

**All Divisions:** A competitor must present him/herself suitably attired to compete. If a competitor is not suitably attired, he or she may receive an automatic warning. If a competitor cannot find suitable attire (uniform, gear, etc.) after three minutes, they will be disqualified. (See below for a full description of suitable attire under Uniform)

**Rank Rule:** All competitors must compete at the highest belt level they have earned in any martial arts. For example; if you have a Black Belt in any other Martial Art and an Orange Belt in Kenpo, you must compete as a Black Belt. Competitors may only compete in rank appropriate divisions: meaning that orange belts compete in orange belt or novice divisions etc.

**Proof of Age Rule:** All competitors must have proof of age. If there is a legitimate reason to question a competitor's age, he/she must present a birth certificate, driver's license, or other acceptable documents to prove his/her age.

**Wrong Division:** If any competitor competes in a division he/she is not qualified for, because of age, weight, or style, he/she will be disqualified from their form, fighting, or weapon division and all awards are forfeited.

**Competitor:** All competitors must present themselves suitably attired and ready to compete. They may be divided into separate divisions based on style, size, gender, rank, origin of the form or age. To enter an adult division, a competitor must be 18 years or older. A competitor must enter the division corresponding to his/her age, gender, and belt color.

**Uniform:** All competitors must wear a proper karate / *martial arts* uniform in a good state of repair. If a competitor wears a uniform with offensive words or artwork, that competitor may be denied the privilege of participation. The appropriate color belt or sash must be worn in competition. No sneakers are allowed in the sparring division with the exception of sparring shoes (ringstars, etc.).

**Form Uniforms:** T-shirts, tank tops, and sweatshirts are allowed in form if they are part of a competitor's official school or if they list the school's name or logo on the uniform top. Uniforms in the form divisions are allowed more liberties because form is not one-on-one competition where the uniform could cause a decisive disadvantage or advantage to a competitor. Shoes may be worn in form competition if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.

**Sparring Equipment:** Is *mandatory* for all sparring divisions. All competitors are responsible for providing their own equipment. (A more complete description for acceptable equipment to follow) All sparring competitors that are 17 years old or younger are encourage to wear a face shield.

**Responsibilities:** *It is the competitor's responsibility to know the rules* and to be ready for competition when called to do so. He/she must be suitably attired, weighed-in (where required), and at the appropriate ring when competition begins. If the competitor is not at his/her ring to compete when competition begins, he/she will not be allowed to compete. If a competitor leaves a ring after the ring competition begins and is not present when his/her name is called to compete, his/her name will be called three (3) times at ringside. If he/she is still not present to compete on the third call, he/she will be disqualified.

### **Late Entries and Order of Performance**

It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at the ring prior to the time that the division starts. Once the division is organized and the first competitor begins, there will be no additional entries. If a competitor comes late but the first competitor has not started, he/she may be allowed to compete. ***(Keep in mind that many countries attend this event and there may be an instance where language is a barrier for some competitors. The center judge may use their discretion in these matters or refer to the event arbitrator. Also some consideration may be given to beginners, especially children).***

### **Required and Recommended Safety Equipment**

**1. Gloves** - a soft padded, surface must cover the fingers, wrist and any striking surface of the hand. The striking areas such as the ridge of the hand (ridge hand) side of the hand (chop, hammer fist), back of the fist (back fist), and knuckles (punch) must be covered with a soft padded surface.

**2. Boots** - A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and heel of the foot.

**3. Head Gear** - The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface. Facemasks are optional but not required.

**4. Mouthpiece** - A properly fitted mouthpiece is required to protect your teeth.

**5. Cup & Supporter** - For men, a cup and supporter are required to cover the groin.

**6. Face Shields** – ***are ecourage for all 17 year old or younger sparring competitors***

**6. Shin Guards** – Not required. If wearing, they must be soft.

**7. Chest Protector** - Not required. If wearing, they must be soft.

*Equipment that is deemed unsafe or unacceptable can be denied at any time by the ring judge or the tournament arbitrator.*

***It is the competitor's responsibility to have appropriate gear.***

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# OFFICIALS

## (JUDGES, REFEREES, TIMEKEEPERS AND SCOREKEEPERS)

### Referees - For Sparring Matches

Are those who officiate as the center official for sparring matches. The (center) referee should be the most experienced official in the ring and be thoroughly versed on the rules. He/she is in complete charge of the ring and the match. 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 decision, administrates the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the scorekeeper and timekeeper and announces the winner of each match. The referee shall announce in a loud, clear voice all official decisions which shall be indicated - with voice and hand gestures - in the direction of the competitor affected by the official decision.

### Added Powers of the Referee:

1. Match starts and ends only with his/her command.
2. Has final decision on any disputes on score if an arbitrator is not available.
3. Has the power to warn and award penalty points without a majority decision.
4. Can overrule a majority call only to issue a warning or penalty point.
5. Has power to disqualify a competitor for excessive/malicious contact or unsportsmanlike conduct.
6. Has power to issue time-outs.

### Center Judge – For Forms, Weapons and Self-Defense

Is the head official for Forms, Weapons, and Self-Defense. He/she should be the most experienced official in the ring and be thoroughly versed on the rules.

### Side Judges

1. Are those who serve as corner officials during a sparring match. ***Side judges may call stop if they see a point or penalty***
2. Are those who officiate during forms, weapons or self-defense divisions.

### Time Keeper

The timekeeper will start and stop time at the command of the center referee and will inform the center referee when the two (2) minutes for sparring or the three (3) minutes for form have expired. In sparring, the timekeeper does not start or stop a match. His/her only duty is to keep time and only stop/start the time if requested by the center referee.

### Score Keeper

The scorekeeper will write down the scores from each judge (if five (5) or more judges are being used, eliminate the high and low scores) and add the scores to attain a total score. The scorekeeper should check his/her addition a second time (calculators are provided and will be used). In sparring, the scorekeeper will write down or flip scorecards at the command of the center referee. The scorekeeper should inform the center referee when a fighter gets the appropriate number of points to automatically win. It is the scorekeeper's duty to listen very closely to the center referee and keep score as the referee commands. Any discrepancy or confusion of the score rests in the hands of the center referee, not the scorekeeper. ***The center referee will make the final score decision.***

# SPARRING RULES

*The officials call points as they see them. When the center referee or side judge believes a point has been scored he/she shall call out the word, "Stop!". Once fighters return to their lines, the center referee will call simultaneously for a point, warning, etc. No late calls!*

**Point is scored** If flags are used, a judge raises the appropriate color flag of the competitor who he/she feels scored the point. (If the judge is calling for a two-point kick, he/she will raise two fingers on the other hand at the same time. If he/she is calling for only one point, no fingers are raised). If no flags are used, the judge will point with his/her index finger at the competitor who he/she feels scored the point and point with his/her index and middle fingers if a kick is being called. When a judge **sees a point** he/she should hold up both flags or hold up one arm if no flags are being used. At the same time, he/she should yell out the word, "Stop!" in a loud, clear voice to let the referee know he/she has a call.

**No point** scored: An official crosses his/her flags or wrists at waist level to indicate that he/she believes no point was scored.

**No See** The official holds his/her hand over his/her eyes indicating that he/she could not see whether a point was scored or not.

**Clash** With or without flags, an official makes a motion as though he/she is hitting both fists together. This means both competitors scored at the same time, therefore, no point.

**Penalty** The official will wave the flag color of the offending competitor in a circular motion. If no flags are being used, the official waves hand in a circular motion as he/she points to the offending competitor.

**Out** Any official calls stop when he/she sees a competitor go out of bounds. If a call is being made and a official believes the competitor was out of bounds, he/she will wave their flags or hands in the direction of the person they feel stepped out of bounds.

**Disqualification** A disqualification vote is taken separately from any other vote. When a disqualification vote is asked for, the center referee will say, "Judges Call!" An official will then hold the flag color, or point if no flags are being used, at the competitor he/she thinks should be disqualified. If he/she does not believe there should be a disqualification, he/she does not hold up a flag or point to a competitor.

**Late Call** All officials should make their calls at the same time. If, in the opinion of the center referee, a corner judge is making a late call intentionally, the referee can disqualify the call (noise not allowing the judges to hear the referee and the honest mistake of raising the wrong flag color should be taken into consideration).

**Number of Officials** In adult under belt & all children's divisions, there will be three (3) officials. In all adult black belt divisions, there will be three (3) or five (5) officials. All grand champion and black belt team fighting divisions must have five (5) officials.

**Removal of Officials and Protest** If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a sparring division for a good reason, he/she must file a protest before the division gets under way. If a competitor feels that an official should be removed from a sparring division, he/she may file a protest at any time, before or after the division starts. The proper way to file a protest is through the tournament arbitrator. ***The decision regarding the actual removal of the official is the arbitrator's decision.*** The decision is final. If an arbitrator cannot be immediately found, the competitor should ask the center referee to hold the division until the arbitrator can be summoned to the ring. ***All protests shall be made in an orderly, proper, and sportsmanlike manner.*** If a competitor has a protest about anything, he/she should file the protest with the referee. The center official will summon the arbitrator to the ring to render a decision on the protest. All protests must be filed immediately. No protest is allowed after competition has resumed.

**Changing of Officials,** A sparring official can be changed at any time during a division once a match has stopped. A form, weapons or self-defense judge cannot be removed until the division he/she is judging is completed. If a judge leaves on their own, in the middle of a forms division, the promoter can only replace that judge and continue the division.

**Late Entries** It is the responsibility of the competitors to be registered, weighed-in and at his/her ring prior to the time his/her sparring division starts. Once the first sparring match has started in his/her division, no other competitors can enter that division. ***(Leniency may be shown to beginning competitors, especially children)***

### **Length of Match and Winner Determination**

1. All single elimination sparring matches will be 2:00 minutes or the first competitor to score seven (7) points. In the event of a tie, whoever scores next wins.
2. All team sparring matches will be 90 seconds or 1 minute and 30 seconds per competitor. The team who cumulatively scores the most points wins. In the event of a tie, each team selects one person to fight. Whoever scores next wins.
3. The Sparring Grand Championship ***final round only*** will consist of two (2) ninety (90) second rounds. The competitor who accumulates the most total points from both rounds is the winner.

### **Point Values**

1. All legal hand techniques that score will be awarded one (1) point.
2. All legal kicking techniques that score will be awarded two (2) points.
3. All penalty points awarded will be one (1) point value.

### **How Points are Awarded**

Points are awarded by a majority vote of the officials. The majority of officials do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. The only agreement to be made is that the point that scored was either a kick or a hand technique. The officials

acknowledge this by holding up two (2) fingers for a kick and one (1) finger for a hand technique scored. A majority of the officials calling for point must agree that a kick scored in order to award two (2) points. Otherwise only one (1) point is awarded.

1. **Legal Target Areas** The sides of the head, top of the head and face, ribs, chest, abdomen, and kidneys. Light contact to the face will be allowed in all divisions.
2. **Illegal Target Areas** Spine, back of neck & head, throat, sides of neck, groin, legs, knees and back are all illegal target areas. Any attacks to these areas could result in a warning and/or penalty points.
3. **Non-Target Area** Joints, hips, back of the head and neck, shoulders, buttocks, arms, and feet are all non-target areas. Points cannot be scored to a non-target area. If it is deemed that a competitor is actually attacking these areas, warning and/or penalty point may be awarded.
4. **Legal Techniques** Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques, except those listed as illegal. When determining the legality of a technique, the official considers if the technique is a legitimate, controlled sport karate technique that adheres to all other rules governing sport point karate.
5. **Illegal Techniques** Head butts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, takedowns, ground fighting, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed opponent, open-handed techniques, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled or blind techniques, any uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe in sport karate.
6. **Sweeps** No sweeps or takedown are allowed. Any violation of this rule will result in a warning/penalty.
7. **Grabbing** No grabbing of the uniform, gear or any part of the body. Any violation of this rule will result in a warning.
8. **Ground fighting**
  - o No ground fighting is allowed.
  - o Deliberately dropping to the floor to avoid or evade fighting is not legal. A competitor may be issued a warning.
  - o A fighter is down when any part of the body, other than the feet is touching the floor.

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<b>Touch</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Defined</b>
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1. **Light Touch Contact** means there is no penetration or visible movement of the opponent as a result of the technique. Light touch may be made to all legal target areas.
2. **Moderate Touch Contact** means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch may be made to all legal target areas except the head and face.
3. **Excessive Contact** is made when an opponent strikes with force more than what is necessary to score a point (defined in light or moderate contact.). A competitor may be disqualified depending on the severity of the contact. This is a judgement call.

Some indications that contact has been excessive may be accessed by the following reactions:

- o Visible snapping back of a competitor's head from the force of a blow.
  - o A knockdown of an opponent (not recklessly charging into a technique or occurring in instances where the fallen party either fell, slipped, or was off balance).
  - o The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding. (Bleeding or other obvious external injury **may** in itself be grounds for excessive contact if it is considered the fault of a competitor) **(Bleeding, however, does not necessarily imply excessive contact).**
4. **Malicious Contact** When an opponent deliberately means to harm or injure their opponent. This is grounds for immediate disqualification
- A knockout of an opponent.
  - The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding. (Bleeding or other obvious external injury **may** in itself be grounds for malicious contact if it is considered the fault of a competitor) **(Bleeding, however, does not necessarily imply malicious contact).**
  - The distortion or injury of the body from the force of a blow to the body.

## Ties

1. If the score is tied when time is called during a single elimination match, the competitors will continue to fight until the next point wins (sudden death).
2. If the score is tied when time is called during a team fight, each team will select one competitor to fight a 30 second run-off. If it's still tied after 30 seconds the competitors will continue to fight until the next point wins (sudden death).
3. In the Fighting Grand Championship round, all matches will follow the same tie breaking rule as single eliminations. If during the final round for fighting grand championship the score is tied the competitors will fight a 30 second run-off. If it's still tied after 30 seconds the competitors will continue to fight until the next point wins (sudden death).

# WARNINGS

## Warnings

1. The Referee may issue a warning to the Competitor with, or without awarding a point to the Opponent. Awarding points to the opponent is at the Referee's discretion. Please see section of "Types of Warnings".
2. In almost all cases of excessive contact, the Competitor will receive a warning and the Opponent will be awarded a point. The second excessive contact infraction will result in disqualification.
3. In the case of severe, egregious, malicious, or willful excessive contact, whether it be the first or subsequent infractions, the Competitor will be immediately disqualified.
4. For the first rule infraction other than for excessive contact, the Competitor receives a warning.
5. After the first warning is given, a point is awarded to the opponent on each subsequent warning. If a competitor receives three (3) warnings in any one match, he/she is automatically disqualified, and his/her opponent is declared the winner.
6. A competitor **can** receive a point because his/her opponent has committed a foul and during the same exchange receives a point(s) for scoring.
7. When a competitor is injured and must forfeit the match, and the injury is **NOT** a result of the Opponent's actions, the Opponent will be declared the winner, whatever the score at the time of forfeit.
8. When a competitor is injured and must forfeit the match, and the injury **IS** the result of the Opponent's actions, the Opponent will be disqualified, even if the Competitor forfeits the match.
9. **A competitor cannot receive a point and a warning on the same exchange.** A penalty always overrules a point. A competitor cannot score a point and be issued a warning during the same exchange. Also, if a competitor scores a point, then immediately proceeds to break the rules, even if it was after the point was scored first, the warning for breaking the rules voids the point.
10. **Out-of-Bounds Warning** A competitor is out-of-bounds as soon as he/she does not have at least one (1) foot touching inside or on the boundary line. Stepping out-of-bounds does not immediately stop the match. An out-of-bounds competitor may be scored on by his/her opponent so long as the in-bounds competitor has at least one foot in bounds and the referee has not signaled to stop. In the event of a jumping technique, the attacking competitor must land with one foot in-bounds to score.
11. **Non-Competing Warning** If the majority of judges and the center referee consider that one or both of the competitors are not making obvious attempts to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors can be issued warnings

## **Types of Warnings**

The following is a list of infractions that may result in a point being awarded:

1. Excessive contact.
2. Attacking illegal and non-target areas.
3. Using illegal techniques.
4. Running out of the ring (not fighting out) or falling to avoid fighting.
5. Continuing after being ordered to stop (fighting after break).
6. Excessive stalling.
7. Blind, negligent, or reckless attacks.
8. Any unsportsmanlike behavior from the competitor or their coaches, friends, etc.
9. Any abusive behavior from the competitor or his/her coach, teammates, family, friends, etc., such that the referee feels it affects the outcome of the match or the performance of the officials or other competitors.

## **Disqualification**

1. Disqualification of a competitor requires a majority vote by all officials.
2. When a competitor is disqualified, it may be necessary to consult with the tournament's rules arbitrator for confirmation.

## **Coaching**

Never, at any time can a coach, friend, team member, etc., enter the ring without the referee's permission (only the officials, competitors and medical personnel are allowed in a ring). No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike, or overzealous coaching allowed. A coach cannot ask for a time out (only a competitor may ask for a time out). Penalties for any of the above coaching infractions are issued by the **center referee**. No Coaching Allowed

## FORMS & WEAPONS & SELF-DEFENSE

### Late Entries and Order of Performance

It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at the ring prior to the time that the division starts. Once the division is organized and the first competitor begins, there will be no additional entries. If a competitor comes late but the first competitor has not started, he/she may be allowed to compete. ***(Keep in mind that many countries attend this event and there may be an instance where language is a barrier for some competitors. The center judge may use their discretion in this matter. Also, consideration for beginner competitors, especially children can be allowed).***

Order of performance will be randomly selected by the computer system.

The order of performance of the grand championship rounds will be determined by in person by random draw. If the competitor is not present at the designated time to draw numbers, he/she will automatically go before the ones who are present.

## JUDGING FORMS, WEAPONS & SELF-DEFENSE

***There are some common components when judging forms creative forms, weapon or self-defense. However, there are some specific components for judging Self-Defense and Weapons that will be further outlined.***

### Time Limit

1. A competitor must be ready to compete when called upon to do so. All form competitors have a maximum of three (3) minutes to present and perform their form or routine.
2. If the judge feels the competitor is stalling before he/she enters the ring, he/she can call for the timekeeper to start the clock. A competitor whose forms exceed the 3-minute time limit will be disqualified.
3. Competitors in the grand championship runoff or finals will receive four (3) minutes to present and perform their routine.
4. ***Time begins as soon as the competitor enters the ring.***

### Scoring of Forms, Weapons and Self-Defense

1. When Judging forms, weapons and self-defense use the following scoring range:
  - o White – Green Belts 7-8
  - o Red/Brown Belts – 8-9
  - o Black Belt 9-10
2. The first three (3) competitors will perform with no score given. The judges will then recall the first three (3) competitors in the same order in which they performed and award them their scores. Each of the following competitors will be scored immediately after their performance.
3. During the Grand Championships rounds forms will be scored immediately following each competitor's performance.

4. In the event there are four (4) or less competitors, the judges should score each competitor immediately following their performance.
5. Judges may track their own scores and keep notes for reference regarding each competitor.

## **Starting Over**

1. **Forms & Weapons** You may start over once. A .5 deduction will be taken away from your score AFTER the judges have given their scores. If you cannot finish your form after a second attempt, the competitor will be disqualified. (The center judge may use discretion for the very young children divisions and allow them to restart a second time.)
2. ***If a Black Belt competitor restarts their form or weapon, they cannot place 1-4 or in the case of only 4 or less competitors, shall not come in first place.***
3. **Self-Defense** All competitors Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced will perform their routine in real time. One performance only.
4. ***All Black Belt Self-Defense Competitors (Adult and Juniors) are required to perform in slow motion first then in real time.*** The competitor may not restart their routine. You get one chance to perform.

## **Ties**

1. **When there are 5 judges:**
  - o The high and low scores should always be eliminated and the total of the three remaining judges scores shall determine the competitor's score.
  - o In the event of a tie, the high and low scores will be added back in to break the tie.
  - o If there is still a tie, those competitors will redo their form. The judges then will vote by a show of hands. The competitor who receives the majority of votes wins the tie break.
2. **When there are 3 judges:**
  - o The total of all three judge's scores shall be added to determine the competitor's score.
  - o If there is a tie, the lowest score will be eliminated and determine the winner of the tie.
  - o If there is still a tie, those competitors will redo their form. The judges then will vote by a show of hands. The competitor who receives the majority of votes wins the tie break.

## Judging Empty-hand Forms, Weapon Forms and Self-Defense Routine

### Three Main Criterion (should be understood)

1. **Execution:** The competitor should demonstrate balance, power, speed, stability, proper technique formation, coordination, flexibility, stamina, timing, technique skill, etc. Proper execution is the most important criterion. and should weigh the most in the judge's final score.
2. **Presentation:** The competitor should demonstrate confidence, competency and composure when performing his/her Form/Routine. Proper presentation is the **second most** important criterion and should weigh accordingly in the judge's final score.
3. **Difficulty:** The competitor should demonstrate a level of complexity and intricacy appropriate to their belt rank when performing their form or routine. Elements of difficulty can include Complexity and versatility of techniques, flexibility, balance, stamina, ambidexterity, etc. Difficulty is the least important of the three criteria. Difficulty elements must be performed skillfully. Poorly performed elements may negatively affect a competitor's score.

### Music

1. Music is only allowed during Black Belt Grand Championship Forms. Competitors must provide their own music and musical device.

### Gymnastic Movements

Forms and self-defense routine should showcase martial arts content and competency. Gymnastics elements may or may not add Martial value to a form or routine. A judge should determine if such gymnastics improved the martial aspect of the performance. Competitors performing sub-par gymnastics may negatively impact their scores. All skills including gymnastics must be performed skillfully.

### Weapons Divisions - No live weapons are allowed re: sharpened knife or swords.

- The judges will inspect all weapons to be used in competition for safety. The use of unsafe or live weapons is prohibited.
- The center judge should make sure everyone is at a safe distance from the performing competitor.
- The competitor must maintain control of his/her weapon at all times. If a Black Belt competitor (adult or youth) drops his/her weapon they will be automatically disqualified.
- Under belts may re-start their form over if they drop a weapon with the same deduction as when a form is restarted for any other reason.
- A competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses his/her weapon, is subject to score deductions. In the case of egregious and harmful behavior the competitor will be stopped in mid performance and disqualified.

## **Self-Defense**

## **Divisions**

***No live weapons in self-defense such as a loaded or unloaded gun only training guns will be allowed. Additionally, no sharpened knives or swords.***

- Self-Defense performances consistence of one (1) competitor and at least one (1) attacker. White to Brown/Advanced may use up to 2 attackers. Black Belts may have a maximum of four (4) attackers.
- The attacks can be at the discretion of the competitor; however, it is suggested that they include a punch, a kick, a grab and a push.
- ***Weapon defenses are permitted in all divisions, however only Adult Black Belts can use the disarmed weapon as part of their defense.***
- All Self-Defense routines will be performed once in real time. Adult Black Belt self-defense routines are required to show their techniques in both slow motion and real time.

**Judges will evaluate the self-defense competitor on the following criterion:**

1. Realism - All techniques shall be evaluated on the reality of their execution.
2. Speed of execution should match the presentation of targets. Competitors should not move so fast that they miss their targets.

## **Grand Championship Form & Weapon Rounds**

There will be (8) forms grand champion run-offs.

- Female Traditional Forms (Kenpo, Japanese, Korean, Chinese)
- Male Traditional Forms (Kenpo, Japanese, Korean, Chinese)
- Adults Traditional Weapons Forms and Open Weapons Form
- Junior Black Belt Forms Traditional and Creative
- Junior Black Belt Weapons Form Traditional and Creative
- Self Defense (all ages)
- Female Adult Point Fighting
- Male Adult Point Fighting

There will be one Super Grand run off between the 3 Adult Grand Champions

The order for performance will be by random draw at the time of the event.

## **Fairness Rule**

If a question arises that is not covered by this rule book, the arbitrator and or promoter may make a ruling at his/her discretion.