



Meeting Minutes from December 22, 2025 Referee Committee Meeting  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Central Time

Attendees: Fariba Madani, Cedric Barksdale, Jay Farrell, Will Gatch, Chris Hodgin, Diane Martin, Shelby Velazquez. Chuck Sweigart was not in attendance.

**Call to Order:** Jay Farrell called the Referee Committee (RC) meeting to order at 11:03 a.m. Central Time.

### **Introduction/updates**

Fariba Madani expressed her appreciation and thanked the RC for all their hard work in 2025.

### **Team Trials Update**

Fariba Madani said that 19 officials were selected and approved for the Team Trials. The proposed list had 20 officials; the AAC voted to remove one official. Invitations were sent to approved officials. Fariba Madani stated there will be one tatami for kumite; officials can plan to leave after 3:00 p.m. on Sunday.

### **Rules Update**

Jay Farrell provided an update on the 2026 documents in progress. The 2026 policy manual, proficiency levels, checklists, and rules of competition updates were sent out for review. The rules include the external body protector requirement for under 14 for all USA Karate categories. Chris Hodgin stated he will be reviewing the rules update and other document updates. Cedric Barksdale said he is also available to assist as needed.

Jay Farrell is working on the online referee test with updates based on the rule changes for 2026.

### **Referee Camp Update**

Discussion on preparations on the various segments of the camp by the instructors.

### **US Open Logistics**

Fariba Madani reported that the US Open will run Thursday through Sunday and that the referee course will be held on Wednesday. Fariba Madani requested RC members arrive on Tuesday and mentioned it would be great to have Shelby Velazquez at the course. Shelby Velazquez confirmed she will be there.

Fariba Madani stated that the U21 Team Trials will run on Thursday on two or four tatamis depending on the number of athletes that register. The JIC will also run on Thursday and continue on Friday. The US Open will begin on Friday.

Chris Hodgin, Will Gatch, and Diane Martin will work on the course schedule for Fariba Madani's approval.

The RC discussed the need to highlight any policy changes in communication to officials.

### **Open Session for RC Meeting**

The RC meeting in March will be held on Wednesday, March 18, at 8:30 PCT, 9:30 Mountain Time, 10:30 Central Time, 11:30 ET. All USA Karate Official members will be able to join the first 30 minutes of the open session of the meeting. The RC will convene as a team for the remainder of the meeting. Diane Martin will post the announcement for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Open session on the website.

### **Good of the Order**

Jay Farrell announced the good of the order section of the meeting.

Chris Hodgin suggested that the referee course slides include information on Para Karate. RC members stated this was a great idea.

Jay Farrell adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Central Time.