

ATA Tournament Rules

2025-2026 Tournament Season

The 2025-2026 Tournament Season will end on **Saturday, April 25, 2026.**

ATA International reserves the right to make changes or adjustments to the rules & procedures as it sees fit during the competition season.

Sign up for our email alerts to get access and stay informed about the latest news, tournament information, and other important training events in your area. Event newsletter signup is here:

<http://eepurl.com/biRC4f>

“Unless it is expressly stated that something is permissible in these rules, it is illegal.”

If you are unsure about a particular situation, submit your question in writing to

ATACMRivera@gmail.com.

For questions regarding the new chevron test please contact Senior Master Rosa:

MasterRosa82@gmail.com

For a summary of rule changes, please review the [last chapter](#).

Click on a Table of Contents entry (below) to jump directly to that chapter.

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Tournament Officials and Their Duties

As in every successful organization, there is a specific and detailed chain of command that must be followed to achieve consistent success. Any person having a question concerning an aspect of a tournament should adhere to the chain of command listed below to obtain the answer:

1. Speak to the judge.
2. Ask your instructor.
3. Have one's instructor speak to the RTTL in one's area.
4. Have one's instructor speak to the Tournament Department at Headquarters.

International Chairman of Tournaments

The International Chairman of Tournaments (also known as the International Tournament Director) is the overseer of all aspects of tournaments. He/she is part of the ATA International Headquarters staff and is appointed by ATA International Headquarters. The Tournament Department is responsible for maintaining all tournament sanction paperwork, the oversight of tournament judging certification, the preparation for world and national tournaments, the arbitration of disputes, and rule revisions. The International Chairman of Tournaments is:

Chief Master Betsy Stevens – 8th Degree Black Belt – betsy.stevens@ataonline.com

Authority of the International Tournament Director

The International Tournament Director is the final arbiter of these rules. Any determination concerning the interpretation, applicability or necessary exceptions to the rules shall be made at the sole discretion of the International Tournament Director.

National Tournament Director

A National Tournament Director is appointed by the Grand Master of Songahm Taekwondo with the input of the International Chairman of Tournaments based upon their experience with the individual and any recommendations of the organization's seniors. This person is responsible for the general operations of World- and National tournaments and supplies a great deal of input on operating procedures and rule revisions. The ATA currently has one National Tournament Director and several Assistant National Tournament Directors.

USA – National Tournament Director (NTD) – LATAM Tournament Liaison

Chief Master Izel Rivera – 8th Degree Black Belt – ATACMRIVERA@gmail.com

USA – Assistant National Tournament Directors

Chief Master Jack Hornbuckle – 8th Degree Black Belt

Senior Master Michelle Pavlik – 7th Degree Black Belt

Europe – National Tournament Director

Ms. Carolina Santos – 5th Degree Black Belt

Latin America – National Tournament Director

Patricio Magaña – 5th Degree Black Belt

Director of Development –Team Sync and Team Demo

Chief Master Scott Skiles – 8th Degree Black Belt

Director of Development – Team Sparring

Senior Master Jesse Isaacs – 7th Degree Black Belt

National Tournament Staff

Senior Master Kevin Pavlik – 7th Degree Black Belt

National Tournament Staff – (Team and Social Media)Senior Master Tony Rosa – 7th Degree Black Belt**National Tournament Staff (Special Abilities – Chair)**Senior Master Susan Winter – 7th Degree Black Belt**National Dividing Coordinator**Chief Master Karla Capobianco – 8th Degree Black Belt**National Data Entry Manager**Master Andrea Jung – 6th Degree Black Belt**Tournament Department, Director of Services**

Ms. Janetta Pickett

Regional Tournament Team Leader

The Regional Tournament Team Leader (RTTL) for each region is appointed by the Grand Master in consultation with the International Chairman of Tournaments. This volunteer leadership position is based upon the International Chairman's experience with the individual, the person's willingness to volunteer, plus the recommendation of the seniors of the region.

The duties of this position vary according to the region in which they are involved. These duties include, but are not limited to:

- Approving the tournament sanction documents for his/her region.
- Verifying that tournament sites are adequate for a regional event.
- Planning and approving the competition schedule for regional tournaments.
- Organizing and running the regional tournaments including arbitration issues that may arise.
- Administering judging certification clinics and tests.
- The RTTL will send the original result sheets, packets (competitor slips) and tournament staff sheet to ATA Headquarters within seven business days of the event at the tournament host's expense.
- The RTTL will keep the copy of the result sheets for at least two years in case of association research needs.
- The RTTL will email data files within two business days of the tournament.

One should check with one's Instructor as to the region in which the student belongs.

The Regional Tournament Team Leaders for the 2025-2026 season are listed below:

Region	RTTL	Email Address:
101	Sr. Master Tony Rosa	masterrosa82@gmail.com
102A	Master Jim Wade	Jim_wade24@yahoo.com
102B	Mr. Mason Franks	masonfranks19@gmail.com
103A	Mr. Jonah Magness	igniteata@gmail.com
103B	Mr. Jacob Kadel	karatekidjacob@yahoo.com
104	Sr. Master Celestino Argudin (Co-RTTL) Master Andrea Jung (Co-RTTL)	ataregion104@gmail.com
105	Mr. Ray Baquero	RayBaquero@vigilancema.com
106	Master Tammy Parker (Co-RTTL)	indvatatp@gmail.com
	Master Beth Moreland (Co-RTTL)	Roblin8693@gmail.com
107	Master Nicholas Schafer	schafekwon@gmail.com
108	Master Jimmy Bell	jimmykbell@gmail.com
109	Ms. Christy Overby	c.overby@thriveata.com

Region	RTTL	Email Address:
110A	Sr. Master Susan Winter	srwinter@princetonata.com
110B	Mr. Cody Obropta	cobropta@gmail.com
111A	Sr. Master Julia Wegmann	jsbeddow@vahoo.com
111B	Master Melynda Cordry	fourkix@gmail.com
112	Mr. Kalob Cox	coxata@me.com
114	Master Matthew White	mwhite@triumphma.com
115	Ms. Courtney Thuston	info@limitlessmartialarts.net
116	Ms. Becky Hammond	rebeccaphammond@gmail.com
117	Sr. Master Michelle Pavlik	rct117@pickata.com
118	Master Thornton	mr.thornton@legendaryata.com
119A/B	Master John Meyer	jamever540@gmail.com
119C	Mr. Timothy Millard	sunshineridgebba@telus.net
119D	Master Joshua Schultz	119drttl@gmail.com

Assistant Regional Tournament Team Leader

Many regions have elected to ask for volunteers to serve as Assistant Regional Tournament Team Leaders or as part of the Regional Tournament Volunteer Staff. Two main reasons for this are:

- The enormous responsibility of running regional tournaments.
- To provide a training ground for future volunteer Regional Tournament Team Leaders.

Assistant Regional Tournament Team Leaders, whose names are suggested by the RTTL, are selected by the Grand Master in consultation with the International Chairman of Tournaments based upon the chairperson's experience with the individual, the person's willingness to volunteer, plus the recommendation of the seniors of the region.

The responsibilities of these assistants are assigned by Regional Tournament Team Leaders. One should check with their instructor as to the name of the Assistant Regional Tournament Team Leader and the Regional Tournament Volunteer Staff members for one's region.

Tournament Arbitrators

The position of Tournament Arbitrator is a temporary volunteer assignment during an individual tournament. It is not a permanent volunteer position. The International Chairman of Tournaments or the Regional Tournament Team Leader is responsible for supervising the event, and the arbitrators are under their guidance. If a tournament arbitrator is used for a tournament, they should be selected from the tournament staff. During National or World Tournaments, the International Chairman of Tournaments, the National Tournament Director and/or the Assistant National Tournament Directors will perform the duties of arbitrator. **Under no circumstances should a senior/master of a region take it upon his/herself to arbitrate a ruling in a ring.** He/She may ask for a ring to stop for the purpose of getting the Tournament Arbitrator to the ring.

An arbitrator is responsible for:

- Supervising assigned rings and for enforcement of tournament rules.
- He/she will make on-the-spot corrections and will assist in resolving problems in a diplomatic and respectful manner.
- If necessary, he/she may suggest to the RTTL to replace a judge for appropriate cause. **He/She may not replace a judge without first consulting the RTTL.**
- And all other duties as assigned.

Tournament Secretary / ATA Records / Data Entry Personnel

The tournament staff includes the Tournament Secretary, and Data Entry Personnel. These are volunteer positions to the RTTL and approved by the International Chairman of Tournaments. Their duties include, but are not limited to:

- Always staffing the control table until all results and all entry cards have been returned from all the rings.
- Entering all packets and results into the Tournament tracking system.
- Provide a check-out / check-in system to be certain that all packets have gone out and all results have been returned.
- Check all returned packets for complete and correct information.
- Packets that are incorrect and/or incomplete should be returned to the center judge of that division for corrections.
- If results are missing, tournament officials shall assume that the fault is that of the center judge rather than the secretary.
- Scan outside and content of packets into a PDF file to be sent to ATA HQ at the conclusion of the event.

Duties of ATA Seniors, Instructors, and Judges

General Guidelines

It is the duty of all adult black belts, regardless of rank or position, to earn appropriate judging levels and volunteer to judge at any ATA event they are attending. This rule applies to every black belt in attendance. One should check with his/her instructor for guidance on how to obtain appropriate chevrons.

All adult black belts shall arrive before the judge's meeting held at every regional event, attend the meeting, and remain at the tournament until the final "Bow-out" has been completed. Under special circumstances, they may request permission to leave early from the RTTL and the Senior Rank in attendance. It is the duty of every senior instructor to ensure that their junior instructors and black belts comply with this rule. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of any points earned at that event and repeatedly leaving early can lead to additional sanctions from the ATA's tournament department.

Senior instructors shall refrain from interfering in the competition. If anyone, especially a Senior Rank, feels there is a problem in the ring they shall notify the RTTL. He/she ***should NOT enter a ring*** or take any further action unless instructed. **Any person** may ask that a ring be suspended for a **rule arbitration**, and/or **safety issue** until the appropriate RTTL staff members can be notified. **During Team Sparring and Team Combat competition, only the ringside coach of the team may request an arbitrator.**

If a black belt does not follow proper protocol at the tournament, the following steps will be taken:

- For the first infraction the RTTL will speak to the competitor involved, discuss the proper expectations of an adult black belt, and notify the student's instructor.
- Any further occurrences will result in a letter being written to the student with copies to that student's senior instructor and the tournament department at National Headquarters advising them of the repercussions for future occurrences of the behavior. The possible consequences include, but are not limited to the following:
 - For adult black belts arriving late, the RTTL will determine if they will be allowed to compete. Black belts who are repeatedly late for tournaments and black belt meetings will, at the discretion of the RTTL, be denied permission to compete.
 - Those who leave early may forfeit **any or all** top ten points earned up to and including those earned on that date toward any championship program (state or world champion top ten.) **This decision on the number of points to be removed is at the sole discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments.**

Black Belt Meetings

All black belts aged 15 and above, ***eligible*** for chevrons and regardless of rank, are required to attend the Black Belt Meeting held prior to the beginning of each tournament. Any black belt mentioned above may be denied the right to compete if he/she does not attend this meeting. This decision is at the discretion of the RTTL in charge of that event. Junior Black Belts, aged 14 and under, are encouraged, but not required, to attend Black Belt Meetings.

The Regional Tournament Team Leader or his/her assistant is to coordinate a Black Belt judges' meeting prior to every regional tournament. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Address judging concerns and any rule clarifications.
- Make special announcements concerning the tournament.
- Make judging assignments.
- Begin the process of black belt competition assignments.

- Remind Judges of the safety compliance rules.

Dress Code at an ATA Tournament

Black belts are held to a higher standard, regarding their attire and conduct, due to their position in the organization and in the eyes of the color belt students. Black Belts in attendance (whether competing or not) should wear either an official traditional white dobok or certified instructor suit (see photo at right). Black belts in attendance should remain in this attire until they are dismissed from the event. Changing into street clothes is not acceptable.

Before and after their competition, color belts may wear regular “street” clothes, bearing in mind appropriate styles for the occasion. **Shorts, tank tops, etc. are never acceptable.**



Windbreakers and/or jackets may not be worn on top of the dobok while inside the competition venue.

The dress code for tournaments does ***not change*** for tournaments held over multiple days. **NO INSTRUCTOR** should arrive in street clothes so they can watch their students without helping the Tournament staff.

It is understood that younger junior black belts have trouble keeping nice clothes clean, and they will be given special consideration. Teenagers and above should be able to care for themselves and are expected to comply with the dress requirements. This dress code is in effect from the first appearance at the tournament site until away from the tournament site.

SPECIAL NOTE: There have been multiple occasions where black belts have been at a tournament, changed because they were “catching a flight soon” or “just here to watch my students”. If a black belt is not in the proper attire because they are leaving, they should exit the facility. A black belt should not be in attendance just to “watch”. While we all wish to see our child compete, it is not always possible. All RTTL’s have been asked to be as accommodating as possible for the parents of children under 12. For parents whose children are over the age of 12, fulfilling the judging needs of the tournament is the first priority of an RTTL.

Judging Levels and Certifications

The ATA takes great pride in the training of black belts to be judges at regional, district, national, and world tournaments. Black belts are trained over a period of time to be qualified as a Level 1 Corner Judge, a Level 2 Center Judge, or a Level 3 Chief Judge. Each competition ring (except ATA Tiger rings) will have three qualified black belts to judge the competitors. All certifications are valid for one year. This requirement is mandatory for all ranks 1st through 9th Degree Black Belt. **Permission to test will be withheld for those whose judging chevrons are not current.**

Note: Judges whose competition age is 17 or younger may not judge any division that contains competitors older than their age. This rule does not apply to adult judges.

******* When calling competitors to the ring, all competitors will be addressed by first and last name only. This will avoid any mistakes among competitors with similar first names. Please avoid any other characteristics or descriptions when calling competitors to the ring. *******

Level 1

The following rules and guidelines apply to a Level 1 judge:

- Must be at least 14 years of age, and a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt or higher.
- May corner judge color belt competitions.
- Must know all the following material:
 - All color belt form techniques.
 - One-steps for white, orange, and yellow belt ranks.
 - Be familiar with all the weapons allowed for traditional color belt weapons competition.
 - It is highly recommended that any person who desires to certify as a Level 1 Judge have prior tournament experience as a time- and score keeper.
 - Achieve a passing score on the chevron test of at least 80%.

A Level 1 judging chevron is a 1-inch-wide blue chevron to be put on the right sleeve of the uniform jacket. The chevron should be centered (on a diagonal) on the crease in the right edge 4 inches from the sleeve bottom and on the left edge (as you look at the uniform) 2 inches from the bottom of the sleeve. **Wearing of chevrons is not required, but highly recommended.**

Level 2

The following rules and guidelines apply to a Level 2 judge:

- Must be at least 16 years of age and a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt or higher.
- May corner judge or center judge for color belt rings.
- May corner judge for black belt rings up to his/her current rank.
- Must know all material required for a Level 1 judge, plus all color belt forms. Must know the black belt forms up to and including his/her current rank.
- Must be knowledgeable in the weapons included in the association's black belt curriculum for the ranks they are judging.
- It is highly recommended that any person who desires to certify as a Level 2 Judge have prior tournament experience as a Level 1 judge.
- Achieve a passing score on the chevron test of at least 80%.

A level 2 judging chevron is 1-inch-wide red chevron to be placed on the right sleeve of the uniform jacket. This chevron should be placed 1/4 inch above the blue chevron. **Wearing of chevrons is not required, but highly recommended.**

Level 3

The following rules and guidelines apply to a Level 3 judge:

- Must be at least 18 years of age and a 2nd Degree Decided Black Belt or higher.
- May corner judge or center judge for color belt rings.
- May corner judge black belt rings up to his/her current rank.
- May center judge black belt rings up to one rank lower than his/her current rank.
- Must know all material required for a Level 2 judge.
- It is highly recommended that any person who desires to certify as a Level 3 judge have prior tournament experience as a Level 2 judge.
- Passing score on the chevron test is 80%.

The level 3 judging chevron is 1-inch-wide black chevron to be placed on the right sleeve of the uniform jacket. This chevron should be placed 1/4 inch above the red chevron. **Wearing of chevrons is not required, but highly recommended.**

Obtaining Judging Level Certifications

The requirements to certify or recertify for any level of judging chevron are the same:

- Read the rules.
- Receive practical training from their instructor.
- Students must take and pass with a score of 80% or better, an online test for the appropriate judging certification level.
 - Currently there is only one test for chevrons, and the test is free.
 - The new chevron test is on the following website.
<http://ata-martial-arts-judging-chevron-test.teachable.com/p/ata-martial-arts-judging-certification-course>
 - Please contact Senior Master Rosa for any questions regarding this new format:
masterrosa82@gmail.com
- Have your instructor's signature verifying that the students have the curriculum knowledge required for that judging level.
- Attend and participate in a judging clinic which concentrates on the practical application of the rules and is taught by an RTTL, or the person designated to fill that role. Please bring a copy of the result sheet from the online test with your instructor's signature which verifies your curriculum knowledge.
- In 2025-2026, there will be 3 national chevrons clinics. The first one is scheduled for Saturday, September 6, 2025 @3pm CST (4pm Eastern). The format will be a National presentation, with an in-person clinic and local practical instruction. Check with [your RTTL](#) for details and locations.

At the completion of the chevron clinic, the RTTL will forward all passing scores via mail, fax or email to the tournament department at International Headquarters. At that time, the student may order, through their instructor, the appropriate chevron. The RTTL will not be responsible for collecting money or ordering chevrons for judges. All judging chevron clinics are at no cost to the student.

The score will be valid for one year. Even though the test site will reset after the Super 20, in July every year, your results are valid for one year after you take it.

Only one level of judging chevrons can be obtained in any 30-day period.

Special Notes

- Attending the black belt meeting the morning of a tournament **WILL NOT** fulfill the judging clinic attendance requirement for certification or recertification.
- No black belt or Senior Rank should ask or imply that a RTTL should certify or recertify a judge for any level without that person attending a seminar and taking the test regardless of rank or experience.
- Any student, regardless of rank, who, with their instructor's permission, desires to attend a regional judging certification clinic for practical application of rules is permitted to participate.
- All levels of certification must attend a clinic to renew their judging chevrons.
- Current Level 3 chevrons are required for all people requesting to test for 4th degree and above.

Responsibilities of Judges

During competition, judges will:

- Remain at their assignment or assigned ring until relieved or replaced by the RTTL or their assistant.
- Refrain from showing prejudice regardless of the students' school or region.
- Recognize that small differences in form technique demonstrated by students from other schools and regions are natural and to be expected.
- Be courteous and respectful to all competitors in both word and deed.
- Ensure the safety and positive experience of every competitor. Ensure that each competitor abides by the official tournament rules.
- Conduct each aspect of competition in the proper order. (See Order of Events)
- Award the correct winners in each division his/her tournament award (trophy or medal).
- Complete the required paperwork for each completed division and return that signed paperwork to the Regional Tournament Team Leader or their assigns.
- Be responsible for the areas surrounding their ring. In the interest of safety, the judges should make sure that spectators allow ample room around each ring for competition to progress unimpeded. Judgment as to what determines ample room is based on the type of competition taking place.
- ***Judges who find difficulty in resolving a given problem should ask the Regional Tournament Team Leader or whomever she/he assigns for rulings.***

Judging Ethics

At any ATA tournament, demonstrations of prejudice, lack of attentiveness in the ring, etc., shall be cause for warnings and reprimands from tournament officials and the International Chairman of Tournaments. The use of cell phones, Bluetooth devices, etc. used for the purpose of communication with non-tournament staff, such as sending and receiving text messages, receiving calls, etc. is strictly prohibited for judges as well as scorekeepers and timekeepers during the running of their ring. Failure to follow this rule will subject the offender to immediate disciplinary action by the RTTL. Additional disciplinary actions are determined by the International Chairman of Tournaments and may include mandatory suspension from all official activities, including judging, participating in tournaments and/or testing for two years.

JUDGES SHOULD NOT JUDGE THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS!

If a member of a judge's immediate family (SPOUSE, SIBLING AND/OR CHILD) is sent to a ring that they are judging, the judge should inform the RTTL, and request to change rings with another judge to avoid the impression of favoritism.

A judge's focus should be entirely on the competitors in their ring. Any such warnings shall become part of the judge's permanent record. **Three warnings within a one year period of time shall incur disciplinary actions to be brought forth by the International Chairman of Tournaments.**

Uniforms, Safety Equipment and Weapons

Traditional White Dobok

An Official ATA white uniform is acceptable for all tournament events.

An official traditional white uniform **MUST**:

- be a white cross-over style top with matching white pants.
- be in good repair (no holes or frayed edges).
- have an official ATA patch.

An official traditional white uniform **MAY include** the following:

- School patch. **Any school or club patch must be for the school where the student is currently enrolled.**
- Karate Kid or Tiny Tiger Victory patch. (School patch is permitted on top of Victory patch if it is round and the same size.)
- ATA Tiger animal patch.
- Official ATA program patches:
 - Black Belt Club
 - Master Club
 - Leadership Club
 - ATA Legacy Patch
- Uniform Lettering:
 - If the Dobok is lettered, that lettering on the back of the uniform top must comply with ATA standards.
 - All State, District & World Champion uniforms must be ordered through, and fulfilled by, World Martial Arts to ensure validity.
- No alterations of years or patches is allowed. Use of an altered year or patch on a uniform will nullify the awarding of any byes in sparring or combat sparring.
 - This is a question of integrity and would be reported to the International Tournament Director.
- 4th Degree Black Belts or higher will wear a 1" black stripe on the side of each pant leg.
- Undershirts are permitted for any member (male or female) but must be plain white. Undershirts are NOT a requirement for females, although a plain white garment is encouraged.
- Other patches allowed are:
 - S.W.A.T.
 - D.E.L.T.A.
 - A-Team.
 - President's Council on Physical Fitness.
 - Demo Team.
 - Competition Team.

- Blue stars (round patches) used to measure accomplishments set within school or club can be utilized with or without a collar stripe.

- Leadership Collar Stripes:

Collars may be worn by a student in the leadership program only if and when the student has received a letter from ATA International Headquarters stating that they have been accepted into the Leadership Program.

SPECIAL NOTE:

A competitor is NOT in the leadership program until they have received the official approval letter from headquarters. Even if you have purchased and received a uniform, the competitor is not officially in the leadership program until the official letter has been sent and received from headquarters. Date of entry to the leadership program **will not be back-dated.**

- Red/White/Blue Collar for leadership students.

- Instructor Collar Stripes:

Instructor Collar Stripes shall be worn by Instructors only when they have received a letter from ATA International Headquarters informing them of their successful promotion to that collar level.

- Red (All students, all belt ranks)
- Black/Red (All students, all belt ranks).
- Black/Red/Black (All students, all belt ranks).
- Solid Black (Black Belts only, minimum age of 18).

- An official traditional uniform **MUST NOT** have the following:

- School patch/logo/school name on the back of the uniform (see official picture on page 5)
- A V-neck pullover top.
- Stripes, patches, pockets, or anything else not listed above.

It is the ATA Licensee's decision as to the number of patches allowed on a uniform for his/her school. A traditional dobok IS REQUIRED to be worn by all competitors and judges during traditional forms, weapons, sparring, and combat weapons sparring competition at ATA sanctioned tournaments. It MAY also be worn by competitors involved in ATA-Xtreme forms, ATA-Xtreme weapons, creative forms, creative weapons, and all types of Team competitions. (All members of a team must wear the same uniform.)

ATA Creative / ATA-Xtreme Uniform

The official ATA Creative/ Xtreme Black Uniform – Must have the Xtreme logo on the back and Songahm Taekwondo in Korean calligraphy on the leg of the pants. This uniform may be worn by competitors or judges involved in either ATA-Xtreme or ATA-creative events and team synchronized form competition or team demo competition (as long as all members of the team are wearing the same uniform). It may not be worn in traditional forms, weapons, sparring, or combat weapons sparring events regardless of whether or not the events are held on the same day. This uniform may not be altered in any way, including but not limited to rolled sleeves.

The New Adidas Black Uniform, used for Creative/Xtreme competitions, may be altered to shorten the sleeves as long as the altered sleeve reaches the midpoint of the competitor's forearm, meaning the overall length of the sleeve is no shorter than the midpoint between the bend of the wrist and the bend of the elbow. If the sleeve is not altered, the competitor may roll the sleeve under one time.

SPECIAL NOTE: If, in the opinion of the center judge, the altered sleeve does not reach the midpoint of the forearm, the competitor will be asked to change back into his/her white traditional uniform. At this time, the RTTL should be notified by the center judge. Failure to change uniforms will result in the competitor being removed from competitions. Any fees paid for this competition will be forfeited by the competitor.

The following are ATA tournament approved uniforms that can be worn for Creative and Xtreme competition. These uniforms may not have team lettering on the back of the uniform.

- Black XMA Middleweight Uniform
- Red XMA Program Uniform
- Red, Black, or Blue ATA Adidas Open Uniform
- Red, Black, or Blue ATA Adidas Team Uniform (stripes on the sleeves)

Changing Uniforms

Traditional Events

- You may change uniform top before sparring and/or combat, provided that it is not at ringside (use a restroom or locker room) and no extra time will be granted.

EXAMPLE:

A competitor may go to change the dobok top for sparring/combat but he/she returns after the byes have been given. This competitor forfeits the bye, even if they would have qualified for a bye. The competitor chooses to leave the ring at the risk of losing the bye.

Creative/Xtreme Events

- The only instance in which time is given for a uniform change is between traditional competition and creative/xtreme competition. Before the start of creative and xtreme, a competitor will be given 5 minutes to change uniform and will compete with this uniform until the end of creative/extreme. Competitors may not change clothes at ringside. Those changing clothes should do so in a restroom or locker room and return promptly.
- The center judge may extend the time granted for changing clothes.
 - Center Judges will take into consideration the age/rank of the competitors in making this decision.

Team Sparring / Combat Uniform

Teams may elect to wear one of the new Adidas team uniforms. Uniforms may have team names, participant names and team titles sewn by WMA on the backs of the uniforms. The team uniforms come in the colors blue, black, red, or white. All Team members must be in the same color uniform. **Team uniforms (with lettering on the back) MAY NOT be worn in traditional, creative, or xtreme competitions.**

ATA Tiger Uniform

There are two different traditional uniforms a tiger competitor may wear: the traditional uniform or the ATA Tiger uniform. Only students competing as a tiger may wear the ATA Tiger uniform. The ATA Tiger uniform may not be worn in a junior division.

Belts

For Tiger competitors, only the following colors and markings are permitted:

- The ATA Tiger belts
- Traditional color belts – see below

For color belts, only the following colors and markings are permitted:

- White, orange, yellow, camo, green, purple, blue, brown, red, red/black, black. (Some licensees use plain black belts instead of red/black belts for recommended black belt ranks.)
- “Knowledge Stripes” (color belts only) MUST be black and are limited to a maximum of 3 stripes. Color belts MAY include either a black or gold stripe the length of the belt.
- 1BR Black Belts MAY wear full black belts that do not have embroidery.
- NO other belt colors, combinations, or stripe colors are allowed.

For black belts, the following rules for markings apply:

- All embroidery MUST be gold.
- If a rank indicator is used, it MUST be the bar or star patch from World Martial Arts.
- Student’s name and rank MUST both be on the same end of the belt (left end when worn).
- Black Belts MUST NOT have “Knowledge Stripes”.

Tang Bagee Pants

Tang Bagee (“hakama”) **all black pants (including the pleats)** may only be worn when competing with the Gum Do weapon. The judges will not pause the ring for a competitor to put on Tang Bagee pants. Pants should touch the top of the competitor’s instep. **The belt should be worn over the pants.**

Shoes

The only shoes acceptable to wear with any ATA uniform, traditional, creative or xtreme, are those that are predominantly **white or black** sports shoes. ATA sliders are acceptable. Other color sports shoes, flip-flops, sandals, etc. are not acceptable.

For judges in their dobok, you must be barefoot or wearing athletic shoes. **ATA sliders are not acceptable footwear for judges who are wearing a dobok.**

Competitor Appearance During Competition

The following is a guide for proper appearance while competing at an ATA Tournament:

- During the competition, competitors will wear clean, pressed ATA uniforms.
- A competitor may roll under the sleeves of the traditional white uniform only one time and may not roll under the sleeves of the black creative and extreme uniform.
- An ATA patch is required on each white uniform for competitors excluding white belts.
- All other lettering, striping, and patches must be in good repair and positioned according to ATA guidelines.
- NO JEWELRY is allowed once a student puts on their uniform or during competition. This includes watches, rings, earrings, or other piercing (male or female), necklaces, etc. Wedding rings may be worn if taped or the stone turned toward the palm as well as medical bracelets and mandated religious medals. This is for the safety of the wearer as well as other competitors. Master Instructors are allowed to wear their Master's ring while not competing.
- Fingernails and toenails should be trimmed for safety as well.

Required Safety Gear

The following safety gear is required by all competitors in a sparring competition including combat weapon sparring:

- Dipped foam or vinyl covered hand pads (all finger joints must be covered when a fist is made).
- Dipped foam or vinyl covered foot pads (back of heel and all toes must be covered).
- Dipped foam or vinyl covered martial arts style foam headgear with attached plastic face shield (full coverage).
- Attached face shield MUST be one of these six models:
 - ATA Champion face shield. (The Champion face shield is not allowed for combat weapon sparring competition)
 - Dyna Rival face shield
 - ProForce Lightning Clear face shield
 - Ventilator face shield
 - Universal face shield
 - Tiger Claw face shield
- Black martial arts style chest protector with an ATA logo. It must cover all ribs and sternum and be worn over the uniform top.
- Mouthpiece (even while wearing the mandatory face shield).
- Groin protector (cup *and* supporter) for males (NO age exceptions! MUST be worn under uniform pants).
- No additional stickers, decorations or adornments may be added to the required safety gear.

All gear MUST be in good repair. (Torn, taped, or worn-out gear will NOT be allowed). ***No one, including instructors or parents, can give permission to alter the rules pertaining to the use and wearing of safety gear.*** A competitor who does not have all of his/her proper equipment may borrow from

another competitor or purchase the equipment at the event if possible. However, it is not required that one student lend another student his/her gear.

Color of Safety Gear

The following guidelines apply to the color of safety gear:

- Color belts MUST wear either red or black safety gear.
- Black belts MUST wear BLACK safety gear.
- Blue is NOT APPROVED for tournaments.
- Hand, foot and head gear MUST match in color.
- All gear MUST have the ATA logo on it.

If a competitor has mismatched safety gear or gear of the wrong color, the student will be allowed to compete. It should be brought to the attention of the RTTL and a note made on the outside of the ring packet. The RTTL will address the issue with the student's instructor. That day, a competitor with illegal or mismatched gear may borrow from others in the ring so they may compete. *If, after consulting with the competitor's instructor, the student continues to arrive at tournaments with incorrect gear, they may be prevented from competing.*

Here is an example of the new Pro-Line black- and red sparring gear:



Types of Weapons

ATA competition weapons include the following:

- Bahng Mahng Ee
 - Wooden type is allowed for Black Belts, but not for Color Belts.
- Ssahng Jeol Bong
- Jahng Bong
- Ssahng Nat (This is a double weapon only and may not be used as a single weapon during any type of competition)
- Jee Pahng Ee (The rubber cap on the end must be removed)

- Gum Do –
 - No metal swords
 - Wooden swords are allowed for Black Belts, but not for Color Belts.
- Oh Sung Do –
 - This is a single weapon only.
 - OSD flags are recommended to balance the sword properly.
 - Flags should be 12-inch squares and colors should be yellow, red, and blue.
- Sam Dan Bong

Style of Weapons

During weapons competition, there are three styles of weapons that may be used.

- ATA Protech safety weapons. These weapons may be black, blue, or red in color.
- ATA Xtreme weapons, including X5 weapons.
- Gum Do Swords, which have three classifications:
 - ATA Protech safety sword (plastic sword)
 - ATA Xtreme sword
 - ATA branded sword is an advanced Protech training sword.

These are exempted from classification:

- Jahng Bong
- Jee Pahng Ee

Note:

- The “collapsible” Ssahng Nat are considered Protech safety weapons and may be used.
- An ATA approved Combat Bahng Mahng Ee may **not** be used in traditional forms competition.
- There are no restrictions on the size or length of weapons. **Consult with your instructor about the appropriate or best fitting length of weapon given the competitor's height.**

Adornment Restrictions

Decorating a weapon is defined as:

Putting anything on the weapon that was not included in the manufacturing of the weapon. Using two weapons that are identical except for the color falls under the category of decorated weapons.

Altering the weapon is defined as:

Changing the weapon from its original size, shape, or form by any means.

The following rules apply:

- For traditional weapons competition (all ranks),
 - The weapon must not be **decorated** in any fashion.
 - The weapon must not be **altered** in any fashion.
- For Creative & ATA-Xtreme weapons competition (all ranks)
 - The weapon **MAY** be **decorated**. If in the opinion of the RTTL, the decorations alter the weapon, the weapon will not be allowed to be used in competition. The decision of the RTTL is final.

- Using two weapons that are identical except for the color falls under the category of **decorated** weapons. Therefore, it is allowed in creative and xtreme weapon competition, but not in traditional weapons competition.
 - The weapons must not be **altered** in any fashion.
- **Grip tape** is allowed on all weapons but must not alter the shape or size of the weapon. This includes combat weapons.
- Drying agents are allowed to be used.
- Weapons used in competition will not have “knowledge” stripes on them.

Competition Opportunities

Tournament Classifications

The ATA provides many opportunities for members to compete at a variety of levels. Currently, there are five classifications of tournaments.

The classifications are:

- **Class AAA Tournament:** Super 20 hosted by the Grand Master of Songahm Taekwondo in Phoenix, AZ.
- **Class AA Tournament:** Fall- and Spring Nationals hosted by the Grand Master of Songahm Taekwondo and the Pan American Championships, hosted by Latin America Licensees. Check (atamartialarts.com) for the date of these events each year.
- **Class A Regional Tournament:** Regional Tournaments hosted around the country by qualifying ATA Licensees, the European Championships, and the Asia Pacific Championships.
- **Class B Regional Tournament:** Regional Tournaments hosted around the country by qualifying ATA Licensees.
- **Class C Tournament:** In-School Tournaments hosted by an individual ATA Licensee.

Competition Events

There are currently 8 different competitive events in which a student can compete at every ATA sanctioned tournament. Those events are:

1. Traditional Forms
2. Traditional Weapons
3. ATA-Combat Weapons Sparring
4. Traditional Point Sparring / Traditional One-Steps
5. ATA-Creative Forms
6. ATA-Creative Weapons
7. ATA-Xtreme Forms
8. ATA-Xtreme Weapons

There are currently two team competitions which will be held at every ATA sanctioned Regional, National, or World tournament. Those events are:

1. Team Sparring
2. Team Combat Sparring

At National and World events there are two team creative/xtreme competitions. Those events are:

1. Team Sync
2. Team Demo

Participants are not required to compete in all aspects of competition. The student should consult his/her instructor to determine the extent of his/her participation at every event. An instructor or judge should not force or intimidate students into something in which they are not confident.

Competition Divisions and Ring Assignments

Permission / Eligibility to Compete

THIS APPLIES TO ALL STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF RANK

To compete in any sanctioned Songahm Taekwondo event, a competitor must comply with all of the following requirements:

1. Be a member in good standing of the ATA.
 - a. “In good standing” means that any member regardless of rank belt or leadership collar, must have a current membership with the organization.
 - b. Competitors should check their personal profile online to monitor their expiration date. If your membership has expired, **NO POINTS YOU EARNED WILL BE POSTED** online by the tournament department. Those competitors will have the same 30-day period after the results are posted for that tournament to rectify the issue or forfeit the points they would have earned. It is to be treated like any other point correction. (See the process below, [here](#).) It is the responsibility of the competitor, or his/her guardian, or his/her instructor to check the profile of the competitor and update their ATA membership. For questions on how to find one’s profile, members may send an email to tournaments@ataonline.com requesting help and include a contact phone number. A member of the tournament department will call you to help as soon as possible upon receiving the request.
2. Be a member and train regularly at an ATA-licensed school or club.
3. Have his/her instructor’s permission to attend and compete.
4. Competitors may only compete in ONE tournament per weekend.

Failure to comply with any of the four requirements listed above will result in the competitor being denied the opportunity to compete or, if discovered after the completion of the event, any points or place winnings will be nullified. These eligibility requirements are applicable to **all** competition events.

Competition Division Definitions

Divisions are classified as either “**CHAMPION**” or “**RECREATIONAL**”.

Champion Divisions are a higher competitive level and provide the competitor opportunities to earn points towards State titles as well as eligibility toward District- and World Tournament of Champion titles. The first, second, and third place winners, who are registered in the OFFICIAL ATA LEADERSHIP / LEGACY Program at ATA HQ, will be eligible to earn points, depending upon the tournament classification, and other guidelines. See [Champion Programs](#), below.

Recreational Divisions (formerly referred to in previous seasons as NOVICE divisions) do not award points, regardless of the competitors age, rank, or status in the ATA Official Leadership/Legacy Program. All Tiger Divisions are Recreational divisions. See [Recreational Black Belt Divisions](#), below, for additional guidelines.

Members can check their Program Status by viewing their ATA Member Profile at www.atamartialarts.com.

Competition Rank

All Rank Competitors

For all Regional, National, and World tournaments, a student is considered to have earned their rank when **either** of the following criteria have been met:

- Rank testing is submitted and processed by the ATA School Licensing Department.
- The student is given his/her new rank belt by their instructor.

For the District Championships, the competitor's rank/belt is determined by their Official Rank/Belt listed at ATA HQ by May 15th of the current tournament season. See [District Championships](#) for additional related guidelines.

Color Belt Competitors

Color belt competitors must wear the proper belt and compete in the division for the rank that they currently hold regardless of how long they have held that rank. A student should take pride in what they have earned and be honored to wear the correct belt. If the student has been awarded a rank at their school, they should wear that belt even if the instructor has not "officially" sent in the results to headquarters.

Example: A new camo belt is not comfortable with free sparring; he/she may choose to only compete in the form and/or weapons portion of the competition. He/She should not wear their yellow belt.

1st Degree Recommended Black Belts may choose to either compete with either Color Belts or with Black Belts at any tournament.

At each tournament, Recommended Black Belt students have a choice to participate as a Color Belt or as a Black Belt but not as both. If a student participates as a Black Belt for one event in a tournament, then they must participate as a Black Belt for all events at that tournament. Conversely, if a student competes as a Color Belt for one event in a tournament, then they must compete as a Color Belt for all events at that tournament, for both Traditional and Creative/Xtreme. If a Recommended Black Belt competes in a Color Belt Division, his/her TOP TEN State or World points for that tournament will not be moved to a Black Belt Division.

Special Note

If a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt competes at a tournament in the 1st Degree division, he/she may also compete in Team Sparring/Team Combat. If he/she competes as a Color Belt at that tournament, he/she is not eligible to compete in Team Sparring/Team Combat at that tournament. (See Team Sparring/Team Combat Rules, [below](#).)

SECTION I: REGULAR TOURNAMENT SEASON

The following guidelines apply if a 1st Recommended Black Belt competes in a 1st Degree Black Belt Decided division:

A. FORMS

- For Traditional Forms Competition, he/she may perform either the Choong Jung 2, Choong Jung 1, or In Wha 2.
- He/she may not compete with a lower belt form nor with the 1st Degree form, Shim Jun.

B. WEAPONS

- For traditional weapons competition, he/she may compete with one of the 5 approved 1st Degree Decided Weapons forms or a weapon from the new color belt weapons curriculum that corresponds with the 1st Degree black belt approved weapons.

SECTION II: DISTRICTS AND TOC COMPETITION

The following guidelines apply to a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt who has qualified for a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt ring:

A. FORMS

- He/she MUST compete with the form Shim Jun during Districts and TOC Competition.

At Districts, and the Worlds “Tournament of Champions” competition, the 1st Degree Form, Shim Jun, must be performed to earn a World Champion Title in the 1st Degree Division. No color belt form can be performed at Districts, or the Worlds “Tournament of Champions”.

B. WEAPONS

- He/she MUST perform a weapon from the 1st Degree Decided Black Belt curriculum when competing for a title. Those weapons forms are: Single Ssahng Jeol Bong, Single Bahng Mahng Ee, Oh Sung Do, Gum Do, or Mid-range Jahng Bong

C. RANK

- The competitor must earn their 1st Degree Decided Black Belt for post-season competition (Districts and TOC).

In order to compete at Districts and/or Tournament of Champions in the 1st Degree division, the competitor must earn his/her 1st Degree Black Belt Decided, **and it must be recorded at ATA HQ by May 15th of the competition season.** Failure to meet this requirement will result in forfeiture of all State/World Top Ten Points, thus making the competitor ineligible for Districts and/or World TOC competitions as a black belt competitor.

Black Belt Competitors

Competitors that are 1st Degree Decided Black Belt rank or higher who are planning to test for a higher rank during the current tournament season, **MAY** opt to compete in the next higher rank division. If a black belt chooses to compete in a higher rank division, **and qualifies to compete at Worlds in the Tournament of Champions (TOC),** he/she must obtain the Decided Rank of that division, and compete with one of the forms of that division at the TOC. **Failure to meet this requirement will result in forfeiture of that person’s eligibility to compete in the TOC.**

See [State](#) and [World](#) Champion programs, below, for additional information.

For 2nd Degree Recommended Black Belts competing up, in the 2-3 Degree division:

- During the regular season they can perform Shim Jun in the 2-3 Degree division.
- The Decided rank must be earned and recorded at ATA HQ by May 15th of the competition season.
- When going for a title (District and TOC) they must perform the 2nd Degree Decided form: Jung Yul.

District Competition has specific rank rules and dates. Please see the [District Championship](#) section for exact information.

Competition Age

A competitor's "competition age" is determined by their age as of December 31st of the tournament season.

EXAMPLE: A competitor's birthday is September 1, 2010. For the 2025-2026 season, that competitor is 15 for the entire season, including the post-season tournaments held in June and July.

The "competition age" will determine the division in which they should compete throughout the entire tournament season.

- Competitors are responsible for making sure they are in the correct division for their age.
- Competitors should consult with their instructor if they have any questions regarding "competition age".

General Procedure for Creating Divisions

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

Division breakdowns are handled by the Regional Tournament Team Leader or his/her assigns. The one rule that is standard is that divisions at regional tournaments will be limited to no more than 12 competitors. If a ring is divided and a late competitor arrives, the ring will not be re-split.

The following procedure will be used to assign competitors to divisions for regional tournaments:

- The competitors will be called to the "staging area", which is usually separate from the main competition floor. Some tournaments may use a specific ring.
- The divisions will be made according to the number of competitors in each of the age and rank groups.
- NO ONE (Competitors, Parents, ATA Seniors, or Spectators) will attempt to influence the Regional Tournament Team Leader (or his/her assigns) in the forming of divisions.
 - This includes asking the RTTL to make adjustments to competition ring assignments to accommodate their travel schedule.
 - Color belt ages and ranks may be called all at once. However, the RTTL will then arrange the competitors by their division. A call from white to red belts DOES NOT constitute a division. This is for efficiency's sake. The divisions will be formed after the main call.

Black Belt Divisions

The divisions for the black belts are set by the International Tournament Department and are designed to give everyone a fair chance. Divisions are based on the gender, age, and rank of the competitors. At the conclusion of each tournament season, the International Chairman of Tournaments will evaluate the number of competitors in each division and determine if any changes are to be made for subsequent tournament seasons.

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

The current Black Belt divisions for individual competition in all events are:

Junior Boys

8 & under	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degrees	
9 & 10	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
11 & 12	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
13 & 14	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
15, 16 & 17	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees

Junior Girls

8 & under	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degrees	
9 & 10	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
11 & 12	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
13 & 14	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees
15, 16 & 17	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees

Adult Men

18 - 29	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
30 - 39	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
40 - 49	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
50 - 59	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
60 - 69	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degree		4 th & 5 th degree
70 - Up	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degree		4 th & 5 th degree

Adult Women

18 - 29	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
30 - 39	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
40 - 49	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
50 - 59	1 st degrees	2 nd & 3 rd degrees	4 th & 5 th degree
60 - 69	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degree		4 th & 5 th degree

70 - Up	1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd degree	4 th & 5 th degree
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Guidelines for Splitting or Combining Champion Black Belt Rings

At National and World events, the national tournament staff will try to adhere to the divisions listed above. However, even at National / World events, divisions may be combined depending on the number of registered competitors. On a regional level, it is often difficult to strictly follow these divisions. On a regional level, black belt divisions MAY be combined. The Regional Tournament Team Leader (or their assigns) can combine divisions where necessary. They will follow the guidelines given to them by the International Chairman of Tournaments.

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

Guidelines:

- For black belts, genders may not be combined.
- Junior black belt **age divisions** must never be combined.
- Junior black belt **rank groups** can be combined when one or more “rank groups” within that age division does not contain at least five competitors. This type of grouping is only applicable for competitors of the same age and gender. Consider the following examples:
 - **Example 1:** Junior Boys 13-14 1st Degree has only 1 competitor, and Junior Boys 13-14 2/3-Degree has 5 or more competitors. Combine for one ring of 13-14 1st / 2nd / 3rd Degrees.
 - If the combined ring has 13 or more competitors, divide at random.
 - Recommended Black Belts choosing to compete in a 1st Degree Decided ring are included in this scenario and should be made aware of this possibility by their instructor.
 - **Example 2:** One rank group has 2 to 4 competitors, and one rank group has 5 or more competitors. Do not combine.
 - **Example 3:** Both 1st and 2/3-degree rank groups have 1 to 4 competitors. Combine to make one ring of 1st / 2nd / 3rd degrees.
 - Recommended Black Belts choosing to compete in a 1st Degree Decided ring are included in this scenario and should be made aware of this possibility by his/her instructor.
- Adult black belt age and rank divisions may be combined. This depends on the number of competitors registered for each division.
- Adult rank groups may be combined at the discretion of the RTTL to facilitate competition.
- At regional events, all black belt CHAMPION rings, junior, and adult, **will not be divided unless there are 13 or more in the ring regardless of height/size of the competitor. If a ring of 12 has been sent to the competition floor (on deck) and an additional competitor arrives, the ring will not be split.**
- The RTTL may rejoin or split a ring as needed, even if sent to the competition floor.
 - If, in the RTTL’s opinion, a competitor arrives late on purpose, to influence the decision to split the ring, the competitor may be reported to the ITD / NTD for further action.
- At National and World events, all black belt CHAMPION rings, juniors, and adults **the number of competitors is at the discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments, and depends on the number of competitors registered for the event.**

Black belts are vying for World Champion points and need to have the experience of going against taller or shorter opponents throughout the year.

Recreational Black Belt Divisions

“Recreational” competition, previously referred to as “Novice” competition, is for any student wanting to compete but not yet ready to be placed in a “Champions” competitive ring. The purpose of the Black Belt Recreational division is to give inexperienced black belt competitors the option to gain tournament experience in black belt divisions before moving into the Champions’ more competitive divisions.

A competitor, with guidance from his/her instructor, may choose to be placed in a recreational division indefinitely. Instructors should determine if a competitor should be placed in a “Recreational Division” (no points awarded) or a “Champion Division” (points awarded).

- Only 1st through 3rd degree black belts may choose to compete in a Recreational Black Belt Division.
- Recreational Black Belt division winners **will not** receive any championship points toward State/World Rankings for placing in a recreational Division.
- No State or World Championship points will be awarded in a recreational division (**even if one competes in the recreational division by any mistake or error.**)
- Recreational Black Belt Divisions **will not** be held in the same ring/time as the Champions competitive division.
- All 8 Traditional/Creative/Xtreme events, in either Recreational or Champions competitions, will be held in the same ring.
- A recreational competitor will be given the same opportunity to change into a Creative/Xtreme uniform prior to Creative and Xtreme events as the competitors in the Champions competition divisions.
- A competitor may choose to compete in a Champion division at one tournament, and Recreational in another tournament. The competitor must choose **for the entire tournament** to either be in Recreational or Champion divisions. He/she may not be in both type competitions at the same tournament.
- When judging Black Belt recreational divisions, the Center Judge does not give a zero for an incomplete form. The Center Judge’s score should reflect the overall presentation with no consideration as to the completeness of the form.

Dividing Recreational Black Belt Divisions

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

- For all Recreational Black Belt divisions, 1st-3rd degrees age/ranks can be combined. This is dependent upon the numbers of competitors registered for the events.
- For black belt adults, genders will not be combined. However, age divisions will be combined.
- If the division has **13 or more** competitors and is to be split, the RTTL will split the division in half. Rank will not be a consideration when making the split. Competitors will be split at random.
- If there are 12 or fewer competitors, the ring will not be split.
- **If a ring of 12 has been sent to the competition floor (on deck) and an additional competitor arrives, the ring will not be split at that time.**

Color Belt Divisions

In trying to promote color belt competition at regional events and provide them with a positive experience, color belt rings will be either classified as Recreational or Champion.

Champion Divisions Guidelines

“Champion” divisions are available for the student who wishes to compete at a higher competitive level and possibly earn points for the State Top Ten standings. Only color belts and/or black belts “officially” registered in the ATA Leadership Program or ATA Legacy Program at ATA International headquarters receive points for State Top Ten standings.

Arranging Champion Divisions – Color Belts

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

Due to the vast difference from region to region of the number of competitors at each event, it is not feasible to issue comprehensive rules concerning how the color belt divisions will be formed.

- Regional Tournament Team Leaders (RTTL) will try whenever possible to follow the black belt junior and adult divisions for color belt competitions, meaning the split will not occur until there **are 13 or more** competitors in the ring.
 - If there are 12 or fewer competitors, the ring will not be split.
 - If a ring of 12 or fewer competitors has been sent to the competition floor (on deck) and an additional competitor arrives, the ring will not be split at that time.
 - The above guideline does not imply that the ring has been started. If the ring has been set, late competitors will just be added to the ring. The ring **WILL NOT** be reset or split.
- An RTTL will **TRY** to have no more than 3 different color belts in any one ring. **Key word is TRY.** The number of competitors and range of belts will help the RTTL to determine the range of height and the number of different color belts. This also applies to all Nationals/World tournaments.
- **All Adult color belt rings will not be split unless there are 13 or more in the ring regardless of height/size of the competitors.**
 - If there are 12 or fewer competitors, the ring will not be split. If a ring of 12 or fewer competitors has been sent to the competition floor (on deck) and an additional competitor arrives, the ring will not be split at that time.
 - If the ring has been set, late competitors will just be added to the ring. The ring **WILL NOT** be reset or split.
- An RTTL may, at their discretion, combine or alter color belt divisions to facilitate competition. Adults have a better understanding of the concept of competition and in general want more competition.
- Junior Color belt rings can be combined to facilitate competition. The combination guidelines are handled by the RTTL of the event.

Recreational Division Guidelines - Color Belts

The ATA reserves the right to combine and/or split divisions depending on competitor turnout.

The purpose of the recreational color belt division (formerly referred to as novice division) is to give an inexperienced student the option to gain tournament experience before moving into the more competitive divisions.

The following guidelines apply for all Recreational divisions:

- The choice to compete in the recreational division is made by the competitor and their instructor on a tournament-by-tournament basis.
- ***No judge or other person should comment on the level of competition in which any competitor participates regardless of the reason, such as the competitor’s age, rank or participant numbers etc.***

- A competitor may elect to compete in the recreational color belt division at a tournament even if they have previously competed in a competitive division.
- The choice to compete in a recreational division applies to the entire tournament.
 - i.e., A competitor may not compete in the recreational division in some events and the competitive division in others.
- A recreational competitor may compete in forms, traditional weapons, sparring/one-steps and combat weapons, but are not required to compete in any specific event.
- Recreational division competitors may compete in creative and xtreme events, if he/she has competed in the corresponding traditional event.
 - This competition will take place in the same ring, after the traditional events have been completed.
 - A recreational competitor will be given the same opportunity to change into a Creative/Xtreme uniform prior to Creative and Xtreme events at the competitors in the Champions competition divisions.
 - In recreational divisions, sparring / combat byes will be given randomly.
 - A recreational division competitor may not compete in the “competitive division” for Creative/Xtreme events at that tournament.
- Recreational divisions **are required** at all sanctioned regional tournaments and must be advertised accordingly.
- In a recreational division, traditional forms competition, the competitors are not required but may perform a complete form. Judges will base their score according to what the competitor demonstrates based on their traditional judging assignments. A competitor will not be penalized by any judge for an incomplete form, nor will a competitor be given extra consideration for completing the entire form.
- For traditional weapons competitions, the Recreational division will run exactly as the Champion divisions, except that:
 - Competitors can perform a 30-second freestyle form, instead of one of the prescribed color-belt or black-belt weapons forms.
 - The Center Judge shall not give a score of zero for any incomplete form, but will score only what is presented.
- For sparring/one-step and combat weapons competitions, the recreational division will run exactly as the Champion divisions.
 - **Except: Byes will be awarded at random.** No one in a Recreational Division will be awarded a bye in sparring or combat for wearing a champion Dobok uniform.
- Competitors are responsible for making sure they are in the correct division for their age and for either competing in a Champion or Recreational division.
- No State or World Championship points will be awarded in a recreational division (even if one competes in the event by mistake).
- Medals in recreational divisions are the same as those given in competitive divisions.

Arranging Recreational Divisions – Color Belts

- Recreational rings will be split if there are 13 competitors or more.
- If there are 12 or fewer competitors, the ring will not be split.
- If a ring of 12 has been sent to the competition floor (on deck) and an additional competitor arrives, the ring will not be split at that time.

White-Orange-Yellow Belts Champion Division

In the case where there are not enough competitors for either gender, white-orange and yellow belts will be combined by gender but the gender with only ONE competitor will not spar or combat spar (automatically gets first place). If the WOY only competitor wants to be able to spar/combat spar they may decide to compete up with Camo and above for all events. **For this specific situation you need to get verbal permission from the International Chairman of Tournaments.**

Tournament Standard Operating Procedures

Ring Dimensions

Ring area for competition shall be square and should measure in the range of 14 - 18 feet (4.25 – 5.5 meters) per side, depending on the type of division (adult or junior). For ATA Tiger divisions, a regular competition ring can be divided in half, and two divisions may be run side-by-side.

Each ring should:

- have clearly marked boundary lines
- have centering marks for sparring competition
- be numbered

Order of Events

The host of each tournament will publish the tournament schedule, **provided by their Regional Tournament Team Leader**, for that tournament. If the host has a particular schedule in mind, the host must submit their proposed tournament schedule to, **and receive approval from**, the Regional Tournament Team Leader before it is published to the general public.

The order of competition at regional, national, and world events will be:

1. Traditional Form Competition
2. Traditional Weapons Competition
3. Traditional One-Steps (if necessary)
4. Combat Weapons Sparring
5. Traditional Point Sparring
6. Creative Forms
7. Creative Weapons
8. Xtreme Forms
9. Xtreme Weapons

At all sanctioned regional events, ATA-Xtreme and ATA Creative competitions will immediately follow the traditional events for all divisions and be held in the same ring as the traditional events.

- Awards for the Traditional events will be awarded at the conclusion of Traditional Point Sparring.
- Competitors not continuing in Creative/Xtreme events will be dismissed at that time.
- Competitors who are competing in Creative/Xtreme events will be given 5 minutes to change into their Creative/Xtreme uniform.
 - Competitors may not change clothes at ringside.
 - Those changing clothes should retire to a restroom or locker room to change clothes.
 - The Center Judge may extend the time allowed for changing clothes.
 - Center Judges will take into consideration the age/rank of the competitors in making this decision.

The competition schedule at National and World events, ATA Creative and ATA Xtreme events will be posted before registration opens. These events may be on separate days from the traditional events.

Tournament Registration

For regional tournaments, all competitors are encouraged to pre-register with their instructor. The following guidelines apply to all registrations and registration cards:

- It is the responsibility of the competitor to obtain a registration card from their instructor, and with his/her guidance, fill out the registration card fully. This includes but is not limited to their Name, ATA number, Date of Birth, Age, Rank, School Number, and the Name of their instructor.
- If the student is competing at an event that their instructor cannot attend, they may register on-site at the event, if they have their instructor's permission.
- If the ATA membership number is absent or incorrect on the registration card, it is the responsibility of the instructor of the competitor to contact ATA International Headquarters within five business days after the event and provide the missing or incorrect number to avoid the forfeiture of points.

To better prepare for **World and National tournaments**, all competitors, regardless of their rank, are asked to pre-register to compete. All registration cards must be filled out completely. **ADULT BLACK BELTS**, who register onsite at a World or National event will be **charged a late fee** of \$50 in addition to the on-site registration fees. Adult black belt competitors will also **only be eligible to earn half of awarded competition points**. Fractional points will be rounded. For example: A late competitor earns ½ of 9 points in his/her ring. The 4.5 points will be rounded up to become 5 points earned. The International Chairman of Tournaments reserves the right to waive this penalty in extenuating circumstances.

Arrival and Competition Times

It is recommended that each participant arrives before opening ceremonies in time to be on the main floor to line up and bow-in before the competition. However, many regional and all national and world events now post the approximate competition times for each division. In those instances, **each color belt competitor** should arrive at the tournament site approximately 30 to 45 minutes before their posted competition time unless otherwise notified in the tournament information packets. All Black Belts age 15 and older should arrive in time to attend the Black Belt meeting prior to opening ceremonies being held.

Late Arrival

If for some unforeseen legitimate reason, a competitor is late for his/her division, the center judge will allow the competitor to enter the division, if possible, provided the Regional Tournament Team Leader approves the entry and is called to the ring to oversee the proper insertion of the competitor into the competition.

The rules governing late competitors are as follows:

- If traditional forms competition has started but has not been closed, the competitor will be allowed to compete in the traditional forms.
 - The inserted competitor will perform next.
 - Regardless of where the inserted competitor's name is placed on the scoresheet, **this late competitor will be called up next to compete**. No additional time will be given for warm-up, stretching etc.
 - If, in the opinion of the RTTL, the competitor was deliberately late to a ring to gain an advantage, or is one who is habitually late for competition, the RTTL will deny the competitor from this competition. This decision will also adversely affect the competitor's Creative/Xtreme competitions either in eligibility to compete, or in points being removed if that aspect of competition has already occurred.

Traditional forms competition is closed when one of the following events have occurred:

- If there are any ties, when the tie runoffs have begun.
- If there are no ties, when the first weapons competitor has been called up to compete.
- If traditional forms competition has been closed and traditional weapons competition has started, the competitor will not be allowed to compete in the forms event but can be added to traditional weapons. If traditional weapons competition has already begun, the inserted competitor will perform next. Regardless of where the inserted competitor's name is placed on the scoresheet, **this late competitor will be called up next to compete**. No additional time will be given for warm-up, stretching etc.
- Traditional weapons competition is closed when one of the following events have occurred:
 - If there are any ties, then when the tie runoffs have begun.
 - If there are no ties:
 - In a ring with one-step sparring, when the first one-step sparring match has begun.
 - In a ring without one-step sparring, when the first combat weapons sparring match has begun.
- If the traditional weapons competition has been closed, the competitor will not be allowed to compete in the traditional forms or weapons event but may compete in combat weapons and one- step or sparring.
- If the first round of one-steps has started, and there are no byes available in the first round, no late entries will be allowed in this event. The bracket will not be re-written to create byes to accommodate a late competitor if the first round has started.
- If the first round of combat weapons sparring has started, and there are no byes available in the first round, no late entries will be allowed in this event. The bracket will not be re-written to create byes to accommodate a late competitor if the first round has started. The late competitor may, however, compete in traditional sparring.
- If the first round of traditional sparring has started, and there are no byes available in the first round, no late entries will be allowed in this event. The bracket will not be re-written to create byes to accommodate a late competitor if the first round has started.

If a late competitor is unable to gain a place in the ring, the Regional Tournament Team Leader will determine if there is another ring available. At National and World events, that decision will be made by the National Tournament Director or his/her assigns.

If, in the opinion of the RTTL, the student has purposefully arrived late to receive an advantageous position, the RTTL may refuse entry into any competition.

For the sake of competition, the Regional Tournament Team Leader will make every effort to see that a junior competitor is allowed to compete. If their ring is completed the Regional Tournament Team Leader MAY create another ring of competition for the purpose of awarding trophies. **These specially created rings will not receive points in the World or State Champion Top Ten standings.**

Rule exception: If the RTTL determines that it was the fault of the RTTL or his/her staff as to why the competitor missed his/her ring, and a special ring is created, the competitor will receive full first-place points. The RTTL must confirm with ATA National staff before the final ruling.

Ring Procedures

The following procedures are guidelines for how each ring is to be run at every ATA tournament.

Traditional Competition

Setup and Bow In

- **Collect all the competitor registration cards.** The center judge should re-count the number of competitors and the number of registration cards to ensure these numbers match.
- The center Judge should not physically “warm-up” the competitors in any manner.
- To officially start the division, the competitors will **line up and bow-in** to the judges assigned
 - The Center Judge will confirm the competition age and division.
 - The center judge will **introduce the judges** to the competitors and announce who is judge A, and who is judge B, and what area of form competition each judge is scoring.
 - While facing the competitors, judge A will be on the left-hand side of the center judge and judge B will be on the center judge’s right.

Competition Order

- **Traditional Forms competition**
- **Traditional Weapons competition**
 - A **traditional weapons check** should be performed by the judges for all competitors participating in traditional weapons competition prior to the start of weapons competition. See [Weapons Inspections](#) below.
- **Combat Weapons Sparring competition**
- **Traditional One-Step / Point Sparring competition**

Special Notes: Sparring and Combat Sparring

A discrete “groin-cup check” should be performed by one of the male judges for all male competitors participating in Combat Weapons Sparring and/or Traditional Point Sparring competitions. Prior to the Combat Weapons competition the designated judge should bring all male competitors who have chosen to compete in either combat sparring or traditional sparring together to form a tight circle. At that time, the male judge should ask each competitor to tap on his own cup so that the judge can hear the “knock”. No person, judge or competitor, should tap on another person’s cup for any reason. See [Groin-Cup Check procedures](#).

- All judges have equal authority to call points or penalties. A center judge cannot overrule a call by a corner judge, except through his vote on a point or warning, which has no more weight than each of the other two judges’ votes.
- No judge is allowed to alter, add, or modify any ATA rules. If there are any questions on interpretation of these rules, ask the RTTL.
- If anyone (Senior, Parent, Competitor, Spectator, or Judge) feels there is a problem in a ring, that person should notify the National Tournament Director or Regional Tournament Team Leader with the concern. The National Tournament Director or Regional Tournament Team Leader will decide if any changes should occur.

Awards and Bow Out

- **Announce Awards:** Awards should now be given for the traditional events in the following manner:
 - Call each competitor by name, have them step forward, and award the commemorative tournament pin.
 - For those competitors who placed in an event, the individual competitor should be called forward and awarded placement medals in the following order: third place, second place, and first place. This same process should be repeated for each individual event.

- Each judge should shake the hand of each competitor and congratulate them after the awarding of the trophies/medals.
- To officially end the traditional division competitions, the competitors will **line up and bow out** to the judges in that ring.
 - PRIOR to dismissing the ring, the Center judge will announce for all those continuing in Creative or Xtreme events to remain standing in line.
 - They will then dismiss those not continuing in the Creative or Xtreme competition.
 - Announce to competitors and parents the current time, and the number of minutes those competitors have to change clothes, if they want.
 - Dismiss those continuing to either change or take a break while others change.
- **Double-check paperwork for the traditional events**
 - If a Traditional competition has a separate packet than the Creative/Xtreme, then complete the checklist on the event packet, and return it to the Tournament Secretary.
- Judges should not offer a “clinic” after an event, with specific feedback on what they did “wrong”. Instead, they should be directed to use the feedback of their scores (feet, presentation, hands) to work with their instructors.

Creative/Xtreme Competition

AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TIME ALLOTTED TO CHANGE UNIFORMS, THE CREATIVE/XTREME COMPETITIONS WILL BEGIN IN THE SAME RING.

Each RTTL will make every effort, but are not required, to switch judges, during the time allotted to change clothes. This does not mean the judges are dismissed!

Setup and Bow In

- The center judge should re-count the number of competitors and the number of registration cards for Creative/Xtreme events to ensure these numbers match.
- Line up and bow in.
- Introduce the judges, if there was a change.

Competition

- **Creative Forms Competition**
- **Creative Weapons Competition**
 - A **weapons check** should be performed by the judges for all competitors participating in Creative weapons competition prior to the start of this competition. See [Weapons Inspections](#) below.
- **Xtreme Forms Competition**
- **Xtreme Weapons Competition**
 - A **weapons check** should be performed by the judges for all competitors participating in Xtreme weapons competition prior to the start of this competition. See [Weapons Inspections](#) below.

Awards and Bow Out

Announce Awards: Awards should now be given for the Creative/Xtreme events in the following manner:

- For those competitors who placed in an event, the individual competitor should be called forward and awarded placement medals in the following order: third place, second place, and first place. This same process should be repeated for each individual event.

- Each judge should shake the hand of each competitor and congratulate them after the awarding of the trophies/medals.
- To officially end the Creative/Xtreme division competitions, the competitors will **line up and bow out** to the judges in that ring.
 - No additional Commemorative pins will be given in the Creative/Xtreme rings. Competitors received their commemorative pins at the conclusion of the traditional event competition.

White/Orange/Yellow Belt – Sparring and Combat Eligibility

All W/O/Y belts will be allowed to compete in traditional sparring and combat weapons sparring as well as traditional one-steps at all tournaments.

For traditional sparring, W/O/Y belt students may choose to:

- Compete in traditional one-steps **or**
- Compete in traditional sparring **or**
- Compete in both traditional sparring and one-steps.
 - If a W/O/Y belt chooses to compete in both traditional sparring and one-steps additional fees may apply.
 - For W/O/Y belts competing in both Sparring and One-step Sparring, points will be given to the higher placement of the events. The competitor will not receive points in both events at the same tournament. For details on how the points will be awarded for placement if the competitor chooses to compete in both sparring and one-step sparring, see Champion program.

A competitor who chooses to do both one-steps and traditional sparring will have an additional competition fee unless this event is their 6th, 7th, 8th, or 9th event. In that case, the traditional sparring will be at no charge.

Genders will be separated only for traditional point sparring and combat weapons sparring.

Example: There are five boys and five girls combined to form a ring at a tournament. They will compete together for forms, weapons, and one-step sparring. However, the genders will be separated for traditional sparring and combat sparring.

Weapons Inspections

The center judge will call for each weapons competitor to come forward and present the weapon intended for use in that competition. The weapon shown will be inspected to ensure that:

- Based on the competitor's rank, they are eligible to compete with that type of weapon. [See [here](#) for color belts, and [here](#) for black belts.]
- The weapon is an appropriate style for their rank and competition event.
- The weapon does not violate weapon [adornment restrictions](#) in any way.
- The weapon is in good repair and safe to use in competition.

In addition:

- If in the opinion of the judges, it is determined that the weapon has been altered before the competition takes place, the competitor will be allowed to replace the weapon.
- The competitor must compete with the weapon presented for inspection. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. This type of behavior will be brought to the attention of the International Chairman of Tournaments, and additional sanctions or penalties may apply.

- If a weapon breaks during competition, it is not the fault of the judge who performed the weapons check.
- The weapon is the responsibility of the competitor.

Groin Protector Check Procedures

All male competitors must wear a protective cup prior to the beginning of combat or sparring competition.

- For all male divisions, prior to the beginning of combat and/or traditional sparring competitions, the judges will perform a discrete groin protector cup check. One of the adult male judges shall gather the competitors competing in either traditional or combat sparring together, forming a tight circle, and ask each person to tap on their protective groin cup so that the judge can hear the knocking sound. No judge should perform this task for the competitor. If all three judges are female, they should ask an adult male black belt judge nearby to do the groin protector check. Any male competitor found not to be wearing a protective groin cup shall be instructed to put one on promptly.
- Any competitor in this ring who is not wearing a protective groin cup or has not returned from putting on their protective cup, at the time they are called to spar, will forfeit the match.

Injuries

Every effort has been made to ensure that competing in a Songahm Taekwondo tournament is as safe as possible. However, injuries may occur. **The following guidelines will be applied to all injuries during competition:**

- If a competitor is injured the judge will have him/her lie down (or remain where he/she has fallen).
- Keep the competitor as still as possible, and DO NOT remove the headgear.
- The medical team on site will be called to the ring.
- If there was no blow to the head or face, the competitor may be asked to remove his/her mouthpiece.
- Until the medic arrives at the ring, every effort will be made to help the competitor stay calm, making sure he/she is advised not to move around.
- If the competitor has asked for multiple injury “time outs” as a way to rest, and/or calm themselves in order to continue, the center judge at his/her sole discretion, may stop the competitor from continuing. In these instances, involving Sparring or Combat matches, the competitor will forfeit the match.

The injured competitor will only be allowed to continue when all of the following criteria are met:

- It is the opinion of the medical team that he/she will not be further injured by continuing. The decision of the medical team, the day of the event, is final, and may not be overruled by a parent or instructor.
- If the competitor is under 18 years old, he/she MUST ALSO receive permission from his/her parents (if present) and instructor (if present).
- If a health-care professional is not available, ALWAYS err on the side of caution.

Injuries and Concussions: ALWAYS err on the side of caution and safety of the competitor. Judges are not expected to diagnose a concussion, as that is the job of an appropriate health-care professional. If an appropriate health-care professional determines that the athlete HAS NOT suffered a concussion, the athlete may return to competition. If an appropriate health-care professional determines an athlete HAS suffered a concussion, that athlete MAY NOT return to competition that day under any circumstances.

NO ONE MAY “OVERRIDE” THE HEALTH-CARE PROFESSIONAL!

This includes parents, instructors, competitors, guardians, other judges, and spectators.

Tournament Awards

Placement Awards for Competition

There will be three places awarded in all Competitive and Recreational divisions based on the criteria below for Traditional Form, Traditional Weapon, ATA-Xtreme Form, ATA-Xtreme Weapon, Creative Form, Creative Weapon, Synchronized Team Form and Team Demo competitions. They are as follows:

- 1st Place - Awarded to the competitor/team with the highest cumulative point total.
- 2nd Place - Awarded to the competitor/team with the next highest cumulative point total.
- 3rd Place - Awarded to the competitor/team with the third highest cumulative point total.

Combat Weapons Sparring, One-step Sparring, and Traditional Point Sparring competitions will culminate with the following awards given:

- 1st Place - Awarded to the person who wins the final round of competition.
- 2nd Place - Awarded to the person who reaches the final round but is defeated.
- 3rd Place - Awarded to the winner of the 3rd place match, which will be held between the two competitors defeated in the semi-final matches.

Tournament Commemorative Pins

- Each competitor will receive a unique tournament commemorative pin. These pins will be awarded to each competitor prior to any placement medals.
- **Disqualified competitors** are still eligible for commemorative awards.

Correctable Errors

Correctable Errors

As in most competitions, there exists the possibility of “correctable errors”. Judgment calls such as scores given or points called in sparring are not considered a correctable error. An instructor/parent/competitor may ask for clarification if they believe a “correctable error” has been made. The Regional Tournament Team Leader will be responsible for this determination, and his/her decision will be final. If an instructor/parent/or competitor would like to discuss the decision of the Regional Tournament Team Leader, they may do so after the conclusion of the tournament. This should occur through the proper chain of command, starting with the student’s instructor.

Video Review

Judges should not review video. A Regional Tournament Team Leader, or National Tournament Director is allowed, but not required, to review video for the purpose of reversing a “Correctable Error”. Video review will not occur on any judgement call.

EXAMPLE: After looking at all 3 scores in sparring, the Center Judge calls one point red, but the scorekeeper inadvertently awards the point to white. This is a correctable error. Assuming the video shows all aspects of the call, the RTTL may adjust the score. The review of whether a competitor actually scored a point, is not a correctable error. There is no “instant replay”. Judgment calls are final, and not subject to review.

Ringside Behavior

No Coaching

It is the responsibility of the judges to ensure that no one is allowed to receive coaching during any competition except the team sparring/combat events. There will be no coaching from the sidelines by anyone, including color belts, black belts, instructors, family members or friends. This no-coaching rule is in effect from the time the competitors are bowed into their ring, through the time they are bowed out of their ring. **This includes quietly telling a student what to do between matches in sparring, or before a tie-breaker in forms or weapons.** Cheering and offering encouragement is indeed allowed and encouraged. A competitor receiving coaching will be penalized in the following manner:

- 1st offense – Competitor shall receive a non-contact warning.
- For 2nd and subsequent offenses – Opponent will be awarded a penalty point.
- After the 2nd offense – The person coaching shall be removed from the ring area. Failure to leave the ring area for the coaching offense will result in disqualification of the competitor.

Competitor Attitude and Conduct

One of the most important tenets of Songahm Taekwondo is the concept of DISCIPLINE. While it is important to show the discipline of being a good loser, it is equally important to exhibit the discipline of being a good winner. Songahm Taekwondo students are known for their discipline, courtesy, and respect. Any exhibition of disgust, frustration or dissatisfaction with the outcome of competition will not be tolerated. This includes leaving the ring or ring area before awards are given and the ring being formally dismissed. Neither will over-exuberance with winning be allowed.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Warnings

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Warnings are at the sole discretion of the center judge. Unsportsmanlike conduct warnings may, in the sole discretion of the center judge, result in a penalty point and/or disqualification.

- If the competitor's family, friends or fans engage in such conduct, then also at the discretion of the center judge, a competitor may be given an unsportsmanlike conduct warning. All penalties would also apply.
- If a competitor is disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct after places are awarded, that competitor will forfeit his/her place. Other competitors will not move up in place if this occurs.
- At the discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments, unsportsmanlike conduct may result in the loss of all or part of one's accumulated top ten points or being barred from future tournaments. The offender will receive official written notification from the International Chairman.

Virtual Training

This describes the State these competitors will be associated with, for the purpose of accumulating points toward State Champ.

Background

When the pandemic hit the US, many schools had to close, and instructors used the virtual method to teach to help students continue with their Songahm journey. As restrictions were lifted and face-to-face instruction was permitted, many schools decided to continue teaching virtually. Other schools were not able to sustain

themselves and closed. There remain very few students that continue to learn virtually but some, due to closure and lack of schools in their vicinity, live in one State but train at a school located in another. To support these students:

- If a licensee is training any students virtually and they are from another State, it is the licensee's responsibility to send all related information to HQ for approval.
- If a licensee competes, his/her points will be attached to the State in which their school is located, not where they train.
- If a competitor is approved to train virtually, the earned points will be attached to the State where the school is located.
 - For example, John lives in TN but he trains virtually with Mr. Leader in AZ. John earned points will be listed in AZ not in TN.
- At any point, HQ has the right to forfeit points or reverse eligibility for virtual students.
- The International Chairman of Tournaments has the final determination of where points will be awarded depending upon the facts presented. The decision of the International Chairman of Tournaments is final.

Traditional Forms Competition

Admissible Competition Forms

Color Belts

Color belt competitors who participate in the forms events will demonstrate the form selected by their instructor. For integrity reasons, the instructor should not have a color belt student do a form that would be considered below his/her current ability level. However, competitors will not be questioned by the judges about the appropriateness of the form a color belt demonstrates.

There will not be any special consideration given regarding the color of the belt the students are wearing and the form with which they compete (neither higher scores for a higher level form nor lower scores for a lower level form). The students will be judged according to their performance in comparison to the others in their division that day.

If a Recommended Black Belt Competes in a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt Division, he/she must perform with either Choong Jung 2, Choong Jung 1, or In Wha 2 forms. He/she may not compete with a lower belt form or with the 1st Degree form, Shim Jun, during the regular season.

If the recommended black belt qualifies for District or top ten title, he/she must earn 1st-degree decided rank by May 15, and must perform the Black Belt Decided form for that division.

Special Note

If any competitor has a legitimate medical condition and is not able to jump, this does not constitute a qualifying condition to compete in Special Abilities. Any competitor who suffers from a condition that doesn't allow them to jump should approach judges and inform them prior to the start of forms competition. Judges will continue judging the quality of the techniques and not whether the competitor jumped or not. This competitor may still receive full points from all three judges.

Black Belts

Black Belts may not compete with a form designated for a rank higher than their current rank, even if they are “competing up” for the tournament season.

1st Degree Black Belt competitors:

- Must compete with Shim Jun form after six months from the date of their successful decided-rank test. This is commonly referred to as the “6-month rule”. Judges will assume that the form presented qualifies under this rule. This is an integrity issue. Judges who feel that the 1BD competitor has been competing with a “color belt” form longer than 6 months should report this to the RTTL at the event. The RTTL will then report this to the ATA International Chairman of Tournaments at ATA headquarters.
 - **The judge should not question or make comments to the competitor as to his/her time in rank. Nor should the judge reflect his/her concern in the score given to the competitor at that event.**

- The lowest forms that can be performed in a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt ring is **Choong Jung 2, Choong Jung 1, or In Wha 2.**

2nd Degree Recommended Black Belt competitors:

- Must compete with Shim Jun.

2nd Degree Decided Black Belts and higher competitors:

- May choose to do any of the black belt forms up to and including the form designated for their rank during the regular tournament season.
- The lowest form that can be performed is Shim Jun.

Note: Please see the [District-](#) and [World Championship](#) section of the rules for additional information on selecting the appropriate form for your competitive goals.

Judges' Area of Concentration

Scoring of traditional forms is divided into three judging roles: Judge A, Judge B, and Center Judge. Each judge is scoring a different aspect of the competitor's presentation. An important aspect of judging forms is not letting personal preferences concerning techniques influence scoring. It is not feasible to expect every member of Songahm Taekwondo to do every technique the same. Differences in body styles, age, and other criteria can make a difference in how an instructor may teach a student certain techniques. Form judges must base their score on the overall look and effectiveness of the techniques. The best "rule of thumb" is to watch the competitor as a judge and not as an instructor.

When seated, Judge A will be on the left-hand side of the Center Judge and Judge B will be on the Center Judge's right hand. While judging one's respective areas, scoring should be based on the following ten attributes. The competitor who can demonstrate the highest quality and the most consistent of these attributes should be given the highest score.

1. **Base** – Foundation of every technique (Base foot when kicking, starting point for hand techniques.)
2. **Trajectory** – The path a technique will take from point A to point B.
3. **Follow Through** – Going beyond the target. (full extension of technique).
4. **Joint Position** – Proper setup of all joints for a technique.
5. **Balance** – Body alignment, posture, proper base, and eye contact.
6. **Precision** – Hitting the exact target with the proper point of contact.
7. **Speed** – Time it takes for your technique to go from point A to Point B. Relaxing the muscles and exploding.
8. **Reaction Force** – The counterbalance to each movement.
9. **Power** – Body rotation and input of the body mass through acceleration.
10. **Automatic Reflex** – Proper repetition allows you to react effortlessly.

Corner Judge A

Will grade only stances and kicks.

For **stances**, the judge should look for:

- Proper Base to include correct
 - Length

- Width
- Weight distribution
- Foot position

For **kicks**, the most important things to judge are proper:

- Trajectory
- Follow through
- Joint position
- Balance
- Power

Note:

- The height of the kicks should match the competitor's body dimensions. (i.e. their solar plexus for mid-section kicks and head level for high section kicks)
- **Judge A will only judge the techniques that are shown and will not make point deductions for moves left out, the wrong type of kick or an incomplete form. Those areas are the responsibility of the center judge.**

Corner Judge B

Will grade only hand techniques.

For **hand techniques**, the most important things to judge are proper:

- Trajectory
- Joint Position
- Speed
- Reaction Force
- Power

Judge B will only judge the techniques that are shown and will not make point deductions for moves left out, the wrong type of block or strike, or an incomplete form. Those areas are the responsibility of the center judge.

The Center Judge

Will grade the overall form presentation.

The center judge will score the overall presentation of the form. In addition to the criteria of Judge A and B, the additional criteria for the center judge are proper:

- Memory (Automatic Reflex)
- Rhythm & Timing
- Attitude & Enthusiasm

Score-Keeper / Time-Keeper

The score-keeper and time-keeper at an ATA tournament play an important part in the overall running of a ring. While these volunteers are not considered to be judges, they have responsibilities and obligations that must be followed. The Center Judge should select a student who is in a dobok to fill the role of the scorekeeper or timekeeper. Street clothes are not considered appropriate attire for this position.

The Score-keeper / Time-keeper should:

- Make sure that his/her duties in the ring are understood and ask the Center Judge for any clarifications necessary.
- Be appropriately dressed in a traditional-, team-, or CRX uniform.
- Repeat the score back to the Center Judge in a loud, clear voice.
- Write legibly and completely, fill in all scores given by the Center Judge.
- Make every effort to get the Center Judge's attention if he/she becomes unclear with a score or time issue at any point during the competition.
- Pay complete attention to the ring in which they are working.
- Refrain from cheering for any particular competitor. He/she should remain unbiased as if he/she were one of the three judges.

Traditional Form Competition Procedures

The following procedures are indicative of how each ring is to be run at every ATA tournament:

- The Center Judge will turn the cards face down and shuffle them so that the competitors are called in a random manner. It is not necessary for all names to be written on the scoresheet before beginning the forms section of the competition.
 - At National and World events, the scoring sheets are pre-printed. The order of the competitors called will be based upon the directions given by the National Tournament Director on the day of the event.
- To begin forms competition, the center judge will draw one card at a time and call the competitor's name. He/she will hand the card to the scorekeeper so the scorekeeper can record the name while the person is doing his/her form. It is not necessary to fill in all competitor names before starting the competition. The scorekeeper will do this while the competitor is demonstrating the form to the judges. As an additional courtesy to the competitors and their families, the Center Judge should also announce the competitor "on deck" (meaning the next competitor up for competition).
- When their name is called, the competitors will answer, "Yes, Sir/Ma'am", run to the center of the ring, stand at attention, and wait for the judges' directions. They will follow the judge's instructions, and when given the command to begin, will demonstrate their form on their count.
- They will hold the position of the last movement until given the command to return and will not leave the ring until dismissed.
- In every division, the first three competitors will demonstrate their form, one at a time, and then be dismissed to the side. This will allow the judges to evaluate the ring by determining the general ability of the competitors present in the ring. At the conclusion of the third competitor's demonstration of his/her form, all three competitors will be brought back and given scores. Every subsequent competitor will be scored immediately following the performance of their form.
 - Competitors should keep in mind that scores vary depending on the level of competitors in the ring on that particular day.
- The Center Judge will announce scores from his/her left, calling out Judge A's Score, then the Center Judge's score, and finally Judge B's score. Judges should keep their scores visible until the scorekeeper has written the scores correctly and repeated the scores back to the Center Judge for verification.
- After every competitor has had an opportunity to demonstrate his/her form, the center judge will check the addition of the scores and determine if there are any ties.

- If a tie in scores should occur for first, second or third place, use the run-off system. (See [Resolving Ties.](#))
- **All competitors in all divisions, regardless of belt or rank, will be given one attempt to present his/her form.**

Determining and Administering a Score

It is important to understand how to determine a competitor's score.

- The first three competitors will complete their form before being scored. This gives the judges a basis for their scores.
- Each judge will give a score ranging from 1 through 9.
 - **The score is a comparison score based on the competitors in that ring, on that day, and not based upon the excellence of the form presented.**
 - Competitors should keep in mind that scores from one tournament may be completely different from another tournament depending upon the level of the competitors in that particular ring on that day.
 - It is highly possible that the scores from each judge may greatly vary because each judge is scoring a different part of the performance, and the scores do not have any relationship to each other.
 - This method of scoring also gives the competitors instant feedback on what part of their form may need improvement.
 - The Center Judge only can give a score of zero (0) for an incomplete form. (See [below.](#))
- There are no boundary restrictions during forms competition.
 - Competitors will not be penalized for stepping beyond the ring boundaries, nor will they be penalized for adjusting their position to avoid obstacles, people, or the ring boundaries. Competitors may not realize that they will not be penalized for stepping beyond the ring boundaries and may adjust to prevent this. It is also possible that equipment bags, spectators, etc., may be in their way and they should be permitted to adjust to avoid these obstacles.
- There are no specific time restrictions for completion of a form.
 - When forms are described and taught, the written material has a suggested time frame in which the form should be performed. This suggested time frame is there for the purpose of helping the student understand the speed and flow of the form. It is not intended as judging criteria to be used for tournament competition.
- In any Champion ring, regardless of the number of competitors, a competitor who presents an incomplete form will receive a score of zero (0) from the center judge. Judge A and Judge B will score the competitor following the normal guidelines for a complete form and not deduct points based on the completeness of the form.

For Rings with Two or Three Competitors

- Instead of giving scores, each judge will point to their choice for the best, according to their assignment. (Judge A for Kicks/Stances, judge B for Hand Techniques & Blocks, Center judge for Overall Presentation)
- If all the judges point to a different competitor, **competitors WILL NOT DO THEIR FORMS AGAIN.** The judges will follow the normal tie-break procedure. See [here.](#)

- The score keeper will record the following scores:
 - 1st place: 9 for all judges
 - 2nd place: 8 for all judges
 - 3rd place: 7 for all judges

For Rings with a Single Competitor

- The single competitor should receive a 9, 9, 9 from the judges, because they are the best in the ring that day, unless an automatic point deduction is involved (for example, an incomplete form).

Score Range & Meaning

The meaning of the scores are as follows:

Score	Meaning
9	Considered among the best of the group
6 thru 8	Better than the average of the group
5	The group average
1 thru 4	Below the group average
0	Incomplete (only to be given by the center judge on the incomplete first attempt, in a Champion Division)

Notes:

- All competitors are allowed only one chance to complete their form.
 - Students who are unsure if they know their form should, ***in consultation with their instructor***, consider competing in the Recreational division for that tournament.
- An incomplete form in the Champion division will receive a score of zero (0) from the Center Judge.
- Corner judges should always base their score based on the quality of technique shown in comparison to the other competitors that day in that ring.

Incomplete Form

An incomplete form is defined as a competitor leaving out at least four or more consecutive moves or stopping any time during the form and not continuing the presentation.

- If a competitor omits one or two techniques, turns in the wrong direction, or performs an incorrect technique, this would **NOT** be classified as an incomplete form.
 - The emphasis of the organization's teaching is on the quality of technique rather than solely memorization.
 - **Only the Center Judge will deduct points based on presentation and the corner judges should not deduct for this type of mistake.**

During form competition, the Center Judge may assist a competitor in completing their form through verbal cues and possible physical demonstrations if the competitor is unable to complete their form. This is done solely to help the self-esteem of the competitor by giving them the opportunity to finish their form in front of their peers and audience.

- In a Champion division, the Center Judge must then score the form as if it were incomplete, giving a score of zero (0), which would be the same as if the judge did not offer assistance and the competitor had not completed their form.
- The corner judges should not deduct for this assistance. Corner judges only judge the techniques demonstrated.

Example

A competitor presenting Songahm #3 leaves out both knife hand high blocks, or does sidekicks in place of the two round kicks, but does correct techniques during the rest of the form. The Center Judge, who is responsible for the overall presentation of the form, may make score deductions for the competitor doing the wrong techniques or leaving out techniques, while Judge A and Judge B should give scores that only reflect the quality of the techniques demonstrated when compared to the other competitors.

Resolving Ties

In a ring with 4 or more competitors, if two or more competitors have the same score for first, second, or third place, there is a tie in the division.

- Ties are to be run off rather than decided in conference.
- The tied competitors will be asked to do their form again, individually.
- Each competitor must do the same form they did originally.
 - **A competitor that does not repeat the same form will forfeit the tie-breaker.**
- All three judges will now be judging the entire form overall rather than their original assignments.
- All ties will be decided by the judges pointing to the best overall presentation, instead of giving scores.
- If there is a tie for more than one place, the judges will decide the **lowest** place first.
 - For example, if there is a two-way tie for first, and a two-way tie for third, the third-place runoff would be done first, and then the first-place runoff.

Determining the Winner

- All the tied competitors (for that place) will line up facing the judges.
- On the command of the center judge, all judges will point at the competitor they felt did the best.
- If at least two judges pick the same person, that person wins and will receive that place in the competition.
- If more than one place were at stake, the judges would immediately decide the next best form, and so on, until all the positions are filled.
- If more than one place were at stake, those competitors eliminated by the original vote would now be brought back, and the judges will point to the one they felt deserved the next place. This procedure will be used until all places have been determined.
- A judge will remain consistent with his/her choice for best form when deciding ties. If a judge points for “Competitor A” in his/her initial voting, **that judge must continue to vote for “Competitor A” in all subsequent voting until competitor A places or is eliminated.**

- If all three judges point to different competitors, follow this procedure to resolve the 3-way tie:

3-Way Tie for First Place	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	
				3 competitors scored the same point total from the judges. If there were 4 or more in the ring, the tied competitors repeat the same form originally presented, with all judges judging overall.
Round 1				
Competitors being considered →	C1	C2	C3	The tied competitors line up in front of the judges. Judges vote for who they think was the best of the group. In this example, there's a 3-way tie.
	↑	↑	↑	
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB	In the following rounds, once a judge has selected a competitor, they must continue to vote for them if possible, until they win or are eliminated.
Round 2			C3	Judges ask competitor 3 to step back.
Competitors being considered →	C1	C2		Judges vote for who they think was best, of those in consideration. Judges A and C must continue to vote for their original selection.
	↑	↑		Judge B becomes the tie-break between C1 and C2. C2 is determined to be the better between C1 and C2.
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB	
Round 3	C1			Since C2 won Round 2, C2 stays, and judges ask C1 to step back.
Competitors being considered →		C2	C3	Judges ask C3 to step forward.
		↑	↑	Judges vote for who they think was best, of the two in consideration. Judges C and B must continue to vote for their original selection.
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB	Judge A becomes the tie-break between C2 and C3. C3 is determined to be the better between C2 and C3. C3 is the winner of the 3-way tie.
Competitor 3 wins first place.				
Round 4			C3	Competitor 3 has already won First Place, and steps back.
	C1	C2		Judges vote for who they think was best, of those in consideration. Judges A and C must continue to vote for their original selection, because if they were good enough to attract a vote for first place, they deserve the vote for second place.
	↑	↑		Judge B becomes the tie-break between C1 and C2 for the round to determine second place. In this example, Judge B already chose C2 over C1 in Round 2, and must stay consistent in the choice here.
Competitor 2 wins second place.	JA	JC	JB	C2 is determined to be the better between C1 and C2.
Competitor 1 wins third place.				C1 is the last remaining, and wins third place.

- Follow this procedure for a 4-way tie:

4-way tie for first place	Competitor 1	Competitor 2	Competitor 3	Competitor 4	
					4 competitors scored the same point total from the judges. The tied competitors repeat the same form originally presented, with all judges judging overall.
Round 1					
Competors being considered →	C1	C2	C3	C4	The tied competitors line up in front of the judges.
	↑	↑	↑		Judges vote for who they think was the best of the group.
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB		In this instance, there's a 3-way tie.
Round 2				C4	Judges ask Competitor 4 takes two steps back. C4 is out of consideration for 1st place.
Competors being considered →	C1	C2	C3		Judges ask competitor 3 to take one step back
	↑	↑	↑		Judges vote for who they think was best, of those in consideration (C1, C2).
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB		Judges A and C must continue to vote for their original selection. Judge B becomes the tie-break between C1 and C2. C2 is determined to be the better between C1 and C2.
Round 3				C4	
Competors being considered →	C1	C2	C3		Judges ask C1 to step back, because C2 beat them in Round 2. Judges ask C3 to step forward.
	↑	↑	↑		Judges vote for who they think was best, of those in consideration.
Judges vote →	JA	JC	JB		Judges C and B must continue to vote for their original selection. Judge A becomes the tie-break between C2 and C3. C3 is determined to be the better between C2 and C3. C3 is the winner of the 3-way tie, and wins 1st place.
Competitor 3 wins first place					
Round 4			C3		C3 won 1st place, and takes 2 steps back.
Competors being considered →	C1	C2		C4	C4 steps back up to the line, and is in consideration for 2nd place.
	↑	↑		↑	Judges vote for who they think was best, of those in consideration.
Judges vote →	JA	JC		JB	Judges A and C must continue to vote for their original selection. In this example, Judge B votes for C4, creating a 3-way tie. Judges now follow the 3-way tiebreak process to determine 2nd place.

Traditional Weapons Competition

Size, Length, Style of Weapons

Color belts may not use wooden weapons (Bahng Mahng Ee, Gum Do), nor the metal Gum Do.

Decorations are not allowed. See [Adornment Restrictions](#), above.

There are no restrictions on the size or length of weapons.

***** Consult with your instructor about the appropriate or best fitting length of weapon given the competitor's height. *****

Color Belt Rules & Guidelines

Type & Style of Weapons Available to Color Belt

The color belt student must confer with their instructor concerning the weapon they will use in competition. If competing in weapons, a color belt MAY ONLY compete with one of the following:

- Single or Double Bahng Mahng Ee – No wooden weapons are allowed.
- Single or Double Ssahng Jeol Bong
- Jahng Bong
- Ssahng Nat
- Jee Pahng Ee – currently, Recreational only.
- Gum Do – No metal or wooden swords are allowed.
- Oh Sung Do

Color belts may use only Protech safety weapons for traditional weapons competition except for the Jahng Bong and the Jee Pahng Ee, which any style is acceptable.

NOTE! See [Adornment Restrictions](#), above.

Content of Color Belt Weapons' Demonstration

All color belts competing in a Champion Division are expected to demonstrate forms from the new weapons curriculum. If the competitor does not present a form from the new curriculum, the Center Judge will score the weapons form incomplete (zero), and the corner judges will score the form presented.

The presentation will be judged on the following criteria:

- Overall control and use of the weapon (deductions for drops, mishandling, etc.)
- Presentation (was the display exciting and fun)
- Practical application of the weapon
- Stances, timing, and rhythm of the form

Control of the weapon is of utmost importance. The above list is not intended to be a specific order of importance but rather a guide for the judge to compare one presentation against another for the purpose of giving a score. ***However, in the resolving of ties*** during the weapons competition, the control of the weapon should be the number one criterion for determining the winner. ***In breaking a tie***, a competitor who

drops a weapon should not receive the win over a competitor who controls the weapon throughout his/her performance.

Tiger and Recreational Divisions

Color belts in Tiger and Recreational divisions may perform a 30-second freestyle routine.

The routine must be approved by the competitor's instructor before the competition. Therefore, it is vital that the student consults his/her instructor as to the presentation.

The competitor may not:

- Add any “gymnastic type” moves such as, but not limited to, splits, rolls, flips, etc.
- Release the weapon.

For each violation of this rule in color belt divisions, each judge shall reduce their score by one (1) point. The center judge shall, prior to calling for scores, remind the corner judges of the required deductions.

Black Belt Rules & Guidelines

Black Belt Weapons Forms & Rank Requirements

Following is the list of black belt weapons forms and their rank requirements:

Rank	Permitted Forms
First Degree and above	Single Bahng Mahng Ee Single Ssahng Jeol Bong Jahng Bong Mid-Range Oh Sung Do Level 1 Gum Do Level 1
Second Degree and above	Double Bahng Mahng Ee Double Ssahng Jeol Bong Ssahng Nat
Third Degree and above	Jahng Bong Long-Range
Fourth Degree and above	Sam Dan Bong Jee Pahng Ee Gum Do Level 2

Weapon Notes

- **Bahng Mahng Ee** – Wooden versions allowed, only as sold by WMA (rattan) with no decorations.
- **Oh Sung Do Level 1** – Previous and new versions of the form are acceptable through July 2026.
- **Gum Do** –
 - The sheath is required during traditional competition.
 - A wooden sword is allowed for competition (for black belts only).
 - A metal sword is allowed for black belts, and 1BR competing in a black belt ring.
 - Belt should be worn outside of the Tang Bagee pants. See [here](#).

NOTE! See [Adornment Restrictions](#), above.

Competing Up

For First Degree Recommended Black Belts that choose to compete with Black Belts, he/she must compete with one of the 5 approved First Degree Decided weapons forms. (Single Ssahng Jeol Bong, Single Bahng Mahng Ee, Oh Sung Do, Gun Do, or Mid-range Jahng Bong). The competitor ***may also present a weapon form from the new Champions' color belt curriculum that corresponds with the approved black belt weapon curriculum.***

Decided Black Belts competing up are limited to the forms designated for their rank in the [chart](#) above. For example, a 3BD competing in the 4/5 division cannot present a fourth-degree weapon, such as Jee Pahng Ee.

Style of Weapon Approved for Black Belt Weapons Competition

Black belts may use only Protech safety weapons for traditional weapons competition except for the Jahng Bong and the Jee Pahng Ee for which any style is acceptable, and all Black Belts may use the metal ATA branded advanced training sword. Recommended Black Belts competing in First Degree Decided rings may also use the metal sword. New First Degree Decided black belts may also present a weapon form from the Champion's color belt curriculum for up to six months after receiving their Decided rank.

Weapons Judging Criteria

In traditional black belt weapon competition, all judges will grade the entire performance of the form, rather than one of the specified aspects. Only the center judge will consider the completeness of the form. Corner judges may speak with the Center Judge, if in their opinion the form was incomplete, prior to revealing scores.

Main judging criterion:

- **Control of the weapon is the first and most important priority.**

The following list of additional criteria would be used to compare one presentation against another (not in order of importance):

- **Accurate, effective strikes** – as they relate to the nine angles of attack
- **Fluid handling of the weapon** – smooth exchanges and transitions from one move to the next
- **Hand-Foot Timing** – coordination of hand, weapon, and foot movements
- **Balance of technique** – Equal precision and quality on the left and right sides of the body
- **Consistency of speed and power** – throughout the form
- **Proper stances**
- **Rhythm and Pacing**
- **Attitude**

The above list is a guide for judges to compare one presentation against another for the purpose of giving a score. Control of the weapon is the number one criterion for determining the winner. ***In breaking a tie***, a competitor who drops a weapon should not receive the win over a competitor who controls the weapon throughout his/her performance.

In a ring of 2 or 3 competitors, if one competitor drops his/her weapon during their regular competition, this doesn't mean that the competitor cannot win (like in a tie-breaker).

Traditional Weapons Form Competition Procedures

Traditional weapon competition procedures will be consistent with traditional form procedures with the following additions:

- During color belt weapon competition for **Tigers and Recreational division**, the time-keeper of the ring will start the clock running at the command of the center judge and will call out “Time” when 30 seconds has expired.
 - Once time has expired, the center judge should stop the competitor if he/she has not finished his/her demonstration within a few seconds of “time” being called.
- There is no time limit for champion division weapons forms.
- The use of resin, resin bags, or other products intended for use to dry the hands before the competition is allowed.

Determining and Administering a Score

Scoring

The range of scores are the same as traditional forms. The judges will give a score ranging from 1 through 9. Notes:

- For a Champion Division weapon form (black belt and color belt)
 - An [incomplete form](#) will receive a zero (0) from the center judge only. Judges A & B will give scores based on the performance given.
 - Deductions for leaving out moves that do not result in an incomplete form may be taken by the center judge.
- **For Recreational and Tigers –**
 - There are no incomplete color belt weapon forms since it’s considered a freestyle form.
 - There will be no penalty for a weapons form that is less than 30 seconds.
 - No part of the presentation that exceeds 30 seconds will be considered when the judges give scores, **even if a weapon is dropped during that excess of time.**
 - If the entire weapon form is all or a section of a black belt weapon form, the competitor will receive a zero (0) from the center judge only. Judges A & B will give scores based on the criteria given.

For Rings with Two or Three Competitors

- Instead of giving scores, the competitors will line up and each judge will point to their choice for the top score according to their assignment.
- The score keeper will record the following scores:
 - 1st place: 9 for all judges
 - 2nd place: 8 for all judges
 - 3rd place: 7 for all judges
- If all the judges point to a different competitor, then the judges will follow the [tie-breaker procedure](#). Competitors will not repeat their forms.

For Rings with a Single Competitor

- The single competitor should receive a 9, 9, 9 from the judges, because they are the best in the ring that day, unless an automatic point deduction is involved (for example, a dropped weapon or incomplete form).

Dropped or Broken Weapons

A weapon is “dropped” when it leaves the competitor’s hand(s) and hits the floor.

- In Traditional Weapons, there is an **automatic one (1) point deduction** from each judge’s score for a competitor **dropping** a weapon(s).
- In Traditional Weapons, there is an **automatic one (1) point deduction** from each judge’s score for **picking up the weapon(s) incorrectly**.
 - The correct way to retrieve a dropped weapon **FOR ALL WEAPONS** is with a **traditional pick-up, meaning going down to one knee and picking up the weapon with two hands**.
 - It should be noted that no one in an actual battle would pick up a weapon with two hands. However, for the purpose of competition, two hands should always be used.
- A competitor is considered to be active in competition from the time they are bowed in to do their presentation until the “Bah-roh” command is given to return the student to their ready position. Any weapon drops between those two actions will impact the score given by the judges.
- There is **NO DEDUCTION** from a competitor’s score if a competitor’s **weapon breaks** during his/her competition. If a weapon should break, the competitor will be given a maximum of 30 seconds to replace the weapon from his/her own gear or borrow one from another competitor. Once the student has replaced the weapon, the form will be continued from the point that the weapon broke. **If for any reason the damaged weapon is not replaced, the competitor will then receive a score of zero (0) from the center judge and regular scores from each of the corner judges.**

Example: The Double Ssahng Jeol Bong form's active time does not extend beyond "Bah-roh". If Sally drops the left Ssahng Joel Bong during the triangle strike after the "Bah-roh", no points should be deducted.

Making a Bracket

A competition bracket is to be set up before a traditional one-step, traditional combat sparring, or traditional point sparring event begins. These guidelines are common to these three events and assure that each division reaches a point at which exactly four competitors are left to spar in the semifinal matches for the event. Simply having an even number of competitors will not ensure that a division will reach this point.

A bye is considered an “automatic win”. The competitor who receives a bye would not have to do one-steps or spar in the first round of the competition and would automatically advance into the next round.

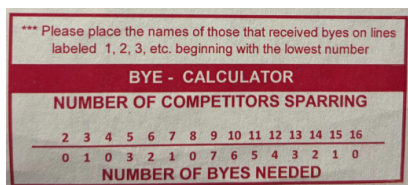
The Center Judge is responsible for making sure the bracket is prepared correctly.

ATA Bye System

The US Tournament Year runs from the Saturday of the World Championship tournament through the Tournament of Champions (TOC) held at the end of the season. Pan-Am Tournament Year runs from Saturday of the Pan-Am tournament through the Pan-Am Tournament of Champions. Note that District, Pan-Am, and State Champions only receive bye preferences for the competition year after the title is earned. Pan-Am Champions and District Champions are considered equal for the awarding of byes.

The procedure for administering byes will be as follows:

- Calculate the number of byes needed, using the bye calculator at the bottom of the bracket sheet.



*** Please place the names of those that received byes on lines labeled 1, 2, 3, etc. beginning with the lowest number

BYE - CALCULATOR															
NUMBER OF COMPETITORS SPARRING															
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
0	1	0	3	2	1	0	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	
NUMBER OF BYES NEEDED															

- Have all the competitors turn around to show the uniform backs, to determine who is wearing an appropriate uniform to receive a bye preference. A competitor must be wearing the “champion” uniform that day, in that event, to get the bye preference and continue to wear it during the portion of the competition for which they received the bye. Verbal or written confirmation of champion status will not be sufficient unless, in rare circumstances, provided in writing by the International Chairman of Tournaments.
- The byes will be awarded in this order:
 1. **World Champions** – The most current World Champion receives the first bye. Additional byes are awarded in descending order of the year the title was won.
 2. **District Champions** or **Pan-Am Champions** – for the competition year after the title is earned. Pan-Am Champion Titles are considered a District title.
 - At this time, a person earning a European and/or Asia Pacific Championship event may order a corresponding uniform indicating this title, but will not receive a bye preference at competitions. This policy will be reviewed each year as these events continue to grow.
 3. **State Champions** – For the competition year after the title is earned.
 4. Award any remaining byes by a random drawing.
- If there are two or more champions of the same year and status, a random draw among those eligible for the bye will be used.
- There is no guarantee that everyone that is eligible for a bye preference will receive a bye.

- **Should a competitor receive a bye in the first round, thus placing him/herself in the medal round, and then refuse to spar in the next round, the competitor will forfeit any “top ten” points earned in that event.**
- A competitor who wishes to change into his/her “champion” dobok top for sparring events may do so, provided that the ring is not delayed in any manner and that they do not change at ringside. They must change the dobok top in the restroom or locker room. He/she must compete in that dobok top to receive the bye. If a competitor leaves the ring to change dobok, extra time WILL NOT be given. If a competitor returns to the ring and byes have been awarded, he/she/they forfeit the potential bye he/she/they would have been given.
- A competitor may not use another’s dobok top for the purpose of obtaining a bye.

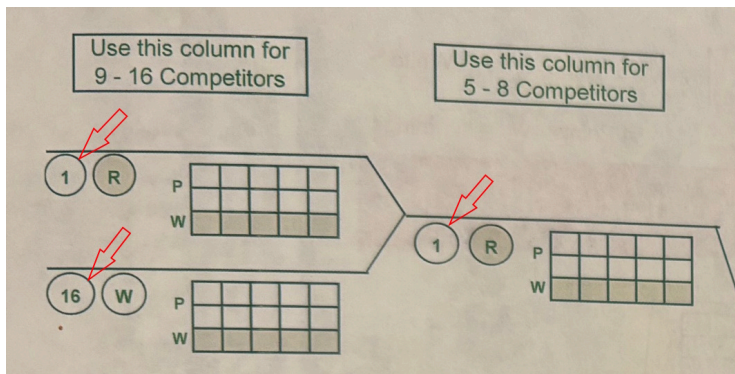
Exceptions

- In Recreational divisions, all byes will be assigned at random. No preference will be made for Champion lettering on the dobok.
- For Districts, the brackets are prepared at Headquarters, and all byes will be assigned at random.
- For Worlds TOC, the top 4 competitors based on the current year’s Top Ten standings will be seeded 1-4, and will have preference for byes in order of their seed. If there are any remaining byes available, they will be drawn randomly from the remaining competitors.

Assigning Byes

Byes will be prioritized given the rules above. Use the small “seed” numbers in the sparring brackets to order those receiving byes properly into the bracket.

- The first bye will go on the top of the bracket at the line marked with ①. If there is a second bye, they would be placed in position ② at the bottom of the bracket. The next bye will go on ③ (middle of the bracket) and so on.



- Example: There are 12 competitors for combat sparring and 4 byes available in the ring. 3 competitors have marked doboks: Bob has a World champion in combat sparring, David has the current District Champion, and James has a current State Champion title.
 - Bob becomes the #1 seed, and he is placed in the ① position on the bracket. Write in BYE for his match.
 - David becomes the #2 seed, and he is placed in the ② position on the bracket. Write in BYE for his match.
 - James becomes the #3 seed, and he is placed in the ③ position on the bracket. Write in BYE for his match.

- Since no one else has a marked dobok, the remaining bye is selected at random from the 9 remaining competitors. Write their name in the #4 seed, at the ④ position, with BYE for their match.
- The 8 remaining competitors are filled in at random in the remaining positions on the bracket.
- More recent World Champions earn a higher seed.
 - Example: there are 6 competitors and 2 byes available in the ring, and there are 3 competitors with marked doboks: Susan with a World Champ 2023 title, Lisa with a World Champ 2021 title, and Emily with a World Champ 2020 title.
 - Susan becomes the #1 seed, is written in the ① position, and earns the first bye.
 - Lisa becomes the #2 seed, is written in the ② position, and earns the second bye.
 - The 4 remaining competitors, including Emily, are arranged into the remaining slots in the bracket at random.
- Competitors with equal markings are seeded within their peer group at random.
 - Example: There are 6 competitors, and 2 byes available in the ring, and there are 4 marked doboks: Adam with a World Champ, David, Nick, and Mike with current State Champ.
 - Adam becomes the #1 seed, is written in the ① position, and earns the first bye.
 - By random drawing among the 3 remaining eligible for a bye, David gains the #2 seed, is placed in the ② position on the bracket, and gets the second bye.
 - The 4 remaining competitors, including Nick and Mike, are arranged into the remaining slots in the bracket at random.

Same School Rule

When the center judge is pairing the competitors for traditional point sparring or traditional one-step competition, he/she will make every effort to avoid having competitors from the same school compete against each other in the first round of competition.

- If a competitor receives a bye in the first round, they may face an opponent from the same school the first time they spar.
- The procedure for determining **earned** byes will take precedence over the rule of competitors being separated by school for the first round.
- Earned byes cannot be reassigned if this procedure leaves only members from the same school competing against each other in the first round.
- **Random** byes can be adjusted for the same-school rule. Try to do that adjustment before the random byes are announced to the competitors.

This “same school” rule does not apply to District competition. All byes and placement of competitors at the Districts competitions are done in a random order, and no consideration of school will be given by the judges.

For the Tournament of Champions, the top four ranked competitors by seasonal points will be placed in the #1 to #4 seeded slots. If there are byes to be assigned, these four competitors will get preference. Any remaining byes will be assigned by Headquarters at random to the remaining competitors in the ring. [See [here](#).]

Final Check

Once the bracket is completed, it is imperative that the center judge checks the bracket using the following procedure:

- Have all competitors line up in the center of the ring.
- Announce each match using the competitors' first and last names. Have each competitor kneel as their name is called.
- Upon completion, make sure everyone still standing is not competing in that event.

Traditional One-Step Sparring Competition

Rules and Guidelines

- All white, orange, and yellow belts are eligible to compete in traditional one-step sparring. Electing to compete in one-step sparring DOES NOT prevent them from also competing in traditional point sparring. White, orange and yellow belts may choose to participate in both events.
- A competitor cannot mix one-steps from two different ranks, but the set of one-steps which a competitor uses does not have to match the form the competitor used during form competition
 - EXAMPLE: a competitor may do Songahm 2 Form and Songahm 1 One-Steps.
- A competitor must do at least two different one-step combinations on the first two attempts to win both points.
- If a competitor does repeat a one-step during the first two attempts, they are prohibited from winning the second attempt. They may, however, repeat a one-step during the final round and win the tiebreaker.
- One-step #1 and #2 can be performed in any order. The #3 one-step will not be allowed.
- Only one-steps from the White, Orange, or Yellow curriculum are allowed.
- If there is a tie and a tiebreaker is necessary, the competitor will use his/her choice of the #1 or #2 one-step.
- A one-step match will last for a maximum of three one-steps.
- If a competitor accidentally makes slight contact during one-step sparring, he/she will not be penalized. If excessive contact is made, a penalty point may be awarded, or the student may be disqualified if appropriate.

Competition Procedures

- Traditional one-step sparring brackets will be set up using the procedure [here](#). Once the bracket is completed, announce the competitors that received byes, if any.
- One-steps must be done with a “partner” facing each other and as if in a self-defense situation. The only exception to this rule is for ATA Tigers. See [here](#).
- After the competitors bow in, the center judge calls the first match, and directs the competitor designated as red on the bracket to line up on his/her right, and will use a piece of red cloth attached to the competitor’s belt in the back, to confirm. The competitor assigned to be white will line up on the Center’s left.
- The red competitor on the center judge’s right will always low block first.
- The center judge will start each one-step segment by telling the red competitor to “Step Back, Low Block!”
- The center judge will break the competitors between each one-step.
 - Using flags, the judges will score the first one-step when directed to score by the center judge.
 - One point will be awarded to either red or white.
 - This will continue until one competitor scores two points and is declared the winner of the match.
 - The winner of the match should then confirm his/her name with the scorekeeper to ensure that the proper competitor is credited with the win, and advances to the next round.

Judging Criteria

All one-steps will be judged by the following criteria. The judges will check each of the criteria, moving down the list until he/she sees a significant difference between the competitors. This determines the winner of the one- step. **The following criteria is in order of importance:**

- The quality of the basic techniques: stances, blocks, kicks, etc. As mentioned earlier about forms, memorization is not the organization's sole objective. A student that has great technique but leaves out a move (or does an incorrect move) should not lose to a student that does the correct moves for the one-step, but has only fair technique.
- If both are even, the judges will look at power; which competitor uses the stronger techniques.
- Next, look at the flow (or smoothness) of the one-step.
- If the judge still can't decide, choose the competitor striking closer to the target.
- If they are still tied, the competitor with the better competitive attitude should win.

Combat Weapons Sparring Competition

Introduction

Combat Weapons Sparring is meant to be an extension of traditional weapons study, through practical application.

This event will be offered at all tournaments, to those competitors who meet the general eligibility requirements. All ranks are eligible for Combat Weapons Sparring.

Equipment

Weapon

The Protech Combat Bahng Mahng Ee sold through World Martial Arts, is currently the only combat sparring weapon approved for competition. It differs greatly from the Protech traditional safety Bahng Mahng Ee in both weight and dimensions. The height of the competitor does not dictate the length of the combat weapon, however, only ATA Tigers may use the new Tiger Combat Bahng Mahng Ee.

Combat Sparring – Safety Gear

The sparring gear requirements are the same for combat weapons as traditional point sparring (see [Required Safety Gear](#)) with the exception of the gloves. There are two options for gloves:

1. Traditional sparring gloves
2. ATA branded combat gloves
 - The new red & black gloves shown below are examples of ATA branded gloves. These gloves are approved for Combat Sparring, but **Not Approved** for Traditional Sparring.



Optional equipment includes

- Forearm Pads
- Knee Pads
- Shin Pads

Competition Procedures

- Competition procedures for Combat Weapons Sparring are the same as for regular sparring (see [here](#)) except:
 - The judges will also inspect the competitors' weapons to ensure they're not broken, and are tournament-legal.
 - If one competitor reaches ten (10) points before the end of the two minutes, he/she will be declared the winner.

Legal Target Areas

Points in combat weapons sparring competition are scored by striking or stabbing with the weapon to a legal target area using one of the combat weapons sparring techniques or by causing one's opponent to drop his/her weapon.

The following guidelines apply:

- The strike or stab must be effective and under control to be considered a scoring technique by the judges.
 - A judge would indicate an ineffective or out of control strike/stab with the “no-point” signal used in all sparring events.
- If, in the opinion of the judges, **both competitors strike or stab with proper technique simultaneously**, no point will be awarded.
 - A judge would indicate simultaneous strikes/stabs by competitors with the "no-point" signal used in all sparring events.
- The competitor cannot score using the handle of the combat weapon.
- The entire body is a legal target area in combat weapons sparring with the following exceptions:
 - Groin
 - Stab to the face
 - Any area of the neck not covered by headgear (Face shield is considered part of the headgear.)

Points is change

Strikes with the weapon to a legal contact area will result in the following points with a maximum of 3 points given at any one time:

- **1 point** will be awarded for a legal strike or stab to the body, not including the head or weapon-holding arm below the elbow.
- **2 points** will be awarded for a legal strike to the head, weapon-holding arm below the elbow, or stab to the front thigh.
- **Add one point** to the score for jumping techniques.
 - To be awarded the extra point, the competitor must strike with both feet off the ground.

If a competitor drops their weapon, a penalty point would be awarded to their opponent. See [Dropped Weapons](#), below.

Parry, Block or Disarm Techniques

For combat weapons competition, to parry means to pass or deflect the opponent's weapon movement without being struck yourself. Parrying of your opponent's weapon or hand is allowed.

For combat weapons competition, a **block** means to resist, with counter force, your opponent's weapon.

- Blocking an opponent's weapon with one's own weapon is allowed, however, pushing one's opponent is not allowed.
- Using one's hand, or any body part, to stop the weapon of one's opponent will result in a point awarded to one's opponent (as if the weapon hit that body part.)

For combat weapons competition, one may attempt to *disarm* your opponent by hitting the opponent's hand, arm or weapon with your own weapon. However, one may not disarm an opponent using a "trapping" disarming technique where one grabs the weapon.

“Out of Bounds” for Combat Sparring

A competitor is considered “out of bounds” when any part of the body is touching the floor beyond the ring boundary during sparring. Corner judges should tap the floor with their flag if they see a competitor is out of bounds, to help him/her realize their ring position.

The following rules apply:

- A competitor who is out of bounds cannot score.
- A competitor who is out of bounds can still be scored upon (by an opponent who is in bounds).
- A competitor is not required to allow the person out of bounds return in bounds. If in the opinion of the judges, there is no danger to the competitors or spectators, they may allow the ring to continue even if one competitor is out of bounds.
- If a competitor has one foot in bounds and one foot out of bounds, the competitor can only score with a strike by picking up the out of bounds foot. He/she is now back in bounds.
- A competitor can score on an out of bounds competitor with a jump if initiated inside the ring and the scoring occurs while still completely in the air.
- If, in the opinion of the judges, a competitor is running out of bounds to avoid the fight, they may stop time and/or assess a warning. See [Warnings](#), below.

“Down”

In Combat Sparring, a competitor is considered “down” when any part of the body, besides his/her feet and one knee or one hand, is touching the ground.

- A competitor who is down cannot score.
- When one competitor is down:
 - The judges may break and reset if the competitor doesn't immediately regain their feet.
 - A judge may call for a non-contact warning if a competitor is going to ground to waste time.
 - The center judge may stop time if a competitor is purposely wasting time or is too slow to get up and return to the mark.

Dropped & Broken Weapons

If a competitor drops his/her weapon any time after the beginning of the match, an additional point will be awarded to the opponent.

- In combat weapons sparring, a weapon is considered dropped if the weapon leaves the competitor's hand and hits the ground.
 - If the weapon leaves the competitor's hand and the competitor catches the weapon before it hits the ground, this is not considered a dropped weapon.
 - If the weapon breaks during the competition, the competitor will be given an opportunity to replace it.
- A broken weapon is not a dropped weapon, and the competitor will not be penalized.
- If the weapon is not replaced promptly, the competitor will forfeit the match.
- To be penalized for a drop, the competitor must have lost control of the weapon.
 - A competitor setting their weapon down to adjust their gear is NOT a dropped weapon.

Procedures for Dropped Weapons

- When a weapon is dropped, the center judge will direct the time-keeper to "Stop Time".
- A discussion will then take place about when the drop occurred, relative to that competitor's scoring technique.
 - If the drop occurred as part of the scoring technique, the competitor cannot score with that technique.
 - If the drop occurred after the scoring technique was completed, the competitor may score.

Example 1: Alice strikes Sue's chest protector. Sue blocks afterwards, and knocks the weapon from Alice's hand. Sue receives the penalty point for Alice's weapon drop. The judges rule Alice had completed the scoring technique, and can be awarded points for it.

Example 2: Alice strikes Sue's chest protector. The judges call break, and Alice trips on her way back to her spot, and drops the weapon. This is clearly separate: Alice completed the scoring technique, and can be awarded points. Sue also receives the penalty point for Alice's drop.

Example 3: Alice strikes Sue's chest protector but, in the process of the strike, loses control of the weapon and drops it. Sue receives the penalty point, and Alice receives no point, because the drop occurred as part of the technique.

- Award the competitor who did not drop the weapon a point his/her opponent's drop.
 - If both competitors in the match drop their weapons at the same time, both will be awarded a point.
- Call for points if necessary.
- Time resumes when the center judge restarts the match.

Example 1: The red competitor performs a scoring strike but during the follow through drops his/her weapon. This is considered an active part of the match. White is awarded a point for red's dropped weapon and the red competitor **cannot** be awarded points for the scoring technique.

Example 2: The red competitor performs a scoring strike and "break" is called. As red moves back to his starting position, he drops his weapon. This would be an example of the "inactive" part of the match. A point is awarded to white for red's drop and red **can** receive points for his scoring technique.

Warnings and Penalty Points

The safety of all competitors is the main concern of every judge involved. It is because of this safety concern that the calling of warnings is a very important aspect of the judge's responsibility. Warnings are given when the judge sees the competitor do something illegal or potentially dangerous.

There are three different types of warnings: Non-contact, Contact, and Excessive Contact.

Procedures for Calling a Warning

The procedures for calling warning in combat weapons sparring are the same as those used in traditional point sparring. See [here](#).

Non-Contact Warnings

A competitor may be issued a non-contact warning. Non-contact warnings include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The competitor was running out of the ring to avoid being scored upon.
- The competitor was purposely falling to avoid being scored upon.
- The competitor is delaying the match (slow returning to mark, slow getting up, etc.).
- The competitor is receiving coaching.

Non-contact warnings will receive the following penalty:

- For the first infraction in the match, the competitor will receive a verbal warning only.
- For each additional infraction in the match, a penalty point will be awarded to the competitor's opponent.

Contact Warnings

Contact warning rules are for the safety of competitors. The safety equipment is only effective in stopping cuts and bruises from accidental contact made with controlled technique. It will not protect against full-power attacks. Contact warnings are awarded when contact is made to an illegal area.

Examples would be:

- Strikes to illegal targets.
- Stabs to illegal targets.
- Takedowns of any kind.
- Throwing of one's opponent.
- Grabbing one's opponent or his/her weapon.
- Body checking, pushing / shoving your opponent.

Contact warnings will receive the following penalty:

- The first infraction in the match will result in a penalty point awarded to the competitor's opponent.
- The second infraction in the match will result in the automatic disqualification of the competitor.

Excessive Contact Warnings

Excessive Contact Warnings follow the same procedures as traditional point sparring guidelines which are listed below.

An excessive contact warning can be called by any judge, and is voted on by all three judges, and may result in a penalty point, or disqualification.

- Remember that the purpose of this rule is to protect all competitors physically and mentally.
- Excessive contact may result in disqualification if excessive contact was due to negligent lack of control. A competitor who is disqualified in the quarter finals of the bracket for excessive contact can advance and participate in the 3rd place match unless in the opinion of the Center Judge, the excessive contact was due to Malice Intent.
 - Excessive contact due to malice will result in an unsportsmanlike disqualification, and the competitor is done for the day in all sparring and/or combat events.
 - **Excessive contact due to malice will be reported to the ATA International Chairman of Tournaments by the RTTL. This will be reviewed by ATA International to determine if any other penalties should be imposed. Additional penalties are at the sole discretion of ATA International.**

Traditional Point Sparring Competition

Guidelines

At all tournaments, all ranks will be eligible to free-spar, including white/orange/yellow belts.

Competition Procedures

Preparation

- The Center Judge will oversee the creation of the sparring bracket. See [here](#).
- Prior to sparring competition, the center judge must verify that all competitors are wearing all the required sparring gear and all gear is ATA-approved. See [here](#).
- Prior to the first sparring match, the center judge will personally check the stopwatch or timer to ensure it is working properly.
- The Center Judge will announce who has been awarded a bye, if any.
- The Center Judge will pair off competitors according to the bracket, so that each knows who they are to spar in the first round.

Competition

- The center judge will call up the competitors in pairs according to the sparring bracket, when it's their turn to spar.
- Each competitor will answer "Yes, Sir/Ma'am!" when his/her name is called and run to the mark indicated by the center judge. From that point to the end of the match, the competitors will follow the instructions of the center judge.
- In the sparring bracket, for each match, one competitor is marked as R for red, and the other W for white.
- The Red competitor will start on the center judge's right and will be indicated by using a red piece of cloth attached to the competitor's chest protector strap, in the back.
- Each round will be timed for a maximum of 2 minutes.
- Time runs continuously unless a judge directs that time should be stopped.
- If one competitor reaches five points before the end of the two minutes, he/she will be the winner.
- Unless a disqualification is declared, the competitor who scores the greater number of points at the end of regulation time will be declared the winner.
- Ties at the end of regulation time will be determined by "sudden victory" – the first competitor to score a point will win. There is no time limit on sudden victory.
- "Sudden victory" fights may be decided by penalty points.
- It is the center judge's responsibility to ensure the correct competitor is advanced to the next round.
 - At the end of a fight, the center judge should direct the winner to go and confirm their name to the scorekeeper.
- After the semifinal matches, the competitors not advancing to the finals will spar for 3rd place.
- There will be a one-minute break before the 3rd place match begins.
- Once the 3rd place match is completed, the final match will determine 1st and 2nd place.

Post-Competition

- The center judge will verify the bracket results, and transfer the results to the score sheet.

- A disqualification or warning given during combat weapons sparring competition does not carry forward to traditional sparring except for unsportsmanlike conduct.

Position of the Judges

Each judge is assigned a particular position in the ring which will allow him/her the best view for judging traditional point sparring or traditional one-step competition. The other two judges should take a position in the opposite corners from the center judge, creating a triangle.

- All three judges should try to maintain this triangle, so that as the competitors and center judge moves around the ring, so do the judges.
- The center judge must maintain his/her primary position directly facing the scorekeeper and timekeeper during any calls.
 - This is to ensure the scorekeeper and timekeeper receive, understand, and write down all instructions and scores. When the center judge has confirmed a point(s) and called them out to the scorekeeper, the scorekeeper should repeat the point(s) back to the center judge. This process will confirm that the proper information was heard and recorded.

Target Areas & Techniques

In a traditional point sparring competition, points are scored by competitors using only hand or foot techniques to legal target areas. The following guidelines apply:

Hand techniques may only strike the front of the torso.

- The front of the torso is restricted to the front of the body starting at the bottom of the belt and going up to the base of the throat, and from one side seam of the uniform to the other side seam.
- Legal hand techniques include only the following: punch, backfist, hammerfist, ridgehand and knife hand techniques.
- Striking techniques going towards or making contact with areas outside of this definition will be considered illegal. (See [Warnings](#).)

Foot techniques may strike the following:

- Front of the torso.
- Any area of the head covered by headgear (face shield is considered part of the headgear).
- Kicking techniques directed towards or making contact with areas outside of this definition will be considered illegal (See [Warnings](#)).

Illegal Target Areas and/or Illegal Techniques

Illegal target areas include any part of the body not described in the above definitions. The type of technique, striking or kicking, will determine which definition to use.

In traditional sparring, illegal target areas include:

- All areas below the belt. This includes side, front or back areas and applies to kicks or strikes.
- The back of the torso
- Any hand techniques to the head & neck

Illegal techniques include:

- Those that strike or target any part of the head not covered by headgear. This includes the throat, sides and back of the neck below the headgear.

- Those that are “blind”. A hand- or kicking technique is considered “blind” if the attacker is not looking at the target at the time the technique is thrown.
 - A spinning backfist would be an example of a “blind” hand technique.
 - Throwing a spinning heel kick while not spotting the target would be an example of a “blind” kicking technique.
- Fingertip techniques

Neutral Target

Neutral targets are defined as areas of the body which, when contact is made, it is not illegal and does not score. The arms and top of the shoulders are neutral targets.

Points

How a Competitor Scores a Point

Scoring points will be done by striking legal hand or foot techniques to or near the legal target areas. The following techniques will score points:

- **Non-jumping or jumping hand techniques** to the legal target area will score **one point**.
- **Non-jumping foot techniques** to the legal target area other than the head will score **one point**.
- **Non-jumping foot techniques** to the head, face, side or back of the neck, will score **two points**.
- **Jumping foot techniques** to the legal target area other than the head will score **two points**.
- **Jumping foot techniques to the head** target areas score **three points**.
- The criteria for a technique to qualify as a jump kick is that the non-kicking foot must be off the ground at the time of the kick coming close to or touching the legal target area.
- Techniques cannot score if the competitor (the attacker) is falling during the execution of the technique.
- Neither color belts nor black belts are required to make contact to score points but may make light to moderate contact to legal areas.
 - In the interest of safety, if a judge feels that the technique was close enough to score, (no attempt was made to block or evade) but contact was not made because of exceptional control by the attacker, a point should be awarded.
 - **Example:** Competitor A strikes the chest of Competitor B with a side kick, but in the process puts his/her hand on the floor while executing the kick. The judges should use the "No point" call.
 - **Note:** It is imperative that judges understand the importance of calling a point for a competitor that is obviously trying not to hit a less talented competitor. If Competitor A does a spin kick just over the head of Competitor B, and it is obvious to the judges that Competitor A did so in order not to hurt Competitor B (competitor B did not evade, attempt a block, or otherwise demonstrate that the kick was seen and dealt with), the judges should award 2 points to Competitor A just as though the kick had actually hit the head of Competitor B. If Competitor A is continually denied points because he/she is trying not to injure the other competitor, he/she will become frustrated and be more inclined to make contact.
 - *This is strictly a judgment call, and not open to interpretation by other competitors, judges, spectators, or seniors. It is put in the rules to remind judges that the most important aspect of judging is competitor safety.*

“Down”

In Traditional Sparring, a competitor is considered “down” when any part of the body, besides his/her feet, is touching the ground.

- A competitor who is “down” cannot score.
- A competitor who puts a hand on the mat to get a higher kick CANNOT score, but they can be scored upon.
- When one competitor is down and doesn’t immediately regain his/her feet:
 - The judges would break and reset.
 - The judges may stop time if a competitor is purposely wasting time.
 - The center may assess a non-contact warning if the competitor is going to ground to waste time.

The Signals Used for Point Calling

Corner and center judges use signals to indicate calls in a ring. The center judge will point to the proper competitor rather than raising a flag. A corner judge will use the flags as an indicator.

The calls are:

- **Point** - raise the correct flag color (as well as pointing the flag toward the competitor who scored) and number of fingers corresponding to the number of points scored. This means the judge saw a technique come close to or touch a legal target area.
- **No Point** - cross both forearms downward. This means the judge saw a technique but did not feel that it qualified as a point due to reasons such as, but not limited to:
 - The technique was not close enough to the opponent.
 - The technique was blocked by the opponent.
 - The technique was not a proper technique (weak or poorly thrown).
 - The technique was thrown when the competitor was out-of-bounds.
- **No See** - one or both hand(s) covers the eyes. This means the judge either did not see a technique thrown or was not in a position to judge whether the technique came close to or touched a legal target area.
- **Warning** - wave the flag color of the competitor to receive the warning down low. This means the judge saw the competitor do something that was illegal.

Difference between “No Point” and “No See”: A judge must SEE, not just hear, contact of any technique he/she warrants a point or warning to be called. If a judge is not sure, or did not clearly see, that a technique scored, he/she will call “no see.” The call of “no see” removes that judge from the decision. If he/she calls “no point”, he/she could prevent a competitor from receiving a legitimate point.

Making a Call – Points

If a point is seen (without a warning), the following actions will occur:

- One or more of the three assigned judges should clearly call out “Break!” to stop the action.
- On the direction of the center judge, each judge will indicate one of the three calls; “point”, “no point”, or “no see”.
- The center judge and the corner judges are required to show their vote at the same time, on the call from the center. Each judge has one vote with all the votes carrying equal weight.
- When indicating a point for either color, the corner judge should raise the appropriate flag **and** point in the direction of the competitor for whom they are calling, while indicating the number of points

awarded. **If** the judge both raises the flag and points in this manner, and an error is made in the color of flag raised, the judge may change the flag for the correct call. If a corner judge calls a point for red but raises the white flag, red is possibly being deprived of an earned point. Honest mistakes do happen. If the judge points in the direction of the proper competitor but raises the wrong color flag, it is evident to everyone for whom he/she meant. It would be permissible in this event to change the flag color.

- Points will be awarded according to the majority of judges who saw the techniques.
- If two or three judges score different points for the same competitor, the highest common score called by the majority of judges will be awarded.

Examples

	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3	Result	Comment
Ex 1	No see	1 Red	No see	1 Red	If a judge calls “no see”, he/she has eliminated himself/herself from that particular scoring vote. In this situation, only one judge saw the scoring technique, so this would make him the majority.
Ex 2	No see	1 Red	No point	No point	There is no majority, so no points would be awarded.
Ex 3	1 Red	1 Red	2 Red	1 Red	The highest score with a majority is 1, so Red is awarded 1 point.
Ex 4	1 Red	2 Red	3 Red	2 Red	At least two judges scored 2 points or higher, so Red was awarded 2 points.

Note: The Center judges’ vote counts no more or less than the other judges, for the purpose of determining the result.

Out of Bounds for Point Sparring

A competitor is considered completely out of bounds when any part of the body is touching the floor beyond the ring boundary during sparring. Judges should tap the floor if they see a competitor is out of bounds to help him/her realize his/her ring position.

The following rules apply:

- A competitor out of bounds cannot score.
- A competitor out of bounds can still be scored upon.
- A competitor is not required to “let” the person out of bounds return in bounds. If in the judgment of the officials, there is no danger to the competitors, or spectators, they may allow the ring to continue even if one competitor is out of bounds.
- If a competitor has one foot in bounds and one foot out of bounds, the competitor can only score with the foot that was out of bounds. By picking up the out of bounds foot, he/she is now back in the ring.
- A competitor cannot score with a jump kick if initiated with both feet out of bounds. However, a #3 style kick can score if the out of bounds foot is the one that initiates the elevation for the kick (and the other foot is in bounds). Once the out of bounds foot lifts off the floor, the base foot is in bounds and the competitor would be considered in bounds.

- A competitor can score on an out of bounds competitor with a jump kick if initiated inside the ring and the scoring occurs while both feet are still in the air.
- The Center may stop time if a competitor is going out of bounds to waste time.

Warnings

The safety of all competitors is the main concern of every judge involved. It is because of this safety concern that the calling of warnings is a very important aspect of the judge's responsibility. There are three different types of warnings: Noncontact, Contact & Excessive Contact or Unsportsmanlike Conduct.

Procedures for Calling a Warning

The following procedures and guidelines are used in the calling of a warning:

- If a judge sees an illegal technique or illegal action, that judge will call "Break" to stop the action. Any judge that saw the warning, will immediately wave the matching colored flag of the offender towards the ground.
- The center judge will direct the time-keeper to "Stop Time!"
- An open discussion will then take place about what that judge saw and whether any of the other judges saw that illegal action. The purpose of this discussion is informational in nature. One judge should never attempt to persuade the other judges to change their minds.
- The center judge should then call for verification of the warning like calling for verification of points.
 - Center Judge says: "Judges call for warning"
 - The signals used to verify a warning are as follows:
 - **Verify the warning** - Wave the matching colored flag of the offender towards the ground. This indicates the judge saw the action and agrees that it was illegal.
 - **Block** - cross the arms low to disagree with the warning. This indicates the judge saw the action, but did not agree that it was illegal. This could be because of a different visual position to the action or otherwise did not interpret the action as illegal.
 - **No See** - hands cover the eyes. This indicates that the judge did not see the action and cannot agree or disagree with the call.
- **The results of this call are handled like calling for points.** The majority indicates the final call. It is important to remember that two calls of "No See" do not negate a warning or a point. The "No See" calls are treated as if the judge wasn't there at the time and the majority of what is remaining indicates the final call, even if the majority is only one judge.
- A competitor cannot be issued a warning and be awarded a point at the same time.
- Judges should make every effort to make sure both competitors and the spectators understand any discussion that occurs.

Example: During the action, one judge saw "Red" punch towards "White's" face and two judges saw "Red" kick towards "White's" head. After the break is called, the judge that saw the punch waves his/her red flag towards the ground. The center judge sees the call for a warning and stops time so the judges can discuss what was witnessed. After the discussion, the center judge asks for official verification. During the verification process:

- **Case #1:** One judge votes for a warning and the other two vote "no warning" by crossing their arms low. The warning is not verified. The center judge then calls for points 1 judge votes "no point" and the other two vote 2 points red. Result: no warning for red and 2 points awarded to red.
- **Case #2:** One judge votes "warning" and 2 judges vote "no see." The warning is verified and red cannot receive points for the kick to the head.

Non-Contact Warnings

A competitor may be issued a non-contact penalty. Non-contact penalties include, but are not limited to the following:

- The technique was going in the direction of an illegal target area (this would include fakes or feints).
- The technique came close to an illegal target area.
- The competitor was running out of the ring to avoid being scored upon.
- The competitor was purposely falling to avoid being scored upon.
- The competitor is delaying the match (slow returning to mark, slow getting up, using the judges to block, etc.)
- The competitor is receiving coaching.

Non-contact warnings will receive the following penalty:

- For the first infraction in the match, the competitor will receive a warning only.
- For each additional infraction in the match, a penalty point will be awarded to the competitor's opponent.

The Center may also stop time if a competitor is wasting time or trying to avoid competition by running out the clock. For example, purposely falling, slow to return to the mark, slow to get up, running out of bounds.

However, as long as a competitor remains upright and in bounds, they may evade within the ring.

Contact Warnings

Contact warning rules are for the safety of competitors. The safety equipment is only effective in stopping cuts and bruises from accidental contact made with controlled technique. It will not protect against full-power attacks. Contact warnings are awarded when contact is made to an illegal area, or for use of an illegal technique, or for use of excessive force.

Examples would be:

- Contact made with any hand techniques to the head.
- A legal technique contacts any illegal target area.
- The technique used was illegal and made contact. (See [here](#) for illegal targets and techniques.)
- Fake or feint made to an illegal target area.
- Contact is excessive in nature.
- Takedowns of any kind
- Grabbing one's opponent or his/her weapon
- Body checking, pushing / shoving one's opponent

Contact warnings will receive the following penalty:

- The first infraction in the match will result in a penalty point awarded to the competitor's opponent.
- The second infraction in the match will result in the automatic disqualification of the competitor.
- All contact penalties will result in a point awarded to the defender. This includes non-intentional contact that does not fall under the "NO FAULT" rule.

No-Fault Rule

If a competitor throws a technique that is intended for a legal target area, but due to actions outside of his/her control, strikes (or comes close to) the opponent in an illegal target area, the competitor will not be penalized. An important factor in determining if the no-fault rule should be exercised is if the competitor recognized what was about to happen and tried to further control the technique. It is also important to remember that this is a judgment call by those judges in the ring. Judges will use their experience and the attitudes of the competitors as guidelines when using the no-fault rule.

Example #1: A competitor throws a sidekick towards his opponent's ribs. The opponent does a spinning hook kick at the same time and is therefore kicked in the back. This would result in a no-fault call.

Example #2: A competitor throws a reverse punch towards his opponent's chest. The opponent ducks down and is hit in the face, or blocks the punch up into his/her face. This would result in a no-fault call.

Excessive Contact

An excessive contact warning can be called by any judge, and is voted on by all three judges, and may result in a penalty point, or disqualification.

Remember that the purpose of this rule is to protect the competitors physically and mentally. It may result in disqualification if excessive contact was due to negligent lack of control.

- A competitor disqualified for excessive contact can advance and participate in the 3rd place match.
- Excessive contact due to malice will result in an unsportsmanlike disqualification, and the competitor is done for the day in that particular event.

Disqualification for Contact Warnings

If a competitor is disqualified for two contact warnings during the same sparring match, he/she loses the current match.

- If a competitor is disqualified in the semi-final match, they can advance to the third-place match.
- If a competitor is disqualified in the finals, they will be awarded 2nd place.
 - The only exception is disqualification due to unsportsmanlike conduct. At that point the competitor is finished for the day, and the unsportsmanlike conduct will be reported to the International Chairman of Tournaments for possible further sanctions to the competitor.

ATA Creative Competition

Eligibility Requirements for Creative Competition

In addition to the regular eligibility requirements, in order to compete in any ATA creative competition, the competitor must also compete in the traditional event that correlates to the ATA creative event in which they wish to compete. Failure to compete in the corresponding event will result in the loss of points earned at the creative event and may result in additional penalties at the discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments. *This applies to all ATA sanctioned tournaments **regardless** of the tournament's classification.*

Example: If a competitor, at a Class C tournament, wishes to compete in ATA Creative Forms, the competitor must also compete in Traditional Forms at that tournament. The same would apply for ATA Creative Weapons competition and all classifications of tournaments.

Rules & Guidelines for Creative Forms & Weapons Competition

The competitors should use the materials taught in Traditional Songahm Taekwondo to create their own form which enhances and demonstrates their strengths as a martial artist. The simplest guideline to follow is that if the basis of the technique is not taught in Songahm Taekwondo forms, then it should not be used in a student's presentation. There are no rolls, splits, kip-ups, cartwheels, or other gymnastic type techniques taught in Traditional Songahm Taekwondo forms. Hence, they are not allowed in creative competitions.

- The key to this guideline is the term “basis of the technique”. A student who learns an inner crescent in class may use that technique to perform a jump reverse inner crescent.
- Scissor kicks, triple (side-twist-round) kicks and quadruple (side-twist-round-side) kicks **are allowed**. All these techniques are the result of combined basic kicking techniques taught in Songahm Taekwondo.
 - If a competitor or instructor feels that technique is questionable, he/she should contact the tournament department for clarification before inserting it into their routine.

Uniform Requirements for Creative Competition

Students may wear

- Traditional white dobok
- ATA Creative/Xtreme Traditional Black Uniform
- Black XMA Middleweight Uniform
- Red XMA Program Uniform
- Red ATA Adidas Open Uniform
- Red ATA Adidas Team-style Uniform (stripes on the sleeves)
- Black ATA Adidas Open Uniform
- Black ATA Adidas Team-style Uniform (stripes on the sleeves)

Please note:

- Competitors may **not wear** the sleeveless ATA-Xtreme uniform.
- **Competitors may not remove any part of their clothing during performance.**
- To be used in CRX competition, a team-style uniform cannot be decorated with a team's name or logo.

The New Adidas Black Uniform, used for Creative/Xtreme competitions, may be altered to shorten the sleeves if the altered sleeve reaches the midpoint of the competitor's forearm, meaning the overall length of the sleeve is no shorter than the midpoint between the bend of the wrist and the bend of the elbow. If the sleeve is not

altered, the competitor may roll the sleeve **under one time**. *If the uniform has been altered*, the competitor **MAY NOT** roll the sleeve under one time.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If, in the opinion of the center judge, the altered sleeve does not reach the midpoint of the forearm, the competitor will be directed to change back into his/her white traditional uniform.

Music

- Music is allowed but not mandatory.
- In keeping with the concept that judges will consider difficulty, then, if the music is used, a competitor who performs “in time” with the music may receive a higher score.
- All music must be approved by the student’s instructor.
- Music is the responsibility of the competitor. Each competitor must have their own sound system in good working order. Malfunctions of any kind will not change the time limit.
- The total time limit of 2 minutes will stand regardless of any music malfunction. Competitors should continue without music if there is any delay and have the person designated to play their music take the appropriate action in keeping with the wishes of that competitor.

Creative Form Composition Guidelines

The following guidelines are in place for ATA Creative Competition (Forms & Weapons):

- At least 50% of the form must be original material. This means that a person may not use “Songahm Forms” for more than 50% of their presentation.
 - Keep in mind that a school may create a form that all of its competitors use. This is acceptable and should not reflect negatively upon the score of the competitor.
- The entire presentation must be no longer than two (2) minutes from the judge’s command to start time until the competitor finishes their performance. **(There is no minimum time)**. Everything a competitor does during this 2-minute period shall be considered part of his/her routine and judged accordingly.
- The following techniques are **not allowed**:
 - **No movements with greater than 360-degree turn or twist in the air.**
 - No intended movements where the head is below the waist (leaning to kick high is acceptable)
 - No “illusion” techniques
 - No “gyro” techniques
 - **No Twists or Flips**
 - **Twist movements where the head and hips are parallel with the floor on an X-axis**
 - **Examples: No Chinese Wushu Butterfly Kicks or Butterfly kicks with twists.**
 - **Flips are movements where the hips are above the head**
 - **Example: Cartwheel, Back Tuck, Rolls, Kip-ups, or other gymnastic type movements**
- The following techniques **are allowed**:
 - Multiple traditional butterfly kicks are allowed.
 - Multiple spinning kicks are allowed.

Creative Weapons Composition Guidelines

In addition to the above rules, the following additions apply to the creative weapon competitions.

- Weapons releases are not allowed.

- Weapon rolls are allowed. A weapon roll is where the weapon remains in contact with the body.
- Weapon to weapon contact is considered a release.

Examples:

- The competitor is competing with Ssahng Nats. He/She holds one Ssahng Nat in their hand and rolls one Ssahng Nat around the other Ssahng Nat. *This is a release, and will be treated as such.*
- It is also considered a release if a competitor drops the weapon and catches it before it hits the ground.
- The sheath of the **Gum Do** is regarded as part of the weapon. **In creative weapons, if a student elects to enter the ring with the sheath, it may not be set down or released.**

Control of the weapon is of utmost importance. The above list is not intended to be a specific order of importance but rather a guide for the judge to compare one presentation against another for the purpose of giving a score. **However, in the resolving of ties** during the weapons competition, the control of the weapon should be the number one criterion for determining the winner. **In breaking a tie**, a competitor who drops a weapon should not receive the win over a competitor who controls the weapon throughout his/her performance.

Approved ATA Creative Weapons

General Guidelines

- Competitors may not use single Ssahng Nat.
- If a competitor presents double weapons, they must be identical. The only double weapons permitted are:
 - Ssahng Nat
 - Double Bahng Mahng Ee
 - Double Ssahng Jeol Bong
 - Double Jahng Bong
 - Double Gum Do
 - **Example:** one cannot use a Bahng Mahng Ee and a Ssahng Nat at the same time.

Color Belts

- Color belts have two **styles of weapons** from which to choose:
 - May use Protech safety weapons.
 - XMA or ATA-Xtreme branded weapons. This includes the ATA magnetized sword and magnetized Ssahng Nat.
 - The “XMA” branded Xtreme competition sword has the logo on the scabbard and an “X” shaped hand guard.
 - Advanced training Gum Do sword.
 - Jahng Bongs & Jee Pahng Ees may be of any type.

Black Belts

- May choose the following **types of weapons**:
 - Any weapon from within the entire “Protech” curriculum.
 - The use of double Gum Do swords is allowed.
 - The use of double Jahng Bong is allowed.

- Black belts, including 1st Degree Recommended Black Belts competing in a 1st Degree Decided ring, have two **styles of weapons** from which to choose:
 - Protech safety weapons
 - XMA or ATA-Xtreme branded weapons, including the ATA magnetized sword and magnetized Ssahng Nat
 - The “XMA” branded Xtreme competition sword, which has the logo on the scabbard and an “X” shaped hand guard
 - Advanced training Gum Do sword
 - Jahng Bongs & Jee Pahng Ees may be of any type.

Creative Forms & Weapons Competition Procedures

Creative forms and weapons procedures will parallel traditional forms and weapons competition procedures with the addition of the scorekeeper timing the competitor’s performance.

- Before the start of the ring, the judges will perform a weapons inspection.
- The scorekeeper will start the time when the center judge says "Your time begins now."
- The scorekeeper will inform the center judge when the 2 minutes have expired.

Competitor Bow in Procedures

1. When a competitor's name is called, he/she enters the ring and runs to the center of the ring for their traditional bow-in.
2. Upon the completion of the traditional bow-in, the center judge will say, “Your time begins now.” The scorekeeper will start the clock.
 - a. This signifies the beginning of the competitor's form. If a competitor wishes to add additional adjustments, bows, or presentations, that is up to him/her. However, these additional adjustments, bows, presentations, etc. are considered part of their presentation, and will be considered in the giving of their score, and the time used is part of their 2 minutes.

Determining and Administering a Score

Scoring for creative forms and weapons will be awarded in the same manner as traditional forms competition and will have a consistent meaning. (See [Determining and Administering a Score](#).)

Judging Criteria for Creative Forms & Weapons

All three judges will score the entire form **with the quality of the competitor's technique and *control of the weapon* being the most important criteria.** Should a competitor choose to add a more difficult technique to his/her routine and fail to control the weapon or technique, points should be deducted.

Additional judging criteria are as follows and are all of equal importance. These criteria are not in any particular order:

- Creativity
- Difficulty
- Presentation
- Attitude
- Precision

Penalties

A Creative / Xtreme competitor will no longer be disqualified for violations.

If a competitor violates presentation guidelines by doing one of the following, they will be assessed a penalty:

- Performs an illegal technique
- Performs an illegal weapon release
- Exceeds the time limit
- Presents a form that is not at least 50% original material
 - A competitor may not use Songahm Forms for more than 50% of their demonstration.
 - Keep in mind that a school may create a form that all of its competitors use. This is acceptable, and not a reason for penalty.

If the competitor incurs a penalty:

- When it's time to present a score, the center judge will announce: **“Because you . . . , I will have to give you a zero, but the corner judges will score as normal”**.
- The corner judges will score what they saw. It is possible for a competitor to receive a score of 9-0-9.

Dropped Weapon in Creative Competition

- **Dropping the weapon:** A dropped weapon will result in a **one (1) point** deduction from all three judges.
- **Retrieving the Weapon:** A weapon that is retrieved must be picked up in the traditional manner: on one knee, with both hands. If a weapon is picked up incorrectly, an additional **one (1) point** will be deducted from all three judges.
- **Multiple Drops:** If the competitor drops the weapon more than once, a **one (1) point** penalty per drop and/or incorrect pick up will be deducted from all three judges.
- **Minimum Score:** The lowest possible score in Creative Weapons is 1. **There are no incomplete forms or second attempts in any competition.**
- **Procedure:** If there are mandatory deductions, the center will explain the deductions to the corner judges before scores are given.

Broken Weapons

There is **NO DEDUCTION** from a competitor's score if a competitor's **weapon breaks** during his/her Creative/Xtreme competition. If a weapon should break, the competitor will be given a maximum of 30 seconds to replace the weapon from his/her own gear or borrow one from another competitor. Once the student has replaced the weapon, the form will be continued from the point that the weapon broke. **If for any reason the damaged weapon is not replaced, the competitor will then receive a score of 0 (zero) from the center judge and regular scores from the corner judges.** It is okay to borrow another weapon from another competitor, however it must be the same type of weapon.

Example: During a competitor's SJB form the end of the weapon flies off into the crowd.

There are three scenarios:

1. The judges notice the weapon is broken, the competitor replaces the weapon within the 30 second time frame and completes the form.
2. The judges notice the weapon is broken, the competitor **does not** replace the weapon within the 30 second time frame and completes the form. The competitor will then receive a score of 0 from the center judge and regular scores from the corner judges.
3. The judges **do not** notice the broken weapon until after the form is complete, the competitor will receive a score as if the weapon had not been broken.

ATA Creative Competition Divisions

Divisions are based on gender, age, and rank of the competitors and ***will mirror*** the divisions of the traditional competitions. At the conclusion of each tournament season, the International Chairman of Tournaments will evaluate the number of competitors in each division and determine if any changes are to be made for subsequent tournament seasons. Divisions evolve as the organization grows and more students in different age and rank groups compete.

- Creative divisions at all tournaments will reflect the standard age groups.
- Genders will not be combined.
- Black belts will not be combined with color belts.
- Age groups may be combined depending on attendance.

Music

- Music is allowed but not mandatory.
- In keeping with the concept that judges will consider difficulty, then, if the music is used, a competitor who performs “in time” with the music may receive a higher score.
- All music must be approved by the student’s instructor.
- Music is the responsibility of the competitor. Each competitor must have their own sound system in good working order.
- **Malfunctions of any kind will not change the time limit, nor will the competitor be allowed to repeat or start their presentation again.**
- The total time limit of 2 minutes will stand regardless of any music malfunction. Competitors should continue without music if there is any delay and have the person designated to play their music take the appropriate action in keeping with the wishes of that competitor.

EXAMPLE:

A competitor has music planned for his/her competition. The judge gives the command, “YOUR TIME BEGINS NOW”. The competitor’s music fails to play. The competitor should begin his/her presentation or risk the chance of going over the allotted time. Competitors should work with their instructor to prepare for music malfunctions and time allotments.

ATA Xtreme Competition

Eligibility Requirement

In addition to the regular eligibility requirements, to compete in any ATA-Xtreme competition, the competitor must also compete in the traditional event that correlates to the ATA-Xtreme event in which they wish to compete. Failure to compete in the corresponding event will result in the loss of points earned at that event may lead to additional penalties at the discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments. This applies to all ATA-sanctioned tournaments regardless of the tournament's classification.

Example: If a competitor wishes to compete in ATA-Xtreme Forms, the competitor must also compete in Traditional Forms at that tournament. The same would apply for the ATA-Xtreme Weapons competition.

ATA-Xtreme Competition Rules & Guidelines

ATA Xtreme form & weapon competitions are a “freestyle” performance that allows the mix of traditional and contemporary martial arts techniques. The ATA Xtreme division category for forms and weapons competition is based in traditional Songahm Taekwondo but allows for non-traditional movements spanning all martial arts styles and disciplines whereas the ATA Creative division categories do not. Competitors are free to create their choreography based where martial arts techniques and combinations carry the highest value over non-martial arts techniques such as gymnastics, acrobatics, and dance.

Note: There are no “qualifying techniques” that must be performed.

Uniform Requirements for ATA Xtreme Competition

Students may wear

- Traditional white dobok
- ATA Creative/Xtreme Traditional Black Uniform
- The Adidas Black Uniform

Please note:

- Competitors may **not wear** the sleeveless ATA-Xtreme uniform.
- **Competitors may not remove any part of their clothing during performance.**

The following are ATA tournament approved uniforms that can be worn for Creative and Xtreme competition:

- Black XMA Middleweight Uniform
- Red XMA Program Uniform
- Red ATA Adidas Open Uniform
- Red ATA Adidas Team-style Uniform (stripes on the sleeves)
- Black ATA Adidas Open Uniform
- Black ATA Adidas Team-style Uniform (stripes on the sleeves)

To be used in CRX competition, a team-style uniform cannot be decorated with a team’s name or logo.

The New Adidas Black Uniform, used for Creative/Xtreme competitions, may be altered to shorten the sleeves if the altered sleeve reaches the midpoint of the competitor's forearm, meaning the overall length of the sleeve is no shorter than the midpoint between the bend of the wrist and the bend of the elbow. If the sleeve is not

altered, the competitor may roll the sleeve **under one time**. *If the uniform has been altered*, the competitor **MAY NOT** roll the sleeve under one time.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If, in the opinion of the center judge, the altered sleeve does not reach the midpoint of the forearm, the competitor will be directed to change back into his/her white traditional uniform.

Music

- Music is allowed but not mandatory.
- In keeping with the concept that judges will consider difficulty then, if the music is used, a competitor who performs “in time” with the music may receive a higher score.
- All music must be approved by the student’s instructor.
- Music is the responsibility of the competitor. Each competitor must have their own sound system in good working order.
- **Malfunctions of any kind will not change the time limit, nor will the competitor be allowed to repeat or start their presentation again.**
- The total time limit of 2 minutes will stand regardless of any music malfunction. Competitors should continue without music if there is any delay and have the person designated to play their music take the appropriate action in keeping with the wishes of that competitor.

EXAMPLE:

A competitor has music planned for his/her competition. The judge gives the command, “YOUR TIME BEGINS NOW”. The competitor’s music fails to play. The competitor should begin his/her presentation or risk the chance of going over the allotted time. Exceeding the allotted time will result in a penalty for the competitor. Competitors should work with their instructor to prepare for music malfunctions and time allotments.

ATA Xtreme Form Composition Guidelines

The following guidelines are in place for ATA-Xtreme competition (Forms & Weapons):

- Competitors in these divisions must demonstrate a form or weapons form that reflects the essence and values of ATA-Xtreme.
- At least 50% of the form must be original material. This means that a person may not use Songahm Forms for more than 50% of their demonstration.
 - Keep in mind that a school may create a form that all its competitors use. This is acceptable, and not a reason for penalty.
- The entire presentation must be no longer than 2 minutes from the judge's command to start time until the competitor finishes their performance.
- There is no limit to the number of "tricks" allowed.
- All types of kicks and combinations are allowed as long as the instructor of the competitor approves of the safety aspect of the presentation. Safety is the number one concern.
- No props are allowed.
- Blindfolds are considered a prop and are **NOT** allowed.

ATA Xtreme Weapons Forms Composition Guidelines

In addition to the rules for ATA Xtreme forms competition, the following additions apply to the ATA-Xtreme Weapon Competitions:

- **Releases** of the weapon **are allowed** in ATA-Xtreme competition.

- During ATA Xtreme competition the sheath of the Gum Do may be set aside as long as it is done in a way that is not disrespectful to the weapon.
 - The sheath of the weapon does not have to be picked up in ATA-Xtreme competitions.
- Control of the weapon is of utmost importance. The above list is not intended to be a specific order of importance but rather a guide for the judge to compare one presentation against another for the purpose of giving a score. **However, in the resolving of ties** during the weapons competition, the control of the weapon should be the number one criteria for determining the winner. **In breaking a tie**, a competitor who “drops” a weapon should not receive the win over a competitor who controls the weapon throughout his/her performance

Approved ATA-Xtreme Weapons

Same as [Creative Weapons](#).

General Guidelines

- Competitors may not use single Ssahng Nat.
- If a competitor presents double weapons, they must be identical. The only double weapons permitted are:
 - Ssahng Nat
 - Double Bahng Mahng Ee
 - Double Ssahng Jeol Bong
 - Double Jahng Bong
 - Double Gum Do
 - **Example:** one cannot use a Bahng Mahng Ee and a Ssahng Nat at the same time.

Color Belts

- Color belts have two **styles of weapons** from which to choose:
 - May use Protech safety weapons.
 - XMA or ATA-Xtreme branded weapons. This includes the ATA magnetized sword and magnetized Ssahng Nat.
 - The “XMA” branded Xtreme competition sword has the logo on the scabbard and an “X” shaped hand guard.
 - Advanced training Gum Do sword (metal swords)
 - Jahng Bongs & Jee Pahng Ees may be of any type.
 - **There are no restrictions in the size of the weapons**

Black Belts

This section also applies to 1st Degree Recommended Black Belts choosing to compete in a 1st Degree Decided Ring

May choose the following **types of weapons**:

- Any weapon from within the entire “Protech” curriculum. The use of double Gum Do swords is allowed in ATA-Xtreme competition.
- The use of double Jahng Bong is allowed.

Black belts have two **styles of weapons** from which to choose:

- Black belts may use Protech safety weapons.
- XMA or ATA-Xtreme branded weapons. This includes the ATA magnetized sword and magnetized Ssahng Nat.
- The “XMA” branded Xtreme competition sword has the logo on the scabbard and an “X” shaped hand guard.
- Advanced training Gum Do metal sword sold by WMA.
- Jahng Bongs & Jee Pahng Ees may be of any type.
- **There are no restrictions on the size of the weapons.**

ATA Xtreme Forms & Weapons Competition Procedures

ATA Xtreme forms and weapons competition procedure will mirror Creative Forms and Weapons competition procedures. (See [here](#).)

Competitor Bow in Procedures

ATA Xtreme forms and weapons competition bow in procedure will mirror creative form and creative weapon competition bow in procedures. (See [here](#).)

Determining and Administering Scores

Scoring for ATA Xtreme forms and weapons competition will be awarded in the same manner as creative forms and weapons competition and will have consistent meanings. (See [here](#).)

Judging Criteria for ATA Xtreme Forms & Weapons

- All 3 Judges will score the entire form.
- The **first and most important aspect** of judging is the **quality of the competitor's technique and control of the weapon**.
 - Someone performing a more difficult technique would still lose points if that person loses control of the weapon.
- The **second aspect** of judging the form will be the following five categories. All should be considered with equal weight and are in no particular order.
 - Creativity
 - Difficulty (for example endurance, number of spins, use of the floor, etc)
 - Presentation
 - Attitude
 - Precision
- The **third aspect** a judge will consider are the “tricks” and variety of tricks presented in the form. This would include how a competitor adds martial art techniques to tricks he/she is demonstrating.

Example #1: Competitor A, who is equal in presenting an “XTREME” form that is creative, has strong, difficult, precise techniques with a great attitude, may not score as high as Competitor B who adds a variety of “tricks” to that same type of form.

Example #2: Competitor A who has strong, crisp, precise techniques, but does not include as many tricks in their Xtreme form presentation may score higher than Competitor B, whose Taekwondo techniques are not crisp and strong but has many difficult “tricks” within their form.

(Remember that the single most important factor in all form presentations is the quality of the techniques demonstrated.)

Example #3: Competitor A and B are equal in quality of techniques and creativity, but Competitor A only does tumbling passes as his/her “tricks” he/she may not score as high, if Competitor B performs martial arts kicking “tricks” verses gymnastic/acrobatic type “tricks”.

Example #4: If Competitor A and B are equal in everything including “tricks”, the competitor that demonstrates a stronger ability to integrate the “tricks” into martial arts combinations may score higher.

- **Case A:** Both competitors do aerial cartwheels but Competitor A performs it in combination - Butterfly kick, hook kick into the aerial ending with a punch in a front stance, Competitor A demonstrates higher level difficulty through integration of this acrobatic move into a martial arts combination verses just doing a stand-alone aerial.
- **Case B:** Performing a Jump Split kick, back tuck, pop front kick turn punch is more difficult than just a back tuck and landing in a stance or on one's knee.

Penalties

A Creative / Xtreme competitor will no longer be disqualified for violations. Instead, a penalty will be assessed.

See details in the Creative section, [here](#).

Dropped Weapons in ATA Xtreme Competition

The same schedule of point deductions will be used for ATA Xtreme weapons as in Creative Weapons competition. See [Dropped Weapons in Creative Competition](#).

Broken Weapons

There is **NO DEDUCTION** from a judge’s score if a competitor’s **weapon breaks** during his/her competition. If a weapon should break, the competitor will be given a maximum of 30 seconds to replace the weapon from his/her own gear or borrow one from another competitor. Once the student has replaced the weapon, the form will be continued from the point that the weapon broke. **If for any reason the damaged weapon is not replaced, the competitor will then receive a score of zero (0) from the center judge and regular scores from the corner judges.** It is okay to borrow another weapon from another competitor, however it must be replaced with the same type of weapon.

Example: During a competitor’s SJB form the end of the weapons flies off into the crowd. There are three types of circumstances:

1. The judges notice the weapon is broken, the competitor replaces the weapon within the 30 second time frame and completes the form.
2. The judges notice the weapon is broken, the competitor **does not** replace the weapon within the 30 second time frame and completes the form. The competitor will then receive a score of 0 from the center judge and a one-point deduction from the corner judges.
3. The judges **do not** notice the broken weapon until after the form is complete, the competitor will receive a score as if the weapon had not broken.

ATA Team Sparring/Combat Sparring Competition

THESE GUIDELINES AND RULES APPLY TO BOTH SPARRING AND COMBAT SPARRING TEAMS. Please read carefully.

National and Regional Teams

Team sparring will be broken down into two distinct and separate categories. These categories have teams that are considered either a “National Team” or a “Regional Team”. In addition to the regular eligibility requirements, in order to compete in any Team event competition, the competitor must also compete as a black belt in the traditional event that correlates to the Team event in which they wish to compete, in either a Championship or Recreational ring. Failure to compete in the corresponding event will result in the loss of points earned at that event and may lead to additional penalties at the discretion of the International Tournament Chairman, including disqualification of the entire Team. This applies to all ATA sanctioned tournaments regardless of the tournament's classification.

National Teams

National Teams represent a country. Each country’s “National Team” will be selected by the ATA governing body of that country. This same governing body will select all coaches and assistants under the guidance of the presiding Grand Master of that year.

- National Sparring/Combat Teams will compete as a 5-person team (plus alternates) at international competitions.
 - ATA-USA National Team Members will be selected at the ATA-USA National Training Academy “Team Trials”.
- ATA-USA National Members and ATA-USA National Training Academy members may still be part of their 3-person regional teams. Three-member Regional Teams may not represent ATA-USA in international competitions.
- The age/rank division in which they compete as of January 1st until December 31st. For example:
 - A competitor is in the 15-17 division as of World’s 2025. On January 15th 2025, a competitor turned 18. At all international Team competition (team of 5), this competitor will remain in the 15-17 division for the entire year.
 - Please note this scenario: a competitor could compete as an adult in the new season, but as a junior for the international team competition (team of 5). For teams of 3, the competitor would be considered an adult.

Age/Rank Divisions - Junior National Teams

- 1st / 2nd / 3rd Degree Black Belts – Ages 15 to 17 (**Varsity**)

Age/Rank Divisions - Adult National Teams

- 1st through 7th Degree Black Belts – (**Elite**) - Ages 18 to 39
- 1st through 7th Degree Black Belts – (**Legends**) - Ages 40 and older

Competing in Another Division

In the Adult divisions, a person older than 40, may compete in the 18-39 years-old division, however, a person in the 18-39 age group may NOT compete in the 40+ division.

Other Important Information about National Teams

- In the USA, the National Team will be “TEAM ATA-USA”. Other countries represented will have similar names, associated with the country of origin.
- The National teams are the only teams eligible to earn the title of “World Champion”, “Pan-American Champion”, “European Champion”, “Asia-Pacific Champion”. These are international competitions, and only a country’s “National team” may compete in those “title” competitions. There may be local competitions at the events for “Regional 3-person teams”, but those competitions are not for the purpose of earning a title.
- Individual school/state “Regional teams” are not eligible to earn INTERNATIONAL World Champion titles but are eligible to win “WORLD CHAMP TOC” titles. There are different levels of “Championship Titles” depending on the age of the division. See [Regional Team - Championship Opportunities](#).
- National teams will consist of more members, coaches, and alternates. Each country will compose the rules and guidelines pertaining to how teams are composed, how to become eligible for a National Team, and when tryouts will occur.
- Please see your instructor for more information concerning how to become eligible for your country’s “National Team” for either sparring or combat sparring.

EXAMPLE: Team Stevens from School 1494, travels to Argentina for the Pan-American Championships. This team may compete against other 3-member teams for points, but not for a “title” at the Pan-American Championships.

Regional Teams

- Regional Teams will consist of 3 competitors plus alternates. For Regional Team Competition, all team members must be from the same state.
 - A person’s “state” is determined by the state in which the school they train is located. If the school is located in a “border town” where it is possible for members whose address is in one state, but train in another, the state of the competitor should be where he/she trains. Students who train via “Skype” or other internet methods should be attached to the state in which he/she has his/her primary residence. *The International Chairman has the final determination as to any questions about the state in which a person is training.*
- Regional teams can/will compete at Regional Tournaments in the US, as well as the European and Asia Pacific tournaments, and all National Tournaments to accumulate points toward State and/or District Champion.
- Team members must meet the State Championship Eligibility Requirements to earn points.

Regional Team Composition

Teams can be formed by any ATA Licensee who has become a certified team sparring coach or has a certified coach on his/her staff. Event credits for potential tournament hosts will be awarded to the school number of the certified coach. One (1) credit will be awarded for each team event for each age group registered. If the certified coach is not a licensee, the school number attached to the certified coach, at the time the team received its Team ID Number will be used as the governing body in case of disputes.

- Schools may combine members for the purpose of creating teams.
- All members of a Regional or National Team, must be in the official ATA Leadership program.
 - The discovery of an ineligible team member will result in forfeiture of all points earned by that team.
- All members of a Regional Team must be from schools in the same state. The state connected to the competitor follows the same guidelines as all other state indicators as written in previous sections of the rules

- A licensee, wanting his/her student to be on a team, may not move students from schools located in one state to another for the purpose of composing a team.
- The student should be attached to the school for the state where their primary residency exists. The International Tournament Director is the final arbiter considering team sparring eligibility.
- Any determination concerning the interpretation, applicability or necessary exceptions to the rules shall be made at the sole discretion of the International Chairman of Tournaments.
- Competitors competing in Special Ability divisions are not eligible to compete in Team Sparring or Team Combat competitions.

Example: School 0182, from Pennsylvania, wants to create a team. The licensee for School 0182 (Team A) also has a school in Ohio, school number 1559. The students from School 1559 cannot be on Team A, because they reside in another state, and are attached to school 1559 at HQ. The Licensee from School 0182 cannot move students from one school to another just to create the team.

Regional teams are comprised as follows for the regular season:

- Each regional team, Junior or Adult, will be composed of 3 persons; 1 female competitor and 2 male competitors -PLUS- Teams may choose to have 1 female and/or 1 male alternate.
 - These teams will be eligible for STATE, DISTRICT, AND NATIONAL TEAM TITLES.
- All members of a team must be from the state in which the School creating the team is located.
 - Licensees with multiple schools may only coach a team in the state in which the licensee has their primary residence.
 - At every competition, each team may have 1 coach on the sideline.
 - A second coach is allowed, ONLY if they are a member of the competing team.
 - The coaches must be members of the ATA and be wearing an official ATA white Dobok, Certified Blues Instructor suit, or the team uniform. Team uniforms may only be worn while their team is actively competing or judging in team competition.
 - Each team must have 1 certified coach present at the tournament, but not necessarily at each ringside competition.
 - Under special circumstances, and **IF the RTTL is notified prior to the day of the tournament**, the RTTL may grant permission for a certified coach of another team, who is not competing that day, to act as the responsible certified coach for that day.

A team can have an unlimited number of team members, BUT AT MOST ONLY 5 of the members are eligible to compete at each tournament during the regular season – 2 females and 3 males. The rosters of any Regional Team can change at any time prior to District Championships. There is no limit to the number of different competitors that a team can field throughout the tournament season. The following conditions apply:

- All competitors must meet the “Eligibility Requirements for ATA Team Sparring / Combat Participants”, below.
- Once a team has earned 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place at a Regional or National Tournament, all competitors listed on that roster are now committed to that team and that team only. They may not compete on another team for the remainder of the tournament season.
- A team that is found to field an ineligible player will be disqualified from further competition and all earned State and / or National points will be forfeited.
- Upon qualifying for District Championships or World Championships, each Head Coach will be required to submit their “post season” roster. Further explanation is included later in this section.

Age/Rank Divisions – Junior Regional Teams

1st / 2nd / 3rd Degree Black Belts –

- **Bantam** – Ages 8-10
- **Rookies** – Ages 12 and Under
- **Jr. Varsity** – Ages 14 and Under
- **Varsity** – Ages 17 and Under

Notes:

- For all divisions, except the Bantam division, the minimum eligible competition age is 9 years old.
 - Bantam divisions may use competitors whose competition age is as young as 8 years old.
- In all divisions, no consideration will be given to a person small in stature who has been placed in an older age group.
- A competitor must compete in the same team sparring age division for both sparring and combat sparring.
 - Any junior competitor may “compete up” in age brackets in another junior division.
 - Juniors may NOT compete in Adult divisions.
- A competitor must compete in the traditional event corresponding to their team event.
 - The traditional event could be either Championship or Recreational.

Example 1: A junior competitor, with an age of 9, is considered eligible for a 12 and under division. However, the coach must realize that he/she may be at a height/weight/size disadvantage when competing against other competitors that are age 12.

Example 2: A junior competitor aged 12 competes on a Jr. Varsity combat team (14 and under). If that same person is on a sparring team, he/she must also compete in the Jr. Varsity age group. He/she cannot be in one age group for sparring, and a different age group for combat.

Age/Rank Divisions – Adult Regional Teams

1st through 5th Degree Black Belts –

- **Elite** – Ages 18 and older
- **Premier** – Ages 30 and older
- **Legends** – Ages 40 and older
- **Executive** – Ages 50 and older

Special Notes:

- In the Adult divisions, a person may choose to compete down in a younger division but no consideration will be given to age during competition. Coaches should take this into consideration when forming their teams.
- Competitors may NOT compete “up” in age groups (ex. A 25 yr old in a Premier team).
- A competitor must compete in the same team sparring age division for both sparring and combat sparring.
- A competitor must compete in the traditional event corresponding to their team event.
 - The traditional event could be either Championship or Recreational.

Eligibility Requirements for ATA Team Sparring/Combat Participants and Coaches

- There is a strong possibility that Junior Teams and Adult Teams will compete at the same time. Coaches should consider this when selecting additional coaches. Competition will not be delayed because an adult coach is **competing, judging, or coaching** at the same time a Junior Team is competing.
- **There is also a strong possibility that teams will compete while a “head coach” is judging. While every effort to relieve judges will be made, coaches/teams should be prepared to move forward with the competition. Coaches should consider this when selecting additional coaches.**
- Competitors must meet all tournament participation requirements.

- All competitors must be at least a first-degree decided black belt.
 - 1st Degree Recommended Black belts are eligible to compete, assuming they compete in the 1st Degree Decided Black Belt rings for their traditional competitions at that tournament. If a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt competes with Color Belts in his/her traditional events at that tournament, he/she is not eligible to compete on a team at that tournament.
 - All rules pertaining to the timeline in which a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt must obtain his/her 1st Degree Decided rank will apply.
- 6th and 7th degree black belts are **not** eligible to compete on a regional team, however, they are eligible to compete as a member of the National team if selected.
- All members of junior or adult teams, including alternates, must compete in the corresponding Traditional Sparring/Combat Weapons Sparring event at the tournament in which the team is to compete.
- No student may be contacted by any person from a different school concerning team participation without prior approval from his/her instructor. Sanctions will be enforced upon any school/coach not adhering to this rule.
- For junior and adult teams, their members and coaches may either be citizens of the country they represent or in the case of USA teams the State in which they represent.
- A citizen of a country outside of the United States, who works for a school owner in the United States, may compete on a Regional Team, and still be a member of a different country's National Team. This would include school owners who are citizens of another country but have schools in the U.S.
- Members of a country's "National Team" may only try out for a team for the country in which they are a citizen.
- For National Teams, a competitor who has "dual citizenship" (e.g., USA and England) may compete for either country. Once a person with dual citizenship competes for one of the two countries for which he/she has citizenship, he/she may not then compete for the other country.
- Members of each team must be currently competing in Black Belt divisions in their respective countries. (Students aged 17 and under may not participate in adult Regional team divisions.)

Regional Teams – Championship Title Opportunities

Regional Team Sparring/Combat Program

Individual school/state teams may attempt to earn titles at the State, District, and National Level depending upon their age group's title eligibility. This is for both sparring and combat sparring teams. Individual school/state teams are not eligible to earn World Champion titles.

State Champion

The team that has acquired the most points in their state by the end of the tournament season will be awarded the title of "STATE CHAMPION". Points are awarded to teams at all Regional and National Tournaments. All Teams are eligible to earn State Champion titles.

Points will be awarded as follows:

Points Awarded	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
Regional (Class A or B)	5	3	1
National (Class AA)	10	8	5

Note:

- Full points will be awarded, regardless of the number of teams competing at the event.
- No points are awarded for Team Sparring at Class C (in-school) tournaments.

Points will be tallied as follows:

- Teams may compete at an unlimited number of Regional and National tournaments.
 - Teams are only eligible to receive points from their best 5 regional tournaments.
- Teams are eligible to receive points from the best 2 of the 3 National Tournaments. (Fall, Spring, Pam-Am)
- Points for the European and the South Pacific Championships are awarded as Regional Class A points currently. This will be reviewed at the end of every season.

District Champion

To earn the title of “District Champion”, a team must:

1. Qualify for Districts by being in the “Team Top Ten” of their state.
2. Register for, compete in, and win the District Championship team competition.

Note: Winners of each District Championship **in all age groups** are eligible to compete at the Tournament of Champions for the title of “World Champion”.

World Champion

To be eligible to compete for and earn the title of “World Champion”, a team must:

1. Be ranked in the “Team Top Ten” of the nation or...
2. Qualify for Worlds by placing 1st at a District Championship.
3. Register for, compete, and win the competition held at Worlds team competitions.

Note: Winning the title of “World Champion” does not make that team “Team ATA-USA.”

Age Requirements for Champion Titles

All age groups of Teams are eligible to earn State, District, and World titles.

Competition Times at Tournaments

- Team competitions at National events will be held on the Friday of the event. (Fall, Spring, Pam-Am and tournaments)
- For Regional Tournaments, ***Teams must check with the RTTL of each tournament regional*** to know when Team Sparring/Combat events will be held at that regional event. A list of all RTTL email addresses is provided in Section 1 of these rules, [here](#).

Team ID Numbers, Roster Submissions, and Results Tabulations

After each Regional/National tournament, the Data Entry Team for that tournament will fill out a spreadsheet with the names of all members of the teams placing either 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, for each division and type of team sparring event. ***As well as a list of all TEAM ID NUMBERS.*** This information will be sent to ATA HQ with the rest of the tournament results. ATA International will record this information, and tabulate points. State “Team Top Ten Points” will be posted once per month.

- For regional competitions, team rosters must be submitted to the RTTL of that tournament by 8 am Wednesday prior to the tournament weekend. A list of all RTTL email addresses is provided in Section 1 of these Rules, [here](#).

- **Prior** to competing in the team competitions for a tournament season, a certified coach will apply for a Team ID number for that season.
 - Certified coaches should submit their request for a Team ID number by using the appropriate online form. For the link to this form, please contact Senior Master Kevin Pavlik at mr.pavlik@pickata.com
 - Teams will submit a Team Name for approval by the ATA legal department, and to obtain a Team ID Number. This may take up to 30 days.
 - Once a team receives the Team ID Number, the coach **MUST** use that number when submitting rosters for competitions.
 - **Failure to use the Team ID Number** will result in forfeiture of any points earned at that tournament.
 - Members who have participated on any team that places 1st, 2nd, or 3rd at a tournament, **MAY NOT** compete on any other team during that tournament season. This includes postseason competitions.
 - At the time of District Registrations, all teams eligible to compete for a District and/or National title must submit the team's **FINAL ROSTER**. (See Postseason Rosters)
 - The final roster may not change for the rest of the Championship Series.
- A removed team member may not compete on any other team regardless of the reason for removal.
- The roster for teams that place 1st, 2nd or 3rd will be set at this point because they have earned Top Ten points.

Postseason – District Championships and National Championships

- For District Championships, a coach must submit his/her final roster during the online registration process. The Coach should submit any and all persons expected to compete in the postseason regardless of whether or not they plan to attend Districts.
 - **Only members submitted on the Final District Roster may receive a District Champion uniform.**
- Only the members listed on the qualifying team's roster may compete. If a member does not attend or cannot compete, a qualifying team must choose from the substitute list they submitted on their roster.
 - **No other substitutes may be used.**
- For each national event, team registration requirements will be communicated on ATA's website atamartialarts.com and must be followed explicitly.
- Members of each qualifying team will be checked to insure eligibility.
- If it is discovered that a team uses a “non-qualified” person on his/her team (i.e., incorrect age, ineligible player, etc.) that team will be disqualified, and any events in which they placed, will be null and void.
- Teams that earn the opportunity to compete for the title of District Champion and / or National Champion will be required to submit a final “postseason” roster for this portion of the tournament year.
 - All members included on this “postseason” roster must have competed on this team at a minimum of 1 regional competition during the regular season and meet all of the requirements listed in the “Eligibility Requirements for ATA Team Sparring / Combat Participants” that are listed in these rules.
 - A postseason roster may not be altered after being submitted for District Championships and must remain the same throughout the District and TOC competitions.
- A team's “postseason” roster may include the following:
 - 1 female competitor and 2 male competitors.
 - Teams may choose to have up to 2 female and / or 3 male alternate competitors for the postseason.

- **Special Note:** A maximum of only 5 team members may “dress-out” in uniform and be on the sidelines during the Districts and National Championship competitions. These must be the same members throughout the days of that tournament.
 - At the end of the season, a team winning a title may get “Champion” doboks for a total of 8 members and 2 coaches, assuming the coach is not also a competitor.
 - These members may be substituted for other members of the team for District Championships and World Championships in case a team member was not able to attend the Championship Event.
- **Only those team members on this list of 8 competitors will have the ability to wear the title of “District Champ,” or “World Champ” on their dobok should their team earn this title.**
- **Any and all members of teams that have earned the “State Champ” title will be allowed to wear this title on their do-bok.**

Coaches Qualifications

All Regional Team coaches must have a Level 1 Coaches Certification. Coaches Certification can be obtained by attending a Coaches Training Seminar at any Regional, National, World, or Virtual certification clinic hosted by ATA-HQ. There is no charge for a person getting a Level 1 coaching certification. Any person who has previously coached a team at the 2018 District and/or World Championships will grandfather in as a certified coach. The official list of certified coaches will be maintained by the tournament department of the ATA.

This “no charge rule” may change for future years certifications.

Coaching certification is necessary to ensure the coaches:

- Know the rules/guidelines for forming teams and competitions
- Learn coaching strategies pertaining to team sparring/cumulative scoring.
- Understand the training nuances connected with team sparring vs individual sparring
- Limit the coaching liability
- Ensure the integrity of the selection process for teams

Rules and Guidelines

General Definitions

A FIGHT	the sparring competition between two members of opposing teams
A MATCH	the sparring competition between two opposing teams (three fights)
A ROUND	All of the matches in one column of a sparring bracket (eg quarter-finals, semi-finals, etc.)
TEAM AREA	The defined perimeter for the team, established around the competition ring for team sparring events. Only team members and coaches will be allowed inside the Team Area. Warnings and penalty points will be awarded if spectators are entering the team area.
COMPETITION MAT / RING	The padded floor marked for Team Competition. Team members who are not a part of the current match may not step into the competition ring at any time. Coaches may step in to give direction only during stoppages but MUST step back out of the ring when the fight commences. Warnings and penalty points will be awarded for each violation.
CUMULATIVE SCOREBOARD	A separate scorecard, visible to spectators, where a team’s total cumulative score for the match is posted.

REGULATION TIME	Each fight has a regulation time of 1 minute 30 seconds.
SUPERIOR POINT	When the point difference between two competitors is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 or more points in Sparring, or • 11 or more points in Combat Weapons the winning team will earn an extra point.
FIGHT FORFEIT	A team automatically loses a fight.
MATCH FORFEIT	A team automatically loses the entire match.

Regional Team – Competition Procedures

- Prior to the beginning of a match (before the first fight), the center judge will ask one coach from each team to come forward to review the rules and turn in the line-up for this competition.
 - At this time, the center judge should ask if the team has an assistant coach at ring-side. Only designated coaches at ring-side may coach during the match.
 - If a team can only field 2 competitors, the opposing team will be awarded 7 points in team sparring and 10 points in team combat sparring for the forfeited fight. The points will be awarded prior to the first fight in this match.
 - The team who forfeited a fight must send their first fighter. The gender of that fighter will be determined by the other coach.
 - If one team is missing a girl fighter, and the other team is missing a male fighter, it is possible that there is only one fight in the match. The Center judge will perform a coin toss. The team that wins the coin toss will choose which team will send out the first fighter, regardless of gender.
- At the end of each fight, the winning team will declare the gender of the next fight and the losing team will send out the next fighter.
- If the fight is tied in the first 2 fights, those competitors will continue with sudden victory until a winner is declared.
- All three fights will occur, regardless of the cumulative score.
- If either competitor in fight #3 cannot continue and the team does not have a remaining alternate, then a **“MATCH FORFEIT”** is declared, regardless of the cumulative score. The team that cannot continue forfeits the match.
- If there is a tie in the cumulative team points at the end of the 3rd fight, sudden victory will apply to the fight in progress.
- A team may compete with a minimum of only 2 competitors; however, the opposing team will be awarded **7 points in team sparring** and **10 points in combat sparring** for the forfeited fight. Teams must have a minimum of 2 fighters.

Special Note:

In the case that the 3rd teammate is injured or cannot travel, teams can compete with 2 members. **If a team, without a legitimate reason, does not fight the first fight, that competitor is done for that day as the assumption is that he/she is injured and cannot compete. Forfeiting a fight as a strategy will not be allowed and could carry consequences to the team.**

Special Note:

If during the 3rd fight, a team member gets disqualified for illegal targeting, such team may substitute and use an alternate to finish the 3rd fight. That competitor is disqualified for that match only and can compete in the next match, if the team advances.

Special Note:

The 10 points awarded for a forfeit in combat sparring does not constitute a “superior decision”, and thus no “Superior point” will be awarded.

Substitutions

At the beginning of each team sparring match, the coach must declare the 3 primary competitors (starters). This is the starting line-up. An alternate can be used as a substitute, prior to the beginning of a fight, during a match. The substitute should declare which competitor he/she is replacing. That starter is now eliminated from competing for the rest of the match. The "starter" may re-enter for subsequent matches of the day. If a competitor is injured during a fight, a substitute may be used.

******If the substitution occurred during the fight because of injury, the injured competitor is not allowed to compete in team sparring or team combat sparring for the rest of the day.**

Fight Scores and Penalties

In each fight, all points and/or warnings will be given using the current sparring/combat sparring rules of the ATA, including the following:

- The threshold required to score a point during team competition aligns with the individual events. Refer to the individual Combat Sparring and Traditional Sparring rules, [here](#).
 - The "Close Contact" rule, as applied in individual sparring **DOES** apply in Team Sparring.
- The Center Judge may stop time if a competitor is purposely wasting time by going to ground, by being slow to get up once down, or by running out of bounds.

These exceptions apply in Team Combat and Sparring:

- The act of running around the ring to avoid the fight will not be allowed. If in the opinion of the judges, the competitor is running around the ring, not just evading techniques, the following penalties will be enforced. For clarification as to what is "running around the ring to avoid the fight" please see your RTTL.
 - 1st time – penalty is a verbal warning. No point is awarded.
 - 2nd time – Point awarded to the opponent.
 - 3rd time – Competitor is disqualified, and the opponent is awarded seven cumulative points, plus the current number of points he/she obtained in the fight. The disqualified person's team does not receive any cumulative points for that fight.
- Each fight will last 1 minute and 30 seconds, regardless of the score.
- Unlike traditional sparring, or combat sparring, there is no limit to the number of points a team can accumulate in a fight.
- The winner is the competitor who scores the most points during the fight.

Match Scores

Team points are awarded in the following way:

- Each team will be awarded the points scored during the fights.
- A competitor can earn an additional POINT for their team if they defeat their opponent by 8 or more points in sparring, or 11 or more points in combat. This is referred to as a "Superior Decision".

Examples

Team SPARRING	Team A score	Superior point A	Cumulative Score A		Team B score	Superior point B	Cumulative Score B
Fight 1	2	0	2		5	0	5
Fight 2	0	0	2		7	0	12

Team SPARRING	Team A score	Superior point A	Cumulative Score A		Team B score	Superior point B	Cumulative Score B
Fight 3	0	0	2		8	1	21
Match Total			2				21

Team COMBAT	Team A score	Superior point A	Cumulative Score A		Team B score	Superior point B	Cumulative Score B
Fight 1	5	0	5		8	0	8
Fight 2	1	0	6		11	0	19
Fight 3	0	0	6		11	1	31
Match Total			6				31

Match Winner

The team with the most points at the conclusion of all three fights will be declared the winner of the match. If, at the conclusion of the third fight, the cumulative score is tied, the competitors of that fight will continue in "sudden victory".

- If either competitor in **fight #3** cannot continue and the team does not have an alternate, then the team forfeits the match.

Awarding of Byes

Should it be necessary for a bye to be awarded for the bracket, a random draw will be used to choose the team(s) that will be given the bye. This random draw will be done by the RTTL or the national tournament staff. Byes will NOT be awarded based on State, District or World Titles from previous years.

Special Note:

The division will not be split at 17 for team sparring events. All teams in the same age group will compete in the same draw (bracket).

At Worlds, while competing for the World Champion Title, byes for Team Sparring and Team Combat Weapons Sparring will be seeded based on the Nation's Top Ten Standings.

The placement in the team sparring and team combat weapons sparring events will be as follows:

- Awarding of Byes: If any byes are necessary, the top 4 ranking teams will receive byes based upon their ranking on the top ten list. If additional byes are needed, they are placed on the bracket based on the ATA current bye system.
- The top 4 ranking teams will be placed on the bracket according to their ranking.
- All other teams, including those that are in the top ten and District Championship winners will be placed randomly.
- Previous National, District or State Champions in Team Sparring or Team Combat Weapons Sparring will not have any bearing on the determining of byes for this event.
- Once the sparring brackets are drawn, they will not be redrawn for "no-show" teams. The "no-show" will forfeit the match, and their opponent will advance.

Competition Opportunities and Team Competition Fees

Junior and Adult teams may compete at any ATA sanctioned regional tournament assuming the team has a certified coach. It is the responsibility of the team coach to check with the RTTL assigned to that Region, to see at what time he/she will be conducting this event. The RTTL will work with the tournament host to allow ample time for teams to plan for that tournament's timelines for team sparring. Team Sparring will be offered on the Friday of National Tournaments. (Spring, Fall, PanAm, European, Asia Pacific)

- The fee to participate in Team Sparring at all regional tournaments is \$75 per team, per event. At National tournaments, the fee is \$100 per team, per event. This amount does not change for multiple teams in multiple events.
- **In the postseason, entry fees will be \$125 per team, per event for teams who qualify for Districts and/or Worlds.**
- All travel expenses of team members are the responsibility of the individual. Teams may try to obtain sponsorships to defray their cost of travel.
- At regional events, should only one team register to compete in team sparring at a tournament, that team will automatically earn 5 points towards a State Title. Registration fees will not be returned to a team that “wins” by default at a regional/district/national event, unless the team forfeits the team “top ten” points.
- At Districts, if only one team registers for the event, that team will automatically qualify for the Worlds’ National Title competition.
 - In instances where there is only one team registered for a postseason event, the team registered must still attend the tournament, and report to the specified time for team sparring.
- In order to qualify for the District Championships, a team must be listed in their state’s “Team Top Ten”.
- At District/National/World tournaments, teams must register in the same timeline as individual registrations. **There are NO ON-SITE REGISTRATIONS FOR ANY EVENTS WHERE A TEAM MAY WIN A TITLE. If there is a late registration opportunity online, the fees and penalties will be the same as the fees and penalties for individuals. This penalty occurs for each team and each event.**

Disqualification, Team Points, and Penalties

If a competitor is disqualified, for any reason other than running around the ring to avoid the fight, and the opposing team is behind in points, they shall be awarded either:

- The greater of seven points or the difference in the fight score at the time of the disqualification.
 - **Example 1:** Team A is disqualified, and the fight score was 10-7, with Team B in the lead. Team B is awarded 7 points, and Team A is awarded 0 points for that fight.
 - **Example 2:** Team A is disqualified, and the fight score was 10-1, with Team B in the lead. Team B is awarded 9 points, and Team A is awarded 0 points for that fight.
- If the opposing team is behind in points, they shall receive 7 points, and the disqualified team shall forfeit any points earned in that fight.
- If in the opinion of the judges, the disqualification was intentional, meaning the team member got themselves disqualified intentionally to prevent the opposing team from catching up in points, or for unsportsmanlike behavior, (including running around the ring) the offending team shall lose the match entirely.
- The act of running around the ring to avoid the fight will not be allowed. If in the opinion of the judges, the competitor is running around the ring, not just evading techniques, the following penalties will be enforced:

- 1st time – penalty is a verbal warning. No point is awarded.
- 2nd time – Point awarded to the opponent.
- 3rd time – Competitor is disqualified, and the opponent is awarded seven cumulative points, plus the current number of points he/she obtained in the fight. The disqualified person's team does not receive any cumulative points for that fight.
- For clarification as to what is "running around the ring to avoid the fight" please see your RTTL.

Special Note:

Instances of a team being disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct will be evaluated by the presiding Grandmaster and the International Chairman of Tournaments for future participation in ATA tournaments. A team disqualified at multiple tournaments will be eliminated from participating in future tournaments and forfeit all top ten points. Penalties given to teams may also be received by the coach on the sideline, the certified coach, and individual team members, depending on the gravity of the infraction.

Competitor Behavior

Coaches are responsible for the attitude and behavior of all team members as well as the spectators supporting their team. All competitors and spectators should maintain the same positive behavior as required in all ATA competitions. If, in the opinion of the judges, competitors, coaches, or spectators demonstrate poor sportsmanship and/or negative behavior, the team in violation will be warned for the 1st occurrence and disqualified for multiple infractions.

Examples of negative behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Arguing calls made by the judges, including visible gestures or visible signs of disagreement.
- Taunting one's opponent or other team members.
- Over-exuberance when scoring a point.

Examples of POSITIVE behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Cheering for one's team in an encouraging, positive manner
- Creating signs depicting the positive aspects of one's team
- Chanting as a group in a POSITIVE manner

Judges should be mindful that team sparring is expected to be a high energy competition. Appropriate loud, exciting cheering for one's team, including chants, is acceptable and should be encouraged. The judges present at ringside and the RTTL will determine appropriate behavior and issue warnings if necessary.

ATA Tiger Competition

Establishing Our Goal

The overall purpose of encouraging ATA Tigers to participate in the Songahm Taekwondo tournament process is to provide them with an introduction to competition. By handling “ATA Tiger” divisions as an introduction to competition we ensure that there will not be any “losers,” only “winners.” All children will be rewarded for what is important, their participation and effort. A key element of this ring is that it should be FUN!

Tiger Age and Rank Guidelines

- The recommended ages for ATA Tigers are from 3 to 6 years old.
 - If a student trains as an ATA Tiger in their school, then they will be allowed to participate in the Tiger division of an ATA tournament regardless of the age of the competitor.
 - Likewise, if a child is training as a junior student rather than an ATA Tiger, then they should participate in the junior division.
- The student’s instructor will determine in which division the child should participate.
- At each tournament, leadership students of tiger age have a choice to participate as a tiger or as a junior but not as both.
 - If a student participates as a tiger for one event in a tournament, then they must participate as a tiger for all events at that tournament. Conversely, if a student competes as a junior for one event in a tournament, then they must compete as a junior for all events at that tournament.

Tiger Divisions

The following are guidelines for Tiger divisions:

- It is strongly recommended that a tiger division have no more than 8 participants with a maximum number of 10.
- At regional events, it is preferable to keep tiger white belts in a separate division from orange and yellow belts. However, it is sometimes not possible.
- It is recommended, but not required, that no more than three rank groups be combined.
- In Tiger rings, male and female participants may be in the same ring. This is true for all ranks, including those that spar or combat spar.

Tiger Ring Staff

Since ATA Tigers do not actually “compete” for a place, the ring staff can be different from the normal tournament guidelines. Only one judge and one helper are required in each ring.

- Every effort will be made to ensure that Tiger judges have experience working with this age group.
- The helper will be a leader through forms and one-steps. These leaders will be available if the child needs help with any of the material they are performing and must know the material for which they are providing help.
- The helper may be a junior leader, younger trainee instructor, or specially trained color belt that knows the material.
- Leaders will only be used for those participants that have indicated they need help on their registration card or if the Tiger gets stuck during the demonstration of their form or one-steps.

- Leaders will perform each form and one-step in such a manner that the Tiger, whose instructor has indicated that he needs help, will be able to follow along.
 - The leader may also verbally lead the student. They should use the proper names for each technique and include a descriptive term that will remind the child how to do the technique.

Tiger Traditional Forms & One-Step Knowledge

The decision of what material the ATA Tiger will participate with will be left up to their instructor and should be indicated on their registration card. Tigers may compete with only one one-step, or they may use two one-steps.

Tiger Judging Criteria & Scoring Format

Since this is an **introduction to competition**, scoring for forms, one-steps, and sparring/combat sparring will be totally different from other divisions.

Judging of Tigers will be as follows:

- A tiger will not receive a numerical score. Instead, the judge will make a positive comment about the performance of the student.
- For one-step competition, call Tigers up two at a time and have them face the front of the ring and not each other. The judge will direct, and the leader will help each tiger to do his/her one-step(s). The judge will not award points, but will comment positively about the effort and techniques demonstrated.
- For free sparring competition, points will not be issued. Instead, when the judge sees something special to comment on, he/she should call "break" and make a positive comment about the move. Free-sparring rounds for Tigers will be 1 minute each.
- *Each tiger will do **two rounds** of one-steps or free-sparring.* If there is an odd number of tigers, one of them will do three rounds. The judge should pick a good positive reason for having that tiger perform an additional time.
- There are no disqualifications for Tigers. Instead, take the opportunity to educate them and their parents about how they might do better next time.

Categories of ATA Tiger Awards

Once the Tigers have completed their demonstration, the judge will decide on which participant will receive an award in each of the following suggested categories:

- Best Kicks
- Strongest Punches
- Loudest Yells
- Amazing Power
- Best Black Belt Attitude
- Fantastic Focus
- Best Memory
- Fastest Moves
- Awesome Blocks
- Most Energy

A separate set of awards are given to those Tigers who compete in Traditional Weapons, ATA-Xtreme Forms, ATA-Xtreme Weapons, Creative Forms or Creative Weapons competitions. The categories will be very similar to the categories for forms and sparring.

The following are suggested categories:

- Incredible Control
- Super Speed
- Black Belt Weapon Demonstration
- Powerful Weapon Handling
- Terrific Twirling
- Cool Creativity
- Best ATA Spirit
- Amazing Combos
- Strongest Strikes / Cuts
- Weapon Super Star
- Xtreme Combos

Regions may decide to change these categories at their discretion, but it should be done with the input of those Instructors that work with Tigers.

Special Abilities Competition

Since the inception of the Special Abilities competition, Eternal Grandmaster Lee formed the Special Ability divisions for tournament competition with the intent to afford competitors with special needs the opportunity to earn the title of World Champion. His desire was to offer safe and fair competition for those with special needs who were unable to compete with others of their age, gender, and rank. The Tournament Department and the Special Abilities Eligibility Committee work hard to determine who can fairly compete in the Special Ability divisions at regional, national, and world tournaments. Special Ability competitors can accumulate points for the Special Ability State Title, as well as become eligible to compete for District- and World Champion Titles. The following information should answer many questions or lead one to the person (or people) who can. The last few years of competition has seen a significant growth not only in the number of Special Abilities competitors, but also in the involvement of Instructors, parents, and other interested members. We are very pleased to have so many involved with actual participation, support, and input. This facet of the ATA membership cannot grow and succeed through the efforts of just a few. It takes everyone.

Special Abilities Competitors Eligibility

To compete in the Special Abilities division, a competitor must meet the general requirements to compete in an ATA tournament (see [here](#)) and must meet one of the following criteria:

- A **Permanent** Physical Limitation
- Impaired Mental Acuity
- Be on the Autism Spectrum

Participants must first submit a formal application (which can be found [here](#)) including supporting documentation, and must receive official approval. (NOTE: you must be logged in to Google before opening this form link.) Participation without prior approval is not permitted. Any points earned before approval will be forfeited and will not count toward rankings, awards, or qualifications. It is the responsibility of each participant to ensure their eligibility status is confirmed before competing in this division.

In order to give the Committee appropriate time to verify all the information, all applications for Special Abilities competition must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the first event in which they want to compete in the Special Abilities Division.

See [below](#) for more details.

Special Considerations when Applying for Special Abilities-Cognitive

A competitor is approved to be in the SA-Cognitive division based on either their inability to process information independently, or process quickly enough to not be at a disadvantage in a typical division. These limitations would not translate to effective judging, and therefore competitors approved to compete in SA-Cognitive will not be permitted to receive judging certification.

The normal pre-requisites to test for 4th degree include that an athlete must be a Level 1 certified instructor (red/black collar) and have a Level 3 judging chevron. The Masters Council, after consultation with the Special Abilities Committee, has granted a special exemption for any of our approved SA-Cognitive athletes to test for 4th degree without these pre-requisites. If an athlete is approved by the SA committee to compete in the Cognitive division, they cannot level up their collar, and they cannot be a judge. ONLY SA-Cognitive athletes, and no others, will receive this exemption.

Fourth degree is the highest rank that SA-Cognitive athletes will be able to achieve.

Definitions

Permanent Physical Limitation

A specific permanent physical limitation would put the competitor at an extreme disadvantage against non-physically challenged peers.

Some examples of a permanent physical limitation that would deem the competitor eligible for a Special Ability division:

- Has a bone, muscle, or nerve disorder that severely limits the physical mobility of the competitor.
- Is missing a limb, both legs, or both arms.
- Has an artificial leg(s).
- Is forced to use a wheelchair or other device to maintain mobility.
- Is blind.

Some examples of physical limitations that would **not** make the competitor eligible for a Special Ability division:

- Muscle pulls, strains, or tears, recovering from a surgery or procedure that temporarily limits physical mobility.
- Is hearing impaired.
- Has a seizure disorder.
- Minor arthritic conditions, or joint replacement.

Impaired Mental Acuity

Impaired mental acuity would put the competitor is at an extreme disadvantage against non-challenged peers, due to their inability to comprehend all aspects of the competition. Some examples of impaired mental acuity would include, but not be limited to:

- Cognitively disabled (impaired ability to function independently)
- Low functioning Autism
- Down syndrome

Some examples of conditions that **would not make the competitor eligible** include but are not limited to:

- Learning disabilities
- Dyslexia
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Psychiatric diagnoses

Autism Spectrum

“Autism spectrum” refers to individuals that have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum by the accepted two-step evaluation process: developmental screening and comprehensive diagnostic evaluation. Some competitors with autism will be in this category, while it is possible that lower functioning autistics may be placed in the cognitive division. Where an individual is diagnosed on the spectrum will help the committee decided whether a competitor belongs in Special-A or Special-C division. (Please see Special Ability eligibility procedures, [below](#), for how this will be determined.)

NOTE:

*** Headphones are allowed ringside for the competitors that need them to deal with the overstimulation the tournament environment may cause***

Special Abilities (SA) Eligibility Procedures

Any competitor wishing to compete in the Special Abilities division must be approved by the Special Abilities Eligibility Committee. The committee is a multidisciplinary group made up of medical and psycho-social professionals that review each application, and the supporting information provided to ensure that competitors are appropriate for the division. The chairperson of this committee is appointed by the presiding Grand Master in consultation with the International Chairman of Tournaments. The current director of this committee is **Sr. Master Susan Winter**.

The following is required to be completed for any competitor to enter a Special Abilities division:

- Download the Special Abilities application from the official ATA site, [here](#).
- Complete the application, along with any supporting information, and email to: specialabilities@princetonata.com.
 - If one is unable to email the application, it may be faxed to 609-430-2893.
- Special Ability competitors **MUST** include their IEP (Individualized Education Programs) in addition to any other supporting documentation that will help the committee better place the competitor based on their placement on the spectrum.
- The committee will review the application and support information and render a decision. If additional information is required, the applicant's instructor will be contacted.
- The applicant will receive the committee determination in writing.
- An approval for competitors in the **Cognitive or Physical divisions** does not have to be renewed each year. However:
- **Special Ability competitors in the Autistic Division must re-submit their application for approval annually.**
 - Some individuals on the autism spectrum can have their needs change as they grow and develop. All parties involved should remember that there are times when individuals, especially younger competitors, will outgrow their need to be in the special abilities division, thus they are asked to re-submit their application annually.
- Once a competitor has been approved to compete in a Special Abilities division, he/she should not compete in a non-Special Abilities division for that tournament year. A competitor cannot change or compete in a SA division they are not approved for by the committee.
- A competitor approved for the Cognitive division cannot compete in the Autistic division.
 - Failure to comply may result in one's Special Abilities status being revoked.
 - Points will not be switched from one Special Abilities division to another for failure to comply.
- **Points earned by a competitor prior to receiving approval from the Special Abilities Committee will be forfeited. This rule will be applied to all Special Ability competitors, including those with presumptive eligibility such as Down Syndrome, use of a wheelchair or other ambulation devices, cerebral palsy, etc.**

Any State or Top Ten points awarded to someone who competes in an incorrect Special Abilities division or the wrong category (Autism, Cognitive, Physical) for competition will be forfeited.

Please remember, the intent of these divisions is to provide an opportunity for those who qualify to earn the self-respect and self-esteem they could not have previously earned. The goal is that the competition be fair and safe for all the competitors involved regardless of their level of function and/or disability.

Special Abilities Divisions

There are separate divisions for those with cognitive challenges and for those with physical challenges. These divisions are for each gender and age group. To determine which division a member should compete in, the competitor's diagnosis that requires the most adaptation for daily life will be considered.

Example: A competitor has been diagnosed as autistic, but because of that autism, the competitor has become physically challenged, the competitor will be included in the cognitive division. The assignment of proper division will be done by the eligibility committee on a case-by-case basis with the necessary input from the competitor, parent or guardian, Instructor, and doctor where needed.

In the Special Abilities divisions, the Junior and Adult divisions are divided by age and whether the student is a Black Belt or Color Belt. These divisions are different from the regular ATA competitor divisions because of the limited number of participants.

The following Special Abilities divisions will be at all ATA sanctioned events.

Cognitively Challenged

Boys	12 & Under	13 to 17
Girls	12 & Under	13 to 17
Men	18 to 29	30 & Over
Women	18 to 29	30 & Over

Physically Challenged

Boys	12 & Under	13 to 17
Girls	12 & Under	13 to 17
Men	18 to 29	30 & Over
Women	18 to 29	30 & Over

Autism Spectrum

Boys	12 & Under	13 to 17
Girls	12 & Under	13 to 17
Men	18 to 29	30 & Over
Women	18 to 29	30 & Over

In the Special Abilities divisions, the Junior and Adult divisions are divided by age and whether the student is a Black Belt or Color Belt. These divisions are unique to the Special Abilities divisions and different from the regular ATA competitor divisions because of the limited number of participants.

Special Abilities Rules Adjustments

Traditional Form and Traditional Weapons competition for the Special Ability divisions will be run the same as other divisions with one exception; **all the judges will watch the entire form quality and the intent of the technique rather than the original assignments.**

The logic behind this rule is as follows:

- There are competitors that cannot perform kicks and stances; therefore it is not reasonable to expect a judge that is assigned to judge kicks and stances to give a fair score.
- There are competitors that cannot perform hand techniques; therefore it is not reasonable to expect a judge that is assigned to judge blocks and strikes to give a fair score.
- By evaluating all aspects of the form and weapon performance the judges, while taking into consideration the intent of the technique shown and what they are capable of doing, can fairly judge and score the competitors.
- If a competitor in the SA-Cognitive division reaches a point as they develop, that memorization no longer presents a challenge to compete, but they are still at a disadvantage in the traditional division, the competitor can be considered for a division change to SA-P.

Traditional Point Sparring Competition – Special Ability Divisions

Autism Spectrum

For Special Ability–Autism divisions, for Sparring and Combat Sparring competition, the standard point rules will apply.

Cognitive and/or Physical

Sparring and or Combat Sparring Divisions for the Cognitive and/or Physical Special Ability divisions will run the same as other divisions with one exception: **all scoring techniques will be awarded one point.**

The logic behind this rule is as follows:

- A person confined to a wheelchair would never have the opportunity to score a two- or three-point technique.
- It would give an unfair advantage to a standing competitor to be able to score a two- or three-point technique to a seated opponent.
- The variety of the competitors' individual mobility to evade a two- or three-point technique could also put a competitor at an unfair disadvantage.

This is not meant to discourage competitors that are capable of using any head-level or jumping type kicks. They are still allowed and encouraged. They simply will only be awarded one point. All legal techniques and legal target areas remain the same.

Champion Programs

Introduction

There are several titles that can be earned by individual competitors in the ATA: State/Provincial Champion, District Champion, Pan Am Champion, European Champion and World Champion. Competitors who are in the USA, Latin America, and/or European Top Ten, may compete for the Pan Am Champion, European Champion, and World Champion events at the respective events. In the Worlds competition, those competitors who rank in the TOP 4 standings published by ATA-HQ have a “guaranteed placement”. Eligible competitors from each of the other designated areas will be given a random number for their placement. **See TOC competition guidelines**. This ranking placement does not apply to the Pan Am Championships or European Championships. These events are at the level of the District Championships, where all competitions are randomized.

School of Record

A person’s state/school of record is attached to the state in which the school they train is located. If the school is located in a “border town” where it is possible for members whose address is in one state, but train in another, the state of the competitor should be where he/she trains. Students who train via “Skype” or other internet methods should be attached to the state in which he/she has his/her primary residence. The key words here are “Border Town”. One should not assume that if they travel across states to train once a month, etc. that they may circumvent the spirit of this rule. The International Chairman has the final determination as to any questions about the state in which a person trains.

This rule applies to all Demo/Sparring/Combat Team competitions. Sync Team competitions are not restricted to one School or State, and therefore do not fall under this rule.

Tournament Year

The tournament year ends and begins at World Championships. One tournament year ends with the Tournament of Champions, and another begins with the Class “AAA” World Championship tournament usually on Saturday and Sunday. The 2025-2026 Tournament Season will end on **Saturday, April 26, 2026**. The final day for ATA Licensees to host a sanctioned Class “C” event will be **April 15, 2026**. Any Tournament **held after those dates** will have any points earned at those tournaments posted in the following season. Class C tournaments held in April must be received at Headquarters within 7 business days to be counted towards the current tournament year.

Competitive Events

There are eight (8) competitive individual events that are awarded points in an ATA tournament. These are traditional forms, traditional weapons, traditional free sparring/one-steps, combat weapons, creative forms, creative weapons, xtreme forms and xtreme weapons.

Proper Division Placement

It is crucial to understand into which division a student should be placed. The proper division is based on competition **age and rank**.

Competition Age

A competitor's competition age is determined by their age as of 11:59 pm, December 31st of the tournament season. The age that they are at that date will indicate the division in which they should compete in throughout the entire tournament season.

Rank Information

The criteria that are important for a color belt and black belt students differ. It is important to check rank information provided in State and World Championship programs to understand the best placement for the competitor.

Notes:

1st Degree Recommended Black Belts may choose to either compete with either Color Belts or with Black Belts at any tournament.

At each tournament, 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt students have a choice to participate as a Color Belt or as a Black Belt but not as both. If a student participates as a Black Belt for one event in a tournament, then they must participate as a Black Belt for all events at that tournament. Conversely, if a student competes as a Color Belt for one event in a tournament, then they must compete as a Color Belt for all events at that tournament. (Traditional and Creative/Xtreme) If a Recommended Black Belt competes in a Color Belt Division, his/her TOP TEN State or World points for that tournament will not be moved to a Black Belt Division.

The following Guidelines apply if a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt Competes in a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt Division:

- For Traditional Forms Competition, he/she may perform either the Choong Jung 2, Choong Jung 1, or In Wha 2. He/she may not compete with a lower belt form or with the 1st Degree form, Shim Jun.
- If he/she chooses to compete in Traditional Weapons, he/she must perform a prescribed color-belt weapon form corresponding with one of the 5 approved 1st Degree Decided Weapons.
 - Those weapons are: Single Ssahng Jeol Bong, Single Bahng Mahng Ee, Oh Sung Do, Gum Do, or Mid-range Jahng Bong
- In order to compete at Districts and or Tournament of Champions, the competitor must obtain his/her 1st Degree Black Belt Decided, **and it must be recorded at ATA HQ by May 15th of the competition season.** Failure to meet this requirement will result in forfeiture of all State/World Top Ten Points, thus making the competitor ineligible for Districts and/or World TOC competitions as a black belt competitor. **Those forfeited points will NOT be transferred to a color belt division.**
 - **This rule applies for all events, including Team Sparring/Combat Sparring.**
- At the Worlds "Tournament of Champions", the 1st Degree Form, Shim Jun, must be performed to earn a World Champion Title. No color belt form can be performed at the Worlds "Tournament of Champions". This guideline does not apply to the District Championships.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If a 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt competes at a tournament in the 1st degree division, he/she may also compete in Team Sparring/Team Combat. If he/she competes as a Color Belt at that tournament, he/she is not eligible to compete in Team Sparring/Team Combat at that tournament. (See Team Sparring/Team Combat Rules)

2ndBR competitors must compete as the 2nd-degree black belts in the 2nd/3rd degree Division.

- A 2BR competitor must compete with the 1st Degree form (Shim Jun) and in the 2nd/3rd degree division. He/She may not compete in the 1st Degree division.
- As a competitor in the 2nd/3rd Degree Division, a 2nd Degree Recommended competitor may compete with any of the weapon forms allowed in that division.

Notes About Points

Participants in class A, B, Class AA (national), and Class AAA (World) tournaments will be awarded FULL points regardless of how many competitors are in their ring. We understand that by doing this, some competitors are not going to want to have their rings “combined” with other rings. However, the RTTL **is required to continue to combine rings as we have done in previous seasons**. Combined division guidelines are set by the International Chairman of Tournaments and given to the RTTL’s. The RTTL’s decision as to how a ring is combined or split is final and should not be affected by the opinion of competitors, spectators, instructors, or seniors at the tournament. If, after the combining division steps have been completed, and there is still a division with less than five competitors then the full points will be awarded for Class A, B, national-, and world events.

Class “C” Tournament

Class C tournaments are to be “inner-school” events. There are multiple ways for a tournament to qualify as “inner-school”.

1. Competitors are limited to only members of schools or clubs owned by the same owner. The owner is defined as a person included on the license of the school or club on record with the Licensing Department of the ATA International Headquarters. Competitors must be from the same geographical area.

Example: A student from Texas cannot compete with students in Indiana for the purpose of holding a Class C event unless that student travels to the Indiana tournament site from his/her state of residence to a Class C event hosted by the same licensee.

2. Any school or club may combine with any other school or club or multiple clubs/schools providing they follow one of the 3 guidelines listed below:
 - a. Unlimited numbers of clubs may be combined with other clubs. A club cannot combine with Basic/Advanced/Elite schools.
 - b. Any 2 **school numbers** of **different licensees** may combine. Combined testing numbers are not a factor.
 - c. Unlimited number of Basic/Advanced/Elite schools & clubs may combine if their combined testing average for the previous calendar year is less than 200. The schools listed on the sanction and their testing numbers will be verified by ATA HQ staff. The average testing number will be determined by the testing department by taking the total number of Black Belts and Color Belts who test during the previous year’s tournament season and dividing the total number by 6, or the actual number of tests sent in (whichever number is less), to create the average number tested. School Licensees, who fail to turn in tests promptly, may hamper their ability to combine with other clubs or schools for this process.
 - i. **Example 1:** School 1494 (Stevens) and School 3852 (Rosa) may combine. There is no max. Testing number requirements because it is only 2 separate licensees.
 - ii. **Example 2:** Club 1234 (Johnson), Club 5678 (O’Brien), Club 9012 (McClain), and Club 3456 (Kent) can all combine, regardless of their combined testing numbers, since they are all club licensees.

If ineligible members of other schools or clubs compete in these events, the results may become null and void, and any possible points earned may not be awarded.

Important Procedures for ATA Licensees

- The Class C event must be sanctioned with the Tournament Department of the ATA International Headquarters at least 30 days in advance of the event.
- The final day for ATA Licensees to host a sanctioned Class “C” event will be April 15, 2026. All tournaments **held after that date** will have points posted in the following season’s standings.
- All class C results must be submitted to ATA headquarters within 7 business days after the April 15th deadline.
- Only one Class C tournament may be hosted by an ATA Licensee during any 30 day period.
- These events must not conflict with other regional (in the ATA Licensee’s region), national, or international events and will not be officially sanctioned if the dates conflict.

The points awarded in all divisions (except Special Abilities) at a Class C tournament for the purpose of State, or World Top Ten standings are as follows:

Points Awarded

For all divisions of 5 competitors or more in each event

1 st place	3 points
2 nd place	2 points
3 rd place	1 point

If the division has fewer than 5 competitors in each event:

Place	4 competitors	3 competitors	2 competitors	1 competitor
1 st	2 pts	1 pt	0 pt	0 pt
2 nd	1 pt	0 pt	0 pt	
3 rd	0 pt	0 pt		

There will be NO points awarded for events with divisions of fewer than three competitors. The creation of divisions is solely in the hands of the school/club owner. They are not bound by any of the same rules governing the other classes of tournaments. **Color belts and black belts may be combined to achieve a full division.** To prevent abuse of the system (this limit applies only to Class C tournaments), there is a three event limit per tournament year that a student can earn points towards World or State Champion Top Ten standings. The best of three Class C tournaments will count in addition to the current number of events allowed towards either “Championship” group. To provide another safeguard against a competitor winning a title with only Class C tournament points, a limit of 50% of a competitor’s point total can come from Class C events.

Check your profile: you must have matching points in class A and/or B tournaments to receive the same amount of class C points. Make sure you have points in non-class C tournaments to receive those points.

Example: The most points a competitor can earn from Class C tournaments are 9 (3 tournaments times 3 points for first place). To be able to apply all 9 points to their total, they would also need to have at least 9 points come from higher class level tournaments.

Note:

- Remember, if a competitor places at Class C tournaments first, their points will not be reflected in the standings until they place at a class A or B level tournament and meet the 50% rule.

- The ATA Licensee has seven business days from the completion of the tournament to submit the results to headquarters. Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of points for the students who participated.
- **Class C tournaments must be held by April 15th, and results must be received at Headquarters within 7 business days, to be counted towards the current tournament year. There will be no exceptions to this rule.**

Awarded Points for Special Abilities

For Special Abilities divisions at Class C events, the competitors may earn 1 point per competitor up to a maximum of 3 points provided that all competitors in the division are Special Ability competitors. All other rules concerning Class C events apply to Special Ability divisions. In Class C events, all categories of competitors in special ability divisions should be combined.

Class “B” Tournament

Regional events that have been approved by the ATA Licensee’s region and sanctioned by the Tournament Department of the ATA International Headquarters are considered “Class B” tournaments.

The points awarded for a Class “B” tournament are as follows:

For all divisions

1 st place	5 points
2 nd place	3 points
3 rd place	1 point

Class “A” Tournament

Class A tournaments are regional events that have been approved by the ATA Licensee’s region and sanctioned by the Tournament Department of the ATA International Headquarters. For a tournament to be eligible for the Class A ranking, the history of the previous events hosted by the same ATA Licensee is reviewed. Class A tournaments are expected to be larger and offer the potential for a higher level competition, therefore, the points awarded are increased from that of a Class B tournament. The points awarded for a Class A tournament are as follows:

For all divisions, in each event:

1 st place	8 points
2 nd place	5 points
3 rd place	2 points

NOTE! As of July 2025 (new season), all Class A tournament competitors will receive full points regardless of the numbers of competitors in the ring. This rule will be evaluated on an annual basis and is subject to change.

Class “AA” Tournament

The three National events are Class AA tournaments. The number of these events may change in the future as may the locations. Due to the size of these events, the potential for more competitors and thus a higher level of competition in each division, the points awarded are of greater value than in a Regional Tournament.

The points awarded for a Class AA tournament are as follows:

For all divisions

1 st place	15 points
2 nd place	10 points
3 rd place	8 points

Class “AAA” Tournament

There is only one Class AAA tournament each year. This tournament is always considered the first tournament of the season and has the highest potential for a competitor to earn points. This event is hosted by the presiding Grand Master of Songahm Taekwondo and ATA International Headquarters. It is typically called the Songahm Taekwondo “Super-20” and competitors from all over the world meet to compete. Due to the size of these events, the potential for more competitors and thus a higher level of competition in each division, more points are awarded than all of the other Sanctioned Tournaments.

The points awarded for a Class AAA tournament are as follows:

For all divisions

1 st place	20 points
2 nd place	15 points
3 rd place	10 points

Points Structure and Maximum Points

All champion programs will use the same point structure for awarding points. Points are awarded based on the tournament's classification, the number of participants in the event, and the competitor's placement in the event. The competitor must be in good standing with the ATA and meet the eligibility requirements for the program. A competitor may choose to attend as many tournaments as they deem necessary to try to obtain maximum points. However, there are a limited number of tournaments where the results will count towards the standings. They are the Super-20 results, the best two Class "AA" results for each event, the five best regional results for each event, and 3 qualifying class C results for each event. Point accumulation for individual competitive events is calculated independently.

The maximum point total is **99** in a single season for State and World Top Ten standings:

Event	Class	Max # Counted	Max Points Each	Total Points
Super-20 @ World's	AAA	1	20	20
Nationals [1]	AA	2	15	30
Regionals [2]	A / B	5	8	40
In-School	C	3	3	9
Total Maximum				99

Notes:

[1] You may count your best two performances, from the three National “AA” Events.

[2] You may count your best five regional tournaments. Max assumes 1st place at 5 Class “A” tournaments.

“Phantom” Competitors

SPECIAL NOTE:

It has come to the attention of the Tournament Department at the ATA International Headquarters that members of the ATA have been “bowing in” to a ring to allow the ring to get “full points”. This practice is strictly prohibited. It violates both the letter- and spirit of the rules. Only competitors who have paid for the event and fully intend to compete in that event to the best of their abilities should be allowed to participate in a ring. Competitors should ALWAYS attempt to compete at their best. Competing with the intention of losing (i.e. demonstrating only a few moves of a form) violates the spirit of Songahm Taekwondo competition. Rings found to contain phantom competitors will be subject to loss of points and additional penalties for the competitors and judges in that ring.

Top Ten Standings

During the tournament season, the ATA Tournament Department will collect the results of all sanctioned tournaments. The eligible students who placed will receive Top Ten points according to their placing. These points are awarded in Traditional Form, Traditional Point Sparring, Traditional Weapons, ATA-Xtreme Form, ATA-Xtreme Weapons, Creative Form, Creative Weapons, and Combat Sparring competitions. These points are totaled at the end of the tournament season, and those ten competitors in each division with the most points will earn a spot on the appropriate Top Ten list. All tournaments will follow all ATA tournament rules including the current guidelines for separating and combining age & rank groups and for distributing awards. Points will be awarded only for placing in those tournaments properly sanctioned by the ATA International Headquarters. Tournaments are identified by different class distinctions. Each class has different criteria that must be met and offers a different point structure.

Point Corrections

Tournament points are normally updated twice a week during the tournament season. Keep in mind that a competitor must have an ACTIVE ATA MEMBERSHIP at the time of the competition. If expired, the competitor has 30 days to update their membership and ask for a point correction. Results sent to ATA-HQ have memberships verified. Points earned by EXPIRED MEMBERS will not be posted. Those points now fall under the point correction guidelines. Every effort is made to post points on Wednesdays and Fridays. The following guidelines apply:

- It is the **responsibility of the competitor and/or the competitor’s instructor** to check his/her points on a regular basis online, [here](#).
- Any point corrections or inquiries must be submitted using the official point correction form, at the link [here](#), within 30 days of the tournament being posted to the standings on ATAonline.com.
 - This includes any points removed or not posted by ATA-HQ because of an expired ATA number at the time of the competition.
 - Requests not made via this form will no longer be accepted. This process is essential in making sure all competitor concerns are addressed in a fair and timely manner.
 - After 30 days of a tournament being posted, no additional correction requests can be made for any reason.
 - It may take longer than 30 days to resolve any requests.
- For tournaments held in April, the competitor will have until **May 5, 2026** to contact the tournament department to request point corrections. All requests must be submitted via the form, [here](#).

- **This rule applies for any errors including but not limited to wrong age, rank, gender errors, and expired memberships.**

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Check your points in your personal ATA profile online, [here](#).
- Match these points against the current World/State Standings.
- If there is a discrepancy, or if you feel that you are missing any points, please notify the ATA Tournament Department immediately, via the form, [here](#).
- Please observe the deadlines given in this section for point corrections.

White / Orange / Yellow Belt Sparring at all Events

Leadership competitors (W/O/Y) who choose to do both traditional sparring and traditional one-steps will receive the points from the highest placement they earn.

Example: Competitor A, in a full division at the Super-20, wins 2nd place in one-step sparring, but 1st place in traditional sparring. He/she would receive the first place points instead of the 2nd place points. The competitor will not receive both sets of points.

State Championship Program

Introduction

The tournament process has gone through many incarnations through the years with Grand Champions, National Champions, and World Champions. These programs had always been solely for black belts with the color belts watching and waiting for their chance to earn a title. In 2001, at the Songahm Taekwondo World Championships, the ATA introduced the State Champion Tournament Program for color belts and black belts.

State Champion Program Procedures

All color belts and black belts who are enrolled in an official Leadership Program with ATA International Headquarters are eligible to earn points towards the title of State Champion. These programs include the Junior Trainee Instructor Program and the Trainee Instructor, Certified Trainee Instructor, Specialty Certified Instructor, and Certified Instructor Programs.

Special Note:

The ability to start earning points towards the State Champion Program begins once the student has received his/her “welcome” letter from the ATA International Headquarters. It does not start once the student completes the paperwork within his/her school.

State Champion Program Procedure

- Once the official results are received by the Tournament Department of ATA International Headquarters, those competitors who are enrolled in a Leadership Program will be researched, and State Championship points will be awarded to them.
- No judge at the regional, national, or world tournaments will be required to confirm a competitor’s enrollment in a Leadership Program. The Leadership requirement will be verified by the Tournament Department at International Headquarters.

Divisions for State Champion Program

Color Belt Divisions: Because color belts change rank frequently during a year, divisions cannot be based on rank. Divisions for color belts will be based on age and gender. Boys and girls will be separated from each other. Also, men and women will be separated from each other. The age breakdowns for junior and adult color belts are consistent with those used for junior and adult black belts. At a regional tournament, if any color belt age divisions are combined and a competitor places, the points will be awarded in their correct age division. The 8 & under division is strictly for those that compete as a junior, not tiger.

Black Belt Divisions

The black belt divisions will match the divisions used in the World Champion program.

Promoting to Black Belt during competition year

A color belt who receives the rank of 1st degree decided black belt will not lose their existing color belt state champ points, but they may no longer add to their total in the color belt division.

The title of “State Champion” is earned solely through the accumulation of points throughout the tournament season. **The following guidelines apply:**

- Points will be awarded separately for traditional form, traditional weapons, traditional one-steps/point sparring, ATA Xtreme weapons & forms and creative weapons & forms. There will be a State Champion for each event.
- The competitor with the highest point total in each competitive event at the end of the competition year will win the title of State Champion for their state and division.
- There will not be any final competition to determine a State Champion.
- In the case of a tie in point totals, all members tied will be declared the State Champion.
- Students who compete in ATA Tiger or Novice rings will not be eligible to earn points towards the title of State Champion for that tournament.
- The state in which your school of record is located as of **December 31st** in the tournament year is the state in which your points will be placed.
- Once the “Final Finals” are posted on the official ATA website at www.ataonline.com, the first place finishers will be able to purchase a special uniform indicating State Champion for his/her state and division through their instructor.

District Championship Program

General Information

The following are the guidelines for District Championships. District boundaries will be evaluated annually and may change in subsequent years. The district boundaries are based upon the number of competitors in each state's Top Ten for previous year and the anticipated travel distance and time for competitors and judges was also taken into consideration. See the District page at ataonline.com for details of the states comprising each district.

Eligibility Guidelines

Any student, color belt or black belt, who is listed in their state as a “State Top Ten” competitor for one or more of the 8 types of competitions is eligible to compete in the District Championships. When the final State Top

Ten points are posted on the ATA official website, students listed in each competition category become eligible in that category with the following provisions:

To compete in this event, an eligible competitor must:

1. Be enrolled in an official Leadership program with ATA International Headquarters and a student in good standing, training regularly in a licensed ATA School or Club.
2. Obtain his/her instructor's permission to compete in this event. Permission to compete in previous competitions does not automatically apply to the District Championship Tournament.
3. Have a current ATA membership.
4. Be listed in his/her state's top ten for the event in which he/she tries to register.
 - **Example:** A student eligible in Traditional Forms may not be qualified to compete in Traditional Weapons, and would not be allowed to compete in Traditional Weapons at Districts.
5. Be listed as a Camo Belt or higher in rank by **May 15th** in the ATA database kept current by the testing department of the ATA International Headquarters. It is highly recommended that all licensees have any May testing results *delivered* to HQ by **May 15th** to assure that all belt ranks are current in the ATA database to ensure that their students can complete the online registration process by the deadline. These belt ranks will be auto-checked by the online registration process. The registration process will not be complete for any competitor who does not meet the appropriate belt requirement. The information in the ATA HQ database is the information that will apply to eligibility for district championships.
6. **Registration will be online only. See ataonline.com for the registration window. Onsite registrations will NOT be allowed.** All registration fees are the responsibility of the competitor.
 - **SPECIAL NOTE:** Once the online registration is complete, the competitor will not be allowed to change the decision regarding which rank to compete. The assumption will be that the competitor did, in fact, consult with his/her instructor prior to registration. If an instructor informs headquarters that the student did not have his/her permission to compete before registration, the competitor will be disqualified from that year's District Championship Tournament.
7. If a competitor cancels his/her registration prior to the Cancellation **deadline date**, a full refund will be sent to the person whose credit/debit card paid for the event. This is not an "automatic" refund from the registration site. A check will be cut from ATA Headquarters accounting department after the District Championships are completed. **Refunds will not be given after the cancellation deadline date.**
8. Ring assignments, divisions, brackets etc. will be announced, posted online, and emailed to registered competitors by announcement date.

Additional Guidelines and Exceptions Applying to District Competition Only

The rules and regulations for the regular tournament season will be enforced with the following additional guidelines and changes uniquely in place for District Championships.

1st Degree Decided Black Belts Guidelines

1st Degree Recommended Black Belts, who have earned the rank of 1st Degree Black Belt Decided, pose some *possible* unique situations. The following rules only apply to 1st Degree Recommended Black Belts competing in the District Championships:

- A 1st Degree Recommended Black Belt who has competed up in the black belt division during the tournament season must earn their 1st Degree Decided Black Belt by May 15, in order to compete in the Black Belt division at Districts (and all postseason competitions).
- At the District Championships and all postseason competitions, a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt must compete with Shim Jun.
- **1st Degree Decided Black Belt students who attain their rank ON OR BEFORE March 30th** but have qualified for the Districts on the Color Belt State Top Ten list **WILL NOT** be able to compete as a color belt at District Championships. Those individuals will be allowed to compete at the Districts **ONLY IF** they earn enough points to qualify as a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt.

- **1st Degree Decided Black Belt students who attain their rank AFTER MARCH 30th** and have qualified for the Districts as a color belt, **WILL BE** allowed to compete in the color belt division of Districts. However, if this competitor wins District Champion in a color belt division, he/she **WILL NOT** be eligible to compete in the Tournament of Champions.
 - **It is possible for a 1st Degree Decided Black Belt, who attains their rank after March 30th to qualify both in a color belt and black belt divisions for the Districts.** Only in this scenario would the final decision regarding in which division the student should compete, rest solely with the instructor of that competitor. The instructor is the most qualified person to determine the competition level of the student in this situation. (ATA International Headquarters will not override the decision made by the competitor's Instructor.) If the decision, made by the competitor's instructor in this scenario, is for the student to compete as a color belt, then the student may only compete as a color belt. If the decision is to compete as a black belt, then the student may only compete as a black belt. It is not the intention of this guideline to infer that an instructor may always choose for a competitor to compete "up or down" in a belt rank. This scenario is unique only to the district championships and may not be used in any other tournament throughout the year.
- **THE ABOVE RULES DO NOT APPLY TO ANY OTHER BLACK BELT RANK**

Example: John, who attained his rank on April 1st of the current tournament year, qualifies in forms and sparring as both a Color Belt and a Black Belt. John must either compete as a Black Belt or a Color Belt for Districts. He may not compete in both at that tournament. His instructor will make that decision as he trains his student. The student may NOT compete in forms as a color belt and in sparring as a black belt.

2nd Degree Recommended Black Belts and Higher Competitors

District Championships will follow the "regular season" rules regarding which material black belts may use for competition. See admissible competition forms, [here](#).

- A competitor **WILL NOT** be allowed to compete in one rank/belt division for one type of event, such as forms or sparring, etc., and a different rank/belt division for another type of event.
- If a Black Belt becomes eligible for the same event in two different rank divisions, he/she must compete at the higher rank for the day. In this case, it is not a decision made by his/her instructor, the competitor, or his/her guardian.

Example #1: Alice qualifies as a 1st Degree in Forms, but as a 2nd Degree in Sparring. She may not compete in both. She, in consultation with her instructor, must choose prior to registering for the Districts, whether to be a 1st Degree competitor or a 2nd Degree Competitor for this tournament.

Example #2: James qualifies as a 1st degree in Forms and as a 2nd/ 3rd degree in Forms. His only option is to compete in the 2nd/3rd-degree division.

District Tournament Procedures

- The order of competitors at the District Championships will be done by random draw and generated by the program currently in place at ATA Headquarters. A competitor's "State Top Ten" placement will have no bearing in determining which competitor name is called first or last.
- In both Traditional Sparring and Combat Weapons Sparring, if it is necessary to award one or more byes, then the byes will be awarded in a random fashion as well. If a competitor has been given a bye and then does not show up for his/her competition, the bracket **WILL NOT** be redrawn. It is possible in this case, where there are multiple "no shows", for a competitor to reach the finals without ever actually sparring an opponent.

Same Age/Rank Divisions Split into Multiple Rings

To produce one District Champion per age/rank division in each event, the following will occur:

For traditional forms, traditional weapons, and all creative and extreme events the division will be divided in the following way:

- 17-32 competitors will be split into 2 preliminary rings
- 33-48 competitors will be split into 3 preliminary rings
- 49-64 competitors will be split into 4 preliminary rings

The winner of each preliminary ring in that division will go to a separate ring for the sole purpose of determining who between those “Ring Winners” is to be named the “District Champion”. Each “Ring Winner” will perform his/her material one time for these judges, and the judges will point to the winner. No scores will be given in this situation. The winner will be given the 1st place medal and awarded the title of District Champion. 2nd and 3rd places will be awarded as follows:

- If there were 2 preliminary rings: the runners-up in preliminary rings will be awarded 3rd place. The finalists compete for 1st & 2nd place.
- If there were 3 or more preliminary rings, no awards will be given in the preliminary ring. Finalists compete for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place.

For Traditional Sparring and Combat Weapons Sparring events the division will be divided in the following way:

- 17-32 competitors will be split into 2 preliminary rings
- 33-48 competitors will be split into 3 preliminary rings
- 49-64 competitors will be split into 4 preliminary rings

The winner of each preliminary ring in that division will go to a separate ring, not one of the same rings, for the sole purpose to determine who between those “Ring Winners” is to be named the “District Champion”. The “Ring Winners” will spar additional matches in the new ring to determine the District Champion. The matches will be run using a regular ATA tournament sparring bracket that is drawn randomly. The winner will be given the 1st Place medal and awarded the title of District Champion. If there are 4 preliminary rings, the non-advancing semifinalist will compete for 3rd place before the finalists compete. If there are 2 preliminary rings, the runners-up in the preliminary rings will compete for 3rd place before the finalists compete.

District Tournament Awards

There will be one gold medal winner, one silver medal winner, and one bronze medal winner in each division for Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, ATA-Xtreme Forms, ATA-Xtreme Weapons, Creative Forms, Creative Weapons, and Traditional Point Sparring and Combat Weapons Sparring competition. The only exception is awarding multiple 3rd place medals for divisions that have two preliminary rings. The competitor who wins the District tournament will gain the title of District Champion in his/her division and can wear a special lettered uniform making this distinction. This uniform is ordered through the student’s instructor from World Martial Arts and is done so at the student’s expense.

Black Belts who win the title of District Champion become eligible for the current tournament year's Tournament of Champions (TOC) for that competitive event.

European Championship Program

- European championships will be equivalent to a District Champion.
- Americans traveling to Europe can compete and win the Title of European champion.
- American Black Belts who win the title of European Champion are **NOT eligible** for the current tournament year's Tournament of Champions (TOC) for that competitive event.

European Tournament Awards

There will be one gold medal winner, one silver medal winner, and one bronze medal winner in each division for Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, ATA-Xtreme Forms, ATA-Xtreme Weapons, Creative Forms, Creative Weapons, and Traditional Point Sparring and Combat Weapons Sparring competition. The only exception in awarding multiple 2nd and 3rd place medals would be for divisions that have multiple preliminary rings. The competitor who wins the European tournament will gain the title of European Champion in his/her division and can wear a special lettered uniform making this distinction. This uniform is ordered through the student's instructor from World Martial Arts and is done so at the student's expense.

World Champion Program

Introduction

The competitive events in which it is possible for a black belt to win the title of World Champion are Traditional Forms, Traditional Weapons, Traditional Free-Sparring, Combat Weapons Sparring, ATA-Xtreme Forms, ATA-Xtreme Weapons, Creative Forms and Creative Weapons.

Eligibility Requirements

Only black belt students who are members in good standing may earn World Champion Top Ten points.

Divisions

The age and rank division for the World Championship program follow these black belt Divisions.

Rank Placements: Rank changes during the tournament season can make a difference as to where a competitor's points will be applied. The following guidelines apply to rank changes during a tournament season:

- If a person changes rank during the tournament season and that rank change places them in a different division, that competitor cannot gain any further points in their previous rank division.
- All subsequent points will be awarded in the new division.
- If a competitor is serious about trying for the title of World Champion, they should plan their rank changes accordingly.
- The one exception to points being carried over to another division after a rank change is if the competitor tests and competes at World Championships.
- If a student knows that they are going to test during the current tournament season, they can compete in the higher rank division before they achieve that rank. It is permissible to enter what may be considered a more "difficult" division. It is not permissible to enter a lower rank or "easier" division. The competitor must successfully test to the rank of the "higher" division by the TOC to be eligible to compete in TOC.
- All the competitors that qualify for the "Tournament of Champions" to compete for the title of World Champion in Traditional Forms MUST perform one of the standard forms for the division in which they are competing during that final competition. A 2nd Degree Recommended Black Belt that has qualified to compete for the title of World Champion in traditional forms must successfully pass the test and be awarded the rank of 2nd Degree Decided by the Tournament of Champions.
- It is possible to earn sufficient points to be in the Top Ten rankings in two rank divisions, but a competitor can only compete for the title in one. This rule applies regardless of the event in which the

person qualifies. When the time to compete for the title of World Champion arrives, the competitor must compete in the higher rank division.

- Points received by a Recommended Black Belt who competes in a Color Belt Division, will not have his/her TOP TEN State or World points for that tournament moved to a Black Belt Division.

Example #1: Mary (an adult) is a 1st degree and after consulting with her instructor, plans to test for the rank of 2nd degree recommended in November. Mary can compete in the 2nd & 3rd-degree division at the Super-20 Tournament. This would allow her to have all her points awarded in the same division throughout the tournament-year. If she competed in the 1st degree division at Super-20, and changed ranks in November, all points she earned from the Super-20 to November would be in the 1st degree division and all points she earned after November would be in the 2nd & 3rd degree division. This could have a major impact on her chances to qualify for that season's TOC.

Example #2: Alice is a 33-year-old 3rd degree testing for 4th degree at the World Championships. Alice shall compete in the Women 30-39 4th & 5th-degree division of the Super-20. Regardless of the outcome of her testing, her points will be awarded in the appropriate division per the outcome of her testing. That is, if she advances in rank, the points will be awarded in the 4th & 5th-degree division. If she is unsuccessful, the points will be awarded in the 2nd & 3rd-degree division.

Example #3: James qualifies to compete in traditional forms competition for the TOC as a 1st Degree and also qualifies to compete in traditional sparring as a 2nd/3rd Degree. James' only option is to compete in the 2nd/3rd degree division for the sparring title. He may not compete for forms champion in the 1st Degree division. He may not earn a title in two separate tournament divisions in the same tournament year.

Qualifying for the Tournament of Champions

The tournament year culminates with the crowning of ATA's World champions. Qualified competitors will compete in the "Tournament of Champions" (TOC) which will be held at World Championships at the end of the tournament season. Starting with the 1999 Songahm Taekwondo World Millennium Expo, competitors from the STF (Songahm Taekwondo Federation) and the WTTU (World Traditional Taekwondo Union) were included in the finals to determine the World Champions for each division. Those competitors' names are provided to the Tournament Department at the end of the tournament year and will not be found posted in the Top Ten standings. **Competitors from the United States who win the PanAm TOC, may wear the champion dobok, but are not automatically eligible for the TOC.** The Top Ten standings will be made up of competitors from the United States and Canada. Since 2012, black belts who won the title of District champion for the current competition year are also eligible to compete in TOC for the event(s) in which they won the title of District Champion.

To qualify for the Tournament of Champions in an event, a competitor must meet one of the following requirements:

- Earn a spot on the Final World Champion Top Ten standings for the current competition year in that event.
- Win the title of District Champion in that event for the current competition year.
- Earn a nomination from the governing bodies from one of the countries in Europe, South American, India, Australia, South Korea, or South Africa for the current competition year.
 - Competitors from the United States may not earn a nomination from one of the governing bodies outside the United States. This does not include students from the US who are living abroad for the competition season and have informed the tournament department at ATA International.

Registration will be online only. See ataonline.com for the registration window. Onsite registrations will NOT be allowed. All registration fees are the responsibility of the competitor.

The result is that potentially there will be more than ten competitors vying for the title of World Champion.

Tournament of Champions (TOC)

The TOC ends the tournament year and is always a highlight of World Championships. Qualifying competitors and their ring assignments will be announced beforehand. The tournament will be run in the following manner:

1. Scoresheets and Bracket sheets will be filled out using only the names of the eligible competitors who have pre-registered for the TOC.
 - The order of competitors who pre-register will be on the scoresheet for traditional forms, traditional weapons, creative forms & weapons, and ATA Xtreme form & weapons will be as follows:
 - For each event, a new random number will be given to all competitors who are not listed in the Top 4 places in the standings listed on the ATAonline.com World Standings. Out of country TOC competitors and District Champions who have not earned a Top 4 standing in the Worlds Standings posted online, are given a random numbering and combined with the competitors who are 5th - 10th in the standings here in the United States.
 - The competitor's name with the lowest random number will be placed in line 1 of the score sheet. This will continue until all competitors not in the "Top 4" standings are on the scoresheet.
 - The Top 4 will be listed last on the competition scoresheet. For questions or concerns contact the International Chairman of Tournaments - betsy.stevens@ataonline.com.
 - The final four to compete will do so in the reverse order of their ranking (starting with the competitor in fourth place and ending with the top ranked competitor).
2. During the TOC in Traditional Forms competition, a competitor MUST perform one of the standard forms for the division in which they are competing.
3. Competitors must be the Decided rank of the division in which they will compete.
4. The placement of competitors in the bracket for traditional point sparring and combat weapons will be as follows:
 - Awarding of Byes: If any byes are necessary, the top 4 ranking competitors will receive byes based upon their ranking on the top ten list. If additional byes are needed, they are awarded based on the random number given to all other eligible competitors. The lowest random number will be given the next bye and so forth until all byes have been awarded for that bracket.
 - The top 4 ranking United States competitors, will be placed on the bracket according to their ranking.
 - Number 1 in the standings will be placed on the #1 seed line on the sparring bracket sheet. Number 2 in the standings will be placed on the #2 seed line on the sparring bracket sheet and so forth through the number 4 person in the standings.
 - All other competitors will be placed based upon the random number assigned. The lowest random number will be placed on the seed line marked #5 and so forth until all lines on the bracket have been filled with either names or byes.
 - Previous World-, District- or State Champions in sparring will not have any bearing on the determination of byes for this event.
 - Once the sparring brackets are drawn, they will not be redrawn for "no-show" competitors. The "no-show" will forfeit the match, and their opponent will advance.
5. After the World Champion Top Ten standings are announced, if one or more of the competitors are unable to compete in the final competition (for whatever reason), those empty slots will not be filled.
6. No Points for standings will be awarded for the TOC competition.

Example 1: James earns the number ten position in the Men's 18-29 2nd & 3rd-degree division. Due to his work obligations, he cannot attend the World Championships and is unable to compete for the title of World Champion. Sam, who is the number eleven finisher, ***will not*** move up to the number ten position because of

James' inability to participate. Sam did not earn the number ten position. James will remain in the number ten position.

Example 2: Emily is a 3rd Degree Black belt competing in forms competition during the TOC in the 2nd & 3rd Degree division. She may perform the 2nd degree form. If there is a tie run-off she must again perform the 2nd degree form.

Tournament of Champions – PanAm

Every year the PanAm Championships occurs in the month of September. When competing in PanAm and planning to compete in TOC in the United States, competitors should register as the age/division they will be in the following year. PanAm champions will qualify for next years' TOC. If they have a birthday on or before December 31 and as such change divisions, they will compete in that age group even though they may have qualified in a lower age division.

Example 1: Robert travels to South America and wins in forms in the 13-14 division. However, by Dec 31, 2023 Robert turns 15 years old. He will compete in the 15-17 age division at TOC even though he qualified in the 13-14 age division in 2023 TOC.

Example 2: Luis won at PanAm in 2022 and qualified for PanAm TOC. However, he has aged up, so he has changed age group division. If he competes in the PanAm TOC, he will be placed in his current age group and not where he qualified in 2022.

Only competitors that finished in the Top Ten in the United States will be eligible to compete in PanAm TOC. If multiple competitors qualify for Top Ten at PanAm, only the top 4 will be allowed to register for TOC-PanAm.

Americans traveling to TOC and PanAm open 2025

- Only the top 4 of the standings in each division can compete in PanAm TOC.
 - For this reason, only 4 from the USA competitors registered can compete at the PanAm TOC. Those from the United States who place first at the PanAm Championships will not automatically qualify for the TOC at Worlds.
 - USA competitors have two other ways to qualify for the TOC: by making the Top Ten in World Standings at the end of the season, and by winning their District Championships.
- Any American can compete in PanAm Open.
- South Americans use September 30, 2025 (current year) as the cutoff date for age groups.
- Americans traveling to compete in TOC will remain in the right rank division if the age is still within Sept 30, 2025.

Example 1: Susan is Top Ten in the US 1st degree 13-14 division, and travels to TOC PanAm. She doesn't turn 15 until after Sept 30, 2025. She will compete in the 13-14 division.

Example 2: Kevin is Top Ten in the US 1st degree 13-14 division, and travels to TOC but turns 15 before Sept 30, 2025. He must compete in TOC as 1st degree 15-17.

Team Sparring (teams of 3)

Starting PanAm TOC 2025, teams of 3 must be in the age group of the current season. They may not "carryover" a member who has "aged out" by the PanAm Championships.

International Teams (teams of 5)

International teams should be selected on a yearly basis. Ages for this competition will be determined by December 31st of the calendar year of competition, not the tournament season age.

Example: For the tournament season of 2025-2026, John is 17 years old by December 31, 2025. John would compete in all of 2026 as a Varsity Competitor on the INTERNATIONAL TEAM. This applies to the following International Team Competitions: World Championships, PanAm Championships, European Championships, and South African Championships.

Tournament of Champions Awards

Certificates and jacket pins are given to all the Tournament of Champion competitors. There will be ONLY one gold medal winner, one silver medal winner, and one bronze medal winner in each competitive event, for each division. The competitor who wins the Tournament of Champions will gain the title of World Champion in his/her division and can wear a special lettered uniform making this distinction. This uniform is ordered through the student's instructor from World Martial Arts and is done so at the student's expense.

Team Sync and Team Demo

Black Belt Team Synchronized Competition

Team Sync Divisions

- **Team Sync Forms** – Two or three members performing without weapons.
- **Team Sync Weapons** – Two or three members performing with weapons.
 - ATA weapon requirements apply.
 - Team members are allowed to perform different and multiple weapons.

Performance Goals

- **Presentation features** – Intensity, synchronization, focus, and movements in sync with music (if used).
- **Creativity** – Use of the ring, various martial arts elements (blocks, strikes, kicks), creative team usage, partner interaction, kick tricks, twists, flips, demonstration structure.
 - For weapons divisions, includes variety and style of weapon tricks.
- **Difficulty** – Number of team members performing, athleticism (speed, power, flexibility, and control) when executing martial arts techniques, tricks, and kicks.
 - For weapons divisions, includes speed, power, and control of the weapon.
- **Time** – Max 2 minutes. No minimum.
- Props are not allowed.

Music

- Music is optional.
- At regional level, teams must provide their own speakers.
- At national level, ATA house system may be used or declined.
- Music must be appropriate. Inappropriate content results in a disqualification.

Team Roster Requirements

- Roster requirements are intended to mirror those of Team Sparring.
- Before a team can compete, the team captain must submit a request to headquarters for a Team Sync and Team Demo ID.
 - A separate ID request is required for each of the three events: Team Sync Forms, Team Sync Weapons, and Team Demo.
 - Please allow two weeks for the team name to be reviewed and approved.
- Competitors can only be listed on the roster of one Sync Forms or Sync Weapons team per season.
- Team Sync members can be from any location.
- Once a member has earned points with a Team Sync Forms or Team Sync Weapons team, they are locked to that team for that event, for the remainder of the season.
 - For example, Alice earns points in Team Sync Forms, but none in Weapons.
 - Alice is locked to her Team Sync Forms team for the remainder of the season.
 - Alice may still change her Team Sync Weapons team.
- Teams may add new members throughout the regular season, as long as they have not earned points on another team.

- Once a team earns points, the roster of performing members is locked and cannot be changed for the duration of the season.
- All must be current ATA members.
- A School/Club may have both Demo & Sync Teams and share members.
- **Only members who have competed in a regional or national event during the regular season are eligible to participate in the T.O.C.**
- **Only members listed on the official T.O.C. roster will earn the title of World Champion if the team wins.**

Team Member Requirements

- All team members must either be 1st Degree Decided Black Belts or higher, or Color Belts actively competing up who will achieve 1st Degree Decided rank by the end of the regular tournament season.
- All ages allowed.
- No gender requirements or restrictions.
- Each member must compete in at least one individual event to be eligible to participate in Team Sync or Team Demo competitions.
 - Exception: Since Masters don't compete in Traditional events at Regional tournaments, they are excused from this requirement, and may still perform in Team Sync / Demo.

Uniform Requirements

- Only ATA-approved uniforms are allowed, including Songahm Taekwondo Traditional Dobok, ATA Creative/Xtreme Black or Red uniform, or ATA-approved team uniforms.
- Teams may add their team name to the back of the uniform.
 - The name must be submitted and approved in advance.
- All members must wear the same uniform style and color within a given event.
- All members must have the same team name displayed if used.
- Team uniforms with names may not be worn during individual competitions.
- Uniforms, weapons, and props must be shown proper respect at all times. No slamming jackets or purposely breaking weapons.

Weapons Requirements

- Weapons must be from the Protech curriculum and comply with ATA Traditional or ATA-Xtreme/Creative competition rules.

Competition Procedure

- Presentation order
 - Team presentation order will be determined by registration date/time – earliest registration will present last.
 - Except TOC, where standings will determine the order – highest will present last.
- Procedure:
 1. Team name is called.
 2. 30 seconds for traditional bow-in.
 3. “You may adjust” — 30 seconds to get into position.
 4. Time begins when judge says “your time begins now” or music is cued.
 5. The team makes their presentation – two (2) minutes, max.

Judging

Judges

- Five judges spread at front.
- All judge the full performance.
- Judges must not be affiliated with any team in the division.

Criteria

- **Martial Technique** – Most important. Graded using Legacy student knowledge points: base, trajectory, follow-through, etc.
- **Presentation, Creativity, and Difficulty** – Equally weighted. [See Performance Goals, [above](#).]

Scoring

- First 3 teams perform before scoring.
- Judges score 1–9.
- 3 or fewer teams: judges point to first / second
 - Scores are recorded as 1st = 9's, 2nd = 8's, 3rd = 7's.
- In the event of a tie, Judges will point to the team they feel had the better performance, similar to individual competition. Teams will not perform again.
- If the team exceeds their allotted time, the Center judge will give a score of zero (0), but the other judges will all score as normal.
 - The Center judge will announce why they are imposing the penalty.

Tournament Points

Tournament Class	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place
National - AA	10	8	5
Regional/MAX	5	3	1

Teams may compete in all tournaments and earn points at all 7 events for the 2025–2026 season.

Registration

- Online registration is required. To register online:
 - Navigate to the event schedule on the ATA website, [here](#).
 - Scroll to the Team Demo / Sync event.
 - Click “register”.
 - Fill out and submit the form.
- Event options: 4 Regionals, MAX Gathering, Fall Nationals, Spring Nationals
- Registration fees are due per event and are listed on the registration page.
- Registration deadline will mirror Team Sparring – due the Wednesday before a regional event, or on the announced schedule for National and ToC events.

No on-site registration is accepted.

Fees

- Regionals/MAX – \$75
- Nationals – \$100
- Worlds/TOC – \$125

Fees are subject to change. See the registration page for your event for the current fee.

Black Belt Team Demonstration Competition

Performance Goals

- Showcase high-energy martial arts with Songahm form segments and techniques, Creative/Xtreme forms and techniques, self-defense, and weapon routines.
- Max Performance time of 3 minutes. No minimum.
- **Presentation** – Intensity, synchronization, focus, and movements in sync with music (if used).
- **Creativity** – Use of the ring, various martial arts elements (blocks, strikes, kicks), creative team usage, partner interaction, kick tricks, twists, flips, demonstration structure. For weapons divisions: includes variety and style of weapon tricks.
- **Difficulty** – Number of team members performing, athleticism (speed, power, flexibility, and control) when executing martial arts techniques, tricks, and kicks. For weapons divisions – includes speed, power, and control of the weapon.
- Props are allowed
 - Only ATA-approved weapons and wood/plastic boards.
 - Other props require approval at least 30 days in advance.

Music

- Music is optional.
- At regional level, teams must provide their own speakers.
- At national level, ATA house system may be used or declined.
- Music must be appropriate. Inappropriate content will result in a disqualification.

Team Roster Requirements

- 4 to 30 members
- No age- or gender restrictions
- Competitors may only be listed on one team per season.
- Once a team earns points, the list of performing members is locked and cannot be changed for the duration of the tournament season.
- Only members listed on the official T.O.C. roster will earn the title of World Champion if the team wins.
- No alternates required.
- A School/Club may have both Demo & Sync Teams and share members.

State Eligibility Note

- Team Demo members must be from the same state.
- Members must train in the state where their school is based. “Zoom” students should list primary residence.
- Border town exceptions must be cleared by the International Chairman.

Team Member Requirements

- All team members must either be 1st Degree Decided Black Belts or Color Belts actively competing up who will achieve 1st Degree Decided rank by the end of the tournament season.
- No color belts are allowed to join Demo team at T.O.C.
- All must be current ATA members.
- Members must compete in at least one individual event to be eligible.
 - Exception: Since Masters don't compete in Traditional events at Regional tournaments, they are excused from this requirement, and may still perform in Team Sync / Demo.

Uniform Requirements

- Only ATA-approved black or red uniforms, or ATA-approved team uniforms allowed, including Songahm Taekwondo Traditional Dobok, ATA Creative/Xtreme Black or Red uniform, or ATA-approved team uniforms.
- Teams may add their team name to the back of the uniform if the name is submitted and approved in advance.
- All members must have the same team name displayed if used.
- Team uniforms with names may not be worn during individual competitions.
- Uniforms, weapons, and props must be shown proper respect at all times. No slamming jackets or purposely breaking weapons.
- Members may wear different ATA-approved uniforms but may not mix or switch uniforms during competition.

Weapons Requirements

- Weapons must be from the Protech curriculum and comply with ATA Traditional or ATA-Xtreme/Creative competition rules.

Competition Procedure

- Presentation order
 - Team presentation order will be random, among the teams registered for the event.
 - Except TOC, where standings will determine the order – highest will present last.
- Procedure:
 1. Team name is called.
 2. 30 seconds for traditional bow-in.
 3. “You may adjust” — 30 seconds to get into position.
 4. Time begins when judge says “your time begins now” or music is cued.
 5. The team makes their presentation – three (3) minutes, max.

Judging

Judges

- Five judges spread at front.
- All judge the full performance.
- Judges must not be affiliated with any team in the division.

Criteria

- **Martial Technique** – Most important. Graded using Legacy student knowledge points: base, trajectory, and follow-through.
- Presentation, Creativity, and Difficulty – Equally weighted. [See Performance Goals, [above](#).]
 - Number of team members should count toward difficulty – It's harder to coordinate a larger group.

Scoring

- First 3 teams perform before initial scoring.
- Judges each score 1–9.
- Two or three teams: judges point to rank (1st = 9, 2nd = 8, 3rd = 7).
- **Ties:** Judges will point to the team they feel had the better performance, similar to individual competition. Teams will not perform again.
- If the team exceeds their allotted time, the Center judge will give a score of zero (0), but the other judges will all score as normal.
 - The Center judge will announce why they are imposing the penalty.

Tournament Points

Tournament Class	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place
National - AA	10	8	5
Regional/MAX	5	3	1

Teams may compete in all tournaments and earn points at all 7 events for the 2025–2026 season.

Registration

- Online registration is required. To register online:
 - Navigate to the event schedule on the ATA website, [here](#).
 - Scroll to the Team Demo / Sync event.
 - Click “register”.
 - Fill out and submit the form.
- Event options: 4 Regionals, MAX Gathering, Fall Nationals, Spring Nationals
- Registration fees are due per event, and are listed on the registration page.
- Registration deadline will mirror Team Sparring – due the Wednesday before a regional event, or on the announced schedule for National and ToC events.

No on-site registration is accepted.

Fees

- Regionals/MAX – \$300
- Nationals – \$400
- T.O.C – \$500

Fees are subject to change. See the registration page for your event for the current fee.

Tournament Schedule

There are 7 Tournaments for the '25-'26 competition season, in which Team Sync / Demo events will be held

Regional Tournaments (4)

- September – Florida
- November – New Jersey
- February – San Diego
- April – Chicago

MAX Gathering (1)

- TBD

National Tournaments (2)

- Fall – Pittsburgh
- Spring – St. Louis

Summary of Team / Sync Changes

Category	Old Rule	New Rule
Team Demo Members	4+ members same school only	4-30 members, from same state
Uniforms	Black Creative/Xtreme only	Any Approved Team Uniform Team name must be approved, if shown
Props	Only weapons allowed	Sync: No props. Demo: Boards allowed with approval
State Requirements	Not clearly stated	Sync: No state limit. Demo: Must match training state
Member Eligibility	Only Black Belts	Color belts competing up allowed (must be 1 st Degree Decided by end of season.)
Roster	Alternates allowed	Only performing members listed. No alternates.
Music	House system expected	Regionals: Bring own speaker. Nationals: House system optional.
Scoring	DQ for over-time	Penalty for over-time (center judge only gives zero)
Tiebreakers	Tie = Team with most members wins	Judges point to winner. No extra performance. *Follows Individual Procedure
Points System	Nationals: 10-8-5 Regionals: 5-3-1	Same system, clarified structure

Category	Old Rule	New Rule
Registration Fees		Regionals/MAX: Sync \$75 / Demo \$300 Nationals: Sync \$100 / Demo \$400 Worlds/TOC: Sync \$125 / Demo \$500

The ATA reserves the right to make changes or adjustments to the rules and procedures during the competition season.

Tournament Opening Procedure

Opening Ceremony Agenda

The ATA Tournament Department has a model agenda for the opening ceremonies of a regional tournament. It is crucial to follow this agenda and not deviate from it without prior authorization from the ATA Tournament Department or Grandmaster In Ho Lee. Following is that agenda:

1. M.C. – Introduction of the Seniors (lowest to highest rank) and Guests. Announce position, city/state, rank, and then name (if applicable, other achievements such as World Champion, etc. may be included)
2. M.C. – Announces “Ladies and gentlemen, please face the flags.”
3. Korean National Anthem (either via tape, CD, or singer)
4. American National Anthem (either via tape, CD, or singer)
 - i. **Bow to the flags**
 - ii. M.C. waits for the “Seniors to face the Juniors” (Please make sure Seniors have had the opportunity to face the juniors before the M.C. or leading student starts the Songahm Spirit of Taekwondo.)
5. M.C. – Songahm Spirit of Taekwondo
6. M.C. – Announce “Everyone, please be seated.”
7. M.C. – Welcomes host of tournament
8. If applicable, have special guest give speech
9. Where appropriate, give out awards (**recognize licensees and outstanding judges**)
10. Highest ranking senior recognizes previous and current world, national and state champions present in the following order: State, District, & World
11. If applicable, announce sponsors.
12. If applicable, begin demonstration.
13. Regional Tournament Team Leader – swears in judges
14. Regional Tournament Team Leader – administers competitor’s oath
15. Regional Tournament Team Leader – gives instructions and explains which divisions are in which rings
16. Regional Tournament Team Leader – asks senior rank for permission to start the competition
17. It is imperative that the opening ceremonies for regional tournaments not exceed 30 minutes (including demonstration). The demonstration should be held in 10 minutes or less.
18. At the conclusion of the tournament, there should be a bow-out ceremony. This would be conducted the same as the ending of a class including the reciting of the Songahm Spirit.

NOTE: ALL BLACK BELTS ARE EXPECTED TO STAY AT THE TOURNAMENT UNTIL THE OFFICIAL BOW OUT. Black belt divisions will no longer be announced. All Adult black belts must sign in when they come into the gym.

Judges’ Oath

The judges’ oath will be administered by the International Tournament Chairman, the National Tournament Director or the Regional Chief of Tournaments to all personnel who will be judging. Although the association holds respect for certified judges’ integrity, the oath is a reminder of the great responsibility held by a judge who is seen by all others as representatives of the ATA. It is vital for judges to project a feeling of ATA unity and that all judges are interested in the growth and continued enjoyment of our martial art.

The administering official shall have all judges raise their right hands with the left hand in the support position, as he/she reads the oath:

“Do you swear that your judging of the Taekwondo students here present shall be without prejudice of school, region or other variant, and that your judging will be to the best of your ability in keeping with ATA policy and standards for the best interests of all competitors here involved?”

All judges shall answer: **“I DO.”**

Competitors' Oath

To maintain the proper mental attitude of the competitors present, the proper official shall administer the following oath to all competitors.

The administering official shall have all competitors stand and raise their right hands with the left hand in the support position, as he/she reads the oath:

“Do you promise as a competitor in this ATA **Regional Tournament, to compete in the spirit of Songahm Taekwondo, demonstrating safety, courtesy, and respect towards your fellow competitors, the judges, and the spectators? And will you always remember that “to compete is to win.”**

All competitors shall answer: **“I DO.”**

Parents Rights and Responsibilities

During a taekwondo tournament, parents play a crucial role in supporting their child while also having certain rights and responsibilities. They have the right to advocate for their child's well-being, ensuring that the competition environment is safe and fair. Parents are responsible for promoting good sportsmanship, encouraging their child to respect opponents and officials, and modeling appropriate behavior throughout the event. Also, parents should be aware of tournament rules and schedules, helping their child prepare mentally and physically. By fostering a positive atmosphere and celebrating their child's efforts, parents contribute significantly to the overall experience of the tournament, reinforcing valuable lessons in discipline, respect, and perseverance.

2025-2026 Rules—Updates and Clarifications Summary

Major Changes

- There is a new curriculum and test for Chevron certification. [See [here](#).]
- Split rings will no longer be determined by height. Instead, the division will be random. [See [here](#).]
- In a ring with three competitors, if there is a tie, competitors will not repeat their forms. [See [here](#).]
- For Traditional Weapons Competition, all judges will judge and score the entire performance. Only the Center Judge will deduct if the form was incomplete. [See [here](#).]
- In a ring of 2 or 3 competitors, if one competitor drops his/her weapon during their regular competition, this doesn't mean that the competitor cannot win (like in a tie-breaker). [See [here](#).]
- In Combat Sparring, a competitor is “down” and cannot score if any part of their body other than their feet, one knee, or one hand is on the floor. [See [here](#).]
- In Traditional Sparring, a competitor is “down” and cannot score if any part of their body other than their feet is touching the ground. [See [here](#).]
- In all sparring events, the Center Judge may stop time if a competitor is purposely wasting time by going to ground, by being slow to get up once down, or by running out of bounds. [Combat, see [here](#) and [here](#). Sparring, see [here](#) and [here](#). Team Sparring, [here](#).]
- For Creative and Xtreme Forms and Weapons Competition, a competitor will no longer be disqualified for technique, time, or content violation. Instead, as a penalty, the center judge will give a score of zero (o). The corner judges will score as normal. [See [here](#).]
- All Class A tournament competitors will receive full points regardless of the numbers of competitors in their ring. [See [here](#).]
- If a recommended black belt qualifies for Districts or top ten title in a Black Belt division and wants to compete there, he/she must earn 1st-Degree Decided rank by May 15 and must perform the Black Belt Decided form (Shim Jun) in post-season competition. [See [here](#).]
 - If he/she qualifies for, and competes in, the color belt division for Districts (post-season for color belts) they may perform a color belt form.
- **1st Degree Decided Black Belt students who attain their rank ON OR BEFORE March 30th WILL NOT** be able to compete as a color belt at District Championships, even if they otherwise qualified for Districts on the State Color Belt Top Ten list . [See [here](#).]
- Team Sync / Demo rules have changed extensively. [See [here](#) for a summary.]
- The “Close Contact” rule, as defined in individual sparring, now applies in Team Sparring. [See [here](#).]
 - See [here](#) for a definition of the close contact rule.
- In Team Sparring and Combat, the rules for “avoiding the fight” have gotten more strict:
 - 1st: verbal warning; 2nd: penalty point; 3rd: fight DQ and severe point penalty. (See [here](#).)
- **Effective immediately, Competitors may only compete in ONE tournament per weekend.** (See [here](#).)

Minor Changes and Clarifications

- Jackets cannot be worn over uniforms at a tournament. [See [here](#).]
- Oh Sung Do Level 1 – Previous and new versions of the form are acceptable through July 2026. [See [here](#).]
- A competitor in Team Sparring or Combat must compete in the black-belt division of the matching traditional event, but they may compete either in Champion or Recreational. [See [here](#).]

- The last day to host a Class C tournament for the season is April 15, 2026. Results MUST be received by HQ within 7 business days, or it will count for the following tournament season. [See [here](#).]
- There are minor updates to qualifying for World's TOC. [See [here](#).]
- There are updates to PanAm TOC, Team- and International Team Sparring eligibility. [See [here](#).]
- Addition of parents' rights and responsibilities. [See [here](#).]
- During Team Sparring and Team Combat competition, only the ringside coach of the team may request an arbitrator. [See [here](#).]
- Clarification: Masters don't compete in Traditional events at Regional tournaments, but they may still perform in Team Sync / Demo. [See [here](#).]
- To be penalized for a weapon drop in Combat Sparring, the competitor must have lost control of the weapon. [See [here](#).]
 - A competitor setting their weapon down to adjust their gear is NOT a dropped weapon.
- In making your combat / sparring bracket, **earned** byes take precedence over the same-school rule, which takes precedence over **random** byes. [See [here](#).]
- An athlete in the Special Abilities-Cognitive division cannot be a judge. Red Collar is the highest instructor rank they can achieve. The highest belt rank they can achieve is 4th degree. [See [here](#).]
- Excessive contact warnings are treated like other contact warnings – first is a penalty point, and the second results in disqualification. If a competitor commits excessive contact with malice, they can be disqualified immediately under the “unsportsmanlike conduct” rule.
- Effective immediately, point correction requests must be made via online form, [here](#), instead of by email. [See [here](#).]