



USA Karate Kumite Competition

Examination questions for Kumite Referees & Judges April 2026

The answer paper must be returned to the examiners if the test is taken at a USA Karate Signature Event. All answers must be entered on a separate answer paper only. You must ensure that your name and other required information are entered on the answer paper.

You may not have additional papers or books on your desk while taking this examination. Speaking to another candidate or copying another's paper during the examination will result in suspension and automatic failure. If you are unsure of the correct procedures or have questions about any examination aspect, you should speak only to an examiner or the RC Secretary.

The questions in this document are based on the USA Karate Rules of Competition (USA Rules). The USA Karate Rules consist of the World Karate Federation (WKF) Competition Rules for Kumite, modified by USA Rules. Consult the WKF Rules first, then the USA Rules. Where the USA Rules are more specific or address a subject not addressed by the WKF Rules, the USA Rules are applied.

KUMITE KARATE EXAMINATION

“TRUE OR FALSE”

On the answer paper, put an “X” in the appropriate box. A question's answer is true only if it can be held to be true in all situations; otherwise, it is considered false. Each correct answer scores one point.

- 1 The USA Karate Rules of Competition shall be used for all non-elite categories at USA Karate Signature Events
- 2 The bout duration for all non-elite USA Karate bouts is one minute thirty seconds.
- 3 An athlete who has trained for more than four years but less than five years is placed in the intermediate category.
- 4 An athlete who has trained for under four years but has achieved the rank of 1st kyu, must be placed in an advanced category.
- 5 The competition area must be an eight-meter matted square.
- 6 The competition area must be a ten-meter matted square.
- 7 Each Judge must be equipped with a red and a blue flag or electronic signal device.
- 8 Earrings are allowed if they are covered with tape.
- 9 Heels of more than 4 cm may not be worn with the uniform.
- 10 Any Voluntary religious headwear can be worn.
- 11 It is possible for an Athlete to be disqualified from a bout (HANSOKU) and continue the competition.
- 12 In two Judging systems, if the two Judges, or one Judge and the Referee, show different points for the same athletes, the lower will be given.
- 13 In the two Judge system, if both judges signal a point, but for a different athlete, the Referee will break the tie and award a point as he/she deems appropriate.
- 14 Athletes must wear a white Karate-Gi without personal embroidery.
- 15 The red and blue belts must be without any personal embroideries or markings.
- 16 The Karate-Gi must be more than three-quarters thigh length.
- 17 The Athletes must only bow properly to each other at the start of the bout.
- 18 At the beginning of a bout Jackets without ties can be used.

- 19 An athlete does not need to change the jacket if ties are torn off during the bout.
- 20 The Karate-Gi jacket sleeve must be no longer than the bend of the wrist.
- 21 If an athlete's Karate-Gi jacket sleeves are too long and a suitable replacement cannot be found in time the Referee can allow him to turn them up on the inside.
- 22 The Karate-Gi trousers must cover at least two-thirds of the shin.
- 23 Awareness is the state of continued commitment, which endures after the technique has landed.
- 24 Athletes may wear 1 or 2 discreet rubber band or ponytail retainer in their hair. Ribbons, beads and other decorations are prohibited.
- 25 Gum-shields (mouth guards) are obligatory for all Kumite Athletes.
- 26 For athletes under 14 years of age, a WKF/USA Karate-approved protective helmet is compulsory.
- 27 The referee panel is composed of 1 Tatami Manager, 3 Tatami Manager Assistants.
- 28 If an athlete comes into the match area inappropriately dressed, the athlete shall be given two minutes to remedy matters.
- 29 Athletes that come into the competition area with unauthorized equipment or irregular Karate-Gi will be given one minute to correct the attire.
- 30 If the athlete is identified as inappropriately dressed, the athlete automatically forfeits the presence of their Coach during that match.
- 31 Cameras and phones may not be used while Coaches are on the competition floor.
- 32 Disqualification by KIKEN means that the athletes are disqualified from that category, although it does not affect participation in another category.
- 33 Male teams must have at least three athletes, and female teams must have at least two athletes.
- 34 Male teams must have at least four athletes, and female teams must have at least three athletes.
- 35 The coach may change the team fighting order during a match.
- 36 Athlete cannot be given penalties after the time-up bell has signaled the end of a bout.
- 37 The Match Supervisor (KANSA) will line up together with the Referee and the Judges.
- 38 In team matches the referee and the Judges will rotate for each bout - provided that all hold the required license.
- 39 In team matches the Panel will rotate for each bout only in bouts for medals.
- 40 When the Referee fails to hear the "time-up" bell the Scorekeeper should blow his whistle.
- 41 An audible signal will be given by the timekeeper 15 seconds before the end of the bout and the Referee will announce "ATOSHI BARAKU".

- 42 If after the bout has started an Athlete is found not to be wearing a gum-shield the Athlete will be disqualified.
- 43 Athletes are not entitled to a period of time between matches, equal to the standard duration time of the match, for purpose of rest
- 44 Athletes are entitled to one minute thirty seconds (1:30) between bouts. When the color of equipment is being changed, the time is extended to three minutes.
- 45 Athletes are not entitled to a period of time between matches, equal to the standard duration time of the match, for purpose of rest.
- 46 In individual bouts an Athlete who withdraws voluntarily from the bout is declared KIKEN and an extra eight points are awarded to the opponent.
- 47 Disqualification by KIKEN means that the Athlete is disqualified from that category, although it does not affect participation in another category.
- 48 The athletes must bow properly to each other at the start and the end of the bout.
- 49 An athlete who establishes a clear lead of eight points is declared the winner.
- 50 Should an Athlete that has been awarded SENSHU receive a warning for avoiding combat when there is less than 15 seconds left of the bout – the Athlete will automatically forfeit this advantage.
- 51 If there are no points at the end of a bout in team matches the Referee will call for HANTEI.
- 52 The Score Judge will order the Referee to halt the bout when he sees a contravention of the Rules of Competition.
- 53 The Referee will call YAME when one or both athletes are off their feet following a fall or attempted throw and begin to wrestle.
- 54 Judges cannot indicate a score or warning before the Referee stops the bout.
- 55 When an athlete seizes the opponent, the Referee will give several seconds for the athlete to perform a throw or technique.
- 56 The Referee will call YAME when an athlete seizes the opponent and does not perform an immediate technique or throw.
- 57 The Referee will not call YAME when an Athlete seizes the opponent and does not perform an immediate technique or throw.
- 58 When an Athlete seizes the opponent and does not perform an immediate technique or throw the Referee will call “YAME”.
- 59 If two or more Judges signal a score for the same Athlete, the Referee must stop the bout.
- 60 If an Athlete is thrown and lands partly outside the match area, the Referee will immediately call “YAME”.

- 61 Athlete who is hit through their own fault and exaggerates the effect should receive a warning or penalty for MUBOBI or exaggeration but not both.
- 62 A fast combination of CHUDAN GERI and TSUKI each of which score in their own right will be given IPPON.
- 63 If an Athlete scores with more than one consecutive technique before YAME, the Judges must show the higher point regardless of which sequence the techniques scored.
- 64 If an Athlete is injured and it is considered to be their own fault (MUBOBI), the Referee will decline to give a warning or penalty to the opponent.
- 65 Only the first correctly executed technique of a combination will score.
- 66 In Senior matches a light “glove touch” to the throat need not result in a warning or penalty provided there is no actual injury
- 67 A technique that lands on the shoulder blades may score.
- 68 IPPON is awarded for JODAN kicks or any techniques against an opponent whose any part of the body other than the feet is in contact with the TATAMI.
- 69 IPPON is worth three points.
- 70 WAZA-ARI is worth two points.
- 71 YUKO is worth one point.
- 72 There are five criteria to be met in determining a score.
- 73 There are six criteria to be met in determining a score.
- 74 Correctly executed techniques executed upon or after “WAKARETE” are valid.
- 75 Excessive contact after repeated failure to block is a consideration for MUBOBI.
- 76 A loss of breath by the recipient of a blow after receiving a CHUDAN technique does indicate lack of control.
- 77 “Skin touch” is allowed in categories for Athletes 16 years or older.
- 78 In the event of a tied score at the end of an inconclusive bout the Referee Panel (the Referee and the four Judges) will decide the bout by HANTEI.
- 79 In Cadet Kumite JODAN kicks are allowed to make a “skin touch” provided there is no injury.
- 80 Skin touch is defined as touching the target without transferring energy into the head or body.
- 81 Correctly executed techniques executed after the time-up signal are valid.
- 82 A technique even if effective, delivered after an order to suspend or halt the bout shall not be scored and may result in a penalty being imposed on the offender.
- 83 An effective technique delivered at the same time that the end of the bout is signaled by the buzzer is valid.
- 84 In team matches there is no extra bout.

- 85 It is not possible to score while lying on the floor.
- 86 JODAN is described as the shoulders and the area above the collarbone.
- 87 A kick in the groin will not result in a penalty provided the offender did not do it intentionally.
- 88 Techniques executed after “WAKARETE” but before “TSUZUKETE” has been called are prohibited.
- 89 If an athlete has been physically propelled from the area, Jogai will be given.
- 90 JOGAI occurs when an athlete's exit from the competition area (JOGAI) is not caused by the opponent.
- 91 Passivity cannot be given after less than the last 15 seconds of the bout.
- 92 Grabbing the opponent with both hands is never allowed during the bout.
- 93 Grabbing the opponent’s arm or Karate-GI with one hand is only allowed for attempting an immediately scoring technique or takedown.
- 94 Simulated attacks with the head, knees, or elbows are offenses.
- 95 An athlete can be given SHIKKAKU if the behavior of the coach or noncombatant members of the Athlete’s delegation is considered to harm the prestige and honor of Karate-do.
- 96 A male team can compete with only two Athletes.
- 97 TSUZUKETE, unless preceded by WAKARETE, is not used if there is fewer than 15 seconds left of the bout.
- 98 WAKARETE for breaking up a clinch can be given at any time of the bout.
- 99 An otherwise correctly executed technique will be penalized if executed at the same time as WAKARETE has been called.
- 100 There are two degrees of official warnings.
- 101 HANSOKU-CHUI is given when the Athlete’s potential for winning has been seriously reduced by the opponent’s foul.
- 102 CHUI is given, up to three times, for smaller infractions.
- 103 HANSOKU CHUI cannot be given if three CHUI have not already been given.
- 104 HANSOKU is imposed for very serious rules infractions.
- 105 Where contact is considered by the Referee to be too strong, but does not diminish the Athlete’s chances of winning, a warning (CHUI) can be given.
- 106 EN: An Athlete that refuses following the instructions of the Referee or display a loss of temper will automatically receive HANSOKU.
- 107 Referee indicates fouls observed, and imposes warning and penalties as required by the rules.
- 108 SHIKKAKU can only be imposed after a warning has been given.

- 109 If an athlete acts maliciously, HANSOKU is the correct penalty.
- 110 If an athlete acts maliciously, SHIKKAKU and not HANSOKU is the correct penalty.
- 111 An athlete who acts maliciously or commits an act which harms the prestige and honor of Karate will be given HANSOKU.
- 112 When an action of an Athlete is considered to be dangerous and deliberately violates the rules concerning prohibited behaviour, the Athlete will be given Shikkaku.
- 113 When a situation appears to possibly warrant a disqualification the Referee can call one or more of judges for a brief consultation (FUKUSHIN SHUGO) before announcing any decision.
- 114 In a Kumite Tatami two mats are inverted with the red side turned up in a one meter distance from the mat centre to form a boundary between the Athletes.
- 115 Any technique, which results in an injury, unless caused by the recipient cause a warning or penalty.
- 116 An athlete may be penalized for exaggeration even when there is an actual injury.
- 117 An obvious display of exaggeration will receive a HANSOKU.
- 118 An obvious overreaction to a contact will receive a CHUI.
- 119 Personal embroidery in the Karate-Gi is allowed only in bouts for medals.
- 120 HANSOKU CHUI will be given for feigning of injury.
- 121 Any instance of feigning an injury, however slight, will receive a minimum warning of CHUI.
- 122 An obvious display of any feigning such as staggering around, falling on the floor, standing up and falling down again, and so on, will receive SHIKKAKU directly.
- 123 Any feigning of an injury from a technique that in fact has been determined by the judges as a point will, as a minimum, result in HANSOKU CHUI.
- 124 Any feigning of an injury from a technique that in fact has been determined by the judges as a point will, as a minimum, result in HANSOKU.
- 125 A “skin touch” to the throat is only allowed in Senior competition.
- 126 Grabbing the opponent with both hands is never allowed during the bout.
- 127 Holding on to the opponent’s Karate Gi is not permitted to break a fall.
- 128 An Athlete who scores and exits the area before the Referee calls YAME will not receive JOGAI.
- 129 An Athlete who exits the area (JOGAI) with less than 15 seconds of bout time remaining will be given a minimum of CHUI.
- 130 A warning or penalty for MUBOBI is only given when an Athlete is hit or injured through his own fault or negligence.
- 131 Jacket ties must be tied.

- 132 Passivity can be given to any athlete at any time.
- 133 Passivity cannot be given during the first 15 seconds of a bout.
- 134 The minimum warning for running away, avoiding combat or/and wasting time during ATOSHI BARAKU is HANSOKU CHUI.
- 135 Avoiding combat with fewer than 15 seconds of the bout (ATO SHIBARAKU) will, as a minimum, result in HANSOKU CHUI and loss of SENSHU.
- 136 “Avoiding Combat” refers to a situation where an athlete attempts to prevent the opponent from having the opportunity to score by using time wasting behavior.
- 137 The Match Supervisor has a vote in cases of SHIKKAKU.
- 138 Passivity cannot be given to someone having a lead by point or SENSHU.
- 139 The Athlete should be examined outside the tatami.
- 140 If AKA accidentally kicks AO on the hip and AO cannot continue the bout, then AO will be given KIKEN.
- 141 If an athlete does not regain his or her feet within ten seconds, the Referee will announce “KIKEN” and “KACHI” to the opponent.
- 142 In the event that an athlete falls, is thrown, or knocked down and does not regain his/her feet immediately, the Referee will call the doctor, and at the same time start a count to ten indicating his/her count showing a finger for each second.
- 143 The timekeeper is responsible for starting the 3-minute count for an Athlete who is injured during a bout in progress and requires medical treatment.
- 144 When the "10 second" count has expired, the Judges will immediately signal their decision for Kiken, Hansoku or Shikkaku.
- 145 Tatami manager must supervise that KANSA stops the bout to instruct the Referee regarding a contravention of the Rules of Competition.
- 146 In team matches if two athletes injure each other and cannot continue and the points score is equal the Referee will announce HIKIWAKE.
- 147 An injured athlete who has been declared unfit to fight by the Tournament Doctor cannot fight again in that competition.
- 148 If two or more Judges signal a score for the same athlete, the Referee must stop the bout.
- 149 If one Athlete has a score indicated by more than one Judge and the score is different between the Judges, the higher will be applied, unless there is majority for a lower score.
- 150 When the Referee Panel has made a decision not in accordance with the Rules of Competition, the Match Supervisor (KANSA) will immediately blow his whistle.

- 151 If a bout ends in a tie with no Senshu, and if the number of IPPONs and WAZA ARIs are equal, the winner will be decided by HANTEI.
- 152 In any bout, if after full time the scores are equal, but one athlete has obtained “first unopposed score advantage” (SENSHU), that athlete will be declared the winner.
- 153 By “first unopposed score advantage” (SENSHU) it is understood that one athlete has achieved the first instance of scoring on the opponent without having the opponent also score before the signal.
- 154 Where both athletes score before the signal, no “first unopposed score advantage” (SENSHU) is awarded and both athletes retain the possibility of SENSHU later in the bout.
- 155 In individual categories with elimination format, a bout can be declared a tie.
- 156 If there are no points at the end of a bout in team matches the Referee will call for HANTEI.
- 157 In any individual bout, with equal score, and no SENSHU by either Athlete, the first criteria of the decision will be made based on the higher number of IPPON scored in the bout.
- 158 At HANTEI if three Judges signal victory for AKA and the fourth Judge signals victory for AO, the Referee must give victory for AKA.
- 159 The Referee indicates the winner by hand signal and the order (AKA/AO NO KACHI), and by this action also resolve any tie.
- 160 The Referee breaks the tie in case of HANTEI.
- 161 If SENSHU is withdrawn when it is less than 15 seconds left of the bout, no further SENSHU can be awarded to either Athlete.
- 162 The winning team is the one with the most bout victories, excluding those won by SENSHU.
- 163 In team matches, if after the extra bout there are no scores, or it is equal scores with no SENSHU, the match will be decided by HANTEI.
- 164 In Senior competition a light touch is allowed for JODAN punches, and a greater tolerance is allowed for JODAN kicks.
- 165 The athlete’s Coach is the only one allowed to make a protest.
- 166 The Head Coach of a delegation can protest about a judgment to the members of the Refereeing Panel.
- 167 When an official protest is lodged the ensuing matches must be delayed until the result of the protest is given.
- 168 The Coach / NF representative will request the official protest from the Tatami Manager.
- 169 Failure of a Coach / NF representative to deliver a protest in a timely manner can lead to its rejection.

- 170 The information of officials implicated in the protest is completed by the Tatami Manager.
- 171 The Referee will give all commands and make all announcements.
- 172 If three Judges signal a score for AKA, the Referee must stop the bout even if he believes they are mistaken.
- 173 The Referee can stop the bout and give a point without the Judges opinion.
- 174 The Referee can stop the bout even if the Judges do not signal.
- 175 When the Judges see a score, they will immediately signal with joy sticks or flags.
- 176 Athletes that are winded as a result of an impact should be allowed time to catch their breath before the bout is resumed.
- 177 When the Referee wants to give SHIKKAKU he/she may call the Judges for a brief consultation.
- 178 If the organizer has a check-up of equipment before line-up, it is still KANSA'S responsibility to ensure that the equipment is in accordance with the rules.
- 179 It is always KANSA'S responsibility to ensure that the equipment is in accordance with the rules before each bout.
- 180 It is the duty of the Tatami Manager to ensure before each bout or bout that the Athletes are wearing the approved equipment.
- 181 The KANSA does not need to interfere if the Referee gives a score to an athlete and exaggeration to the other.
- 182 The KANSA needs to blow the whistle if the Referee gives a score to an athlete and MUBOBI to the other.
- 183 The KANSA does not need to interfere if the Referee gives a score for a technique done after the time is up.
- 184 A correctly executed technique executed after the time-up signal is valid.
- 185 The KANSA must remain silent if the referee gives a warning or penalty for passivity during ATOSHI BARAKU.
- 186 If the Referee does not call the doctor in a 10 second rule situation, the KANSA must blow the whistle.
- 187 KANSA has to blow the whistle if the Judges are holding the joy sticks in the wrong hands.
- 188 The KANSA has no vote or authority in matters of judgments such as whether a score was valid or not.

- 189 In the event that the Referee does not hear the time-up bell, the KANSA will blow his/her whistle.
- 190 ATOSHI BARAKU means “10 seconds of bout time remaining.”
- 191 In two Judging systems, the Judges will assist the Referee by giving signals for JOGAI, excessive contact, and skin touch for categories where this contravenes the rules.
- 192 In two Judging systems, the Referee remains autonomous in applying warnings and penalties.
- 193 In two Judging systems, if the two Judges, or one Judge and the Referee, show different points for the same athletes, the higher will be given.
- 194 The Referee Panel for each bout shall consist of one Referee, four Judges and one Match Supervisor.
- 195 Referee Panel of a Kumite bout shall consist of a Referee, four Judges, a Match Supervisor and a Score Keeper.