



General Rules of Tatami Sports

Chapter 2



WAKO General Rules of Tatami Sports

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Officials, Equipment, Uniforms, Fighting Area, Weight divisions, Weigh-in procedures, Rounds and Special violations of rules.

Art. 1. Officials

Art. 1.1 Chairman of the Appeals Board

The Chairman of the Referee Committee shall act as head of the Appeals Board together with a designated member of the Technical Committee and the designated member of the Board of Directors.

Art. 1.2 Tournament Committee

- Will act as announcers
- Will control the Tatami
- Will conduct the official weigh-in, drawing and layout of fighting areas in the sport hall

Art. 1.3 Chief referees of Tatami Sports

The WAKO International Referee Committee of Tatami Sports will select 2 chief referees per fighting area. Their main responsibility is to organize the central referees and judges according to the nationalities of fighters and to observe every single match in order to be ready to educate referees and judges in case of mistakes or to be able to handle protests. They can alternate their role. Also, they

- May interrupt the Match to answer or deal with protests.
- May interrupt the Match if the Rules are not being applied correctly.
- May remove a Referee and Judges who are not performing at an acceptable standard.
- May appoint an assistant to replace a member when necessary.

Art. 1.4 Referees

- There is one Central Referee per Match
- The Referees shall be selected by the Chief referee of tatami sports
- He makes sure that the rules of fair play are strictly observed.
- He will have the power to control the tatami and fighters.
- His first responsibility is the safety of the fighters.
- He shall have the power to stop the match to award points or penalties.
- The Referee is the only person who shall have the authority to stop the match.
- The Referee may issue warnings for rules violations without confirmation of the judges.
- He shall not award points without at least one judge voting to confirm his call.
- When he issues a warning or a penalty, no points can be given to the offending fighter.
- He must give all commands in ENGLISH.
- He will be responsible for the enforcement of the rules throughout the competition and ensure that all scores, penalties and warnings are recorded.
- In cases where the Referee feels a disqualification may be appropriate, except in cases or instances requiring automatic disqualification, the Chairman of tatami sports shall be consulted.

Art. 1.5 Judges

- There are two (Semi-Contact) or three (Light-Contact) Judges per match including the final matches.
- The Judges are to assist the referee to ensure the safety of the fighters.
- They shall check fighters before each match to ensure proper safety equipment is being used.
- When a Judge sees what he considers a legal score, he must indicate so immediately.
- The Judges must keep constant watch over the fighting area and inform the referee when one of the fighters leaves the area.
- If a Judge spots an action which he feels is in violation of the rules, he must contact the referee and inform him of his views.



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Art. 1.5.1 Referees / Judges

The Referee and the Judges should be dressed in the following manner: clean gray pants, white WAKO shirt, WAKO bow tie, blue jacket with WAKO insignia on it and black gym shoes.

All WAKO judges and referees should undergo, in their own countries, a basic medical test before officiating in WAKO Championships. Their valid medical certificate should be brought with them during Championships and shown on demand.

Before officiating in an international tournament that is regulated according to the above-mentioned rules, a referee must submit to a medical check-up in order to prove his physical fitness to fulfill his role on the tatami. His sight must be at least 6 dioptics per eye. A referee is not allowed to wear glasses, but he may wear contact lenses. The referee is obliged to attend the meeting organized by the Medical Committee, before each championship.

WAKO judges must use clickers to count the scored points while on duty (Light-Contact).

WAKO judges/referees' age limit is 65.

WAKO judges/referees must attend International WAKO referee seminars before officiating in any WAKO championships. Their license must be renewed every two years.

To ensure neutrality, the referees and the three judges for each bout will be chosen by the Chief Referees of the area, according to the following rules:

- Each official will come from a country and Federation/Association different from that of the others and from that of the fighters.
- In no way may two of the officials of the same bout, if not due to an uncontrollable event, come from the same country.
- An official may not be born or live in a country which is a dominion, colony or in any way dependent of the country of either kickboxer taking part in the bout.
- In the case of an official having changed nationality, he will not officiate in a bout where one of the fighters or other officiating judges come from his native country.

In the event the Chief Referee on duty is not able, for any reason, to apply the preceding directives, the name or names of the Official or Officials will be chosen by drawing lots, by the Chairman of Tatami Sports or the Referee Committee, or any other person on his behalf, for the bout in question.

For international matches between the teams of two or more national federation/associations, a bout could be supervised according to an agreement between the official representatives of the federations/associations in question, provided that the agreement does not go beyond the basic refereeing principles set forth in WAKO regulations.

Persons in charge of the refereeing or judging of a bout or a series of bouts, will not at any moment of the bout or bouts be allowed to act as a manager, trainer, coach or second of a kickboxer or team of kickboxers taking part in a bout, nor act as an official in a match in which a fighter from his country participates.

Should the referee prove to be inadequate during the course of a bout, the Chief Referee on duty will hold him back and stop the match. The next referee on the WAKO international list of neutral referees will receive the necessary instructions to direct and officiate the rest of the bout.

Art. 1.6 Timekeeper

The Timekeeper will stop and start the clock only on the command of the referee and shall, at the exact moment time has run out, cause the audio device to be activated or throw a soft bean bag onto the tatami.

The Timekeeper will be in charge of the clock and audio device

Art. 1.7 Score Keeper

The Score Keeper records all points, warnings and penalties given by the referee and shall notify the referee when a 10 point lead is achieved by either fighter (Semi-Contact).

The Score Keeper must notify the referee when the warnings add up to a penalty point or when the penalties add up to an automatic disqualification.



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Art. 1.8 Special Note

All referees, judges and officials working a tournament, whether on or off duty, are not allowed to take action on behalf of a team/nation as coach or in any other way show favoritism (screaming, cheering like any coach/fan).

Art. 2. Safety equipment

The WAKO Board, together with the Technical Committee must approve all safety equipment. Producers of safety equipment must get their products approved by WAKO. Safety devices to be used in World and European Championships must be approved at least 3 months before the tournaments and all members must be duly informed.

All uniforms and safety equipment must be clean, correct and in good and safe condition. Special care must be taken for weapons, which must not be sharp or with unprotected points.

Art. 2.1 Head protection

Head protection is mandatory in all kickboxing fights in all disciplines except in musical forms and aero kickboxing. Head protection must be made from foam rubber or soft plastic or from compact sponge covered by leather. In fights, head protection that covers the face or head protection that reduces the field of vision is not allowed.

Head protection must cover the top of forehead, top of head, temples, the upper part of jawbone, ears and back of head. Head protection must not obstruct the athletes hearing. Parts for fixing the head protection cannot be metal or plastic buckle. Velcro for adjusting is allowed under chin and on back of head.

Art. 2.2 Gloves

Two types of protective gloves are used at kickboxing competitions: gloves for semi-contact (which are open hand) and 10 ounces gloves for light contact (closed hand with velcro) the same as those used in ring sports. In every fighting discipline, gloves are mandatory.

Art. 2.2.1 Gloves for Semi-Contact

In semi-contact it is mandatory to use gloves with an open palm or open hand and with full cover of the first half of fingers, including the thumb. The gloves make it possible to open and close the hand. Gloves must cover hitting area on the front and upper side of the fist and edge of the palm and must cover a minimum of 5 cm above the wrist. Gloves must be made from soft and compact synthetic foam rubber material covered with original or artificial leather. Gloves must be fixed on the fighter's hand by a self adhesive and adjustable strip over the wrist.

Metal or plastic buckles or ropes are not allowed for fixing gloves. Also, any kind of self-adhesive tape is not allowed, except self adhesive tape made with a cotton base, and this tape can be used only to fix gloves at the wrist. The total weight of the glove must be 8 Oz (226 grams).

Art. 2.2.2 Gloves for Light-Contact

Gloves for light contact used in official WAKO competitions must be approved by the WAKO Board of Directors and checked by the referee. The Gloves must weigh 10 Oz (283 grams) and the weight must be clearly marked. The Gloves are produced from special foam rubber, synthetic, compact and soft material that is covered with genuine or artificial leather. The Gloves must make it possible for the fighter to completely clench his fist and keep his thumb in contact with other fingers. The Gloves completely cover the fighter's fist with separate parts for fingers and thumb. The thumb is connected by a small strong strip to the rest of the glove. This strip keeps the thumb together with the fist to avoid separation of the thumb during punching and injuries to the fighter's thumb or to the other fighter. Inner foam rubber material must cover the front and upper part of the fist, edge of palm and upper and front part of thumb.

The interior part of gloves covers the bottom part of the fingers and palm only with leather and cover a minimum of 5 cm of the wrist. Self-adhesive strips around the fighter's wrists will fasten gloves and the use of self-adhesive cotton-base tape is allowed (plastic or other types of self-adhesive tape are not allowed). Fastening gloves with strips or any kind of buckles is not allowed.



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Art. 2.3 Hand wraps (Bandage)

Hand wraps are used for wrapping the fist to avoid injuries. Using hand wraps are mandatory. Hand wraps are 250 cm long and 5 cm wide cotton strips without sharp edges. Hand wraps will be fastened on the upper part of fighter's wrists with self-adhesive cotton-base strips with a maximum length of 15 cm and width 2 cm. For cadets and juniors, hand wraps can be lighter, of course.

Art. 2.4 Tooth protection (Mouth-guard)

Mouth-guards must be made from soft and pliable rubber-plastic material. Protection on only the upper teeth or on both upper and lower teeth is allowed. Mouth-guard must enable free breathing and must be adapted to the competitor's mouth configuration. It is not allowed to use a mouth-guard over tooth correction apparatus (braces, retainers). Using tooth protection is mandatory for all fighting disciplines, in all age categories.

Art. 2.5 Breast protection

Breast protection is mandatory for all female competitors in older cadets, junior and senior categories and is mandatory in all fighting disciplines (semi, light, full contact, low-kick and K1 Rules). Breast protection is made from hard plastic and can be covered with cotton material. Breast protection can be made in one piece and cover all the chest or in two pieces for insertion into bra to cover each breast individually. It is worn under the T-shirt or under the top (bodice).

Art. 2.6 Groin protection

Groin protector is mandatory for all male competitors. Groin protector is made of hard plastic material and fully covers genital organs to protect this part of competitor's body from any injury. The groin protector can be made as a cup for covering genitals, or for covering the entire abdomen. Competitors must wear the groin protection under their pants. Groin protection for women is recommended.

Art. 2.7 Shin guard

Shin guards are made from hard foam-rubber material. A shin guard must cover the shinbone from under the knee to the top of the feet. Shin guards are fastened to the leg by a minimum of two self-adhesive elastic strips. No other kind of plastic tape is allowed for fixing the guard to the shin. Shin guards with metal, wooden or hard plastic elements are not allowed.

Art. 2.8 Foot protection

Foot protection is made from special synthetic foam rubber, a compact and soft material which is covered with genuine or artificial leather. Foot protection covers the upper part of the foot (instep), lateral and medial malleolus and heel - all in one piece - with open sole of the foot. They must be adequately long to completely cover the competitor's feet and toes. The front part of the foot protection is fastened by elastic strips for the big and second toes. The Foot protection is fastened to feet with elastic self-adhesive strips on the back of the feet, above the heel.

Art. 3. Uniforms

A T-shirt must be worn in semi-contact and light contact by male and female competitors. The length of sleeves must be a maximum of mid upper arm.

Art. 3.1 Sponsors

Sponsor advertising or logos may be worn on the uniform in the following manner:

- Top, on the upper sleeve and/or shoulder area, and may not be larger than 10 x 10 cm (4" x 4").
- Pants, on the side between the knee and the hip area.

If the promoters and sponsor(s) do not wish the fighters to wear advertising other than their own, the promoter and his sponsor must provide sponsorship to the fighters or countries equal to the amount they have given up from their individual sponsor.



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Art. 4. Fighter's uniforms and equipment

Art. 4.1 Competitors in Semi-Contact

Head-guard, mouth-guard, groin-guard, breast protection (for female competitors only, optional for younger female cadets division), gloves for semi-contact, hand wraps, groin protection – mandatory for all male competitors (optional only for younger female cadets division, recommended for female junior and senior), shin-guards and foot-guards.

Competitors wear V-neck sport top or T-shirt (with name of represented country) and long pants with belts indicating their grade.

Other garments such as traditional kimonos (karate, taekwondo, kung fu-wushu) are not allowed.

Art. 4.2 Competitors in Light-Contact

Head protection, mouth-guard, breast protection (for female competitors)) 10 Oz boxing gloves, hand wraps, groin protection (optional for female cadets, but mandatory for female and male junior/senior competitors), shin guards, and foot protection.

Competitors wear V-neck sport top or T-shirt (with name of represented country) and long pants. Belts indicating grade, allowed.

Art. 4.3 Competitors in Musical Forms

For musical forms performances the competitor is allowed to wear all original clothes and footwear of the traditional martial art on which his/her performance is based (karate, taekwondo, kung fu/wushu aikido, and others). They can wear any kind of legally recognized kickboxing or karate uniform, which must be clean and decent. In Hard styles, competitors must be bar footed, while in Soft Styles they can wear sport shoes

They can also be shirtless for their performance (apart from women, of course). Competitors are allowed to wear sweatbands on arms/wrist. Competitors are not allowed to wear any jewellery or piercing of any kind.

Art. 4.4 Competitors in Aero Kickboxing

Competitors must show up in long pants (aerobic or fighting pants) and t-shirt or sport top (for female only). Women cannot show up in bra only. They must wear shoes and they cannot wear any jewellery or piercing. For all details check chapter six – Aero Kickboxing.

Art. 5. Procedure for equipment and uniform check

Competitor's safety equipment, uniform and other checks will be done by the central referee or the judge, according to the decisions taken by International Referee Committee.

Usually the Fighter must present himself, both in semi and light contact, to the Judge nearest his corner to have his safety equipment inspected/reviewed. After the Judge has inspected the Fighter, he will wait to enter the Tatami until told to do so by the Referee.

Competitors must be suitably conditioned to participate in their chosen discipline and they must have no injuries or illnesses that may harm them or other competitors. His/her face must be dry and without any grease. It is not allowed to enter a match while bleeding. Also, it is not allowed to enter a match with any adhesive bandages or with tampons in nostrils or with any cuts or scratches. In that case, judge will consult the doctor. The body must be dry and without any oil.

The judge will ask the coach to wipe clean the competitor's face and body.

It is not allowed to enter a fight with any kind of jewellery or other adornment. Judges will run their fingers under the top of the T-shirt to check that competitors have no jewellery or other adornment around the neck. Also, judges will push index fingers under head guard to insure that competitors have no earrings, studs or other jewellery. No tongue piercing and belly button piercing allowed either. Binding hair with any kind of metal, plastic or hard buckle is not allowed. Only elastic or cotton strips are allowed for this purpose.

It is not allowed to fasten safety equipment with self-adhesive tape, over the original strips.

Before allowing a fighter to enter the tatami, the judge must be completely sure that the fighter's safety equipment and uniform are fully functional for the competitor's safety and conform to WAKO rules.

The Chief Referee on duty for Musical Forms and Aero Kickboxing check all competitors for jewellery and piercings before they compete.



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Art. 5.1 Semi- and Light-Contact

Competitors must stand outside of the tatami. The judge (if not differently decided) will check uniforms, which must be dry, clean, without any blood or other substances and in good repair.

The Judge will check the head guard and must pay attention to the following: the head guard must be firmly fastened by self-adhesive strips under the chin and at the back of the head (no type of buckle is allowed). The top of the head must be completely covered. The face, chin and eyebrows must be open.

Gloves for semi-contact must be without any cracks. The competitor must be able to open his hand and the first half of fingers must be covered. The palm must not be covered. The fastening strip must be self-adhesive and gloves must be fastened at the wrist. Hand wraps must be wrapped around the base of fingers, palm and back of the hand. Wraps must be fixed on the wrist with self-adhesive small strips or with self-adhesive cotton-based tape. The Judge must touch and feel that hand wraps are soft and without any hard parts.

Before checking gloves for light contact, the competitor must show his hands with hand wraps. Hand wraps are mandatory. Hand wraps must be wrapped around the base of fingers, palm and back of the hand. Wraps must be fixed on wrist with self-adhesive small strips or with self-adhesive cotton-based tape. Judge must touch and feel that hand wraps are soft and without any hard parts. After checking the hand wraps, the judge will allow the competitor to put on the gloves.

Gloves for light contact must be 10 Oz boxing gloves in good repair, without any cracks.

Fastening must be with a self-adhesive strip and gloves must be secured at the wrist. Gloves with fastening laces are not allowed.

Art. 6. Other equipment

Art. 6.1 Fighting area - Tatami

The Competition area shall be called the tatami. In World and Continental Championships the tatami size will be 8x8 meters for seniors and juniors and 6x6 meters for cadets. In World Cups, regional and low-level championships, the tatami can be smaller, but not smaller than 6x6 meters.

The tatami must be placed on the bare floor and must be made up of non-slip interlocking mats, suitably colored.

The area for musical forms and aero kickboxing performances can be larger. The tatami must combine two colored parts, a border (6-8m x 1m) in one color, and the center (5-7m x 5-7 m) in another color, so as to warn fighters that they are coming close to the boundary.

Art. 7. Weight Divisions and Weigh-in Procedures

Art. 7.1 Weight Classes and Age Categories

Age divisions will be determined in the following manner at All WAKO Continental and World Championships:

A competitor will be placed in an age division according to his/hers **date of birth**.

Age Categories specifications:

- **Younger Cadets Category:** 10, 11 and 12 years old. Meaning from the date he/she turns 10 years and up to the day he/she turns 13 -Tatami sports only.
 - **Older Cadets Category:** 13, 14 and 15 years old. Meaning from the date he/she turns 13 years and up to the day he/she turns 17 -Tatami sports only.
 - **Juniors Category:** 16, 17 and 18 years old. Meaning from the date he/she turns 16 years and up to the day he/she turns 19.
 - **Seniors Category:** 18 to 45 years old. Meaning from the date the he/she turns 18 years and up to the day he/she turns 46
-
- **Specification during championships/tournaments:** In case of birthday during a tournament that changes the age category, he/she can compete in the lower category until the tournament is over. A tournament period is defined as from the day of the official weigh-in/registration and until the finals is finished.



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- **Ring Sports specifications for Juniors:** The date in which he/she turns 18, he/she can decide to be either a junior or senior. However if he/she has competed as a senior at the age of 18 he/she cannot go back to competing as a junior again.
- **Tatami Sports specifications for Juniors:** The date in which he/she turns 18, he/she can decide to be either a junior or senior. However if the fighter has competed as a senior at the age of 18 he/she cannot return to competing as a junior again. You can not compete in Senior and Junior World/Continental Championships without prior WAKO Board approval. Board of Directors may in special circumstances allow fighters down to 16 or 17 year to participate as seniors. Applicants must be in writing to the board six months in advance of the World/Continental Championships.
- **Legitimation:** Positive proof of age will be required at all championships (passport or driving license).
- **Only one weight-class:** In WAKO championships, it is only possible to start and compete in one weight class.
- See General Rules of either Tatami Sports or Ring Sports for other requirements, as health certificate.

Art. 7.1.1 Seniors (from age 19 to 45)

Men

Under 57 kg
Under 63 kg
Under 69 kg
Under 74 kg
Under 79 kg
Under 84 kg
Under 89 kg
Under 94 kg
Over 94 kg

Woman

Under 50 kg
Under 55 kg
Under 60 kg
Under 65 kg
Under 70 kg
Over 70 kg

Art. 7.1.2 Veterans (from age 35 to 45)

Men

Under 57 kg
Under 63 kg
Under 69 kg
Under 74 kg
Under 79 kg
Under 84 kg
Under 89 kg
Under 94 kg
Over 94 kg

Woman

Under 50 kg
Under 55 kg
Under 60 kg
Under 65 kg
Under 70 kg
Over 70 kg



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Art. 7.1.3 Juniors (from age 16 to 18)

Male	Female
Under 57 kg	Under 50 kg
Under 63 kg	Under 55 kg
Under 69 kg	Under 60 kg
Under 74 kg	Under 65 kg
Under 79 kg	Under 70 kg
Under 84 kg	Over 70 kg
Under 89 kg	
Under 94 kg	
Over 94 kg	

Art. 7.1.4 Younger cadets (10-11-12 years old) - Boys and Girls

-28 kg
-32 kg
-37 kg
-42 kg
-47 kg
+ 47 kg

Art. 7.1.5 Older Cadets (13-14-15 years old)

Boys	Girls
- 42 kg	- 42 kg
- 47 kg	- 46 kg
- 52 kg	- 50 kg
- 57 kg	- 55 kg
- 63 kg	- 60 kg
- 69 kg	- 65 kg
+ 69 kg	+65 kg

Art. 7.2 Weigh-in Procedures

The fighters of each weight category will be weighed the day before the competition or in the morning between 8:00 and 10:00 o'clock on the same day that they have been drawn to fight.

The Chairman of Tatami Sports and the Technical Director or the official substitutes will be allowed to modify these conditions in case of an inevitable postponement.

The fights will start at least 3 hours after the weigh-in time, or in a shorter lapse of time if the Board of Directors so decides after consulting with the Medical Committee, provided that the decision is not prejudicial to any kickboxer taking part in the first bouts of the tournament.

The WAKO authorized delegates will perform the weigh-in. WAKO representatives of any national association may be present, but are not allowed to intervene on any occasion.

Each fighter will be officially weighed only once. The weight registered on that occasion is final. However, it is possible for the representative of a country whose fighter has not reached the right weight limit during the official weigh-in, to put him into another, suitable weight category, provided that the country in question has



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got a vacancy in that category and the weigh-in has not yet closed. It is also allowed for all countries to replace one kickboxer with another, before the end of the first weigh-in and the medical check-up, on condition that, within each competition where substitutes are allowed, the kickboxer in question has been registered as a reserve for that, or in any other weight category.

The weight is what the scale shows when the fighter is undressed. The weight must be displayed in metric measures. Electronic scales can be used. A fighter is generally allowed to fight solely within the category defined by the weigh-in.

Each fighter must have his own WAKO SPORT PASS with MEDICAL TEST included, valid for 1 year, to be shown at weigh-in procedures.

In European or World Championships, NO FOREIGN COMPETITORS can be part of a National Team and official passports must be issued by the nation of the team. At weigh-in, official passports must be shown to the registration/weigh-in officials in charge. In Continental Championships competitors from other continents are not allowed to participate.

Art. 7.2.1 International Bouts

For tournaments or competitions between two or more nations, the weigh-in will be carried out by a member appointed by the National Federation/Association of the organizing country, with a representative of the participating country or countries present and allowed to verify the weight of each kickboxer. The Association/Federation of the country which hosts a "visiting" team will provide it with scales (for the purpose of weight check) and a training area, when the last visitor has arrived in the town where the match takes place. WAKO referees (for world, international or national matches) will referee each bout: two or three judges may equally officiate if necessary. Each fighter must, before weigh-in, be judged fit for fighting by the doctor appointed by the Board of Directors. In order to assure a successful weigh-in, the Board of Directors can decide to start the medical check-up earlier.

Art. 8. Rounds

All WAKO fighting styles shall have 3 x 2-minute rounds in all WAKO tournaments. In World Cup or Open Wako Championships, this can be a 2 x 2 or 1 x 3-minute round.

In Continental and World Championships for seniors and juniors, there will be 3 rounds of 2 minutes, with 1 minute rests between rounds in both elimination matches and the finals. For official WAKO world, continental, International Opens and regional Cups, due to the large number of competitors, the time can be reduced to 2 rounds of 2 minutes each, with a one minute rest between rounds, or one round of three minutes both in eliminations and the finals.

For Cadets in Continental and World Championships: fights are 2 rounds of 1'30" (qualification, semifinals and finals). For official WAKO world, continental, International Opens and regional Cups, due to the large number of competitors, the time can be reduced to 1 x 2-minute round.

In case of draw declared by the central referee at the end of match, in a semi contact competitions there is a prolongation on an extra round of 1 minute.

In case of another draw, the "sudden death rule" will be applied, i.e. winner is the fighter who scores the first mark.

Art. 9. Special violations of Rules

If a fighter, coach or a whole team protests without leaving the tatami immediately after the fight, the Chairman of Tatami Sports, after consultation with the Board of Directors or the tournament organization, is allowed to disqualify the whole team.

Art. 10. Use of Drugs

WAKO follows the WADA Code of Conduct and its lists of prohibited substances which may be amended from time to time. Consult WAKO Anti Doping Rules and procedures.

Any kickboxer refusing to submit to a medical examination or doping test before or after a fight may be immediately disqualified or suspended pending a full hearing.

The same will occur in the case of an official encouraging such a refusal. The use of local anesthetics is allowed, if agreed upon by a doctor from the Medical Committee.

WAKO refers to and adopts WADA Anti Doping Rules in all cases.



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Note

For better readability the text sometimes uses masculine pronouns only. However, all references to persons apply to both genders.