



Meeting Minutes from March 14, 2025 Referee Committee Meeting
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Central Time

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

Call to Order: Jay Farrell called the Referee Committee (RC) meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Central Time.

Jay Farrell made a motion to approve Shelby Velazquez's absence, Cedric seconded, and all approved.

Introduction/updates

Regional program

Fariba Madani provided an update on the regional program and seminars, stating the program has been very successful.

Jay Farrell said the regions have been coordinating and communicating well with each other and are on track. Cedric Barksdale concurred with Jay that there is good collaboration among regions. Will Gatch said everyone is doing a fantastic job. Cedric Barksdale said they appreciated Will Gatch coming to the recent New Jersey tournament in February.

New Business

US Open Logistics

Fariba Madani stated that the U21 Team selection is on Wednesday. Currently, there are not many registered. Will Gatch agreed that the categories are currently small. Fariba Madani said the number of tatamis (one or two) will depend on the size, and it is expected more will register.

Fariba Madani explained there will not be a briefing the evening before; there will be a brief meeting Wednesday morning. She does not anticipate the U21 event will be a late day.

US Open Referee Course and Materials

Chris Hodgins provided an update for the course and requested the kata videos from Fariba Madani and answer sheets and sheets for grading. Jay Farrell will take care of the forms and grading sheets. Fariba Madani said she will provide videos and copies of the kata video answer sheets and transparencies.

Chris Hodgins will contact Darrin Free about the medical staff being available for the practical kumite section. Since medical staff are there for the U21 event, Chris Hodgins will just need to let Darrin Free know the time they will be needed Thursday for the course.

Competitors for practice and exam

Will Gatch stated that the regional lead for the region where the signature event is held will be responsible for coordinating fighters for the practical. This was communicated at the regional leader meeting. Chuck Sweigart stated that Ronald Tolentino from Las Vegas will help bring competitors for the course. Fariba Madani said the RC will help reach out to their contacts if additional fighters are needed.

Chris Hodgins requested that Diane Martin coordinate the kumite practical evaluation scoring sheets. Diane Martin said the scoring sheet will be in Teams so that evaluators can score at the same time and calculations will be done automatically.

Chris Hodgins met with Will Gatch and Diane Martin to review the course schedule.

Fariba Madani will bring paper for Diane Martin to print certificates.

Chris Hodgin will contact Sara Plackett for patches and books. Cedric Barksdale stated that Sara Plackett mentioned new passbooks will be made. Fariba Madani explained they were updating the passbooks to improve the quality, add pages needed, and remove pages not being used. She welcomed suggestions for any passbook changes from the RC. Jay Farrell requested that RC members look at the book and provide feedback to Diane Martin and Fariba Madani on any suggested changes. Fariba Madani stated her preference was to have kata/kumite license pages as the first two pages and have additional pages for tournament attendance.

Jay Farrell is working on the questions for the US Open as a priority and will start working on the Spanish version as time permits. He said there is a chance the Spanish version will be ready for the US Open, and the Spanish version will definitely be ready for Nationals.

Diane Martin stated that there are 33 officials registered for the JIC/US Open and 12 candidates registered for the course and exam. Fariba Madani anticipates many will attend the course this year.

Jay Farrell described several options for membership categories. Diane Martin explained that officials will need to have a referee membership or combined athlete/referee membership. The athlete membership only will not allow them to take the online referee exam.

Cedric Barksdale asked about using Sportdata and some of the issues experienced with Video Review and database issues in non-elite categories not using Sportdata. Will Gatch explained that most of the issues with Video Review were in the elite categories, and those categories should be fine with Sportdata use in elite tatamis.

Jay Farrell asked what happens if they move non-elite to elite tatamis. Fariba Madani stated that if Sportdata manages the timetable and schedule, it should run efficiently.

Fariba Madani discussed the issues with JIC last year with empty tatamis and one tatami having the 17-year-old advanced category very late in the evening. She is scheduling a meeting with Brody Burns, Darrin Free, and Will Gatch to discuss the schedule for the US Open. She said one suggestion is to have the youngest competitors start later and have the older, advanced categories start first. Fariba Madani said if the RC has any suggestions on the schedule, please send them to her to bring to the meeting.

Cedric Barksdale asked if he will be involved with deployments. Fariba Madani said she assigned Will Gatch to coordinate deployments. Will Gatch stated that he will work with Diane Martin on initial deployment and will welcome any suggestions from Cedric Barksdale based on his experience.

Cedric Barksdale asked if weigh-ins will be handled by the Technical Committee. Fariba Madani said the Technical Committee will be responsible for weigh-ins.

Chris Hodgin will send an email to the RC with suggested names and tasks for the course.

Chuck Sweigart asked about the RC Structure and responsibility of members for certain tasks. Jay Farrell stated there are no longer any specific areas of responsibility for RC members. All RC members will be working together. He explained that the bylaws were updated last year to take out specific assigned roles for RC members including education, operations, and certification.

Fariba Madani stated that all RC members can jump into any area to help other committee members and there is not a single person in charge of certification, education, operations, etc.

Fariba Madani suggested that Kathy Bailey and Raul Shelton are still available as task force members to help as needed. Diane Martin confirmed that Kathy Bailey and Raul Shelton are still part of the task force for 2025. She stated that Raul Shelton mentioned he will not be in attendance at the US Open. Fariba Madani said there will be many senior officials at the US Open that can pitch in as needed.

Diane Martin requested a few RC members come early to the course to help with check-in.

Adjournment

Jay made a motion for adjournment at 11:42 am central time. All voted in favor and the meeting ended.