

13th Annual

Southwest Florida Martial Arts Open



Saturday, September 6, 2025
Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center



Tournament Handbook



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Thank you for participating in the Southwest Florida Martial Arts Open! We appreciate your support of the tournament. This handbook will provide you an overview of the rules, regulations and categories. We encourage all school owners, masters, instructors, coaches, competitors and parents to read the tournament handbook. It is important for everyone to have an overview of the rules, as some rules will be different than other tournaments.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Date: September 6, 2025
- Location: Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, Punta Gorda, FL
(75 Taylor Steet, Punta Gorda, FL 33950)
- Time: Doors Open at 8:00am
Competition begins at 10:00
- Competitor Fee: These fees are for ONLINE registration. Onsite registration fees will be higher.
\$95 – Competitor chooses two (2) categories from, forms, breaking, weapons, sparring.
\$20 – Additional category (*excludes Team Form, Pair Forms, Demo Team & Power Breaking*)
\$60 – Synchronized Team Form (3-5 people) (*fee is per team, not team member*) **NEW!**
\$60 – Pair Forms (2 people only) (*fee is per pair, not per person*) **NEW!**
\$60 – Demonstration (Demo) Team (*fee is per team, not team member*) **NEW!**
\$60 – **Power Breaking** (*Does not include boards. Boards are an additional fee*) **NEW!**
FREE – Team Spirt Category NEW!
- Coaches Fee: **FREE** – Each participating school will receive (one) 1 FREE coach's badges. Each additional coach badge is twenty-five dollars (\$25) per badge. *Schools that bring over 15 competitors receive additional free coach's badge.*
- Spectator Fee: \$10 for Adults – Children 5 and under – **FREE** (*Proceeds will be donated to charities to feed needy families, veterans and animal shelters for the Thanksgiving holiday.*)
- Registration: Register online at www.SWFLMATournament.com (*Online registration closes September 1, 2025. After that date all registration will be onsite at The Tournament.*)
- Food: Concessions will be available for purchase onsite.

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TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE:

8:00am – On-site Registration Opens

8:00am – 9:30am – Rings open for competitor stretching & practice

9:15am – 9:30am – Judges & Coaches meeting

10:00am – Opening Ceremonies

- i. Welcome Remarks
- ii. GM & Master Thank You
- iii. National Anthem
- iv. Scholarship Award
- v. Team Spirit Award
- vi. Brief overview, competitor, spectator information & updates

10:15am – Competitors to Rings

10:15am – 4:00pm – Competition begins

- i. Special Needs
- ii. Forms – Color Belts & Black Belts
- iii. Forms Grand Championship Rounds
- iv. Pair Forms (2 people only)
- v. Synchronized Team Forms (3 – 5 people)
- vi. Breaking – Color Belts & Black Belts
- vii. Weapons – Color Belts & Black Belts
- viii. Sparring – Color Belts & Black Belts

LUNCH – The competition will continue throughout the day. Competitors choose their own lunch time. Rings and judges will have designated lunch breaks.

Based on unforeseen circumstances the schedule could vary prior to the start of the tournament. Any changes will be updated on the website as soon as possible.

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GENERAL RULES

- I. **Courtesy & Respect** – Be courteous, respectful, kind and practice good sportsmanship.
- II. **Cleanup** - Please remember to pick up your broken boards, trash, water bottles, papers etc.
- III. **Language** – No cursing or inappropriate language. Competitors will receive point deductions or be disqualified for cursing, using inappropriate language, trash talking or poor sportsmanship.
- IV. **NO Smoking** – This is a NON SMOKING Tournament. There is no smoking in the convention center, including electronic cigarettes.
- V. **Alcoholic Beverages** – Alcoholic beverages *are not* permitted at The Tournament.
- VI. **NO Coolers** – Coolers and glass bottles *are not* permitted in the convention center.
- VII. **Competition Area** – The competition area includes the competition rings and surrounding space where athletes compete or wait to compete. Only authorized personnel are permitted in this area. Anyone in this area is required to have appropriate credentials.
- VIII. **Competition Area Dress Code** – Everyone in the competition area must follow the dress code including competitors, coaches, judges, volunteers and parent helpers.
 - a. **Uniforms** – All competitors must wear a clean and wrinkle free uniform. Competitors with a soiled and/or wrinkled uniform will receive a one (1) point deduction in the categories they compete. Competitors **MUST** be wearing a uniform at the time they are called to the ring. No shorts, tank tops, jeans, ripped clothing, etc. may be worn. If you have a question please see an official tournament representative before the start of your division.
 - b. **NO Shorts or Jeans** – Shorts and Jeans *are not* permitted in the competition area.
 - c. **Shirts** – All shirt must have a team/school logo
 - d. **Judges** – Judges must wear the judge's shirt and badge at all times.
 - e. **Coaches** – Coaches have the option to wear a uniform, suit, collared shirt, or team/school warmup suit. Warmup suits must have a team or school logo. Coaches must wear their badge at all times.
- IX. **Practice & Warmups** – The competition area will be available for practice and stretching before the competition begins. All practice and warmups before, during and after the tournament must be conducted in a safe manner. Please be careful and cautious of others around you.

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Categories

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COMPETITION RULES:

The following outlines the rules for each of the competition categories. *Remember to register online on or before September 1, 2025!*

I. **Special Needs - NEW**

This is a **FREE** event to students with Down Syndrome or other qualifying special needs. Tournament directors will work with school owners to coordinate divisions and pairings for any special needs competitors. For tournament purposes, ADD, ADHD or similar attention disorders do not qualify for this category. Competitors will be awarded Gold, Silver and Bronze medals.

II. **Scholarship/Grant - NEW**

The Tournament will give away one (1) five hundred dollar (\$500) scholarship/grant that can be used for college or trade school. The category is open to **BLACK** belt students that are a high school junior, senior or college level student. Each school with five (5) or more competitors can submit one (1) qualifying student who you feel should receive the scholarship/grant.

The candidate must submit a five hundred (500) – six hundred (600) word essay in his or her own words on what it means to be a black belt. The essay must include a cover page with the following details. The cover page information does not count towards the essay word count.

1. Full Name, Age & Current Grade Level
2. Martial Arts School Name & Master's Name
3. Number of years training Martial Arts.

The candidate will be judged and scored on the content and presentation of the essay. Essays that fall under or go over the word count will be disqualified. Essays with cursing or inappropriate language will be disqualified. The essay must be submitted on or before September 1, 2025. Essays received after September 1, 2025 will receive a five (5) point deduction on the overall score. Eighty-five percent (90%) of the score is based on the content and fifteen percent (10%) of the score is based on the presentation, grammar and spelling. Essays should be mailed to 2345 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34239 or by email to RoyWorth@SWFLOpen.com. The winner will be announced at The Tournament.

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III. Team Spirit Award - **NEW**

The Team Spirit category is open to all participating schools. The Team Spirit award will be given to the school with the most pre-registered paid competitors participating in the tournament. For a competitor to be included in the total count they must be pre-registered and paid on or before September 1, 2025.

The winning school receives the following:

1. \$250 in equipment/gear provided by Dynamics
2. Reserved section for your team and parents in the bleachers
3. Team Pizza Party
4. Team Spirit Trophy
5. Bragging rights for one year!

For this award, Pairs Forms, Synchronized Team Forms and Demo Team count as one (1) paid competitor. Each person on the Pairs Team, Synchronized Team and or Demo Team do not count as an individual pre-registered paid competitor for this category. The tournament directors will coordinate with the winning school owner(s) to receive the pizza party and equipment.

IV. Demonstration (Demo) Team - **NEW**

This category will be open to *ALL* belt and age divisions. It is a fun and exciting category that allows Demo Team to compete against each other. Each team must have a minimum of six (6) competitors and a maximum of twenty (20) competitors. The teams can be mixed with male and female and different belt divisions.

In this category the Demo Team has a **maximum time limit of FOUR minutes (4 min.)** to perform their routine. Time starts when the Demo Team enters the ring and ends when the Demo Team is finished. Competitors that exceed the allotted time will receive point deductions. Music, weapons and props are permitted. Weapons and props that are sharp, considered dangerous or harmful to spectators and or any part of the competition area are not permitted. Any props that cause major clean up time will not be permitted. Demo Teams are responsible to clean up the ring when finished.

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Forms

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- V. **FORMS Category – NEW STRUCTURE** – The category is open to all styles of martial arts. You will see different styles and forms competing against each other. This category features two (2) levels or rounds.
1. **Level I** – This is the medal round. At this level three (3) competitors in the same division compete against each other. They compete for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. All Gold medal winners advance to LEVEL II, the grand championship trophy round.
 2. **Level II** – This is the grand championship trophy round. The level is open to all competitors that won a Gold medal in the LEVEL I forms category. Gold medal winners compete for the title of Grand Champion against other gold medal winners in their division. When all of the competitors in a group have completed their forms and the medals have been awarded, all GOLD medal winners enter the ring again. The top three (3) gold medal competitors with the highest scores will be awarded 1st place, 2nd place and 3rd place trophies.

In LEVEL I forms competition, competitors will be grouped by divisions. Once the grouping is complete, the competitors will be separated into brackets of three (3) competitors. For example, if there are nine (9) competitors in a group they will be subdivided into three (3) brackets of three (3) competitors. If there are eleven (11) competitors in a group, they will be subdivided into three (3) brackets of three (3) competitors and one (1) bracket of two (2) competitors.

When a bracket of three (3) or two (2) competitors have completed their form, the judges will conference to award Gold, Silver and Bronze medals to the competitors based on their scores. All Gold medal winners advance to LEVEL II to compete against other gold medal winners in their division.

In LEVEL I competitors enter the ring one competitor at a time. The competitors bow when they enter and exit the ring. After entering the ring, the competitor walks up to the judge's table, bows and introduces themselves to the judges and asks permission to begin. When introducing themselves to the judges they tell the judges what Martial Art school they represent and ask permission to begin. For example, the competitor may say, "My name is (state their name). I represent (state Martial Art school name) or Representing (state Martial Arts school name). With your permission, I will begin." After the judges acknowledges the competitor, the competitor will say thank you judges, bow and return to center of ring and begin their form. The introductions provided are examples. Each introduction may vary from competitor to competitor.

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Forms Competition Continued:

SCORING – This is an outline of how the forms category will be scored by the judges.

Black Belts: The officials will each score forms in the range of 9.00 to 10.00.

Color Belts: The officials will each score forms in the range of 8.00 to 8.90.

Competitors must be present when their names are called. Three (3) calls will be made for the competition at ring side: a first call, a second call and a final call. If a competitor is not at the assigned ring to compete or if a competitor leaves a ring after the ring competition begins and is not present when their name is called three (3) times, they will be disqualified.

Uniforms for forms category. T shirts, tank tops and sweatshirts are not allowed in form category. Uniforms in form divisions are allowed more liberties because it is not a one on one competition where the uniform could cause a decisive disadvantage or advantage to a competitor. Removal of the uniform top is allowed in forms competition if the removal is considered relevant to the artistic expression or safety of the competitor. Approved shoes may be worn in forms competition if they do not damage or mark the competition floor.

VI. Synchronized Team Forms - **NEW**

This category is open to *ALL* belt and age divisions. Its a fun and exciting category that allows competitors to compete with their friends and/or family as a team. Each team must have a minimum of three (3) competitors and a maximum of five (5) competitors. Teams can be mixed with male and female and different belt divisions. Each team must demonstrate a traditional Martial Art form. This is not a creative category.

VII. Pair Forms - **NEW**

This category will be open to *ALL* belt and age divisions. It is a fun and exciting category that allows competitors to compete with friends or family as a pair. Each pair is two (2) competitors. The pair can be mixed with male and female and different belt divisions. Teams must demonstrate a traditional Martial Art form. It is not a creative category.

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Forms Competition Continued:

- VIII. **Musical/Creative Forms** – The musical forms category and the creative forms category will be combined into one (1) category. However, if enough competitors enter to create separate categories they will be divided onsite at The Tournament. That determination will be made on the day of The Tournament. Competitors choosing musical forms must provide their own equipment to play the music. The Tournament does not provide audio equipment for competitors. If the audio equipment malfunctions due to no fault of the tournament and its coordinators, the competitor will be downgraded by the judges.

COMPETITORS – All competitors must present themselves suitably attired (as described in this handbook) and ready to compete. They may be divided into separate divisions based on style, size, gender, belt color, origin of form or age. Divisions can be divided based on the number of entered competitors to not exceed more than twelve (12) competitors per division or rank within the same competitor ring. To enter an adult form division, a competitor must be 18 years or older. A competitor must enter the division corresponding to his or her age group.

LATE ENTRIES – It is the responsibility of the competitor to be at the ring prior to the time that the form division starts. Once the division is organized and the first competitor begins, there will be no additional entries. If a competitor comes late but the first competitor has not started, he or she can compete but must compete first and immediately.

ORDER OF PERFORMANCE – The order of performance of the non seeds (where seeding is used) will be by random draw, shuffling of cards computer selection, numbers, etc. Switching the order of performance numbers is not allowed between competitors. If there is good reason to believe that competitors switched numbers, he/she will be disqualified.

TIME LIMIT – A competitor must be ready to compete when called upon to do so. All form competitors have a maximum of three (3) minutes to present and perform their routine. The time starts once a competitor enters the ring. If the judge feels the competitor is stalling before entering the ring, the judge can call for the timekeeper to start the clock. A competitor whose form exceeds the three (3) minute time limit will be disqualified. Competitors in the grand championship run off or finals will receive three (3) minutes to present and perform their routine.

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Forms Competition Continued:

STARTING A FORM OVER – If a competitor starts their form over because of a memory lapse or any other reason due to their own negligence, they may perform the form again. The officials will score that competitor as though there was not a mistake, but the scorekeeper will deduct one (1) point from the competitor's total score. A competitor can only start over one (1) time. If a competitor does not finish on the second try, they will be disqualified. If a competitor has to start over not due to their own negligence, they may start over without a penalty. It is important that the referee discuss the penalty procedure with the judges and scorekeeper. When a competitor starts over, the clock will not reset. The clock continues to run.

EXTERNAL AIDS – No external aids such as props, weapons, music, etc., can be used in any division except those divisions where it is allowed. No external aids can be used that would damage, disrupt or render the competition area unsafe for the other competitors, spectators or judges.

TIES – The first three competitors must perform before any scores are given. The high and low scores should always be eliminated before totaling the scores when five (5) or more judges are involved. If after adding up the scores for each competitor, there are ties, the high and low scores can be added back in to break the tied scores except when determining a first place winner.

Competitors tied for first place as well as any competitors who are still tied after adding back the high and low scores (for second through third place) must perform again to break the tie. The competitors can perform the same form or another form in the tie breaker. If after the competitors have performed again, there is a second tie, the competitor who received the majority of the judges votes (winning scores) will be declared the winner of the second tie breaker (all judges scores are used). If the scores remain tied after the second tie breaker, the competitors will perform again using the same form or a different form.

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Breaking

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IX. **BREAKING Category** – The breaking category is subdivided into three (3) categories, Standard Breaking, Power Breaking and Highest Kick Break!

1. *Standard Breaking* – In this category competitors compete against themselves. The competitor determines their own breaking technique and board heights based on the allowed number of boards for their belt rank. If the competitor is successful and completes the breaks on the first attempt, the competitor will be awarded a Gold medal. If it takes the competitor two (2) attempts on any break they will be awarded a Silver medal. If it takes the competitor three (3) or more total attempts the competitor will be awarded a Bronze medal. **Black Belt competitors will compete against two (2) other black belts in their division for 1st, 2nd & 3rd place trophies. Black belts will be judged on their breaking techniques and difficulty. Number of breaking attempts supersedes technique.**

The competitor must break the boards using a balanced number of hand and foot techniques. For example, a breaking competitor in Level I must break four (4) boards. That competitor must use two (2) hand and two (2) foot techniques to break the boards. Level II and LEVEL III competitors have additional requirements as outlined below. The breaking category is divided into the following three (3) levels.

- a. **LEVEL I – 4 Boards** – White, Yellow, Orange & Green Belts
 - a. 2 hand & 2 foot technique
- b. **LEVEL II – 6 Boards** – Purple, Blue, Brown & Red Belts
 - a. 3 hand & 3 foot techniques
 - b. Must use at least one (1) jumping kick
- c. **LEVEL III – 8 boards** – Black Belts (BB)
 - a. 4 hand & 4 foot techniques (NO hammer fist for BB division)
 - b. Must use at least one (1) jumping kick
 - c. Must use at least one (1) spinning/turning kick

Competitors in the standard breaking category **WILL NOT** be permitted to break more boards than the number of boards allowed for their belt rank. Competitors must use an equal combination of hand and foot techniques to break the number of boards for their belt rank. If a competitor fails to break a board because of a holder mistake, that attempt will not be counted against the competitor. The competitor will be allowed to attempt the break again.

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Breaking Competition Continued:

2. *Power Breaking* – This category will be limited to black belts only this year. This category will be divided by, under 18 years old division and over 18 years old division. Black belts in those 2 divisions will compete against each other in that division regardless of competitor age and size.

Breaking material will be limited to wood or concrete/cement. The Tournament will use one inch (1”) thick pine wood boards for power breaking boards. No other materials can be used. Boards and concrete/cement can be stacked on top of cement blocks. Construction pencils can be used as spacers. To keep power breaking as fair as possible, competitors must purchase boards from The Tournament. Competitors using cement or concrete must bring their own material. The Tournament will not provide or sell concrete or cement. Based on material, the tournament will separate boards and concrete/cement into two (2) separate divisions.

Judging – Power Breaking judges will count the number of boards broken to determine the winner. The competitor who breaks the most (or, in the event of a tie, has the highest percentage broken) is the winner.

Ties – In the event of a tie, the winner will be decided by the highest percentage broken. For example: competitor “A” breaks 10 out of 10; competitor “B” breaks 10 out of 12. Competitor “A” broke at 100%; competitor “B” broke at 83%. Competitor “A” is the winner. If more than one competitor has the same percentage broken after their initial break, there will be a break off to determine the winner. If there is a tie created by more than one competitor breaking 100% of their stack (example: 2 competitors break 10 out of 10), the competitor that broke the amount first is the winner.

MATERIALS – YOU MUST CLEAN UP ALL MATERIALS AFTER BREAKING!! For fairness, all competitors must use the same style board. Boards must be purchased from The Tournament for the cost of three dollars (\$3.00) per board. Competitors that bring their own boards will not be permitted to use those boards at The Tournament. Competitors must provide their own holders. Table judges can assist holding if needed. Parents are permitted to assist in holding boards.

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SAFETY – The safety of the competitor and the audience comes first, NO EXCEPTIONS! The safety of the competitor is very important and we request that the instructor of the competitor approve all breaks. If the break is deemed to be unsafe by the referees, judges or the representatives onsite, we reserve the right to restrict the break. No material may leave the ring as a result of breaking unless planned for beforehand, to ensure that no other competitor, spectator, or Judge will be struck or put in danger by material as a result of a break. If this occurs, the Judges have the right to disqualify the competitor if they feel that the safety of others was compromised. Also, the break cannot cause damage to the facility or surrounding fixtures.

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Weapons

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X. WEAPONS Category – **NEW STRUCTURE**

This category is open to different weapons including sword, bo staff, nunchucks, kamas, kali (escrima) sticks, fans and more. For safety reasons, competitors **ARE NOT** permitted to use sharpened weapons. This category encompasses traditional and music/creative routines. The weapons category features two (2) levels or rounds.

1. **Level I** – This is the medal round. At this level three (3) competitors in the same division compete against each other. They compete for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. All Gold medal winners advance to LEVEL II, the grand championship trophy round.
2. **Level II** – This is the grand championship trophy round. The level is open to all competitors that won a Gold medal in the LEVEL I weapons category. Gold medal winners compete for the title of Grand Champion against other gold medal winners in their their division. When all of the competitors in a group have completed their weapon and the medals have been awarded, all GOLD medal winners enter the ring again. The top three (3) competitors with the highest scores will be awarded 1st place, 2nd place and 3rd place trophies.

Competitors are judged based on their overall performance, technique, beauty, grace and stances compared to the other competitors. When all competitors have completed their weapons routine the judges will conference to award medals in LEVEL I and trophies in LEVEL II.

- XI. **Musical/Creative Weapons** – The musical and creative weapons categories will be combined into one (1) category . However, if enough competitors enter to create separate categories they will be divided onsite at The Tournament. That determination will be made on the day of The Tournament. **Competitors choosing musical weapons must provide their own equipment to play music. The Tournament does not provide audio equipment for competitors.** If the audio equipment malfunctions due to no fault of the tournament and its coordinators, the competitor will be downgraded by the judges.

WEAPONS – The referee can check all weapons for safety. Weapons are subject to referee’s approval (no sharp weapons allowed). The referee should make sure all spectators and competitors are at a safe distance from the performing competitor. Safety of all competitors, judges, spectators and helpers should be considered by all involved. Therefore, the competitor’s control of the weapon is of utmost importance. If a competitor unintentionally drops the weapon, the competitor is automatically disqualified. If a competitor recklessly or carelessly misuses the weapon, the competitor may be penalized or disqualified.

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Self Defense

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XII. Self-Defense

A competitor must be at their ring just like all other divisions prepared to compete. The competitor who is being attacked must be in full martial arts gear. The attackers should also be in uniform, but if a technique requires a person to be in street clothes for the technique(s) then that will be allowed. The competitor will be given ninety (90) seconds to do the technique(s). The time of ninety (90) seconds will start after they present themselves to the officials.

A competitor must have a minimum of three (3) self-defense techniques or attackers and a maximum of seven (7) techniques. A competitor may have a single attacker or multiple attackers. It will be at the discretion of the competitor. The competitor can do all open hand or defend against weapons or mix them. The scoring of the techniques will be on the knowledge, response time to an attack, and the reality of the techniques.

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Sparrrring

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XIII. SPARRING

The Tournament strives to provide a fun and safe sparring experience. Safety is a major concern. Sparring rules at this tournament are put in place to keep the competition fun, exciting and as safe as possible. **ALL sparring competitors under 18 are REQUIRED to wear full sparring gear.** Competitors must wear hand, foot, head, chest, groin and mouth protection. Gear must be in clean working condition. Competitors **WILL NOT** be allowed to spar without protective gear. If the competitor's gear is deemed unsafe, the competitor will be asked to change the equipment before the competitor can compete. This **IS NOT A FULL CONTACT** tournament. Competitors must control their kicks and punches. *If a competitor kicks or punches another competitor hard enough to cause that competitor to receive a knockout (KO). The competitor that caused the KO can be disqualified (DQ).*

1. Required Gear

- a. Hand Protections – A soft padded surface must cover the fingers and any striking surface of the hand. The Striking area such as the ridge hand, side of the hand (Chop, Hammer Fist) back of the fist (Back Fist, and the knuckles (Punch) must be covered.
- b. Foot Protection – A soft padded surface must cover the instep, sides, toes, ankle and back of the heel of the foot.
- c. Head Gear – The front, sides and back of the head must be covered by a soft padded surface. A face shield is mandatory for all competitors under 18.
- d. Chest Protection – Chest protector is required for all competitors under 18.
- e. Groin Protection – Mandatory for all male competitors & recommended for females.
- f. Mouthpiece – Mandatory for all competitors
- g. Face shield – Face shield is mandatory for all competitors under 18 years old.

Insufficiently-padded gloves, foot and head gear will not be allowed. Fingerless gloves and toeless foot gear are not allowed. Equipment must be in good state of repair and must be free of heavy taping, tears or any other repairs that may cause injury. Equipment with heavy or too many seams on the striking surface is not allowed. (Boxing and other contact sports equipment is not allowed) Shin, elbow, knee guards are recommended for additional protection. (Women over 18 recommended chest and groin protector) Because we are involved in promoting, participating and spectating in sports karate, only karate, tae kwon do and kung fu equipment is allowed if it follows The tournament requirements. The approval or denial of the equipment is ultimately determined by the tournament head rules arbitrator.

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Sparring Competition Continued:

The sparring category will be divided into two (2) separate categories. Point sparring is **SINGLE (1) ROUND** elimination until the grand championship round. Continuous sparring is **TWO (2) ROUND** elimination.

1. Point Sparring – In point sparring the first competitor to reach seven (7) points wins. When a point is scored, the judge stops the fight and the fighters return to the center to face off again. The match ends when a competitor reaches seven (7) points or the time expires.
 - a. Match Time – Preliminary matches are one (1), ninety (90) second round. Finals matches are two (2), ninety (90) second rounds.
 - b. Scoring – Points are scored with both hands and feet.
 - a. Hands – All legal hand techniques that score are awarded one (1) point.
 - b. Kicks – All legal kicking techniques that score are awarded two (2) points.
 - c. Penalty Points – All penalty points awarded will be one (1) point value.
 - c. Winner – The competitor who earns the first seven (7) points automatically wins. If no one scores seven (7) points by the end of the two minutes, the competitor who is ahead in points wins. If at the end of two (2) minutes the match is tied, the match will continue into a sudden victory overtime period. The first competitor to score a point is declared the winner.

HOW POINTS ARE AWARDED – Scoring points are awarded by a majority vote of the judges. The majority of judges do not have to agree on the same technique being scored, only that a point was scored. The only agreement to be made is that the point that scored was either a kick or a hand technique. The judges acknowledge this by holding up two fingers if a kick and one finger if a hand technique scored. A majority of the judges calling for a point must agree that a kick scored in order to award two (2) points. Otherwise only one (1) point is awarded. For example, if three (3) of five (5) judges see a point for one competitor two (2) of the three (3) judges must call a scoring kick in order for the competitor to be awarded two points. If there are only three (3) judges being used and two (2) of the three (3) see a competitor scoring technique but one (1) sees a hand technique and the others see a kicking technique, the competitor receives one (1) point. To be awarded two (2) points the majority of the judges who saw a point must see a kicking technique. See penalty points for additional information on receiving penalty points at the same time.

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Sparring Competition Continued:

2. Continuous Point Sparring – In continuous sparring competitors fight two (2) rounds before being eliminated.
 - a. Match Time – Two (2) one (1) minute rounds (Twenty (20) second rest between rounds).
 - b. Scoring – Points are scored with both hands and feet.
 - a. Hands – All legal hand techniques that score are awarded one (1) point.
 - b. Kicks – All legal kicking techniques that score are awarded two (2) points.
 - c. Penalty Points – All penalty points awarded will be one (1) point value.
 - c. Winner – The competitor with the most points at the end of a round wins that round. A competitor must win 2 rounds to win the match. If each competitor wins one (1) round, the fight another round. The is **NO SUDDEN VICTORY**.

Emphasis must be placed on both punching and kicking techniques. Punching or “boxing” only for an extended period of time without throwing kicks may be cause for penalization or may downgrade the judge’s evaluation of your performance. Competition contact for all techniques is deemed to be light contact controlled martial arts movements. Continuous sparring ***does not*** include knockout techniques. This is not a full contact combat tournament. Techniques must be well controlled when they land on legal targets with enough control as not to “strike through” or “push through” target with their scoring technique.

NEW BLACK BELT FORMAT – In 2025 the tournament will feature a new scoring procedure for black belts. Judges will no longer decide winners for black belt sparring. This year, electronic scoring boxes will be used to track competitor points. The points will be displayed a television scene in each ring. The competitor that scores the most points wins. If there is a tie at the end of the round, the competitors fight another round. There IS NO sudden death.



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Sparring Competition Continued:

WHAT IS A POINT – A point is a controlled legal sport karate technique scored by competitor in-bounds that strikes an opponent with the allowable amount of focused touch contact or focused control to a legal target area. Some of the things an official considers when deciding if a point was scored are:

Was it legitimate and legal sport karate technique?

Was it delivered with the required focused touch contact to a legal target area.

Was the competitor who scored in-bounds?

Had the match been stopped by the referee?

Either competitor down illegally when the point was scored?

Was the competitor who scored the point in control and well balanced?

Was the technique delivered with an amount of controlled force that would have incapacitated the opponent at least momentarily, if the technique had not been controlled?

ELECTRONIC SCORING – **NEW SYSTEM**

The tournament will feature an electronic scoring system. Scores will be displayed on a large TV screen located on the judge's table. For point sparring and continuous black belt sparring.



NON -TARGET AREAS – Hips, shoulders, buttocks, arms and feet are all non-target areas. Points cannot be scored to any non target area. If a competitor strikes these areas a warning is issued first. If it continues a penalty point will be awarded for each offense.

TOUCH CONTACT DEFINED – Light touch contact means there is no penetration or visible movement of the opponent as a result of the technique. Light touch may be made to all legal target areas. Moderate touch contact means slight penetration or slight target movement. Moderate touch may be made to all legal target areas except the head and face, which may use moderate contact if opponent is wearing a face shield.

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EXCESSIVE CONTACT – Excessive contact is when an opponent strikes with force in excess of what is necessary to score a point. Indications that contact has been excessive may be accessed by the following actions.

3. Visible snapping back of a competitor's head from a force of a blow.
4. A knock down of an opponent (not recklessly charging into a technique or occurring in instances where the fallen party either fell, slipped or was off balance).
5. A knockout of an opponent.
6. The appearance of severe swelling or bleeding (bleeding or other obvious external injury may in itself be grounds for excessive contact if it is considered the fault of a competitor. Bleeding, however, does not necessarily imply excessive contact).
7. The distortion or injury of the body from a force of a blow to the body.

TOUCH CONTACT REQUIREMENTS

1. All black belts must make light touch contact to the face and head (head gear) to score a point and light or moderate touch contact to the body to score a point.
2. Youth black belt can make light contact to the face as long as the opponent is wearing a face shield. Light contact to the head is allowed to the head gear. Youth black belts must make light or moderate contact to the body to score a point.
3. Color belts may make light contact to the head and face area. Color belt youths may make light contact to the head and face area only when a face and head gear is on the competitors. All under black belt competitors must make light or moderate touch contact to the body or head to score a point.

OUT OF BOUNDS – A competitor is out of bounds as soon both feet are outside the boundary line. Stepping out of bounds does not immediately stop the match. The referee is the only one who can stop the match. An out of bounds competitor may be scored on by his or her opponent so long as the inbound competitor has at least one foot inbounds and the referee has not signaled to stop. In the event of a jumping technique the attacking competitor must land with one foot in bounds in order to score.

COMPETING PENALTY – If in the majority opinion of the judges and referee it is considered that the competitors are not making an obvious attempt to fight in the true spirit of competition, both competitors will be disqualified and all awards and rating points (if awarded) are forfeited.

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COACHING – Coaching is a luxury that most competitors do not have access to. Therefore, it sometimes can become an unfair advantage over a competitor who does not have a coach. Rules are made and enforced so that no one competitor has an advantage or disadvantage over another competitor. The rules make the contest as equal and as fair as possible for both competitors. The following rules on coaching apply.

1. Never at any time can a coach, friend, team member etc. enter a ring without the referee's permission (only the officials, competitors and medical personal are allowed in a ring).
2. No abusive, violent, unsportsmanlike or overzealous coaching allowed.
3. A coach cannot ask for a time out (only a competitor may ask for a time out).
4. A coach cannot, at any time interfere with the running of the ring or decisions of the judges.

Penalties for any of the above coaching infractions are issued by the referee.

LEGAL TARGET AREAS – The following parts of the body may be attacked using the authorized fighting techniques:

1. Head – front and side
2. Torso – front and side

LEGAL TECHNIQUES – Legal techniques are all controlled sport karate techniques, except those listed as illegal. When determining the legality of a technique, the official considers if the technique is a legitimate, controlled sport karate technique that adheres to all other rules governing sport point karate. Scoring both hand and foot strikes should be used. In evaluating each fighter's performance the judges will give more credit to the athlete that is effective with a balanced attack of kicks and punches thrown in combination. The authorized striking area of the hand or foot must make "Clean/ Controlled" Light contact. The fighter must be looking at the point of contact when executing the technique. All techniques must be well executed. Weak techniques or techniques that simply touch or brush or push an opponent will not be scored. Excessive contact, mauling, pushing or rough-housing will be grounds for penalization and/or disqualification. (Center ring official has discretion).

HAND, FOOT, LEG TECHNIQUES – The following hand, foot and leg techniques may be applied:

1. HAND – Ridge hand, Punches, Backfist (Spinning Back Fist –Illegal Technique)
2. FOOT – Front kick, Sidekick, Roundhouse kick, Heel kick (sole of the foot only), Crescent kick, Axe kick (sole of the foot only), Jump kicks.

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ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS – The following are illegal target areas. Any attack to these areas could result in a warning and or penalty points.

1. Spine, back of neck, throat, side of neck, groin, legs, knees and back
2. Any technique not listed as legal above or a striking any target not listed as legal.
3. Attack the throat, lower abdomen, kidneys, back, legs, joints, groin and to the back of the head.
4. Attack with the knee, elbow, knife-hand, head-butts, thumb and shoulder or a spinning hand.

ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES – Headbutts, hair pulls, bites, scratches, elbows, knees, eye attacks of any kind, take downs, ground fighting, any stomps or kicks to the head of a downed opponent, slapping, grabbing for more than one second, uncontrolled blind techniques, throws, take downs or sweeps and any other uncontrolled dangerous techniques that are deemed unsafe.

PROHIBITED – The following is prohibited.

1. Turn one's back to the opponent, run away, fall down, intentional clinching, blind techniques, wrestling and ducking below opponent's waist.
2. Attack an opponent who is falling to the floor or is already on the floor, that is, as soon as one hand or knees touches the floor. Attacking an opponent who is on the floor or getting up.
3. Leave the ring without any permission.
4. Continue after the command "stop" or "break" or the end of the round has been sounded.
5. Punching below the belt, hooking, tripping, and hitting with knees or elbows.
6. Butting with the head, shoulders, forearms and elbows, strangling the opponent, crushing his face with arm or elbow and pushing back the opponent.
7. Hitting with open gloves, with the inside of the gloves or with a wrist.
8. Hitting the opponent's back, particularly on the nape of his neck, head and kidneys.
9. Lying down, wrestling or not fighting at all.
10. Clinching without any reason.
11. Hitting while hooking the opponent, or pulling the opponent into the blow.
12. Hooking or holding opponent's arm or putting an arm underneath the arm of the opponent.
13. Suddenly lowering one's head below opponent's belt in a way that would be dangerous for the latter.
14. Using artificial means for a passive defense and falling down intentionally, to avoid a blow.

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15. "Spoiling": Intentionally preventing your opponent from engaging you by moving around the ring or clinching your opponent in order to cut down on round time.
16. Using insulting and aggressive language before, during or after a round.
17. Refusing to withdraw after the order "BREAK".
18. Trying to land a blow on the opponent immediately after a "BREAK" order and before withdrawing.
19. Assailing or insulting the referee at any time.
20. Exiting the ring during the fighting competition, 1st violation for exit – Verbal warning on 1st exit, 2nd violation for exit – Official warning on 2nd exit, 3rd violation or exit – Award penalty point –1, 4th violation for exit – Disqualification.

RULE VIOLATIONS – Violations of the rules and regulations will lead to warnings, point deductions and disqualification. Referees may warn, deduct points or disqualify a competitor at their discretion depending upon the severity or repetitive nature of the rules violation. The following may lead to disqualification:

1. Excessive contact resulting in an injury
2. Repeatedly striking with excessive contact
3. Uncontrolled or malicious attacks.
4. Excessive or continuous hitting after "stop" command.
5. Extreme unsportsmanlike conduct of a fighter such as insulting the referee or the opponent.
6. The coach, representative, parent or family member acts unprofessional or enters the ring.

INJURIES – The match should only be interrupted if an injury occurs. In the event of injury, time may only be interrupted until the medical staff decides on the seriousness of the injury, that is, whether or not the fight can continue or whether it must be stopped. Treatment of the injury can only be done in between rounds or after the match. If the injury needs to be treated, the match must be stopped. In any case, cuts cannot be taped unless ordered by medical staff. If the match is stopped due to injury, the officials must decide:

1. Who caused the injury?
2. Whether or not it was intentional.
3. Whether or not it was self-inflicted.

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If the injury was not intentional and the injured fighter cannot continue fighting immediately, the uninjured fighter is declared the winner. If the injury is due to a violation of the rules, the responsible fighter is disqualified. If the injury is due to his own fault, the uninjured fighter is declared the winner.

LATE ENTRIES – It is the responsibility of the competitors to be registered, weighed-in, and at their ring prior to the time their division starts. Once the first competitor or match has started in their division, no other competitor(s) can enter that division.

ORDER OF COMPETITION – Once the final call for competitors of a division has been made at ringside, the referee and their ring personnel will collect the competitors' cards, tickets, or other proof of entry. Once the cards are mixed thoroughly and byes, if needed, are drawn, the rest of the cards will be drawn randomly and the competitors' names will be written on the bracket sheet.

WRONG DIVISION – If any competitor competes in a division they are not qualified for because of age, weight, gender or style they will be disqualified from that form, fighting, self defense or weapons division and all awards and rating points, if awarded, are forfeited.

REFEREES – The referee has the power to:

1. Stop a fight at any moment if he finds it to be too one-sided.
2. Stop a fight at any moment if one of the fighters has received an unauthorized blow or is wounded, or if the referee considers a fighter unable to continue.
3. Stop a fight at any moment if he finds the fighters behaving in an "unsportsmanlike" manner. In such a case, the referee must disqualify one fighter.
4. Warn a fighter, stop the match, give a point deduction or warning to a fighter for an offence.
5. Disqualify a coach or a second who has broken the regulations or the fighter if their coach or the second fails to obey the referee's orders. This includes parents, family and friends.
6. Disqualify, with or without a warning, a fighter who has committed an offence.
7. Interpret the rules as long as they are applicable or compatible with the fight that is taking place, or, at a special moment, decide on a move which does not appear in the rules.
8. If a fighter breaks the rules but does not necessarily deserve a disqualification, the referee must stop the fight and give a warning to the fighter about the infraction. Before the warning, the referee must order the fighters to stop fighting. The warning must be given clearly, so that the fighter understands the reason and cause of the penalty. The referee must hand signal to each

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judge that a particular warning has been given and clearly show which fighter has been punished. After having given the warning, the referee orders the fighters to fight again. If a fighter has been given three (3) official warnings within the same match, the fighter is disqualified.

9. A referee may give a caution to a fighter. A caution means a warning given by a referee to a fighter for breaking the rule. In order to do this the referee doesn't need to stop the fight and may reprimand the fighter during the fight.

REFEREE RESPONSIBILITY – During sparring, referees are responsible for the following.

1. Check the safety equipment and clothes of the fighters.
2. Make sure that the rules of fair play are strictly observed.
3. Supervise the whole match.
4. Consider the merits of the two (2) fighters and choose the winner according to the regulations.
5. At the end of a bout, call for the decision by show of hands.
6. The referee must not announce the winner by raising a fighter's arm or in any other way before the official in charge announces the decision.

JUDGES – During sparring judges are responsible for the following.

1. Each judge must independently consider the merits of the two (2) fighters and choose the winner according to the regulations.
2. During the match, judges will not talk to the fighter, other judges, or anybody else, except for the referee. Judges may, if necessary, at the end of a round, notify the referee about any incident they may have missed, for example telling them about the misbehavior of a second, etc.

SCORING SYSTEM

1. Every round is separately evaluated by each of the judges according to a positive criteria that will gain a fighter points and negative criteria that will deduct points.

POSITIVE JUDGES CRITERIA – The following will earn a fighter points towards victory with clean and controlled scoring strikes.

1. The demonstration of effective combination striking
2. The effectiveness of the fighter's defense

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3. The variety of strikes used (hands and feet)
4. Excellent physical condition

NEGATIVE JUDGES CRITERIA – The following will reduce a fighter's points.

1. Warnings / penalties for rules violations
2. "Bulling", or any effort to overpower an opponent rather than demonstrate superior skill
3. Lack of combination striking & lack of variety in strikes (hands and feet)
4. Poor physical condition – Every close match is to be judged by the overall impression the fighter makes and not only by considering the points scored particularly in regards to the variety of skills that each fighter has been effective with.

PROTEST – A competitor has the right to protest an infraction of the rules or if a possible error occurred, not a judgment call. The arbitrator can be called if the center referee cannot reach a decision.

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Divisions & Judging

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AGE & BELT DIVISIONS:

The following charts provide the age and belt divisions for The Tournament. The Tournament groups division by experience, beginner, intermediate, advanced and black belt. The Tournament may allow competitors to move up or down one (1) age division. For example, an eight year in division 3 may compete with a 7 year old in division 1 if appropriate. In certain categories, like Team Forms for example, it may be permitted to mix belts and ages. Competitors must enter The Tournament as their current belt rank. Any competitor caught entering The Tournament or a category at a lower belt rank will be disqualified.

BELT Divisions	
Beginner Division	White Belt
	Yellow Belt
	Orange Belt
Intermediate Division	Green Belt
	Purple Belt
	Blue Belt
Advanced Division	Brown Belt
	Red Belt
Black Belt	

AGE Divisions	
5 years old & Under	D1
6 & 7 years old	D2
8 & 9 years old	D3
10 & 11 years old	D4
12 & 13 years old	D5
14 & 15 years old	D6
16 & 17 years old	D7
18 – 29 years old	D8
30 – 49 years old	D9
50+	D10

JUDGING:

The tournament strives to provide fair, honest and reliable judging. The Tournament will follow the rules and judging outlined in The Tournament handbook. Be respectful to the judges and referees. Disrespectful verbal and or physical action(s) can result in point deductions or disqualification of the competitor(s), coach(es) and or team(s).

Each competitor ring will have four (4) officials. There will be one (1) center ring official and three (3) table judges. Pair and team categories may have a different number of officials. There is one (1) arbitrator for The Tournament.

- I. **Arbitrator** – The arbitrator oversees all of the judges and referees. The arbitrator is responsible for assigning officials and judges to the rings. If there are any discrepancies or disagreements that cannot be resolved by the center ring official, the arbitrator will be called to make the final decision.

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- II. **Center Ring Official (CRO)** – The CRO is the head ring judge or referee and promotes the safety of the competitors, enforces the rules and ensures fair play. They provide the direction and leadership for the ring. The CRO is in complete charge of the ring and the match. To this end he or she starts and stops the competition, awards points, makes penalty decisions, administrates the voting of the other judges, communicates clearly with the score keeper and time keeper and announce in a loud, clear voice all official decisions and shall indicate with voice and gesture the competitor affected by the official decision and can overrule a majority call ONLY to issue a warning or penalty. The CRO has the power to issue warnings and award penalty points without a majority decision. The CRO can automatically disqualify competitors who receives three (3) penalty points. Competitors can ask for a timeout but only the CRO that has the authority to issue the timeout. Any concerns, challenges or issues should be addressed to the CRO. If an issue cannot be handed by the CRO, the arbitrator can be consulted to resolve the issue. Here are calls the CRO can make.
- 1) Stop & Stop the Match – When the CRO believes there has been a significant exchange of technique, or when signaled to do so by a corner judge, the CRO calls out **STOP** in a loud voice. The CRO shall then return the competitors to their starting marks and address the judges by saying JUDGES CALL all judges and center referee cast their votes simultaneously in the following manner.
 - 2) Point is Scored – If flags are used a judge raises the appropriate color flag of the competitor who he or she feels scored the point (if the judge is calling for 2 point kick they will raise two fingers on the other hand at the same time. If calling for 1 point, no fingers are raised). If no flag is used the judge will point with their index finger at the competitor who they feel scored the point and point with their index and middle finger if a kick is being called.
 - 3) No Point Scored – A judge crosses their flags or wrists at waist level to indicate that he or she believes no point was scored.
 - 4) No See – The judge holds their hand over their eyes indicating that they could not see whether a point was scored or not.
 - 5) Clash – With or without flags a judge makes a motion as though they are hitting both fists together. This means both competitors scored at the same time, therefore no point.
 - 6) Penalty – The judge wave's flag color of the offending competitor in a circular motion. If no flags are being used, the judge waves hand in a circular motion as they point to the offending competitor.
 - 7) Out – The CRO calls stop when they see a competitor go out of bounds. If a call is being made and a judge believes the competitor was out of bounds, they tap the flag which represents the competitor is out of bounds.

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- III. **Table Judges** – The table judges sit at the ring table and provide competitor scoring and placement recognition for medals and trophies. During the sparring category table judges may transition to corner judges and timekeepers. The judges call points as they see them. They may be consulted by the center ring official (CRO) to help in determining penalties or warnings, although the referee alone has the power to issue them. They will be asked to vote on disqualification rulings. It is the majority vote of the judges and CRO that determines a scoring point.
- IV. **Timekeeper** – The timekeeper is the appointed helper to keep time. They will start and stop time at the command of the center ring official (CRO) and will inform the CRO when the two (2) minutes for sparring or three (3) minutes for form have expired. In sparring the timekeeper does not start or stop a match. Their only duty is to keep time for the CRO.
- V. **Score Keeper** – The score keeper is the appointed to keep score. They will write down the form scores from each judge, eliminate the high and low scores (if 5 or more judges are being used) and add the remaining scores to attain a total score. The score keeper should check his or her addition a second time (calculators should be used). In sparring the score keeper will write down or flip score cards at the command of the center ring official (CRO). The score keeper should inform the CRO when a fighter gets the appropriate number of points to automatically win. It is the score keeper's duty to listen very closely to the CRO and keep score as the referee commands. Any discrepancy or confusion of the score rests in the hands of the CRO, not the score keeper. The CRO will make the final score decision. The Timekeeper and score keeper can be the same individual. It may not be two (2) separate officials.
- VI. **Arbitration and Protest** – Competitors who feel they received an unfair score may file an Official Protest by presenting their argument to the tournament director on site. The protestor will present the case to the tournament director through the ring coordinator. Any decision rendered by the tournament director will be final. If the tournament director finds in favor of the protestor, then the decision will be rectified. Protests must be made before the end of their particular division.
- VII. **Warnings and Disqualification:** Disruptive behavior, use of profanity, or other unsportsmanlike conduct by the competitor, coach, parent or family member etc. will result in a warning being issued. If the behavior is deemed by the Judges to be malicious, it will result in deduction of a point (as appropriate for the event) or disqualification.