



INTERNATIONAL COMBAT KARATE-DO FEDERATION

國際格鬥空手道連盟

COMPETITION RULES

COMBAT KARATE-DO



Karate Line KK1 — KK5 / Kickboxing Line KB1 — KB5 / MMA Line MMA1 —
MMA5

Book 1 is common to all three Lines

1st Edition — in force from 3 August 2026

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Preface — Structure of These Rules

These Rules apply to all Combat Karate-do competition organised or sanctioned by the International Combat Karate-do Federation (the "Federation"). Competition consists of **three Lines**, each complete in **five Grades**.

Line	Attire	Grades	Method of decision
Karate Line	Dogi	KK1–KK5	Waza-ari / Ippon + flag decision
Kickboxing Line	Gloves + kick pants or dogi	KB1–KB5	10-point system (KB1 and KB2: first-to-points)
MMA Line	MMA gloves + fight shorts and rash guard	MMA1–MMA5	10-point system + submission

The Karate Line is the Federation's principal discipline. The Kickboxing Line and the MMA Line provide continuity with striking competition and with bare-faced mixed martial arts competition.

The Three Principles (Karate Line)

First — All standing strikes are delivered with full contact. Punches, kicks, knees, elbows and head-butts are permitted to the whole body except prohibited target areas. The practical character of jacketed fighting is not diminished.

Second — On the ground, strikes to the head are non-contact (sundome). No contact to the head of a downed opponent is permitted from the athlete on top. Strikes to the body and legs are permitted with contact (parallel to the floor only). **Strikes to a head that cannot be defended are removed from the sport entirely.**

Third — Grappling and ground fighting are not time-limited (KK5). Because the Second Principle guarantees that **impacts to the head do not increase**, the full technical sequence from takedown through control to submission can be expressed without interruption.

The three principles depend on one another. **The Second makes the Third possible, and the Third makes this sport a complete combat sport.** Stalling arising from the removal of time limits is eliminated by the duty to progress (Articles 46 and 52).

How to Read These Rules

Book 1 applies to all Lines. Books 2 to 4 contain only the provisions specific to each Line. **A referee who has mastered Book 1 needs only to check the Book for the Line being officiated.**

Book 1	General and Common Provisions — all Lines	
Book 2	Karate Line	KK1–KK5
Book 3	Kickboxing Line	KB1–KB5
Book 4	MMA Line	MMA1–MMA5

Within each Line, only one hazard element is released per Grade. No skipping combination exists.

The Grade names are common to all three Lines.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5
Name	Light	Standard	Advance	Expert	Full

Even across different Lines, **a Grade of the same name occupies the same position.** Each Grade may carry a **sub-name** describing what it releases (e.g. KB1 = First Match, KB4 = clinch permitted, MMA3 = ground-and-pound permitted).

Grades (which rules you fight under) and Divisions (whom you meet) are separate. Age operates only as the minimum for entry to a Grade (Article 2).

Chapter 1 General

Article 1 (Scope) These Rules apply to Combat Karate-do competition organised or sanctioned by the Federation.

2 Book 1 applies to all Lines. Provisions specific to a Line are set out in Books 2 to 4. 3 Where Book 1 conflicts with Books 2 to 4, **the Book of the relevant Line prevails**.

Article 2 (Divisions and Grades)

(1) Divisions — determining whom an athlete meets Divisions are determined by **age**. Each Division contains a men's and a women's category.

"U" means "Under" and does not include that age. U16 means under 16 years of age; **a 16-year-old is not included** (a 16-year-old belongs to U18).

Division	Age
U6	4 years and over, under 6
U8	6 and over, under 8
U10	8 and over, under 10
U12	10 and over, under 12
U14	12 and over, under 14
U16	14 and over, under 16
U18	16 and over, under 18
General	18 and over

- **Age is the athlete's age on the day of the tournament.** No academic year or other basis is used.
- Two adjacent Divisions may be combined where the tournament regulations so provide. **Three or more may not be combined.**
- **Masters** (45 and over) may be established at the discretion of the tournament regulations. Where not established, they are included in the General Division.
- Minors must submit written parental consent.

Age notation in these Rules is limited to the following three forms.

Use	Form	Example
Naming a Division	U-notation	U6/U8/U10/U12/U14/U16/U18/General
Naming a range of Divisions	U-notation + and below / and above	U12 and below, U18 and above
Stating a minimum for entry	N years and over	8 years and over

- **Notation by school grade (elementary, junior high, high school) is not used.** School divisions differ among overseas member organisations.
- Where a technical restriction is set by age, **the range of Divisions is written directly** (e.g. "U12 and below may not apply chokes"). **No collective term is used**, so that each restriction may be adjusted independently.

(2) Grades — determining which rules apply Grades (**KK1–KK5 / KB1–KB5 / MMA1–MMA5**) determine **the competition rules that apply**, and are distinct from Divisions.

- Grades are selected according to **experience and technical stage**, not according to age.
- **No Division for inexperienced athletes is established.** Progression by experience is carried by the Grades.
- An athlete may **not enter more than two Grades** at the same tournament.
- Conditions for moving up a Grade are set out in Articles 60 (Karate), 69 (Kickboxing) and 74 (MMA).

Example — The minimum age for KB1 of the Kickboxing Line is 6 years. **An athlete in U8 and an athlete in the General Division may both enter KB1. They will never face each other**, because pairings are determined by **Division (age) and weight class**, not by Grade. **A Grade is a choice of which rules to fight under; it does not determine whom an athlete meets.**

(3) Minimum age — determining only whether entry is possible Age operates **only as the minimum for entry to a Grade**. The minima are set out in the composition tables of each Grade (Articles 34, 61 and 70).

Minimum	Grades
4 years and over	Karate KK1
6 years and over	Karate KK2 / Kickboxing KB1
8 years and over	Karate KK3, KK4 / Kickboxing KB2 / MMA MMA1
13 years and over	Karate KK5 / Kickboxing KB3, KB4 / MMA MMA2–MMA4
18 years and over	Kickboxing KB5 / MMA MMA5 (both bare-faced)

Grade, Division and minimum age each have a separate role. The Grade determines how one fights, the Division determines whom one meets, and the minimum age determines whether one may enter at all. **The only technical restrictions that vary by age are those concerning U12 and below** (Articles 23 and 54).

Article 3 (Weight and Physical Index Classes) Classes are determined as follows according to Line.

Line	Basis
Karate Line (U16 and above, General)	Physical Index (height in cm + weight in kg)
Karate Line (U14 and below)	Weight class
Kickboxing Line, MMA Line	Weight class

2 Physical Index classes:

Men	230 and under / 240 / 250 / 260 / 270 / over 270
Women	215 and under / 225 / 235 / over 235

3 The Physical Index offsets the advantage in striking conferred by height against the advantage in grappling conferred by weight. **Because the relationship between height and weight is unstable in growing athletes, U14 and below use weight classes.** 4 The Physical Index is not used in the Kickboxing or MMA Lines. Where strikes are exchanged bare-faced or with light protective equipment, weight is the principal determinant of advantage.

5 **Weight classes** are as follows.

(a) MMA Line, General — the internationally common classes.

Men	Women
Strawweight 52.2 kg	Atomweight 47.6 kg
Flyweight 56.7 kg	Strawweight 52.2 kg
Bantamweight 61.2 kg	Flyweight 56.7 kg
Featherweight 65.8 kg	Bantamweight 61.2 kg
Lightweight 70.3 kg	Featherweight 65.8 kg
Welterweight 77.1 kg	over 65.8 kg
Middleweight 83.9 kg	
Light Heavyweight 93.0 kg	
Heavyweight over 93.0 kg	

These are the classes used internationally in mixed martial arts. **Adopting different values here would make mutual entry with other organisations and international competition impossible.**

(b) Kickboxing Line, General — 5 kg increments.

Men	Women
-55/-60/-65/-70/-75/-80/+80 kg	-45/-50/-55/-60/+60 kg

Professional striking classes are divided in 1–2 kg increments, but **in amateur competition, the finer the classes the harder it is to find opponents.** Five-kilogram increments are used, prioritising the number of entrants.

(c) U18 and below (all Lines) — 5 kg increments.

Division	Classes
U16, U18	Men -45/-50/-55/-60/-65/-70/+70 kg Women -45/-50/-55/+55 kg
U14	-30/-35/-40/-45/-50/-55/+55 kg (common to both sexes)
U12 and below	-20/-25/-30/-35/-40/-45/+45 kg (common to both sexes)

Growing athletes are not required to cut weight. For this reason U18 and below use 5 kg increments in every Line, with no decimal increments. **Class structures presupposing weight cutting must not be adopted.**

6 **"-60 kg" means 60.0 kg or less.** "+80 kg" means more than 80.0 kg. 7 Where entrants are insufficient, **two adjacent classes may be combined** under the tournament regulations. Three or more may not be combined. **The spread within a combined class must not exceed 10 kg.** 8 U6 to U14 **may combine men's and women's categories.** U16 and above may not. 9 Weighing takes place on the day, up to three hours before the start (Article 4). **For U18 and below, an athlete found to have cut weight abruptly on the day of weighing shall not be permitted to compete.** 10 Where an open-weight tournament is held, the treatment of pairings with a large difference in Physical Index or weight is determined separately in the tournament regulations.

Article 4 (Weighing and Excess over Declared Figure) Weighing takes place on the day, up to three hours before the start. A medical check by the tournament doctor is conducted at the same time.

2 Where the measured figure exceeds the declared figure:

under 1 = warning / 1 to under 2 = Penalty 1 / 2 to under 3 = Penalty 2 / 3 or more = disqualification

Chapter 2 Attire and Protective Equipment

Article 5 (Attire)

Line	Attire
Karate Line	White or blue Combat Karate-do dogi
Kickboxing Line	Gloves. Lower garment: kick pants or dogi , freely chosen
MMA Line	Fight shorts and rash guard. A dogi is not permitted

2 The dogi shall comply with the following.

1. The sleeve shall cover the elbow when the arm is lowered; the cuff shall be wide enough to grip without pinching the skin.
2. The trouser hem shall be within 5 cm of the ankle; the cuff shall be wide enough to grip without pinching the skin.
3. The ends of the tied belt shall not hang below mid-thigh.
4. A patch not exceeding 18 cm may be affixed to the left sleeve. At international tournaments, a national emblem may be worn on the left chest.

Article 6 (Names of Protective Equipment)

(1) **Head protection** — four types, distinguished by the area protected.

Name	Area protected	Face	Grades used
Super Safe (men)	Covers the whole face , one piece	Fully covered	Karate KK3, KK4, KK5
Headgear + Face Guard	Face-front attachment fitted to headgear (including barred full-face type)	Front covered	Kickboxing (U12 and below only)
Headgear	Forehead, temples and back of head, plus cheeks and ears ; thick type	Exposed	Kickboxing KB1–KB4 / MMA MMA1–MMA4
Head Guard	Forehead, temples and back of head only ; thin type	Exposed	Karate KK1, KK2
(bare-faced)	—	—	Kickboxing KB5 / MMA MMA5

2 **The difference between a Head Guard and Headgear is whether the cheeks and ears are covered.** Grades that do not permit hand techniques to the face (Karate KK1, KK2) use a Head Guard; Grades that permit punches to the face (Kickboxing, MMA) use Headgear.

3 Facial protection decreases in the following order.

Men (whole face) > Headgear + Face Guard (front)
> Headgear (to cheeks and ears) > Head Guard (forehead, temples, back only) > bare-faced

4 A **Face Guard** is an attachment fitted to headgear protecting the front of the face, including the barred full-face type. It is not used alone. **It is used only for U12 and below in the Kickboxing Line, and is not used in the MMA Line** (Article 7(4)).

(2) Hand and body protection

Name	Definition
Fist Guard	Open-finger hand protection (Karate Line)
Glove	Boxing-type glove, specified by ounce (Kickboxing Line)
MMA Glove	Open-fingered, permitting gripping (MMA Line)
Chest Guard	Chest protection
Shin Guard	Shin protection, cloth (Karate Line, MMA Line)
Leg Guard (leather)	Shin protection, leather (Kickboxing Line)
Knee Pad	Knee protection (Kickboxing Line, MMA Line)
Mouthguard	Protection of the teeth and mouth. The upper-jaw type is standard
Foul Cup	Groin protection. Men's and women's types exist; both are worn inside the dogi or the lower garment

5 **Shin Guards and Leg Guards are different items.** Cloth items are Shin Guards and leather items are Leg Guards; **leather is used in the Kickboxing Line**, where kicks carry greater force.

6 **Mouthguards and Foul Cups are worn as follows.**

	Mouthguard	Foul Cup
Karate KK1, KK2 (no hand techniques to face)	optional	men required / women recommended to wear the women's type
Karate KK3, KK4, KK5 (hand techniques to face)	required	men required / women recommended to wear the women's type
Kickboxing, all Grades	required	men required / women recommended to wear the women's type
MMA, all Grades	required	men required / women recommended to wear the women's type

A mouthguard is required in every Grade permitting hand techniques to the face, to prevent fracture of the teeth and the transmission of impact to the brain through the lower jaw. It is optional only in KK1 and KK2, where hand techniques to the face are not permitted.

(3) Federation-approved equipment

Type	Approved (model)
Super Safe (men)	KHS / HGKP3
Head Guard	HG49 / HG
Headgear	HG50 / HP-3
Headgear + Face Guard	HG15
Fist Guard	FG29
Shin Guard	cloth
Leg Guard	leather
Mouthguard	upper-jaw type. Modified or damaged items may not be used
Foul Cup	men's and women's. No hard part may be exposed outside the dogi

7 **The items listed in (3) are products the Federation has verified.** Items not listed may nevertheless be used where they are found equivalent to approved equipment at the equipment check on the day.

8 Equivalence is determined by all of the following.

1. The **area protected** under Article 6(1) and (2) is satisfied (e.g. headgear must cover cheeks and ears).

2. Material and thickness do not differ markedly from approved equipment.
 3. There is no damage, modification or marked deterioration.
- 9 The finding of equivalence is made by **the tournament executive chairman or the chief referee**. Where in doubt, the opinion of the tournament doctor is sought.
- 10 Equipment found equivalent is recorded and reported to the Federation. **The Federation may add approved equipment on the basis of such reports**. Additions and removals take effect from the date of posting on the Federation's website.
- 11 The equipment check on the day is conducted under this Article.

Fixing model numbers would prevent athletes from competing where production has ceased or where the item is unobtainable abroad. **The approved list is an illustrative list of verified items; equivalence is sufficient**. By placing the criterion on the area protected, verification can be made against the item itself rather than its name.

Article 7 (Required Equipment by Line)

	Head	Hands	Chest	Shins	Common to all Lines
Karate KK1, KK2	Head Guard	Fist Guard	all athletes	women / U18 and below	Mouthguard (optional in KK1, KK2) Foul Cup (Article 6(6))
Karate KK3, KK4	Super Safe	Fist Guard	women	women / U18 and below	as left
Karate KK5	Super Safe	Fist Guard	women	women / U18 and below	as left
Kickboxing KB1–KB4	Headgear (U12 and below fit a Face Guard)	Glove	—	Leg Guard , knee pad	Mouthguard required Foul Cup (Article 6(6))
Kickboxing KB5	bare-faced	Glove	—	Leg Guard , knee pad	as left
MMA MMA1–MMA4	Headgear (no Face Guard)	MMA Glove	—	Shin Guard, knee pad	as left
MMA MMA5	bare-faced	MMA Glove	—	Shin Guard, knee pad	as left

2 **Head protection is switched according to whether hand techniques to the face are permitted**. From KK3 upward in the Karate Line, where hand techniques to the face are released, Super Safe is required. 3 **In Karate KK1 and KK2, all athletes wear a Chest Guard regardless of sex**. These two Grades admit athletes from 4 years of age, and protection of the chest and ribs is given priority. 4 **No Face Guard is used in the MMA Line**. In grappling and ground fighting, an opponent's fingers or clothing may catch on a face guard and **apply twisting force to the neck**. This applies to U12 and below as well. 5 Super Safe and headgear are secured by laces at two points at the back of the head. 6 Women wear, under the dogi jacket, undergarments containing no hard parts and a plain white or black short-sleeved shirt.

Article 8 (Prohibitions concerning Equipment) Modification of approved equipment, items worn under the dogi (other than those in Article 7(6)), ornaments liable to cause injury, and untrimmed nails are prohibited.

2 Bandages are limited to Federation-approved items and are checked before the bout by the opponent's second. 3 Where supports or taping are required due to injury, prior approval of the tournament doctor and submission of a medical certificate are required.

Chapter 3 Conditions of Entry

Article 9 (Suspension for History of Head Trauma) A person falling within any of the following may not compete.

1. A person who, **within 14 days** before the tournament, received a heavy blow to the head or was knocked down by a strike to the head, in any discipline.
 2. A person who, **within 90 days** before the tournament, sustained a knockdown involving loss of consciousness even momentarily, or suffered head trauma, whether in competition, training or accident.
 3. A person hospitalised due to impact to the head (except where a medical examination and written consent have been submitted in advance).
 4. A person who has been **knocked out twice within 180 days**. Competition is suspended for **120 days** from the most recent knockout.
 5. A person who has been **knocked out three times within one year**. Competition is suspended for **150 days** from the most recent knockout.
- 2 Return after the suspension periods in items 4 and 5 requires **written medical consent following an examination including a head CT scan**. 3 In this Article, "knockdown" means any symptom suggesting concussion, including loss of consciousness, memory impairment, headache, dizziness, vomiting or bleeding.

Article 10 (Gradual Return to Practice) A person within the periods in the preceding Article who has no serious symptoms, has completed a Gradual Return To Practice protocol and has obtained a physician's permission may apply to the Federation and receive exceptional approval to compete.

Article 11 (Pre-existing Conditions) A person diagnosed with disease, disorder or malformation of the head, neck, brain, spine, heart or other part rendering continued competition dangerous, and a person suffering or suspected of suffering from a blood-borne infectious disease, may not compete.

Chapter 4 Structure of the Bout

Article 12 (Competition Area) The competition area is 13 m square, comprising a 9 m × 9 m contest surface at the centre and a 2 m safety border. Because throws are permitted, the surface is matted or tatami.

2 Starting lines in blue and white are marked 1.8 m apart at the centre of the contest surface.

Article 13 (Bout Duration)

Karate Line — uniform by Grade; no variation by Division.

Grade	Main bout	Extension	Second extension
KK1, KK2	1 min 30 s	1 min	1 min
KK3	2 min	1 min 30 s	1 min 30 s
KK4	3 min	2 min	2 min
KK5	5 min	3 min	3 min

Kickboxing Line and MMA Line

Grade	Duration
KB1	1 min × 2R
KB2, KB3	1 min 30 s × 2R (KB3 may have an extension in tournament play)
KB4	2 min × 2R
KB5	3 min × 2R
MMA1, MMA2	3 min × 1R
MMA3	4 min × 1R (final: 3 min × 2R)
MMA4	3 min × 2R
MMA5	5 min × 2R

2 A second extension is held only in the final. Up to the semi-finals, where an extension does not decide the bout, the flag decision (Article 58) determines the result. The second extension is of the same duration as the extension. **This applies to all Lines.**

3 Intervals are 30 seconds in the Karate Line and 1 minute in the Kickboxing and MMA Lines. 4 The main bout of KK5 is 5 minutes because, grappling and ground fighting being unrestricted in time, the entire technical sequence from takedown through control to submission is to be completed within one round. 5 Where Masters are established, the main bout is 3 minutes and the extension 3 minutes.

Article 14 (Timing and Stopping of the Clock) The clock is not stopped as a rule. It continues to run during counts, during return from outside the area, and while equipment is adjusted.

2 The clock is stopped only in the following cases.

Stopped	Reason
Intervention by the tournament doctor (examination, treatment of bleeding)	It would be improper for an athlete to lose bout time through a medically necessary interruption
Interruption caused by the opponent's foul	The athlete committing the foul must not gain the benefit of time consumed

3 The timekeeper measures the bout, displays the time remaining and signals the end of the round. **Because the referee counts at one-second intervals, no signal need pass between timekeeper and referee.**

Article 15 (Conduct of the Bout) The bout proceeds on the referee's commands "HAJIME" (begin), "MATE" (interrupt), "ZOKKO" (continue) and "YAME" (stop).

- 2 The bout is not interrupted when a technique lands; it is interrupted only for a knockdown by strikes, a standing count, exit from the area, or danger. 3 Before the bout, the athletes stand 1.8 m apart at the centre and bow, on the referee's command, to the record table, the referee and the opponent, in that order.
- 4 **All counting performed by the referee is at one-second intervals and aloud.** This is identical for counts, non-response, control and hold-downs.

The interval is not varied between measurements, so that athletes, seconds and spectators can follow the elapsed time at the same tempo in every situation.

Article 16 (Determination of the Result) The result is determined by one of the following. Decisions are taken by a **majority of the refereeing panel** (Article 28).

1. Ippon, KO or TKO
2. Decision
3. Disqualification or withdrawal of the opponent

Article 16-2 (Formats of Competition) A tournament is held in **knockout format, league format (round robin) or as an exhibition**. Which applies is set out in the tournament regulations.

(1) Knockout format

- 2 In knockout format, the result is **always determined** under Article 57 (Karate Line), Articles 66 and 67 (Kickboxing Line) and Article 73 (MMA Line). **There is no draw.**

(2) League format

- 3 In league format, **no extension is held; the result is determined at the end of the main bout** as follows.

Karate Line

- ① The athlete with more Waza-ari wins
- ② If equal, the athlete with fewer fouls wins (warnings do not count)
- ③ If still equal, the bout is a draw

Kickboxing KB1 and KB2 (first-to-points) The athlete with more points wins; if equal, the bout is a draw. **Kickboxing KB3–KB5 and the MMA Line** (10-point system) The athlete with the higher total wins; if equal, the bout is a draw.

No extension is held in league format because placing is decided across several bouts. There is no need to settle each bout on its own, and holding an extension for every tied bout would break the schedule. **However, because ② (fewer fouls) is retained, an athlete who stalls does not even draw — they lose.** The state in which the athlete who does not move gains does not arise in league format either.

- 4 Placing is by **league points**.

Result	Karate Line	Kickboxing / MMA
Ippon (including two Waza-ari) / KO / TKO	4	4
Opponent disqualified	4	4
Won on Waza-ari (more Waza-ari)	3	—
Won on the decision (higher total under the 10-point or first-to-points system)	—	3
Opponent withdrew	3	3
Won on the decision (fewer fouls)	2	—
Draw	1	1
Loss	0	0

The points follow the Rules themselves. **Disqualification is an Ippon for the opponent under Article 56(8)**, and **withdrawal is a Waza-ari for the opponent under Article 59(2)**; they are therefore 4 and 3 points respectively.

- 5 Where league points are equal, placing is determined in the following order.

- ① The result between the athletes concerned
- ② Number of wins by Ippon (including KO and TKO)
- ③ Total Waza-ari obtained (Kickboxing and MMA: total points scored)
- ④ Fewer Waza-ari conceded (Kickboxing and MMA: fewer points conceded)
- ⑤ Fewer fouls
- ⑥ If still equal, a deciding bout is held. It consists of one extension, and if still equal, the flag decision (Article 58) must produce a result

In a league of three, all three may finish 1–1 and ① runs in a circle. ② onwards exist to determine placing in that case.

(3) Exhibition

6 **An exhibition is a bout in which no result is determined.** It is not counted for placing, records or awards. 7 **All provisions of these Rules on prohibited acts, equipment and safety apply to exhibitions.** The referee stops the bout where danger is found. 8 **The record required by Article 32 (knockdowns, KOs, doctor stoppages and the site of injury) is prepared for exhibitions as well.**

Not awarding a result and relaxing the safety provisions are different things. **Injury arises irrespective of the result, so the record is prepared identically.**

Chapter 5 Knockdown and Count

This Chapter applies to all Lines. The treatment of a knockdown is identical in the Karate, Kickboxing and MMA Lines.

Article 17 (Definition of a Knockdown) In these Rules, a "knockdown" means a state in which a part of the body other than the sole of the foot touches the floor **as a result of damage from an opponent's strike**.

1. **A fall caused by a throw, takedown, voluntary guard-pull, slip or loss of balance is not a knockdown.** In such cases the bout is not interrupted and the situation is treated as ground fighting.
2. Whether the fall resulted from a strike is determined by the referee. **Where this cannot be determined, it is not a knockdown.**
3. Where an athlete is unbalanced by a strike but rises immediately and no damage is apparent, it is not a knockdown.

This is the most important distinction in these Rules. In the Karate and MMA Lines athletes touch the floor constantly. **If a count began at every takedown, ground fighting could not exist.**

Article 18 (Ten Count) On recognising a knockdown, the referee declares **"DOWN"** and counts to **ten at one-second intervals**. The attacking athlete withdraws immediately and waits at the position indicated. The clock is not stopped.

Result	Decision
Unable to stand and assume a guard by the count of "9" (the referee counts "10")	Ippon / KO (bout ends)
Stands, assumes a guard, and is found fit to continue	Waza-ari to the opponent. Restart from standing

2 **Mandatory eight count** — even where the athlete rises before eight, the referee **counts to eight in every case**, confirms the intention and condition to continue, and then declares "ZOKKO". 3 Where the referee judges the situation dangerous during the count or at the confirmation, **the bout may be stopped even mid-count** (opponent wins). 4 Further attack on a downed opponent is prohibited (Article 27). 5 **The referee shall, so far as possible, seek to support the athlete's head so that it does not strike the floor heavily on a knockdown.**

Article 19 (End of Round during a Count) Where the round ends during a count, **the count is not interrupted and continues to its conclusion.**

1. Where the athlete cannot rise within the count, the result is **Ippon**. The end of the round provides no relief.
2. Where the athlete rises and is found fit to continue, Waza-ari is awarded to the opponent and the round ends.
3. Where a knockdown coincides with the end of the main bout, the count is completed before deciding whether an extension is required.

Article 20 (Standing Count) Even where there is no knockdown, the referee may separate the athletes and take an **eight count** where satisfied that an athlete has clearly lost the capacity to fight through strikes (including where non-response under the following Article exceeds four seconds).

2 This Article is a measure taken at the referee's discretion and operates separately from the measurement of non-response (Article 22). **Non-response does not interrupt the bout even beyond four seconds.** 3 In such case **Waza-ari is awarded to the opponent**. Where recovery is not evident, Ippon is awarded. The clock is not stopped.

Article 21 (Two Knockdowns) **An athlete knocked down twice in a bout loses.** In the Karate Line this results from two Waza-ari constituting Ippon; in the Kickboxing and MMA Lines it is a KO.

2 A standing count under the preceding Article is also counted as a knockdown.

Article 22 (Non-response) "Non-response" means **a state in which an athlete, while receiving consecutive strikes, performs neither counter-attack, defence nor movement**. Even without a knockdown, the bout is decided where this state continues.

(1) Where any of the following occurs, "response" is present and the measurement returns to zero.

1. Striking back (a single effective counter suffices)
2. Interrupting, parrying or slipping the line of attack with the arms, fist guard or glove, or by moving the head
3. Moving forwards, backwards or laterally, changing position, or breaking distance
4. Gripping, clinching or engaging

(2) The measurement proceeds only where none of the above is performed and the athlete continues to be struck while upright or in a collapsed posture. Merely being outworked is not non-response.

(3) Award

Continuation of non-response	Decision
4 seconds or less	No award
Over 4 to 6 seconds	Waza-ari. The bout is not interrupted
Over 6 seconds	Ippon / TKO. The referee declares "YAME"

(4) Procedure The referee counts aloud at **one-second intervals** (Article 15(4)). Judges raise and maintain the flag on determining non-response; **continuation of the measurement requires that a majority of the panel recognise non-response** (Article 28).

2 **Waza-ari is declared on exceeding four seconds. The bout is not interrupted.** The measurement continues. 3 **On exceeding six seconds, the referee declares "YAME" and awards Ippon.** 4 Where a response occurs during the measurement, it returns to zero. Where non-response recurs, measurement begins afresh from zero.

The bout is not stopped at four seconds. This preserves the opportunity for the athlete being struck to show a response, and allows the measurement to run to six seconds without interruption. **The bout is stopped only beyond six seconds**, at which point it is decided.

Why this provision is necessary — in a sport using head protection, an athlete does not readily fall. If "knockdown" were the sole criterion, **the most dangerous state of all — being struck one-sidedly without the bout ending — could not be stopped.** This is a knockout provision without a knockdown, and exists to protect the athlete.

Article 23 (Where the Bout Ends on a Single Knockdown) In the following cases, **the bout ends on a single knockdown** (opponent wins). **No count is taken.**

Subject	
U12 and below (all Lines)	Athletes under 12 years, in the Karate, Kickboxing and MMA Lines alike
Kickboxing KB1	All athletes regardless of age
Other	Where the tournament regulations so provide for minors

2 In such cases, and where a standing count has been taken, **examination by the tournament doctor is mandatory.** 3 **Where an athlete of U14, U16 or U18 sustains a knockdown, a ten count is taken and examination by the tournament doctor is mandatory. This applies to all Lines.** 4 For athletes of the General Division, the referee determines whether examination is required.

For growing athletes, ending the contest at that point takes priority over granting an opportunity to recover through a count. In this age group, the decision whether to continue is not left to the athlete or the referee. The same applies to KB1 regardless of age. **It is a Grade that does not aim at knockout**, and once a knockdown occurs the purpose of that bout has been served.

Chapter 6 Fouls

Article 24 (Accumulation of Fouls) A prohibited act is a **warning (KEIKOKU)** on first occurrence, and thereafter accumulates within the same bout regardless of the type of act.

Warning → Penalty 1 → Penalty 2 → Penalty 3 (disqualification; opponent wins)

2 **In the Karate Line, fouls do not constitute points.** Where the number of Waza-ari is equal, **the athlete with fewer fouls wins** (Article 57). Warnings do not affect the decision.

3 **In the Kickboxing and MMA Lines, fouls are processed as deductions within the 10-point system.**

Foul	10-point system (KB3–KB5, all MMA)	First-to-points KB2 (first to 5)	First-to-points KB1 (first to 3)
Penalty 1	1 point deducted from that round	1 point to the opponent	no point given
Penalty 2	2 points deducted from that round	2 points to the opponent	1 point to the opponent
Penalty 3	Disqualification	Disqualification	Disqualification

4 **Points arising from fouls are reduced in KB1 alone.** Were KB1 treated like the others, Penalty 1 and Penalty 2 would give the opponent 3 points and **the athlete would lose on that alone, without having taken a single effective strike.** KB1 admits athletes from 6 years of age, and most fouls at this Grade are contacts arising because the rules have not yet been learnt in the body — gripping, the clinch, and knees to the face. **At this Grade alone, fouls are not a means of deciding the bout.**

Disqualification under Penalty 3 is unchanged. The check on serious misconduct is identical to the other Grades. Only the state in which two minor fouls end the bout is removed.

5 In the first-to-points system, fouls bear directly on the result.

6 Fouls and warnings accumulate from the main bout through the extension and second extension. 7 Where the act is intentional or causes substantial damage, Penalty 1 or above may be imposed on first occurrence. Where particularly serious, the chief referee and deputy chief referee may impose Penalty 2 or Penalty 3 on first occurrence. 8 An athlete injured by a foul is not immediately required to continue; after a rest equivalent to two bouts, the bout may resume by agreement of the athlete, the second and the referee. 9 **Where a technique not released at the relevant Grade is used, it is treated as a prohibited act.** 10 **A verbal caution is instructional and is not counted among the fouls.** It is not entered in the official record or on the display board. However, a verbal caution may be omitted and a foul imposed directly where necessary for safety.

Article 25 (Prohibited Acts Common to All Lines)

(1) Attacks generally - Further attack on an opponent who has clearly lost the capacity to fight through a knockdown (whether by strike, throw or ground technique). This applies whether or not an award has been made - Attack to the spine, whether standing or on the ground. Forcefully bending or twisting is treated as particularly serious

(2) Strikes - Strikes to the back of the head, crown, throat and kidneys - Kicks to the front or side of the knee joint (kicks in the natural direction of flexion excepted) - Strikes to the groin - **Elbow strikes** (prohibited in all Grades of the Kickboxing and MMA Lines; permitted only to men in the General Division of the Karate Line) - **On the ground, any contact strike to the head of the lower athlete by the athlete on top** (only non-contact permitted). A contact strike while the opponent is applying a submission is treated as particularly serious - **On the ground, downward strikes by the athlete on top** (strikes to the body or knee in a direction not parallel to the floor) - On the ground, strikes in which the opponent's head, face, body or knee is caught between the striking fist or foot and the floor - Knee strikes to a grounded opponent

(3) Throws - Throws causing serious damage to the opponent's head or spine (a foul on the thrower even where it results from the opponent's resistance) - Throws landing the opponent on the head or back of the head first. Throws liable to damage the head or cervical spine, such as back-drops, are treated as particularly serious - Techniques executed bent forward so that one's own head touches the floor first - Throws applying full body weight liable to injure the chest or abdomen, and rolling throws - Kani-basami (scissor takedown)

(4) Submissions - Small-joint techniques to fingers or wrists - **Heel hooks, neck cranks and techniques twisting the spine** (prohibited in all Grades of all Lines) - Pressure on the windpipe or carotid artery using the belt, fingers or palm - Submissions completed while standing, and submissions applying body weight while standing

(5) Gripping - Gripping Super Safe, headgear, fist guards, gloves, groin guards, hair, throat or groin - **Attacks from behind** — striking an opponent from their rear, giving no opportunity to defend. **Prohibited at every grade of every Line**

(5)-2 Pushing and hooking (grades that do not permit gripping only)

At grades that do not permit gripping, pushing and hooking are restricted as follows.

Grade	Pushing	Hooking
Karate KK1 (no gripping)	Only a momentary push with one hand, made to link into an attack, is permitted. Repeated pushing, and pushing for defence that does not lead to an attack, are fouls	Prohibited
Kickboxing KB1–KB5 (no gripping)	as above	Prohibited
Karate KK2–KK5 (gripping permitted)	not restricted	not restricted
MMA MMA1–MMA5 (gripping permitted)	not restricted	not restricted

Pushing is restricted only at grades that do not permit gripping. KK1 and the whole Kickboxing Line prohibit gripping, so without the restriction **pushing would serve as a substitute for gripping and the bout would proceed as a pushing contest.** At KK2 and above, and throughout the MMA Line, where gripping is permitted, restricting pushing serves no purpose and it is not restricted.

(6) Passivity and fighting spirit

"Passivity" means an act breaching the duty to progress, or failing to show intent to attack. Passivity is a prohibited act under this Article and is **processed under the preceding Article** (first occurrence = warning; second = Penalty 1; third = Penalty 2; fourth = disqualification). Passivity does not carry an independent sanction of its own.

- Deliberately turning the back, defending only without showing intent to attack, or **failing to attack for 10 seconds or more**
- **Breach of the duty to progress** (Articles 46, 52 and 72)
- Leaving the area to escape the opponent's attack
- Loss of the will to fight

(7) Acts causing interruption of the bout - Feigning a knockdown — falling while feigning damage from a strike, so as to gain rest through a count and consume bout time. Where the referee finds feigning, no count is taken and Penalty 1 or above is imposed on that athlete. Where an athlete leading on Waza-ari does so late in the bout, it is treated as particularly serious and Penalty 2 or above may be imposed on first occurrence - Interruption without proper reason (retying the belt, adjusting equipment, spitting out the mouthguard, etc.) - Delay after being called: **immediate = warning / 30 s = Penalty 1 / 40 s = Penalty 2 / 50 s = disqualification** - Failure to be ready after the interval: as above - Treatment of bleeding or injury: **2 min = warning / 2 min 10 s = Penalty 1 / 2 min 20 s = Penalty 2 / 2 min 30 s = disqualification**

(8) Attire and equipment - Breach of the requirements, unapproved taping or supports, failure to secure head protection at two points

(9) Seconds - Leaving the designated seat, striking the mat, protesting a decision, abusive language to athletes or officials - **A breach by a second is accumulated as a breach by the athlete.**

(10) Other - Obstructing the ventilation of head protection, scratching with the nails, pinching or twisting the skin, inserting fingers into body orifices, failing to follow officials' instructions, protesting a decision

Prohibited acts specific to a Line are set out in Books 2 to 4.

Article 26 (Situations Not Provided For) Where a technique or act not contemplated by these Rules occurs, its admissibility is determined **by agreement of three or more** of the tournament executive chairman, the chairman of the review committee, the chief referee, the auditor and the referee, from the standpoint of safety, the spirit of budo and sportsmanship, and is subsequently reflected in these Rules.

Chapter 7 Refereeing Panel and Tournament Administration

Article 27 (Composition of the Refereeing Panel) The panel takes one of the following two forms, specified in the tournament regulations. **The same form is used for all bouts at the same tournament.**

Composition	Personnel	Tournaments
Full Panel (5)	Referee 1, Deputy Referee 1, Judges 3 + Auditor 1, Timekeeper 1	World championships, international and national tournaments, and tournaments designated by the Federation
Simplified Panel (3)	Referee 1, Judges 2 + Timekeeper 1	Regional tournaments, tournaments hosted by member organisations, and all others

2 **With a Simplified Panel the auditor need not be appointed.** In that case the auditor's duties are performed by the referee and the record of measurements is kept by the record table. 3 The Simplified Panel exists so that these Rules may be applied identically in regions and overseas member organisations where qualified officials are difficult to secure, and **the content of the competition rules applied is in no way different from that under a Full Panel.**

Article 28 (Validity of Decisions and Continuation of Measurement)

	Full Panel (5)	Simplified Panel (3)
Validity of a decision (result; declaration of Ippon)	agreement of 3 or more of 5	agreement of 2 or more of 3
Continuation of measurement (non-response, control)	2 or more of the 3 Judges maintaining the flag	2 or more of the Referee and Judges recognising it

2 In both compositions the requirement is identical: recognition by **a majority of the panel.** 3 Where the two Judges of a Simplified Panel differ, the referee's judgment constitutes the majority. 4 Scoring under the 10-point system is performed **by the Judges.** With a Simplified Panel, the two Judges and the Referee, three in all, score.

Article 29 (Duties of Officials) The referee is positioned within the competition area and is responsible for the conduct of the bout and the determination of the result.

2 The deputy referee assists the referee, covering one another's blind spots to arrive at a fair and accurate decision. With a Simplified Panel this duty is shared by the Judges. 3 The Judges indicate effective techniques, fouls and exits from the area occurring in the blind spots of the referee and deputy referee. 4 The auditor does not participate in determining the result. The auditor:

- answers enquiries from the referee (the cap on awards within a single ground sequence, the number of passivity calls, the record of measurements, etc.)
- advises the referee on fouls and prohibited acts
- requests intervention by the tournament doctor (shared with the referee and deputy referee)
- corrects misuse of flags

5 The timekeeper stops the clock only in the cases set out in Article 14. 6 All officials are responsible for ensuring that athletes compete in a safe and fair environment.

7 **Decisions and judgments are final and no protest is entertained.** Where an objection is raised by an athlete, second or member organisation, **the tournament executive chairman deals with it.** An official must not deal with it personally.

8 An official must not explain the reasons for a decision in detail, and must not publish personal views after the bout (including on social media).

Article 30 (Tournament Doctor) At least one tournament doctor is stationed at each competition area.

Before each bout, the timekeeper confirms that the tournament doctor is seated in the designated place. Where they are not, the timekeeper reports to the referee through the auditor (through the referee directly with a Simplified Panel), and **the bout is not started and the clock is not started.** A bout must not begin in the doctor's absence.

2 Where an athlete has received a heavy impact to the head or back, where injury is suspected, or where there is bleeding, the referee summons the doctor and determines whether the bout may continue on the doctor's advice. 3 An athlete may not resume competing until bleeding has stopped.

Article 31 (Seconds) Each athlete has one or two seconds.

2 The second is responsible for **determining whether the bout should be stopped on account of accumulated damage, even where the athlete indicates a willingness to continue** (Article 44). 3 Before the bout the second checks the opponent's bandages and, on request of the referee, produces the athlete's medical

certificate. 4 The second remains seated in the designated seat and encourages the athlete with restraint.

Article 32 (Duty to Record) The organiser records, for every bout, **knockdowns, KOs, doctor stoppages and the site of injury**, and reports to the Federation.

2 The Federation compiles these annually and publishes them.

Continued publication of injury statistics is a requirement for recognition as an international governing body, and **the only means of demonstrating the safety of these Rules.**

Article 33 (Anti-Doping) Athletes and seconds shall comply with the Federation's Anti-Doping Code.

Chapter 8 Composition of the Karate Line

Article 34 (Composition of the Karate Line)

Grade	Name	Sub-name	Minimum age	Hand techniques to face	Gripping	Ground	Sundome control	Head protection	Main/Extension
KK1	Light	Full-contact karate	4 yrs+	×	×	×	×	Head Guard	1:30/1:00
KK2	Standard	+ judo	6 yrs+	×	○ (10 s)	×	×	Head Guard	1:30/1:00
KK3	Advance	+ face punches	8 yrs+	○	○ (10 s)	×	×	Men (Super Safe)	2:00/1:30
KK4	Expert	+ jiu-jitsu	8 yrs+	○	○ (10 s)	○ (30 s × 2)	×	Super Safe	3:00/2:00
KK5	Full	+ jiu-jitsu (unlimited time, control)	13 yrs+	○	○ (unlimited)	○ (unlimited)	○	Super Safe	5:00/3:00

2 **KK4 and KK5 differ in only two respects: time limits and sundome control.** Up to KK4 the bout is regulated by fixed times; only at KK5 are time limits removed. KK4 is the highest Grade of "jacketed fighting divided by the clock"; KK5 is "jacketed fighting without division". Because this single step changes the referee's method of operation itself, **promotion to KK5 requires that the officials, as well as the athletes, have mastered the duty to progress (SUSUME and passivity).**

Article 35 (KK1 Light / Full-contact karate)

Item	Content
Hand techniques to the face	Prohibited
Kicks to the face	Permitted (prohibited for U14 and below)
Knee strikes to the head	Prohibited
Head-butts, elbows	Prohibited
Gripping	Prohibited (separated by the referee on contact)
Throws, ground fighting	Prohibited

2 Because gripping is not permitted, where a grip occurs the referee separates the athletes immediately with "MATE". Single sweeps, off-balancing and pushes are excepted.

Article 36 (KK2 Standard / + judo) Adds gripping to KK1.

Item	Content
Hand techniques to the face	Prohibited
Gripping	Permitted, up to 10 seconds at a time
Strikes while gripping	Permitted (excluding hand techniques to the face)
Throws	Permitted
Ground fighting	Prohibited. On going down, the referee restands the athletes with "MATE"
Head-butts, elbows	Prohibited

Article 37 (KK3 Advance / + face punches) Adds hand techniques to the face (full contact) to KK2.

Item	Content
Hand techniques to the face	Permitted (full contact). Super Safe required
Gripping	Permitted (10 s)
Throws	Permitted
Ground fighting	Prohibited. Restand with "MATE"
Head-butts	General Division only. Prohibited for U18 and below
Elbows	Prohibited

Article 38 (KK4 Expert / + jiu-jitsu) Adds **ground fighting** to KK3. **Sundome control is not permitted.**

Item	Content
Gripping	Permitted (10 s)
Ground fighting	Permitted, 30 seconds at a time, twice per round
Effective ground techniques	U18 and General = chokes and joint locks / U12 and below = hold-down only (Article 54)
Sundome control	Not permitted
Head-butts	General Division only. Prohibited for U18 and below
Elbows	Prohibited

2 The time provisions of this Article (gripping 10 s, ground 30 s × 2) are **fixed times administered by the referee's clock**. Because they do not require a judgment on stalling, they suit operation by a Simplified Panel.

Article 39 (KK5 Full) Removes **the time limits** from KK4 and adds **sundome control**.

Item	Content
Gripping	Not limited in time (duty to progress, Article 46)
Ground fighting	Unlimited in number and time (duty to progress, Article 52)
Sundome control	Permitted (Article 50)
Head-butts	Men of the General Division only
Elbows	Men of the General Division only
Punches to the face	Permitted in all Divisions, on the equipment basis of Article 7

2 **Punches to the face are permitted to U16 because Super Safe is required in all Divisions.** For this age group, on sustaining a knockdown a ten count is taken and **examination by the tournament doctor is mandatory** (Article 23(3)).

Chapter 9 Awards

Article 40 (Awards) Awards in the Karate Line are of two levels, **Ippon** and **Waza-ari**.

1. **Ippon** — the bout ends at that moment; the athlete wins.
 2. **Waza-ari** — **two constitute Ippon**, and the athlete wins.
 3. Advantages falling short of these are not awarded. They are assessed as material for the **flag decision (Article 58)**.
 4. Fouls are not awarded. They bear on the result under Article 57(2).
- 2 For the compilation of placings, Ippon counts as 8 points and Waza-ari as 4 points.
- 3 Waza-ari or Ippon arises only in the following cases.

	KK1	KK2	KK3	KK4	KK5
Knockdown by strikes (Art. 18)	○	○	○	○	○
Non-response (Art. 22)	○	○	○	○	○
Throw + sundome finish (Art. 42)	—	○	○	○	○
Chokes and joint locks (Ippon)	—	—	—	○ (U18, General)	○
Hold-down (Art. 54)	—	—	—	○ (U12 and below)	—
Sundome control (Art. 50)	—	—	—	—	○

Key point of design — the abolished "Yuko" and "Koka" were *counterfactual* assessments ("it would have hurt without the protector"), the area in which officials vary most. Limiting awards to two levels minimises the area left to subjective judgment.

Chapter 10 Standing Techniques

Article 41 (Effective Strikes) In the Karate Line, "strike" means punches, back-fists, palm strikes, **elbow strikes** and **head-butts** with the upper limbs, and kicks and knee strikes with the lower limbs.

2 **All standing strikes are delivered with full contact.** The target is the whole body except the prohibited areas in Article 25.

Article 42 (Throws) Throws, off-balancing and takedowns are not in themselves awarded. They are material for the flag decision.

2 Only where a **clear and forceful throw** (executed without loss of posture and with vigour, such that damage would have resulted without the mat) is followed by a **sundome finish** is **Waza-ari** awarded. 3 A "sundome finish" means indicating **two or more consecutive** punches, elbows or kicks, at a distance from which they could actually be delivered, to the upper body of the downed opponent, without contact. 4 Where the downed athlete defends effectively from below so that two or more sundome strikes cannot be indicated, no award is made. Where the counter from below is effective, the award goes to the downed athlete. 5 Where the thrower also goes to the ground, standing up and performing the finishing motion does not constitute a valid finish. The same applies to a finish performed without changing position after a foot sweep.

Making a throw alone a Waza-ari would mean that, in KK5 where ground fighting is unlimited, two takedowns would decide the bout, and the sport would cease to be a striking budo. **Waza-ari is awarded for the complete set: throw fully executed and finished.**

Article 43 (Going to Ground in KK1 to KK3) KK1 to KK3 do not permit ground fighting. Where either athlete goes down, the referee immediately declares "MATE" and restarts from standing.

2 Further attack on a downed opponent is prohibited, except for the sundome finish following a throw.

Article 44 (Safety Confirmation) Where an athlete has conceded one Waza-ari, the referee interrupts the bout and confirms with the second whether the athlete may continue.

2 Where the referee determines that continuation is impossible on account of accumulated damage, the opponent wins by Waza-ari.

Chapter 11 Standing Grappling

Article 45 (Gripping)

Grade	Gripping
KK1	Prohibited
KK2, KK3, KK4	Up to 10 seconds at a time (no limit on the number of times)
KK5	Not limited in time

2 In KK2 to KK4, on the expiry of 10 seconds the referee separates the athletes with "MATE". Neither athlete is disadvantaged thereby. Even before 10 seconds have elapsed, where neither athlete shows any initiative they are separated. 3 **Wrapping the arms around the head protection to clinch and deliver knee strikes is permitted** (KK2 to KK5).

Article 46 (Duty to Progress — Standing Grappling) In **KK5**, where for **10 seconds** while gripping an athlete shows none of the following intentions, the referee declares "SUSUME".

1. An attempt to off-balance, throw or take down
 2. A strike from the gripping position
 3. Action substantially disturbing the opponent's balance
- 2 Where **a further 5 seconds** elapse after "SUSUME" without change, **passivity** is applied to that athlete (Article 25(6)). 3 Where neither athlete shows initiative, passivity is applied to both and the referee separates them with "MATE".
-

Chapter 12 Ground Fighting

Article 47 (Definition and Duration of Ground Fighting) "Ground fighting" means a state in which a part of either athlete's body other than the sole of the foot is touching the floor.

Grade	Ground fighting
KK1, KK2, KK3	Prohibited (Article 43)
KK4	30 seconds at a time. Twice in the main bout and twice in the extension (twice again in a second extension)
KK5	Unlimited in number and in time

2 In KK4, on the expiry of 30 seconds or the completion of the two occasions for that round, the referee restarts from standing with "MATE".

The two occasions apply separately to the main bout, the extension and the second extension; they do not carry over. Where both are used in the main bout, two fresh occasions are available in the extension.

3 **Ground fighting is established five seconds after the referee's declaration of "GROUND".** Where it is broken within five seconds, **it is not counted** towards the permitted number.

If a momentary fall consumed one of the permitted occasions, ground fighting in KK4 would end after two such moments. **The five-second establishment requirement exists to make ground fighting possible.**

4 Where one athlete has a part of the body other than the sole of the foot on the floor and grips and attacks a standing opponent, **that period is measured as ground-fighting time.** 5 In KK5 the bout is not interrupted other than for a submission, stalling (Article 52), exit from the area or the end of the round.

Article 48 (Strikes on the Ground)

Situation	Strikes
From the athlete on top to the head of the athlete below	Sundome only. Contact is a foul
From the athlete on top to the body or legs of the athlete below	Contact permitted , but only parallel to the floor (downward strikes prohibited)
From the athlete below to a standing opponent	Contact permitted (upper-limb strikes; kicks limited to a single first strike in defence of a takedown)
Both standing	Contact permitted

2 "The athlete on top" means the athlete whose head is higher than the opponent's. 3 **Downward strikes (strikes in a direction not parallel to the floor) are prohibited**, because the athlete's own weight is behind them and the athlete below cannot withdraw. The same applies to strikes to the knee. 4 In KK4 no strikes are permitted on the ground by either athlete. The sundome finish following a throw (Article 42) is excepted.

Only the head is protected by the non-contact rule. Impacts to the brain accumulate in an undefendable state and are removed from the sport; strikes to the body and legs are necessary for the sport to function as a complete combat sport, and carry no body weight when limited to a direction parallel to the floor.

Article 49 (Awards on the Ground) In KK5, only the following two are awarded on the ground.

Act	Award	Conditions
Completion of a submission	Ippon	Tapping (two or more rapid taps), the call "MAITTA" or "STOP", loss of consciousness, or stoppage at the referee's judgment
Sundome control	Waza-ari / Ippon	Article 50

2 Takedowns, guard passes, the taking of mount or back mount, sweeps, escapes from below, submission attempts and time in control are **not awarded**. They are material for the flag decision.

Awarding positions would make "retaking position to accumulate points" the optimal strategy in KK5, where ground fighting is unlimited. By limiting the routes to an award to **finishing or controlling completely**, no path to victory exists other than progression.

Article 50 (Sundome Control)

(1) Requirements — the count runs only while all three are satisfied **simultaneously**.

#	Requirement	Content
①	Controlling position	Mount, back mount, knee-on-belly, or a side position in which one's own legs are not entangled by the opponent's. The opponent's orientation is immaterial
②	Continuity of strikes	Four or more consecutive sundome strikes (punches, elbows) to the head , delivered in one breath and maintained without interruption
③	Opponent undefended	The athlete below shows neither defence, escape nor counter (paragraph (3))

(2) Award

Continuation of undefended state	Under 5 s	5 s or more	10 s or more
Decision	No award	Waza-ari	Ippon (bout ends)

Only the highest level reached is awarded. Awards are not cumulative. **Consistently with the principle that two Waza-ari make an Ippon, control for 5 seconds is a Waza-ari and twice that, 10 seconds, is an Ippon.**

(3) Definition of "undefended" — where any of the following occurs, defence is present and **the count returns immediately to zero**.

1. Interrupting the line of attack by **moving** the arms or elbows (including covering)
 2. Bridging, shrimping, hip escape, recovery of guard
 3. Gripping to pull the opponent in, or an attempt to reverse position
 4. A counter from below
 5. Escape, standing up or turning in from the turtle position
- 2 **A posture merely maintained without movement is not defence.** Holding the arms to the head without moving, or remaining curled without moving, is undefended in each case. **This applies whether the athlete is in the turtle position or supine.**

A state in which the athlete on top holds a controlling position and maintains four-strike sundome sequences for **five seconds** without interruption, while the athlete below shows **not a single movement**, is in itself an extremely confined situation. **No exception need be made for the type of posture.**

(3)-2 Position of sundome strikes against the turtle

1. **Sundome strikes against a turtled opponent are indicated to the temple or the face. The back of the head and the crown must not be targeted** (prohibited areas under Article 25).
2. Where the angle makes it impossible to indicate strikes to those positions, **control is not established**. The athlete on top must turn the opponent or change position.
3. Contact strikes to the body and legs are permitted against a turtled opponent as well (parallel to the floor only, Article 48).

(4) Interruption and termination of the count

1. The count terminates where the athlete on top loses the controlling position, where the sundome sequence is interrupted for **two seconds or more**, on exit from the area, or at the end of the round.
2. **Ippon arises only where 10 seconds is reached within the round time.**
3. Where 5 seconds had been reached at termination, the Waza-ari stands.

(5) Re-establishment — after the count has returned to zero, where the requirements are again satisfied within the same ground sequence, the count begins afresh from zero. No award exceeding the cap in the following Article is made. Ippon on reaching 10 seconds is excepted.

(6) Procedure — the referee counts aloud at **one-second intervals** (Article 15(4)). Judges raise and maintain the flag on determining that the opponent is undefended; **continuation requires that a majority of the panel so recognise** (Article 28). On reaching 10 seconds the referee declares "YAME" and Ippon is awarded by a majority of the panel.

(7) Value and treatment for safety purposes

- **Ippon by control has exactly the same value as Ippon by contact strikes.** Its value is not reduced because the strikes were non-contact.
- However, because the losing athlete **has received no impact to the head whatsoever**, the suspension for head trauma under Article 9 **does not apply**.
- It follows that, **in a single-day tournament, cumulative exposure of the head can be reduced without sacrificing decisive results.**

Article 51 (Cap on Awards within a Single Ground Sequence) Awards obtainable from a single continuous ground sequence are **capped at one Waza-ari**.

2 Completion of a submission (Article 49) and Ippon by control (preceding Article) are excepted.

The purpose is to prevent a single takedown from ending the bout. **Because two Waza-ari constitute a win**, victory requires either taking the opponent down and controlling twice, or finishing, or controlling for the full 10 seconds.

Article 52 (Duty to Progress — Ground Fighting) On the ground in **KK5**, where for **15 seconds** none of the following occurs, the referee declares "SUSUME".

1. Positional progress (an attempt to pass, mount, take the back, sweep or escape)
 2. An attempt at a choke or joint lock
 3. A sundome striking sequence
- 2 Where **a further 10 seconds** elapse after "SUSUME" without change, **passivity** is applied to the athlete responsible for the stalling. 3 This applies irrespective of whether the athlete is on top or below. **An athlete below who holds closed guard without moving is equally subject to passivity.** 4 Where both are responsible, passivity is applied to both. 5 **On the second declaration of passivity within the same round, the referee restarts from standing with "MATE".**

This Article is what makes the "unlimited" character of KK5 workable. Rather than forcing athletes to stand by the clock, **the disadvantage falls only on the athlete who does not move**, so that only the ground fighting of the technically capable is permitted without limit.

Article 53 (Scope of Submissions) Chokes and joint locks are permitted only on the ground.

1. **Joint locks** — limited to the elbow, shoulder, knee and ankle (Achilles tendon).
2. **Chokes** — by pressure on the carotid arteries or the trachea.
3. **Prohibited** — as set out in Article 25(4).
4. Beginning a technique standing and completing it after moving to the ground is permitted.
5. The referee does not judge the effectiveness of a submission. An athlete unable to defend must so indicate.

Article 54 (Prohibition of Submissions and Hold-downs for U12 and Below) **U12 and below may not apply chokes or joint locks.** Where applied, the act is treated as a prohibited act.

Rationale — pressure on the neck may temporarily interrupt blood flow to the brain, and it is not appropriate to require growing athletes to do this for competitive purposes. Joint locks likewise carry a high risk of injury in athletes whose growth plates have not closed. **Accordingly, decision by submission is removed from the sport for this age group.**

2 In KK4 for U12 and below, ground awards are made by **hold-down**.

Continuation of hold-down	10 seconds or more	20 seconds
Decision	Waza-ari	Ippon (bout ends)

3 A "hold-down" means a state in which the athlete on top controls the back or side of the athlete below, who cannot escape. It is not established where the legs of the athlete on top are entangled by those of the athlete below. 4 Where the athlete below escapes, or where the 30 seconds under Article 47 elapse, the referee restands the athletes with "MATE". 5 The referee counts aloud at **one-second intervals** (Article 15(4)), declaring Waza-ari at 10 and Ippon at 20.

Article 55 (Takedowns) A takedown is regarded as an attack.

2 A kick in defence of a takedown is permitted **only as a single first technique**. 3 Where an athlete on the ground grips and attacks a standing opponent, the standing athlete may counter with upper-limb strikes (kicks limited to a single first technique).

Chapter 13 Decisions in the Karate Line

Article 56 (Ippon) Ippon is awarded in the following cases.

1. The opponent cannot rise within the count following a knockdown by strikes (Article 18)
2. The referee determines during the count or at the confirmation that the opponent cannot continue
3. The opponent is non-responsive to consecutive strikes to the head for **more than 6 seconds** (Article 22)
4. The opponent taps, calls out or loses consciousness under a choke or joint lock
5. Ippon by control (Article 50; undefended for 10 seconds or more)
6. Hold-down of 20 seconds (U12 and below, Article 54)
7. **Two Waza-ari** have been obtained (including combinations such as two knockdowns, a knockdown and a control, or two throws with finishes)
8. The opponent is disqualified under Penalty 3

Article 57 (Order of Decision) Where there is no Ippon, the result is determined in the following order. **The same order applies throughout the main bout, the extension and the second extension.**

- ① The athlete with more Waza-ari wins
- ② If equal, the athlete with fewer fouls wins (warnings do not count)
- ③ If still equal, an extension is held (mandatory). The extension is decided by ① and ②
- ④ If still equal after the extension, the flag decision (following Article) determines the result
In the final, a second extension is held, and if still equal, the flag decision applies

2 Waza-ari and fouls are counted cumulatively through the main bout, extension and second extension. 3 The deputy referee and the referee (the referee alone with a Simplified Panel) may declare the main bout drawn and send it to an extension. However, **the athlete with more Waza-ari can never lose**. 4 The flag decision must produce a winner. It may not end in a draw. **A second extension is held only in the final** (Article 13(2)), and no extension beyond it is held.

Stalling and lying-and-waiting (breach of the duty to progress) become a direct cause of defeat under ②. The sole weakness of unlimited ground fighting — that the athlete who does not move gains — is closed by the criteria for the decision itself.

Article 58 (Criteria for the Flag Decision) Where no difference arises from awards or fouls, superiority is assessed in the following order. **All advantages designated in these Rules as "not awarded" are assessed under this Article.** Judges are under a duty to remember and record them during the bout.

- ① Number of effective contact strikes to the head – those which would have caused damage without protection
- ② Threat of submission – the number and quality of attempts that finished, or that clearly forced the opponent to defend
- ③ Number of throws, off-balancings and takedowns
- ④ Control – positional superiority and its maintenance

Article 59 (Withdrawal, Disqualification and Treatment of Injury)

1. On disqualification for a prohibited act (Penalty 3), the opponent wins by Ippon.
2. On withdrawal before the bout, the opponent wins by Waza-ari.

2 Where an athlete cannot continue on account of injury, the case is treated according to its cause.

Cause	Treatment
Injury from a legitimate attack — from a strike or throw permitted by the Rules, or arising in the course of an exchange involving effective strikes, knockdowns or takedowns	The opponent wins (the attacking athlete being without fault)
Injury from a foul — from a clear foul such as a groin attack or a strike to the back of the head	The athlete committing the foul is disqualified and the opponent wins
Self-inflicted injury — failed breakfall, self-caused fall, or inability to continue through ill health	The athlete unable to continue loses

3 In the following cases no result is declared and the bout is a "No Contest".

1. **Accidental clash of heads**, where neither athlete is at fault and it arose unavoidably in the course of the exchange

2. **Accident by force majeure** — displacement of the mat, defect in the venue's equipment, accident caused by a third party
3. **Serious injury in the early stage of the bout**, before the bout is established or where there has been almost no effective exchange (at the discretion of the tournament headquarters)
- 4 The final determination under the preceding two paragraphs is made by **the chief referee and the tournament headquarters**.

No Contest exists for **accidents attributable to neither athlete**. Without it, an accidental clash of heads would make one athlete the loser.

Article 60 (Entry Requirements — Karate Line) An athlete may enter a Grade satisfying the following.

1. The age requirement for that Grade (Article 2) is met
 2. **An athlete entering KK3 or above must have competed at a tournament in KK2 or below**. This does not apply to a person whom the Federation recognises as equivalent on the basis of experience in another discipline or otherwise
 3. **An athlete entering KK4 must have competed in KK3, and an athlete entering KK5 must have competed in KK4**
- 2 An athlete may **not enter more than two Grades** at the same tournament. 3 The Federation may individually restrict the Grades an athlete may enter in order to ensure safety.
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Chapter 14 Composition of the Kickboxing Line

Article 61 (Composition of the Kickboxing Line) The Kickboxing Line is a standing discipline. **Punches to the face are permitted in all Grades.**

Grade	Name	Sub-name	Minimum age	Clinch	Knees to head	Gloves	Head	Duration	Decision
KB1	Light	First Match	6 yrs+	×	×	14 oz	Headgear	1:00 × 2R	First to 3 points
KB2	Standard	Amateur Kick	8 yrs+	×	×	14 oz	Headgear	1:30 × 2R	First to 5 points
KB3	Advance	THE FIGHT DAY	13 yrs+	×	○	14 oz	Headgear	1:30 × 2R (extension possible)	10-point
KB4	Expert	clinch permitted	13 yrs+	○ (5 s)	○	12 oz	Headgear	2:00 × 2R	10-point
KB5	Full	clinch permitted, bare-faced	18 yrs+	○ (5 s)	○	12 oz	bare-faced	3:00 × 2R	10-point

2 **The sub-names are the names of competitions held by member organisations of the Federation.** KB1 to KB3 are identical to those competitions in duration, method of decision and permitted techniques.

3 Accordingly, **athletes may move between member organisations' tournaments and Federation tournaments with the same preparation.** Records obtained at member organisations' tournaments are treated as equivalent in assessing Grade eligibility.

4 **The elements released in sequence are: knees to the head and the change of decision method (KB3) → clinch (KB4) → bare-faced (KB5).** Punches to the face are permitted in all Grades, and **elbows are prohibited in all Grades.**

5 **Throws, ground fighting and pulling an opponent down by a grip are prohibited.** 6 **"Knees to the head" means knee strikes to the face and head. They are permitted from KB3 upward.** They are prohibited in KB1 and KB2, where only knee strikes to the abdomen are permitted. 7 **Spinning techniques (spinning back kicks, back-fists, etc.) are permitted in all Grades.** Attacks to the back of the head remain prohibited (Article 25). 8 **Equipment: gloves, headgear (except KB5), knee pads, leather leg guards, mouthguard and groin guard (optional for women). Athletes of U12 and below fit a Face Guard to the headgear.**

8-2 **Glove weights are as follows.**

Grade and category	Weight
KB1, KB2 U14 and above, and the General Division	14 oz
KB1, KB2 U12 and below, over 40 kg	14 oz
KB1, KB2 U12 and below, over 30 kg up to 40 kg	10 oz
KB1, KB2 U12 and below, 30 kg or under	8 oz
KB3	14 oz
KB4, KB5	12 oz

8-3 The weight in the preceding paragraph is **the weight recorded at the weigh-in**, not the declared weight.

The boundaries coincide with the weight classes for U12 and below (-20/-25/-30/-35/-40/-45/+45 kg). Once the class is known the glove weight follows, and there is no need to weigh the athlete again at the equipment check.

Class	Gloves
-20, -25, -30	8 oz
-35, -40	10 oz
-45, +45	14 oz

The lighter glove for U12 and below is not there to reduce protection; it is there to fit the hand. A 14-ounce glove is too large for an athlete of around 20 kg: they cannot hold their guard and the arms drop. A dropped guard exposes the head in itself. **The bands are set by weight because, within the same U12 division, a 20 kg athlete and a 45 kg athlete differ by nearly twice in hand size.** KB3 and above admit only athletes of 13 and over, so no U12 category arises.

Changing KB1 from 16 to 14 ounces makes KB1, KB2 and KB3 identical in glove weight. The design of this Line — that athletes move between member organisations' tournaments and Federation tournaments with the same preparation (Article 61(3)) — now holds for gloves as well. That KB1 does not aim at knockout is preserved by **1 minute × 2R, first to 3 points, one knockdown ending the bout, and the prohibition of knees to the head and of the clinch.** 9 The lower garment may be kick pants or a dogi, freely chosen. Intervals are 1 minute.

Article 62 (KB1 Light / First Match) This Grade is for **those competing for the first time and does not aim at knockout.**

1. Punches to the face and **knee strikes to the abdomen** are permitted.
2. **Knees to the head, the clinch and elbows are prohibited.** Throws and ground fighting are prohibited.
3. Gloves are **14 ounces (8 or 10 ounces for U12 and below, by weight — Article 61(8-2)).**
4. The bout is **1 minute × 2R.** The decision is by **first to 3 points** (Article 66).
5. **On a knockdown, the bout ends without a count** (Article 23).

Article 63 (KB2 Standard / Amateur Kick) Raises the method of decision and the duration from KB1. The permitted techniques are identical to KB1.

1. Punches to the face, kicks and **knee strikes to the abdomen** are permitted.
2. **Knees to the head, the clinch and elbows are prohibited.**
3. Gloves are 14 ounces. The bout is **1 minute 30 seconds × 2R.**
4. The decision is by **first to 5 points** (Article 66).

Article 64 (KB3 Advance / THE FIGHT DAY) Adds **knees to the head** to KB2 and changes the method of decision.

1. Punches to the face, kicks, spinning techniques and **all knee strikes including knees to the head** are permitted.
2. **The clinch and elbows are prohibited.** The referee separates the athletes with "BREAK" the moment a grip is taken.
3. Gloves are 14 ounces. The bout is **1 minute 30 seconds × 2R,** with an extension permitted in tournament play.
4. The result is determined by **KO, TKO or decision.** The decision is by the **10-point system** (Article 67).

Article 65 (KB4 Expert / KB5 Full)

KB4 Expert — adds **the clinch** to KB3.

1. **The clinch and grappling in a standing position are permitted for up to 5 seconds.** On expiry the referee separates with "BREAK".
2. Knee strikes, punches and head-turning from the clinch are permitted.
3. **Throws and transition to the ground are prohibited. Elbows are prohibited.**
4. Gloves are 12 ounces. The bout is 2 minutes × 2R.

KB5 Full — removes the headgear from KB4.

1. All of KB4 applies, **bare-faced.** Gloves are 12 ounces.
 2. **KB5 is the only Grade in the Kickboxing Line contested bare-faced.** For this reason entry is limited to those 18 years and over.
 3. The bout is 3 minutes × 2R. **Elbows are not permitted.**
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Chapter 15 Scoring and Results in the Kickboxing Line

Article 66 (First-to-Points — KB1 and KB2) Decisions in KB1 and KB2 are by first-to-points. **KB1 is first to 3 points and KB2 first to 5 points.**

2 Points are awarded for **three consecutive clean hits, a clean counter, a clean kick to the head, and an effective knee strike to the abdomen.** 3 Where time expires, the athlete with more points wins; where equal, the athlete who has fought the more positively wins. 4 Scoring presupposes the wearing of headgear and is based on **light to moderate contact.**

Article 67 (10-Point System — KB3 to KB5)

1. At the end of each round, each Judge awards **10 points to the superior athlete and 9 or fewer to the other.**
2. A round with clear damage or multiple knockdowns is **10–8**; a wholly one-sided round is **10–7.**
3. **Deductions for fouls are processed within this scoring.**
4. At the end of all rounds, **the athlete with the higher total from the Judges wins.** A tie is resolved by a majority of the panel, which must produce a winner.

Article 68 (Results in the Kickboxing Line)

1. **KO** — unable to rise within the count following a knockdown, **two knockdowns** (including standing counts), or incapacity to continue following effective strikes.
2. **TKO** — the referee stops the bout on continued undefended strikes; the referee or tournament doctor stops the bout for injury or bleeding; the second throws in the towel.
3. **Decision** — where the result is not determined by the preceding items, under Article 66 or 67.
4. There is no draw, save where both athletes are knocked down simultaneously and neither rises within the count.

Article 69 (Entry Requirements — Kickboxing Line)

1. **An athlete entering KB3 or above must have competed in KB1 or KB2.** This does not apply to a person whom the Federation recognises as equivalent on the basis of experience in another discipline.
 2. **An athlete entering KB5 must have competed in KB4.**
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Chapter 16 Composition of the MMA Line

Article 70 (Composition of the MMA Line)

Grade	Name	Sub-name	Minimum age	Strikes to face	Ground-and-pound	Leg locks	Elbows	Head	Duration
MMA1	Light	no strikes to face	8 yrs+	×	×	×	×	Headgear	3:00 × 1R
MMA2	Standard	—	13 yrs+	○	×	×	×	Headgear	3:00 × 1R
MMA3	Advance	ground-and-pound	13 yrs+	○	○	○	×	Headgear	4:00 × 1R (final 3:00 × 2R)
MMA4	Expert	round system	13 yrs+	○	○	○	×	Headgear	3:00 × 2R
MMA5	Full	round system, bare-faced	18 yrs+	○	○	○	×	bare-faced	5:00 × 2R

2 **The elements released in sequence are: strikes to the face (MMA2) → ground-and-pound and leg locks (MMA3) → the round system (MMA4) → bare-faced (MMA5). Elbows are prohibited in all Grades.**

3 Decisions are by the **10-point system in all Grades** (Article 67 applied mutatis mutandis). 4 **No time limit is placed on ground fighting.** Stalling is dealt with under Article 72.

5 Restrictions applying to U12 and below

- **Chokes and joint locks are prohibited**, for the reasons set out in Article 54 (pressure on the neck may interrupt blood flow to the developing brain; joint locks carry high risk of injury before the growth plates close).
- Ground fighting for U12 and below is decided by **hold-down**. **A hold-down of 20 seconds wins by Ippon**, and a hold-down of 10 to under 20 seconds is treated as an advantage in scoring. The definition of a hold-down is as in Article 54.
- **MMA1 is for those 8 years and over.** Because strikes to the face, ground-and-pound, elbows and leg locks are all prohibited, the hazard remains at the level of Karate KK4.
- **MMA2 and above are for those 13 years and over.** Strikes to the face are released at MMA2, but the headgear does not cover the face and MMA gloves have a small striking surface.
- **No Face Guard is used in the MMA Line even for U12 and below** (Article 7(4)), because of the danger of force being applied to the neck in grappling.

Article 71 (Grade Provisions — MMA Line)

MMA1 Light

1. **Strikes to the face are not permitted.** Strikes to the body and legs, throws and ground fighting are permitted.
2. **Ground-and-pound, elbows and leg locks are prohibited.**
3. Effective ground techniques are **chokes and joint locks** (basic techniques such as the armbar, triangle choke and choke holds).

MMA2 Standard

1. **Strikes to the face are permitted.**
2. Ground-and-pound, elbows and leg locks are prohibited. Effective ground techniques are as in MMA1.

MMA3 Advance / ground-and-pound

1. **Ground-and-pound is permitted. Downward ground-and-pound is prohibited.**
2. **Leg locks are released**, limited to the **straight ankle lock, the Achilles lock and the kneebar** and the like.
3. The bout is 4 minutes × 1R. The final may be 3 minutes × 2R.

MMA4 Expert / round system

1. All of MMA3 applies. The bout is **3 minutes × 2R** under the round system.
2. Headgear is worn. Downward ground-and-pound and elbows are prohibited.

MMA5 Full / bare-faced

1. All of MMA4 applies, **bare-faced**. The bout is **5 minutes × 2R**.
 2. **MMA5 is the only Grade in the MMA Line contested bare-faced**. For this reason entry is limited to those 18 years and over.
 3. **Elbows are not permitted**. Downward ground-and-pound is prohibited.
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Chapter 17 Scoring and Results in the MMA Line

Article 72 (Stalling) Where for **20 seconds** neither athlete shows an effective attack, positional progress or an attempt at a submission, the referee declares "SUSUME".

2 Where a further 10 seconds pass without change, the referee restarts from standing with "MATE" and declares passivity.

Article 73 (Scoring and Results) Scoring is by the 10-point system (Article 67), assessed in the following order.

① Damage ② Takedowns ③ Time in control ④ Aggression

2 Results are as follows.

1. **KO** — unable to rise unaided following effective strikes, or loss of the will to fight.
2. **TKO** — the referee stops the bout on continued undefended strikes; stoppage for injury or bleeding; the second throws in the towel; **effective defence against ground-and-pound is lost** (MMA3 and above).
3. **Submission** — tap-out under a choke or joint lock, loss of the will to fight, loss of consciousness, or stoppage by the referee.
4. **Decision** — where not determined by the preceding items, by the total under the 10-point system.

Article 74 (Entry Requirements — MMA Line)

1. An athlete entering MMA4 or above must have competed in MMA1 to MMA3.
 2. An athlete entering MMA5 must have competed in MMA4.
 3. An athlete may **not enter more than two Grades** at the same tournament.
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Supplementary Provisions

1. These Rules were enacted by the International Combat Karate-do Federation on **3 August 2026** and came into force on the same date. **The current text is the 2nd Edition, in force from 5 August 2026.**
2. These Rules are subordinate to the "Combat Karate-do Tournament Regulations", under which administration, decisions and sanctions are executed.
3. On the enactment of these Rules, the three former regulations — the Competition Rules, the Competition Grade Regulations (Karate Line) and the Competition Regulations (Kickboxing and MMA Lines) — are consolidated into these Rules.
4. Amendment of these Rules is by decision of the President of the Federation.
5. The **record of amendments** is as follows. On each amendment the edition is advanced and the edition and date of entry into force are recorded.

Edition	In force from	Content
1st Edition	3 August 2026	Enactment
2nd Edition	5 August 2026	(1) Article 16-2 (Formats of Competition) inserted , providing for league format (points and draws) and exhibitions (2) points arising from fouls reduced in KB1 (Article 24(4)) (3) confirmation of the tournament doctor's presence (Article 30) (4) attacks from behind prohibited at every grade, and restrictions on pushing and hooking confined to grades that do not permit gripping (KK1, KB1–KB5) (Article 25(5)-2) (5) occasions of ground fighting in KK4 stated as twice in the main bout and twice in the extension (Article 47) (6) sundome control times changed from 8 s / 16 s to 5 s / 10 s (Article 50) (7) KB1 gloves changed from 16 oz to 14 oz, with 8 / 10 oz for U12 and below by weight (Articles 61(8-2) and 62)

6. The original of these Rules is in Japanese. Versions in other languages are translations for reference; **in the event of any inconsistency of interpretation, the Japanese version prevails.**
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Schedule 1 Comparison of the Three Lines

	Karate Line	Kickboxing Line	MMA Line
Grades	KK1–KK5	KB1–KB5	MMA1–MMA5
Grade names (common)	Light / Standard / Advance / Expert / Full	as left	as left
Nature of the Grade	Experience and technique (minimum age 4 / 8 / 13)	Experience and technique (minimum age 6 / 8 / 13 / 18)	as left
Attire	Dogi	Gloves + kick pants / dogi	MMA gloves + shorts (no dogi)
Head	Head Guard (KK1, KK2) / Men (KK3+)	Headgear (KB5 bare-faced)	Headgear (MMA5 bare-faced)
Classes	Physical Index (U14 and below by weight)	Weight	Weight
Awards	Waza-ari / Ippon, two levels	10-point (KB1, KB2 first-to-points)	10-point
If equal	Fewer fouls → flag decision	Total of round scores	Total of round scores
Elbows	Men of the General Division only	Prohibited in all Grades	Prohibited in all Grades
Strikes on the ground	Head non-contact; body and legs contact (parallel only)	(no ground fighting)	Ground-and-pound (MMA3+)
Knockdown	Ten count (common)	as left	as left
Fouls	Warning→P1→P2→disqualification (common)	as left	as left
Panel	Full (5) / Simplified (3) (common)	as left	as left
Entry conditions	Articles 9–11 (common)	as left	as left

Schedule 2 Karate Line

	KK1 Light	KK2 Standard	KK3 Advance	KK4 Expert	KK5 Full
Sub-name	full-contact karate	+ judo	+ face punches	+ jiu-jitsu	+ jiu-jitsu (unlimited, control)
Minimum age	4 yrs+	6 yrs+	8 yrs+	8 yrs+	13 yrs+
Hand techniques to face	×	×	○	○	○
Kicks to face	○	○	○	○	○
Knees to head	×	○	○	○	○
Head-butts	×	×	General only	General only	General only
Elbows	×	×	×	×	General men only
Gripping	×	10 s	10 s	10 s	unlimited
Throws	×	○	○	○	○
Ground fighting	×	×	×	30 s × 2	unlimited
Chokes / joint locks	×	×	×	U18, General only	○
Hold-down (U12 and below)	×	×	×	○	×
Sundome control	×	×	×	×	○
Head protection	Head Guard	Head Guard	Men	Men	Men
Chest Guard	all	all	women	women	women
Main／Extension	1:30／1:00	1:30／1:00	2:00／1:30	3:00／2:00	5:00／3:00

Schedule 3 Kickboxing Line

	KB1 Light	KB2 Standard	KB3 Advance	KB4 Expert	KB5 Full
Sub-name	First Match	Amateur Kick	THE FIGHT DAY	clinch permitted	clinch, bare-faced
Punches to face	○	○	○	○	○
Knees to head	×	×	○	○	○
Knees to abdomen	○	○	○	○	○
Spinning techniques	○	○	○	○	○
Clinch	×	×	×	○ (5 s)	○ (5 s)
Elbows	×	×	×	×	×
Throws / ground	×	×	×	×	×
Gloves	14 oz (U12 and below 8/10 oz)	14 oz (U12 and below 8/10 oz)	14 oz	12 oz	12 oz
Head	Headgear	Headgear	Headgear	Headgear	bare-faced
Duration	1:00×2R	1:30×2R	1:30×2R (extension)	2:00×2R	3:00×2R
Decision	first to 3	first to 5	10-point	10-point	10-point
Minimum age	6 yrs+	8 yrs+	13 yrs+	13 yrs+	18 yrs+

The sub-names of KB1 to KB3 are the names of competitions held by member organisations. Duration, method of decision and permitted techniques are identical, so that athletes may move between member organisations' and Federation tournaments with the same preparation. **Athletes of U12 and below fit a Face Guard to the headgear.**

Schedule 4 MMA Line

	MMA1 Light	MMA2 Standard	MMA3 Advance	MMA4 Expert	MMA5 Full
Sub-name	no face strikes	—	ground-and-pound	round system	round system, bare-faced
Strikes to face	×	○	○	○	○
Ground-and-pound	×	×	○	○	○
Leg locks	×	×	○	○	○
Elbows	×	×	×	×	×
Throws / ground	○	○	○	○	○
Head	Headgear	Headgear	Headgear	Headgear	bare-faced
Duration	3:00×1R	3:00×1R	4:00×1R	3:00×2R	5:00×2R
Minimum age	8 yrs+	13 yrs+	13 yrs+	13 yrs+	18 yrs+

Leg locks are released from MMA3 (straight ankle lock, Achilles lock, kneebar and the like). **Heel hooks, neck cranks and techniques twisting the spine are prohibited in all Grades.**

U12 and below may not apply chokes or joint locks; a hold-down of 20 seconds wins by Ippon (Article 70(5)).

Schedule 5 Awards in the Karate Line

Award	When given
Ippon (bout ends)	Unable to rise within the count / referee finds continuation impossible / non-response over 6 s / submission completed / control 10 s / hold-down 20 s (U12 and below) / two Waza-ari / opponent disqualified
Waza-ari (two make an Ippon)	Rose after a knockdown / standing count (referee's judgment) / non-response over 4 s to 6 s (bout not interrupted) / clear and forceful throw + sundome finish / control 5 s / hold-down 10 s
Not awarded (material for the flag decision)	Minor loss of balance / non-response of 4 s or less / throw, off-balancing or takedown alone / guard pass / taking mount or back / sweep / escape / submission attempt / time in control

Schedule 6 Counts and Times

All counting by the referee is aloud at one-second intervals (Article 15(4)).

Situation	Figure	Meaning
Knockdown	10 count	Unable to stand and guard by "9" → Ippon at "10"
Knockdown	mandatory 8 count	Counted to 8 even where the athlete rises earlier
Standing count	8	Waza-ari awarded
Non-response	over 4 s	Waza-ari. Bout is not stopped
Non-response	over 6 s	Ippon / TKO. Bout is stopped here
Sundome control	5 s	Waza-ari
Sundome control	10 s	Ippon
Control sequence	4+ strikes / 2 s	Four or more in one breath; count ends if interrupted for 2 s
Hold-down (U12 and below)	10 s / 20 s	Waza-ari / Ippon
Duty to progress (standing, KK5)	10 s + 5 s	SUSUME at 10 s, passivity after a further 5 s
Duty to progress (ground, KK5)	15 s + 10 s	SUSUME at 15 s, passivity after a further 10 s
Stalling (MMA Line)	20 s + 10 s	as above
Gripping (KK2–KK4)	10 s	"MATE" on expiry
Ground fighting (KK4)	30 s × 2	"MATE" on expiry; established at 5 s
Clinch (KB4, KB5)	5 s	"BREAK" on expiry

Schedule 7 Composition of the Panel and Validity of Decisions

	Full Panel (5)	Simplified Panel (3)
Officials in the area	Referee 1, Deputy Referee 1, Judges 3	Referee 1, Judges 2
Other officials	Auditor 1, Timekeeper 1	Timekeeper 1 (auditor may be omitted)
Tournaments	World championships, international, national	Regional, member organisations' tournaments
Validity of a decision	3 or more of 5	2 or more of 3
Continuation of measurement	2 or more of the 3 Judges maintaining the flag	2 or more of the Referee and Judges

Both are "a majority of the panel". The content of the competition rules applied is identical under either composition.

Schedule 8 Accumulation of Fouls

Warning → Penalty 1 → Penalty 2 → Penalty 3 (disqualification; opponent wins)

	Penalty 1	Penalty 2	Penalty 3
Karate Line	Not scored. Where Waza-ari are equal, fewer fouls wins	as left	Disqualification
Kickboxing KB2 (first to 5)	1 point to the opponent	2 points to the opponent	Disqualification
Kickboxing KB1 (first to 3)	no point given	1 point to the opponent	Disqualification
Kickboxing KB3–KB5, MMA (10-point)	1 point deducted	2 points deducted	Disqualification

- **Passivity is a prohibited act** and rides on this ladder (first = warning, second = Penalty 1, third = Penalty 2, fourth = disqualification).
- A **verbal caution** is instructional, is not counted among the fouls and is not recorded.
- Warnings do not affect the decision. Fouls and warnings accumulate from the main bout to the second extension.
- Where intentional or causing substantial damage, Penalty 1 or above may be imposed on first occurrence; where particularly serious, Penalty 2 or Penalty 3.

Combat Karate-do Competition Rules (ICKF Competition Rules), 2nd Edition Enacted 3 August 2026 / 2nd Edition in force from 5 August 2026 Published by the International Combat Karate-do Federation (ICKF) The original of these Rules is in Japanese. This English version is a translation for reference; in the event of any inconsistency, the Japanese version prevails.