



Meeting Minutes from May 6, 2024 Referee Committee Meeting
11:00 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. Central Time

Attendees: Fariba Madani, Cedric Barksdale, Jay Farrell, Will Gatch, Chris Hodgins, Diane Martin, Chuck Sweigart, Shelby Velazquez.

Call to Order: Jay Farrell called the Referee Committee (RC) meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. Central Time.

Approval of the last meeting minutes, March 4, 2024. Will Gatch made a motion to approve, Shelby Velazquez seconded, and minutes were approved.

Introduction

Fariba Madani welcomed Cedric Barksdale to the RC.

Reports from the RC

RC Chair Update

- Fariba Madani thanked RC members for providing after event summaries. She will be sending an updated report to Elisa Au.
- Fariba Madani reported that the four elite tatamis at the US Open were empty for a total of 1.5 hours. The reason received was that the tournament was running ahead of schedule. There were tatamis running at 9:30 p.m. for 17-year-old advanced divisions.
 - The RC discussed the need to modify the schedule based on registration.
 - Will Gatch agreed with modifying the schedule based on registration. He suggested that local tournaments use beginner and advanced tatamis, and that concept, if applied to signature events, could help with staffing.
 - Fariba Madani stated that participants and parents need to have general staging times.
- Fariba Madani discussed two recommendations:
 - Using the Sportdata system for running the tournament and continuing to use Tournament in a Box for registration. Fariba Madani said the system has advanced capability to run, as evidenced by its use in large youth league events.
 - Using joysticks in elite and team selection tatamis. Fariba Madani spoke with Michael Cain, who indicated it would be considered after the US Open, depending on the funds available.

Operations Update

- Cedric Barksdale stated he was looking forward to working with the RC. He stated that Cleve Baxter was the Operations member at the JIC and US Open, and he did not have observations to report in this new role. He spoke with Cleve Baxter to understand the role. Cedric Barksdale requested data for the event from Diane Martin and reported that there were 96 total officials, the highest number of officials. There were 19 international officials, 7 RC members, 4 USA WKF AA officials, 4 USA officials with WKF licenses, 19 USA with PKF licenses, and 42 USA with USA Karate licenses.
- Cedric Barksdale said his observation was that there was a lot of downtime in the Elite tatamis as well as technology issues. There were issues with video review, and computer systems. The laptop was outdated. He said there were also issues with Elite Kata charting.
- Cedric Barksdale requested information about protests and injuries. Fariba Madani reported that there were seven protests, and four were accepted. It was suggested he reach out to Darrin Free for information to receive an update on injuries. We need to have a way for the RC to have this information moving forward.

- Cedric Barksdale reported that he will meet with Darrin Free before the National Championships to understand what the national volunteer team does to make operations run smoothly. He asked what the role was for Sportdata at the US Open.
- Fariba Madani reported that the CEO met with Sportdata to see their capabilities and how they could help with technology or update our system. Sportdata sent two staff members at their own expense to observe and see how they could assist. A report was sent directly to the CEO and President; the RC will not have a role in what they decide.

Education Update

- Jay Farrell reported that things went well. He will coordinate questions with Fariba Madani to decide if kobudo and para karate need to be included in the education portion since there were related questions in the test. Those answers did not count towards the overall score.
- Jay Farrell reported that more efficiency in providing results is needed based on the amount of time spent with candidates.
- Jay Farrell reported that test questions were not posted in advance, and having them available helps people stay up-to-date. He will review the rules to look for items that do not apply for USA Karate events, such as round robin, to decrease the areas candidates need to study.

Certification Update

- Chris Hodgins said the after-action report summaries were a great idea. He felt the referee course and certification showed outstanding teamwork.
- Chris Hodgins liked the template used and stated that it was much more streamlined for scoring officials. He also said the ability to use the Kata videos was appreciated and worked very well. He said learning how long it takes to view and score videos was good and can be used to make changes.
- Chris Hodgins reported that everyone passed to the next level. The ability to observe candidates and make updates during the championships was very helpful.
- Chris Hodgins said they need to have medical staff available for the practical and will reach out to Darrin Free. He also indicated the benefit and appreciation for having a lot of fighters; which was an improvement over the previous year.
- Chris Hodgins reported that ten candidates were certified as new regional instructors.

Other Updates

- Chuck Sweigart suggested that if events have long days, USA Karate should provide an additional hot meal and break.
- Shelby Velazquez stated that if officials are sitting at the table, they need to look engaged in the match. Fariba Madani reiterated that all officials need to be fully engaged when in the tatami.

Old Business

- Fariba Madani requested the RC make a decision and notification on the red/blue colors on the shoulders of Gis since the rules state all WKF equipment is accepted. If Gis are not included, we need to make a clarifying statement.
- The RC discussed concern with changing Gis at the ring for efficiency; while not a violation of Safesport, it is not a good optic.
- The RC discussed that the red/blue colors on the shoulders of Gis will remain optional for the US Open due to international participation.
- Jay Farrell made a motion to provide notification for non-elites to wear white Gis for Nationals only. Chuck Sweigart seconded. Votes in favor = 4; Abstained = 2.
- Further discussion ensued on the operational aspects of Gis, including disqualification.

- Cedric Barksdale made a motion to make red/blue colors on the shoulders of Gis optional for Nationals this year. Shelby Velazquez seconded. Votes in favor = 4; Votes opposed = 1; Abstained = 1.

New Business

- Fariba Madani had sent a draft agenda for review to the RC and asked if anyone had changes. No changes were made; Diane Martin was asked to send the agenda for posting on the USA Karate website.
- There are 17 officials going to the PKF Senior Championships in Uruguay, and 12 candidates will be testing for new or upgraded licenses.
- Fees for sanctioning regional referee courses were discussed. Jay Farrell proposed a discounted rate for sanctioning a combined course (kata/kumite) and a discounted rate for participants testing for both licenses at a combined course.
- Jay Farrell motioned to approve the sanctioning fee for the Regional Referee Instructor program certification seminar, which will be \$200 for one certification course, either Kumite or Kata, and \$300 for both at the same seminar. The registration fees when using Tournament in a Box for certification candidates will be \$55 for one certification, either Kumite or Kata, and \$75 for both. The instructor reserves the right to change the registration fee when not utilizing Tournament in a Box. Cedric Barksdale seconded. Votes in favor = 6.
- Diane Martin referred to the reimbursement policy for the RC members as posted under the Policies and Procedures for Committees on the USA Karate website. *Note: A follow-up CEO approval policy specific to RC members was sent via email.*
- Fariba Madani discussed that all RC members need to be present throughout the entire signature event. The RC needs to be present for the course, the entire briefing, and through the end of finals. She stated that even if a tatami that an RC member is in has been dismissed, RC members should see if other tatamis need help before leaving.
- The June RC meeting will be open to all members. Diane Martin will have the meeting date and time posted on the USA Karate website under news. The meeting will be held on June 10th at 3 p.m. Central Time.

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m. Central Time.