result in disqualification (for any contact less than excessive).

(1st call- warning, 2nd call – point to opponent, 3rd call - disqualification) - **Attempt / Actual contact**

Malicious contact (1st call – disqualification)

Penalty - A competitor using malicious contact to a scoring area will be disqualified and declared the loser. That call may be made solemnly by the center referee. Excessive contact calls will depend on the severity of the injury and/or technique executed. A majority of the judges' call will suffice. If a "DQ" call is over-ruled, then the opponent will be awarded a penalty point.

Point definition: A point is a technique placed to a legal scoring area with a legal amount of contact during the match and before the match is stopped. If at any time a competitor purposely makes contact with any technique to his/her opponent after the match has been stopped, then he/she will be disqualified, and the remaining player will be declared the winner.

Scoring of points: One point is awarded to a competitor for any legal hand or foot technique by a majority vote of the judges, with the exception of adult black belts – see *amount of points to win*. Scoring competitor must have at least one foot be in the ring to score.

Note: A competitor may not receive a scoring point and a penalty on the same call. **A penalty always override's a point.** A competitor may receive a point for scoring and a point for the opponent's penalty.

Scoring by Penalties: A one-point penalty may be awarded to a competitor by a majority vote of the judges, or in some cases where the opponent is placed in substantial risk, the call may be made solemnly by the center referee.

Accumulated warnings

- If a competitor accumulates three unrelated or separate warnings, he or she may be disqualified by the center referee or majority of the judges' call. *This call will be dependent on the competitor's intentions and attitude.*

Amount of points to win

- All youth divisions and adult's under black belt: two-minute rounds, and the first competitor to reach five points, or whichever competitor is ahead at the end of the two minutes will be declared the winner. All legal techniques = 1 pt. each.
- Black Belts 18 years and older: two-minute rounds, seven (7) point spread, or whichever competitor is ahead at the end of the two minutes, will be declared the winner. Hand techniques = 1 pt. Head Kick techniques = 2 pts. For Grand champion matches: 2-two-minute rounds accumulative points or (9) point spread.

Ties

- A tie will be broken by “sudden-death/overtime”, meaning the first competitor to score after the match time has elapsed. However, the scoring technique must be a clean visible point.

Downed opponents - A competitor is considered downed when either upper limb or buttocks touch the ground.

- ***Scoring** – Either competitor will have two seconds to score when one competitor has been downed or drops to the ground. (*When downed, only the torso area for either competitor becomes the legal target*).
- **Kick to the Head** - If a competitor is downed, then kicks/kicking motion or punch/or punching motion to the head of either competitor is illegal. No exceptions.
Penalty - A competitor kicking/making motion to kick, or punching/making motion to punch to the head of a down competitor will, at the discretion of the Center Referee or with the majority vote, will receive a warning for his/her first offense. The second offense will have one penalty point awarded to his/her opponent, and third infraction will result in disqualification.
Actual contact made on first offense may result in a point being awarded to the opponent. Second infraction will result in automatic disqualification.

Excessive contact made to the head of a downed opponent, will result in automatic disqualification.

*****The center referee has the authority to disqualify a competitor without any judge's call(s).**

(1st call - **warning**, 2nd call – **point** to opponent, 3rd call - **disqualification**) - **Attempt/Actual contact**

Malicious contact (1st call – disqualification)

Stalling, running, going out of the ring, or falling to avoid being scored upon.

- A competitor who stalls, running to avoid opponent, goes out of the ring willingly, or falls to the ground to avoid being scored upon will receive a warning for the first two infractions and point awarded to his/her opponent for each infraction thereafter. (1st call - **warning**, 2nd call- **warning**, 3rd call – **point** to opponent, etc.)

Un-sportsmanlike conduct

- Any competitor who displays any unsportsmanlike conduct will result in an automatic disqualification, no exceptions. No competitor shall conduct himself/herself, while in competition in such a way as to bring shame, dishonor upon their martial arts school, staff or any other member in the tournament facility.
However, if the referee or judges deemed the competitor's conduct is a minor act, then he or she may be warned for the first infraction. Thereafter it will result in automatic disqualification.
The center referee has the authority to disqualify a competitor without any judge's call(s).

Byes and pairing of competitors

- Byes are done in the first-round only.
- If possible, competitors from the same school or team will not be paired up in the first-round only.
- In children's divisions, if possible, the size of the competitor will be taken into consideration.

Injury

- An injured competitor gets **one-minute running clock**.
- Starting with the arrival of medical personnel, a five-minute duration will be allowed for recovery of an injured competitor, **ONLY** if the medical personnel deems it to be necessary.
- The center referee and/or the tournament medical personnel, or the competitor's coach/instructor may not let a competitor continue whom they deem unable to compete.
- A competitor that is bleeding before the match begins will be barred from competing.
- Any competitor that has a slight injury before the match begins and the injury worsens either by itself during the normal progression of the match or by allowable contact, and as a result the competitor cannot continue, then the injured competitor will be disqualified.
- If a disqualification was called for either a foul or a contact executed by the opponent, and the injured competitor is **not able** to recover within the one-minute time period, or five-minutes with authorization of a medical personnel, then he/she will also be disqualified.