



Meeting Minutes from March 4, 2024 Referee Committee Meeting
11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Central Time

Attendees: Fariba Madani, Cleve Baxter, Jay Farrell, Will Gatch, Diane Martin, Chuck Sweigart, Shelby Velazquez. Guests: Elisa Au, Michael Cain.

Call to Order - Fariba Madani, RC chair, opened the meeting at 11:05 a.m. Central Time. Fariba Madani welcomed USA Karate guests Elisa Au, Board Chair, and Michael Cain, CEO, to the meeting.

Chuck Sweigart requested a revision to the minutes from the January 22, 2024 RC meeting. Diane Martin will update the minutes and send them out to the RC for review.

Cleve made a motion to have Jay Farrell facilitate the RC meeting. Will Gatch seconded the motion.
Votes in favor=5

Jay Farrell recommended at previous RC meeting to use a simplified version of Roberts Rules of Order for meetings, which provides a committee of under 12 people with more ability to have discussion. The goal is to give everyone an opportunity to be heard and get things done. Jay Farrell made a motion to use the abridged version of Roberts Rules. Chuck Sweigart seconded the motion. Votes in favor=5.

Agenda Order

- Jay Farrell requested moving the US Open logistics down on the agenda. All RC members agreed.
- Fariba Madani requested to add Will Gatch's two items from the AAC to the top of the agenda.
- Jay Farrell asked if there were any objections to moving AAC items to the top of the agenda item; none were noted.

Team Trials

- Will Gatch stated that an action report after the Team Trials is a good idea. He said athletes discussed accountability from officials at the recent AAC meeting.
- Cleve Baxter stated that any issues were discussed with officials at the time and there is not an abundance of officials like at the WKF. He said the issues cannot be addressed after the tournament and can be addressed by inviting additional officials.
- Chuck Sweigart stated that the AAC and selection process created a problem by limiting officials to those who did not have expired WKF or PFK licenses.
- Will Gatch stated that this was a remarkably good Team Trials with the highest batting average for calls made and that if the trade-off is keeping to the most qualified officials versus expanding the list to include additional officials, it will need further discussion.
- Fariba Madani agreed officials were pulled aside to discuss any issues and feedback reduces issues. She discussed changing the culture to feedback and improvement. In the past, feedback was not provided because of concerns about losing officials. All have responsibility to monitor, educate, and guide performance.
- Jay Farrell suggested adding ways to improve to the advanced presentation for officials. Will Gatch said feedback needs to be welcomed by officials and not seen as retaliation.

Panel Selection

- Will Gatch said the AAC discussed the randomizing and automation of the officials deployed for matches. Elisa Au shared the perspective that the AAC wants to see more computer automation.
- The RC discussed automation, and overall consensus was that while computers can play a role, human touch is better. When the computer does not select an appropriate panel, it needs to be manually changed by tatami managers. This is also a factor because of conflicts including the

state, organization, relationships, etc. The number and level of officials also require tatami manager to manually change random selection as needed.

Rules of Competition

- Jay Farrell made updates to the rules of competition based on feedback. He stated that the USA Rules of Competition provide variations from WKF rules.
- Jay Farrell reviewed the rule added that 11 and under could not make Jodan contact with the foot. Fariba Madani said non-elite and elite should follow the WKF rule where 13 and under cannot make Jodan contact with the foot.
- The RC discussed optional red or blue piping on GIs for non-elite. The rules state white GI without piping and will remain as is. There should not be anyone changing GIs on the tatamis.
- Chuck Sweigart stated he was opposed to the referee having to award points when two corner judges signal points for different competitors. Will Gatch stated that the rule has been used by USA Karate since 2021.
- Chuck Sweigart made a motion to eliminate #9 in Appendix 5 in WKF competition rules on referee awarding points to both competitors when judges signal points for different competitors. No one seconded; the motion failed.
- Jay Farrell motioned to approve the Rules of Competition with an amendment to incorporate the rule for no kick contact for competitors 13 and under to match the WKF rules and optional external chest protection for Jr. Cadets and below as recommended by Chris Hodgins. Will Gatch seconded. Votes in favor=4.
- Elisa Au stated the Rules of Competition approved by the RC now need to go to the Medical and Technical Committees and the AAC for review, and then once approved by the CEO, it can be published on the website.

Equipment for the US Open

- Michael Cain will send the draft update on equipment for the USA Open to the RC for review, then send it to membership and post it on the website. He expects to send a draft by 3/5.
- USA Karate will have branded headgear in the future; this will not be available for the US Open.
- Michael Cain stated they will have WKF-compliant head coverings available at the US Open. He is getting clarification on non-elite and will provide update to Jay Farrell for official education. Michael Cain left the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Central time.

Regional Program

- Fariba Madani stated that the new program will no longer use regional licenses and instead will use national-level licenses. Jay Farrell will include the formatted table Chris Hodgins submitted.
- Chuck Sweigart expressed concerns with instructors not being able to go outside their region. Fariba stated that an instructor A can go anywhere, as can RC members.
- Fariba Madani said the principle is to promote regions the same way as done for coaches.
- Jay Farrell proposed that, with the prior consent of the RC, instructors can conduct a seminar outside a region using certain criteria.
- Chuck Sweigart expressed concern that an Instructor A has to have a WKF Kumite A license and a Kata A license as limiting, and the intent is to bring officials to the program.
- Fariba Madani discussed that attending WKF events provides additional learning and experience with the latest updates. Jay Farrell concurred. She said the investment of time and effort in attending WKF events is well worth the additional knowledge and keeping up-to-date with rules.
- Fariba Madani explained that instructor level does not prevent Instructors from doing seminars; the license levels that can be awarded are based on qualified levels. She explained that those not involved internationally can still give licenses at a certain level.

- Jay Farrell made a motion to amend the regional program document to add his phrasing on RC approval for an exception for crossing regions. Shelby Velazquez seconded the motion. Votes in favor=4.
- Jay Farrell asked if there was any further discussion on the regional program document. Hearing none asked for a vote to approve the regional program document. Votes in favor=4.
- Jay Farrell reviewed the registration process for the Regional Program and the use of Tournament in a Box (TIAB) for all registrations. TIAB checks if SafeSport, Background and membership are current. If anyone is allowed to register onsite, the host must verify eligibility and all requirements. Sanctioning will also go through TIAB.
- Jay made a motion to pass the regional program registration document. Chuck Sweigart seconded the motion. Votes in favor=5
- The RC discussed activating the regional program as soon as possible.
- Fariba Madani will follow up with David Richmond to make sure TIAB is ready, and will send the documents to Michael Cain for review.
- Jay Farrell said once approved, Michael will need to post on the website and send out notification.

Code of Conduct

- RC members had provided feedback, and updates were made to the Code of Conduct. Jay Farrell asked if any further discussion was needed. Verifying no discussion was needed, the RC unanimously voted to approve the Code of Conduct.
- Chuck Sweigart and Elisa Au left the meeting at 1:10 p.m. Central time.

USA Referee Course

- The RC discussed the logistics for running the seminar and exam. Fariba Madani said the RC will have one tatami to do the practical exam and practice matches. The RC and the task force will use their laptops to score and the compiled totals will generate results.
- Fariba Madani can provide videos to Chris Hodgins to use with his materials for the kata practical exam.
- Jay Farrell said he should have questions updated for online testing available soon.

Competitors for the Practical Exam

- Fariba Madani requested all RC members use their resources to bring athletes for the practice matches and practical exam.
- Cleve Baxter said he will reach out to people, including officials with dojos in Texas.

Task Force

- Cleve Baxter intends to have Task Force members participate in all aspects of the championships. including evaluations, help during the lecture, administration, and deployments.
- Diane Martin will send list of registrations on Monday, March 25th to Cleve Baxter and Kathy Bailey for initial review. Two deployments will be required: one for the JIC and one for the US Open.
- The RC discussed having the Selection Committee document the deployment process. Will Gatch will contact the Selection Committee.
- Cleve Baxter will do the deployments with the Task Force members and send them to Fariba Madani for review.

- Fariba Madani recommended sending final deployments via email to officials, as done by the WKF before the briefing. Jay Farrell mentioned the recent WKF event used a QR code to show deployments.

USA Open Logistics

- Fariba Madani stated 43 officials have already registered and 7 international officials with many more expected. She requested another notification go out reminding officials to register.
- Fariba Madani said there will be 10 tatamis, as reported by the Organizing Committee, and four elite rings for the US Open. The Kata rule changes as discussed previously will not be applicable for this year.
- Will Gatch discussed that he and Shelby Velazquez may be asked to help athletes during the event. Fariba Madani suggested the potential use of an executive bureau for the event, as done at the WKF. The group could be made up of three members, including one athlete, from different states who are able to make decisions quickly (i.e., equipment issues with an athlete). Having a bureau would alleviate that need for Will Gatch and Shelby Velazquez.

There was a motion to adjourn, seconded, and approved.

The meeting adjourned at 1:32 p.m. Central Time.