

New Rules for Free Sparring

Key Points and Trends

With an aim of reintroducing Jiyu Kumite at the upcoming Global Championships, the competition rules for Jiyu Kumite have been updated and will be implemented during the upcoming 2024 All Japan Goju Kai tournament

Here is a breakdown of the major changes and general trends observed through match simulations:

- The match time is 2 minutes. If the match results in a draw, there will be a 1-minute extension, after which a winner must be determined.
- Protectors:
 - Thick, international standard type of mitts will be used. Additionally, air-type mitts will also be allowed.
 - For instep and shin guards, only white (regardless of the manufacturer) will be allowed. Red, blue, and other colour guards are not permitted.
- Assistant Referees
 - There will be 2 Assistant Referees
 - Decisions will be by majority vote. If 2 or more of the 3 referees (Chief Referee and 2 Assistant Referees) make a decision, the decision stands
 - Example:
 - Chief Referee = Red, Assistant Referee 1= Red, Assistant Referee 2 = Blue ⇒ Red wins
 - Chief Referee = Red, Assistant Referee 1 = Draw, Assistant Referee 2 = Draw ⇒ Draw
- Judging Criteria
 - The Referees will consider the overall performance of the competitors throughout the bout. Both offensive and defensive techniques will be evaluated.
 - Performance is based on overall performance throughout the bout. This means that a high number of warnings will not necessarily result in a loss.

- Warnings / Prohibited Behaviour

There are 6 categories of fouls:

 - Contact (Atte)
 - Dangerous Behaviour (Kiken Koi)
 - Fighting Posture (Kamae)
 - Self-Endangerment (Mubobi)
 - Non-Engagement (Tohi)
 - Attitude (Shiai Taido)

- Prohibited Behaviour Warning and Penalties
 - The different stages are “Chui” → “Hansoku Chui” → “Hansoku”
 - Accumulating 3 warnings in a single category will result in a loss.
 - Depending on severity, stronger penalties may be imposed immediately, without the need to step through lower stages.
 - Accumulating 3 different prohibited actions in different categories does not result in an automatic loss.
 - If multiple prohibited behaviours are displayed at the same time, multiple penalties will be imposed simultaneously

- Attacks to the head are considered “sun dome” and should stop short of making contact. “Contact” will be strictly penalized.

- Attacks to the mid-section (Chudan), where the attack is not being pulled back (i.e. no hikite or hiki ashi), or repeated techniques intended to inflict injury will also be penalized.
 - The penalties for Contact (“Atte”) or Dangerous Behaviour (“Kiken Koi”) will be used in this instance.

- Going out of bounds (“Jogai”)
 - If a competitor steps out of bounds, the Chief Referee will stop the match and competitors will return to the indicated starting lines. No penalty will be incurred.
 - However, if a competitor intentionally steps out to avoid engaging with the opponent or while running away, the Non-Engagement warning category will be imposed.

- Focusing only on attacks
 - If a competitor focuses solely on attacking, and does not defend themselves nor display defensive techniques, they will incur a self-endangerment (“mubobi”) warning.

- Loss of Composure
 - If a competitor loses composure, and acts emotionally or uncontrollably, they will incur a Dangerous Actions (“Kiken Koi”) warning.

For other details, please refer to the Jiyu Kumite Rules.