

# **IFK International Kata Championship Rules**

**Version 3.0**



**International  
Federation of  
Karate**

# IFK International Kata Championship Rules

## Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Change Reference
December 1997	SA/TRB	V1.0	No Previous Document
June 2001	SA/JD	V1.1	N/A
October 2009	SA/JD	V1.2	N/A
July 2018	IFK Kata Committee	V1.3	N/A
October 2021	IFK Kata Committee	V1.4	Update to Scoring Matrix Diagram & adjust format.
August 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V1.5 (draft)	Included Division of Junior Individual Categories U15 & U18 pre review
August 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V1.6	Ready for Review and format update
August 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V1.7	Updated permitted katas in free kata for U15.
September 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V1.8	Minor Amendments ready for final review
September 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V2.0	Released Version
October 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V2.1	Lowering Junior grade entry for WT
October 2023	IFK Kata Committee	V3.0	Released.

Only the IFK World Chief Referee, with the approval of the IFK Executive Board, is allowed to alter or modify these rules.

IFK President Shihan David Pickthall (7<sup>th</sup> Dan) Great Britain

IFK Chief Kata Referee & Head of IFK Kata Committee  
Shihan Janine Davies (6<sup>th</sup> Dan) Great Britain

IFK Kata Committee Members  
Shihan Victor Fomin (7<sup>th</sup> Dan) Russia  
Shihan Itzik Ashkenazi (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) Israel  
Shihan Sunil Tailor (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) Great Britain  
Shihan Dolores Emmenegger-Jaros (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) Switzerland  
Shihan Stephano Blokland (5<sup>th</sup> Dan) Netherlands

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### **Article 1: International Kata Championships**

- 1.1 These rules govern international kata championships and include World, European and other Regional Championships within the limits of the IFK organisation.
- 1.2 There are categories for seniors (aged 18 years and above) and juniors (aged 12 – 17 years). Ages refer to the participants' age on the day of tournament.
- 1.3 The minimum grade for participants in the senior categories is 2<sup>nd</sup> Kyu. The minimum grade for participants in the junior category is 4<sup>th</sup> Kyu. There is no maximum grade.
- 1.4 There are 8 categories in international kata championships, which are as follows:
  - Individual Males (Senior)
  - Individual Females (Senior)
  - Team Event (Senior)
  - Individual Boys (Junior U18)
  - Individual Girls (Junior U18)
  - Individual Boys (Junior U15)
  - Individual Girls (Junior U15)
  - Team Event (Junior)

### **Article 2: Governance of the International Championships**

- 2.1 For the World Championships, the Chief Referee will be the IFK Chief Referee.
- 2.2 For other international championships, the appointed Chief Referee will be a nominated individual of high international qualification.
- 2.3 The Chief Referee is responsible for the event and the selection of appropriate judges and officials.
- 2.4 The Chief Referee will appoint Senior Judges to be responsible for particular competition areas.
- 2.5 The Senior Judge will manage the judges appointed to their area and will be responsible for selecting/changing central judges and corner judges.

### **Article 3: Official uniform for Chief Referee and all Judges**

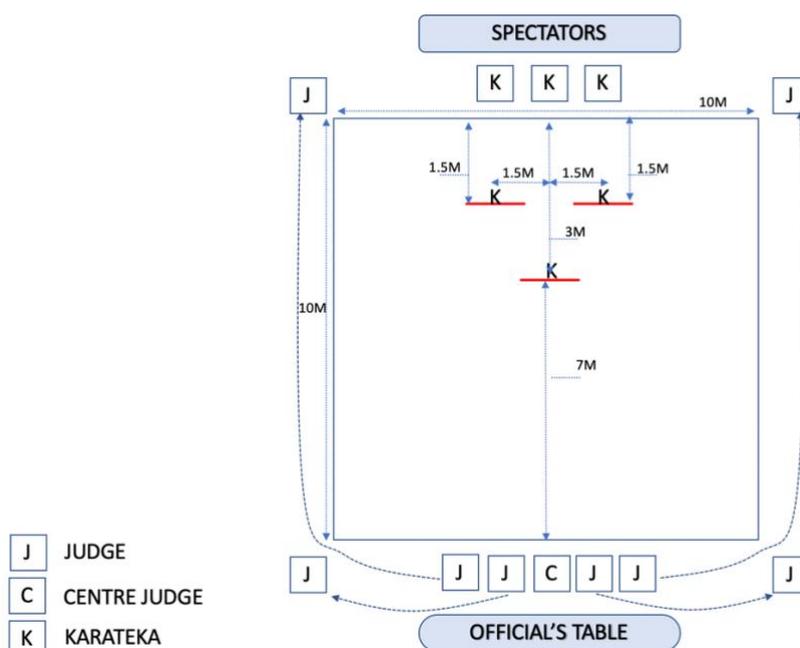
- 3.1 The Chief Referee and judges must wear their own official uniform.
- 3.2 The official uniform consists of navy blue blazer with IFK badge on breast pocket, white shirt with long sleeves, long dark blue IFK official tie, mid grey trousers, black shoes and black socks.
- 3.3 All judges must have a whistle.

#### Article 4: Official dress (gi) for competitors

- 4.1 Contestants must wear a clean white Kyokushin karate gi with IFK badge on the right sleeve and relevant official country badge on the left sleeve. No other badges or inscriptions on the gi are permitted.
- 4.2 The jacket, when tightened around the waist with the belt, must be of an overall length that it covers the hips.
- 4.3 In the case of women, a plain white T shirt must be worn underneath the karate jacket. Men are not permitted to wear any form of clothing under the gi jacket.
- 4.4 The sleeves of the jacket must come lower than the elbow and must not be rolled up.
- 4.5 The trousers must be long enough to touch the ankle and the feet must be visible.
- 4.6 Belts must be worn so that each side is of equal length. If a contestant is Yudansha the belt must be worn with the name and grade on the right-hand side.
- 4.7 Hair must be arranged so that it does not interfere with the performance of kata.
- 4.8 All jewellery and piercings are forbidden.
- 4.9 Any person who does not comply with these regulations will be disqualified from the event.

#### Article 5: Competition area

- 5.1 The competition area must be flat, firm and devoid of hazard.
- 5.2 The competition area must be 10 square metres to permit the correct performance of kata.
- 5.3 The competition area will be set up as follows:



## **Article 6: The Judging Panel**

- 6.1 All judges must be internationally or nationally qualified and must be selected by the Chief Referee of the event. All must be at least Sandan grade.
- 6.2 Senior Judges will be appointed to manage each competition area.
- 6.3 Five judges will be appointed to judge each match.
- 6.4 The Organising Committee must select suitably qualified and experienced scorekeepers and announcers to be responsible for recording all information during the event.
- 6.5 A maximum of 2 judges from the same country may be selected to judge on a competition area within a particular round.
- 6.6 The same panel of judges should remain for the entire round. No exchanges should take place within a round, except in exceptional circumstances.
- 6.7 For the procedures for judges, see Appendix 1.

## **Article 7: Procedure for Competitions**

- 7.1 Prior to the tournament, there will be a draw to determine the order of competitors and teams to compete. The Chief Referee will be present when the draw is completed. Coaches and officials must be invited to attend.
- 7.2 The kata competition is organised into 3 rounds. The first round selects 16 contestants, the second round selects 8 contestants and the third round selects the winner and 2 other final placings. The Chief Referee on the day may alter or change the number of contestants to proceed to the next round depending on the initial number of competitors in a particular category.

For example:

If there are more than 8 but less than 16 contestants/teams in a category, 8 will be selected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round and 4 for the final. In the event that there are only 4 contestants/teams in a category, all 4 will proceed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (providing they are not disqualified) and the scores from Round 1 and Round 2 will be combined to select the 3 contestants/teams to proceed to the final. In this case, only the scores attained in the final will determine the final placings (the scores from previous rounds will be disregarded).

## **INDIVIDUAL EVENT**

- 7.3 In Round 1 the contestants shall wait for their names to be called by the table official and shall stand on the edge of the competition area, bow and say "Osu!". On the signal from the central judge the contestant will move forward to the designated line, bow to the central judge and say "Osu!".
- 7.4 The central judge will choose a card upon which a "compulsory" kata is written and then call out the name of the kata to be performed. The contestant MUST then repeat loudly the name of the kata and wait for the command to begin.

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- 7.5 If the kata does not include the Mokuso position at the beginning, the central judge will give the particular command: for example "Pinan Sono Go. Yoi. Hajime". The contestant does not repeat the name of the kata during that command.
- 7.6 The contestant will hold their last position until the centre judge calls "Naore". The contestant shall return to Fudo Dachi and will remain silent (no "Osu!" or bow).
- 7.7 If the kata includes the Mokuso position at the beginning, the central judge will give the particular command: for example "Mokuso. Saiha. Yoi. Hajime". The contestant does not repeat the name of the kata during that command.
- 7.8 The contestant will hold their last position until the central judge calls "Mokuso Yame. Naore". The contestant shall return to Fudo Dachi and will remain silent (no "Osu!" or bow).
- 7.9 Upon completion of the kata, the contestant will remain in place and await an award from the panel.
- 7.10 The central judge will call for a decision "Hantei" and blow a sharp blast on the whistle. All 5 judges in unison will hold up their scorecards in their right hands, facing towards the table of officials. The table official will announce the scores and, when the scores have been registered, the central judge will blow a further sharp blast on the whistle. The judges will then show the scorecards to the spectators. The central judge will blow a third blast to instruct that the scorecards are lowered.
- 7.11 The table official will announce the ACTUAL score (with the highest and lowest score deducted).
- 7.12 When instructed, the contestant will bow and say "Osu!" to the central judge before walking backwards to the edge of the competition area, where he/she will again bow and say "Osu!" before leaving the competition area.
- 7.13 The contestants who are successful in proceeding to Round 2 and any subsequent rounds will choose a "free" kata and submit their choice of kata to the table official before the start of the round. Note that a kata cannot be repeated in any subsequent rounds.
- 7.14 In Round 2 and 3, the procedure outlined in Article 7.3 is repeated.
- 7.15 The central judge then shouts "Kata?". The contestant loudly states the name of the kata he/she wishes to perform. The centre judge MUST then repeat the name of the kata and gives the command to begin.
- 7.16 In Round 2 and 3 the procedure as outlined in Articles 7.7 to 7.12 will be followed.

### **TEAM EVENT**

- 7.17 Teams will consist of 3 contestants. Teams may be same sex (male or female) or mixed sex (male and female).
- 7.18 Contestants can only compete in one team, they cannot compete in 2 different teams.
- 7.19 The same contestants must remain in the team throughout. Contestants cannot be changed in subsequent rounds.

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- 7.20 In all rounds, the team chooses the katas they wish to perform from the list of “team event” katas. The choice of kata for each round must be provided to the table officials in advance.
- 7.21 The team responds to the calling of their names by going directly to the edge of the competition area, bows and say “Osu!”. On the signal of the central judge, the team moves forward to the starting position, bows and say “Osu!”. The central judge then shouts “Kata?”. The team captain loudly states the name of the kata they wish to perform. The central judge MUST then repeat the name of the kata and gives the command to begin. The procedure is as in Articles 7.5 to 7.12 above.
- 7.22 In Rounds 2 and 3 the same procedure applies as in the first round.

### Article 8: Criteria of Judging

- 8.1 Judges must consider the following criteria:
- a) Correct succession of movements with proper tempo, rhythm and breathing (nogare, ibuki and kiai) according to the correct plan and direction of movements;
  - b) Quality and efficiency of techniques, positions, stances and breathing with correct proportion of slow and fast movements, coordination, balance, proper control of energy/body power and correct glance;
  - c) Mastership/skill of performance. This criterion includes illustration of the understanding of the combat techniques, correct focus, concentration, harmony of power and flexibility, “presence” of real budo spirit.
- 8.2 In addition, in team events, judges must consider:
- a) Synchronicity of kata performance, not only at the points of start and finish of movements, but also at every phase of them, especially in slow movements.
  - b) The technical and energetic unity of kata performance.
- 8.3 Once all of these aspects have been considered, the judges will determine the correct position on the judging matrix (see Appendix 2).
- 8.4 The judge will then reflect the complexity of the kata in the score awarded.

### **Article 9: The Procedure for Scoring**

- 9.1 The scoring range is from 6.0 to 8.0 points.
- 9.2 On the command “Hantei” and whistle of the central judge, all 5 judges in unison will hold up their scorecards in their right hands, facing towards the table officials. The table official will announce the scores and, when the scores have been registered, the central judge will blow a further sharp blast on the whistle. The judges will then show the scorecards to the spectators. The central judge will blow a third blast on the whistle to instruct that the scorecards are lowered.
- 9.3 The scorekeeper disregards the lowest and highest score awarded and adds the three remaining scores to provide the ACTUAL score
- 9.4 In the event that more than one contestant/team receives the same score, the lowest score is considered. If one contestant/team has a higher lowest score, he/she/the team will be announced as the winner of the particular stage of the competition. If the lowest score is the same, the highest score is considered. If one contestant/team has a higher highest score, he/she/the team will be announced as the winner of the particular stage of the competition. In the event of a continuing tie/draw, the contestants/teams must perform a further kata of their choice (but they cannot perform a kata that they have already performed). They will be called to perform the further kata in the same order as they were in the particular round.

### **Article 10: Disqualification**

- 10.1 A contestant is disqualified if they vary, interrupt or stop performing a kata (for 5 seconds) or if they perform a kata different from that drawn or announced.
- 10.2 The centre judge will announce Hansoku or Shikkaku when disqualifying a contestant or team.
- 10.3 When Hansoku is called, this relates only to the particular category. The contestants may still take part in the individual or team event if they have entered more than one event.
- 10.4 When Shikkaku is called the contestant or team members cannot take part in the championship for the remainder of the event. This would only be used if a competitor/team displays bad behaviour. A decision of Shikkaku will be made by the Chief Referee in consultation with the central judge and IFK Kata Committee, if appropriate.

### **Article 11: Interpretation**

- 11.1 Any situation not defined by these rules shall be resolved by the Chief Referee and IFK Kata Committee.

## **LIST OF KATAS**

### **JUNIOR INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY – COMPULSORY KATA**

1. Pinan Sono Ni
2. Pinan Sono San
3. Pinan Sono Yon
4. Pinan Sono Go
5. Gekisai Dai

### **SENIORS INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES – COMPULSORY KATA**

1. Pinan Sono Yon
2. Pinan Sono Go
3. Yantsu
4. Tsuki No Kata
5. Saiha

### **INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES - FREE KATA**

1. Gekisai Dai
2. Yantsu
3. Tsuki No Kata
4. Saiha
5. Tensho
6. Gekisai Sho
7. Seienchin
8. Kanku Dai
9. Sushiho
10. Garyu
11. Seipai

NOTE A KATA CANNOT BE PERFORMED TWICE

Gekisai Dai, Yantsu, Tsuki No Kata and Saiha can be performed as a free kata if not already performed as a compulsory kata.

### **TEAM EVENT**

1. Gekisai Dai
2. Yantsu
3. Tsuki No Kata
4. Saiha
5. Tensho
6. Gekisai Sho
7. Seienchin
8. Kanku Dai
9. Sushiho
10. Garyu
11. Seipai

NOTE A KATA CANNOT BE PERFORMED TWICE

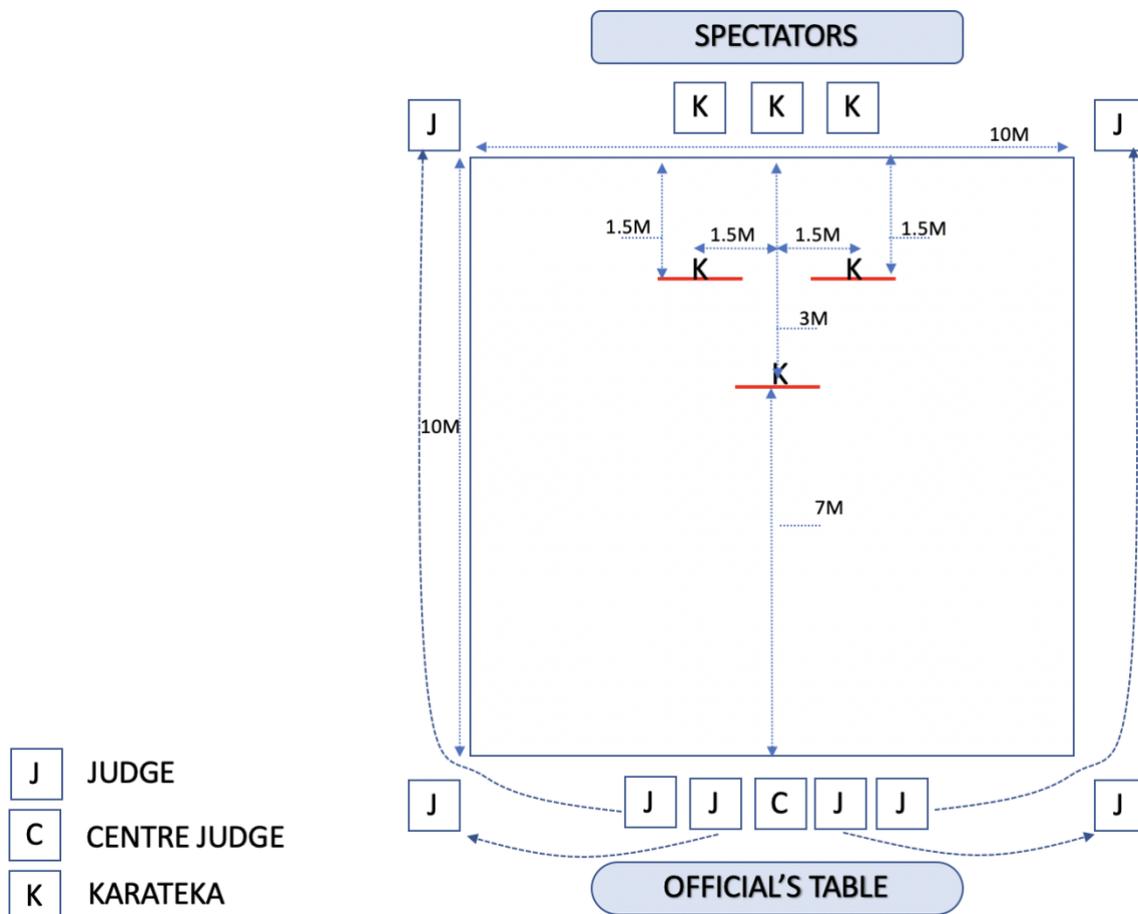
## Appendix 1: Procedure for Judges

### Article 12: Responsibility of Senior Judges

- 12.1 Senior Judges are responsible for the competition area and will select the central judge and 4 corner judges for each round of the competition.

### Article 13: Procedure at start of each round

- 13.1 Before the first round, the judges line up in front of the officials' table, facing the competition area. The nominated central judge will stand in the centre.
- 13.2 The central judge will give the command "Shomen Ni Rei!". All judges will bow and say "Osu!"
- 13.3 The central judge will take a step forward and turn towards the 4 corner judges. The central judge gives the command "Shimpan Ni Rei!". The 4 corner judges then bow and say "Osu!" to the central judge and at the same time the central judge bows and says "Osu!" to the corner judges.
- 13.4 The central judge gives the sign to the 4 corner judges to move to their positions. [Hands are placed palms together in front of the chest, with fingers pointing away from the body and then travel away from the body, moving further apart but with palms still facing each other].
- 13.5 The 4 corner judges then move to the positions as outlined in the diagram below:



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- 13.6 The corner judges remain standing at their positions until the central judge provides the sign to sit. [Hands are held out in front at shoulder height with palms facing downwards. The hands are then lowered in a parallel position]. All 5 judges then sit in unison and take the score cards.
- 13.7 All judges must sit in an upright position with both feet flat on the ground throughout the round.

### **Article 14: Procedure for managing contestants**

- 14.1 When a contestants/team presents themselves to the competition area, the central judge will provide the gesture for the contestant/team to move forward to the designated starting position. [Right arm is outstretched, with the palm of the hand facing the contestant, in a position similar to shotei. The hand is then turned and pulled towards the face of the central judge].
- 14.2 The central judge then follows the procedure as stated in the Championship Rules (Article 7.5 – 7.8).
- 14.3 At the conclusion of each kata, the judges will select the appropriate score on the scoreboard and then lower their heads, to indicate to the central judge that they are ready.
- 14.4 Upon the command “Hantei!” and a sharp whistle, all 5 judges will hold up their scorecards with their right hands, with the scores facing the table officials.
- 14.5 Once the scores have been announced by the table officials, the central judge will blow the second sharp blast on the whistle to instruct the judges to turn the scorecards towards the spectators.
- 14.6 The central judge will then blow a third sharp blast on the whistle to instruct the judges to lower their scorecards.
- 14.7 Following the announcement of the score awarded by the table official, the central judge will stand. He/she will bow and say “Osu!” to the contestant/team, the contestant/team will also bow and say “Osu!”. Then the central judge will provide the gesture for the contestant/team to leave the competition area. [Right arm is outstretched, with the palm of the hand facing the contestant, in a position similar to shotei].

### **Article 15: Procedure for changing judges**

- 15.1 The central judge will stand and give the gesture for the 4 corner judges to stand. [Both arms are held outstretched in front with palms facing upwards. The arms are then raised slightly, with palms still facing upwards.]
- 15.2 The central judge will then give the command “Fukushin Shugo!” and the gesture for the corner judges to return to the initial position in front of the official table. [Both arms are outstretched with the palms facing upwards. The elbows are then bent, bringing the palms towards the central judge’s shoulders]
- 15.3 The central judge will then give the command “Shomen Ni Rei!” and all 5 judges will bow towards the spectators.
- 15.4 The central judge will take one step forward and turn to face the 4 corner judges. The central judge will give the command “Shimpan Ni Rei!” and the central judge and 4 corner judges will bow to each other and say “Osu!”.
- 15.5 The central judge will then indicate for the judges to leave the competition area in a particular direction with an open straight arm. All judges will then leave the competition area in single file.

- 15.6 The new panel of judges will then enter the competition area and follow the procedure set out in Article 2 above.

### **Article 16: Procedure for Hansoku**

- 16.1 A contestant is disqualified if they vary, interrupt or stop performing a kata (for 5 seconds) or if they perform a kata different from that drawn or announced.
- 16.2 If a contestant varies the kata, for example, if he/she starts one kata but finishes a different kata or misses out a complete section or moves in the wrong direction then, at the conclusion of the kata, the central judge calls in the 4 corner judges by using the command “Fukushin Shugo!” with the appropriate gesture. A brief discussion will take place between the judges to be sure that this is a case for Hansoku.
- 16.3 If a contestant interrupts or stops the kata, after 5 seconds the central judge will give the command “Yame! Naore!”. Hansoku is then appropriate.
- 16.4 If a contestant performs a kata different from that drawn or announced, at the conclusion of the kata, the central judge calls in the 4 corner judges by using the command “Fukushin Shugo!” with the appropriate gesture. A brief discussion will take place between the judges to be sure that this is a case for Hansoku.
- 16.5 If Hansoku is appropriate then the central judge will stand and give the command “Hansoku!” and at the same time give the appropriate gesture with the right index finger pointing up at 45 degrees. The central judge will then provide the appropriate command for the contestant/team to leave the competition area according to the etiquette.

### **Article 17: Procedure for Shikkaku**

- 17.1 This would only be used if a competitor displays bad/disrespectful behaviour.
- 17.2 A decision of Shikkaku will be made by the Chief Referee following consultation with the central judge and IFK Kata Committee, if appropriate.
- 17.3 If Shikkaku is appropriate then the central judge will stand and give the command “Shikkaku!” and at the same time give the appropriate gesture with the right index finger pointing up at 45 degrees. The central judge will then provide the appropriate command for the contestant/team to leave the competition area according to the etiquette.
- 17.4 In the event of Shikkaku, the contestant or team members cannot take part in the remainder of the championship.

## Appendix 2: Scoring Matrix

