



CREATIVE BREAKING COMPETITION RULES

January 1, 2026

USA Taekwondo Creative Breaking Competition Rules

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Article 1. Overview & General Guidelines

1. In Creative Breaking competition, participants use powerful, correctly executed Taekwondo techniques to break pine boards. Competitors are expected to display technical skill and proper Taekwondo manner, as well as showmanship and creativity.
 - 1.1. All competitors must wear a white Taekwondo V-neck USATKD approved uniform (dobok) or WT approved Poomsae competition uniform in good condition, and appropriate to the competitors' division. Black Belts must wear black-collared white uniforms or WT approved Poomsae competition uniform. Color belts may not wear black-collared or poom collared uniforms.
 - 1.1.1. Optional: Athletes may wear black pants.
 - 1.2. Competitors may choose the kind of techniques and number of boards to break, up to a maximum of 15 boards. Any Taekwondo striking or kicking technique may be used, apart from head strikes which are banned.
 - 1.2.1. Performing a head strike will result in a 0.3 Procedural Deduction per attempt per board.
 - 1.2.2. Performing a head strike will result in the Referee calling the medic for an examination of the athlete after the cleanup time is complete, or during the routine if there is a clear injury.
 - 1.3. Competitors must provide their own board holder assistants. (Please note that board holder credentials are not a pass into the event; persons receiving this credential will need to pick it up in the designated holding area and return it to the holding area after competition).
 - 1.4. Competitors and helpers will have 180 seconds (3 minutes) to set up, perform the breaking routine and clean up all boards, broken boards and wood fragments. Exceeding the time limit will result in 0.3 procedural deduction in the final score for each 10 seconds, or fraction thereof, over the time. (Example: 12 seconds over = 0.6 procedural deduction.) If computer scoring is not used, a timer will be provided for each ring.
 - 1.5. Blindfolds are the only prop permitted. All other props are banned, such as chairs, trampolines, tables, glitter, confetti, explosives, sound makers, target pads, rebreakable boards, etc. However, board holders may be used as "human launch pads."
 - 1.6. Multiple attempts of a single break are allowed, but each unbroken board will result in a 0.3 technical deduction per attempt.
 - 1.7. A "Broken Board" is defined as one that is a) completely separated; or b) held together only by wood strands, such that if one side is held horizontal, the other side naturally drops perpendicular to the floor.

- 1.8. Boards that are brought into the ring but not attempted will result in a 0.3 technical deduction for each board. Note that missed boards are considered attempted, and will not result in any additional penalty, other than the deduction on the failed attempt described in Section 1.6, if a competitor chooses not to re-attempt the break.
- 1.8.1. Example 1: Competitor A brings two boards. Completed his first break but missed his second break and decided not to re-attempt. He should receive a 0.3 deduction for the missed break and no deduction for not attempting a board.
- 1.8.2. Example 2: Competitor B brings two boards. In his first attempt, he completed the first board and missed the second board. In the second attempt, he completed the second board with a different technique. He should receive a 0.3 deduction for the missed first attempt of his first break.
- 1.8.3. Example 3: Competitor C brings 2 boards. In his first attempt, he completed the first board and missed the second board. In the second attempt, he missed the second board with a different technique. He should receive a 0.3 deduction for the missed first attempt + 0.3 deduction for the missed second attempt = total 0.6 deduction.
- 1.8.4. Example 4: Competitor D brings 2 boards. In his first attempt, he misses both boards and does not attempt again. He should receive a 0.3 deduction for the first board + a 0.3 deduction for the second board = total 0.6 deduction.
- 1.9. The performance must be confined to the 10m x 10m competition area. A competitor who crosses the boundary line with two feet will receive a 0.3 procedural point deduction for each violation. Holders may cross the boundary line or stand outside the boundary line with no penalty.
- 1.10. Competitors may be cautioned to stage the performance so that flying boards do not endanger officials, spectators or other competitors.
- 1.11. Boards must be purchased from USATKD or a USATKD-designated vendor at the competition venue. Board security procedures for each event will be published by USATKD on or before the first day of registration. *Under no circumstance will competitors provide their own boards.* Standard board sizes: (Sizes may be modified to accommodate the designated vendor's stock.)
- 1.11.1. 6 - 9 years old: $\frac{1}{4}$ x 10 x 12-inch Pine Board
- 1.11.2. 10 - 14 years old: $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 x 12-inch Pine Board
- 1.11.3. 15 - 17 years old: 1 x 10 x 12-inch Pine Board
- 1.11.4. 18 + years old: 1 x 10 x 12-inch Pine Board
- 1.12. No spacers may be used, including fingers. Boards may be taped together using masking tape for ease of holding in multiple board breaks.

- 1.13. Holders may not attempt to “help” the competitor by bending, moving, or pushing the boards; any attempt to do so will result in a 0.3 technical point deduction for each occurrence.
- 1.14. Boards may not be treated, manipulated or altered to increase the likelihood of breaking; any attempt to physically alter the boards will result in disqualification of the competitor.
- 1.15. No bricks, cinder blocks, or tiles may be brought into the Contest Area. Any mechanical holders used for multiple board breaks must not have sharp edges and must be approved for safety by a designated official at the ring prior to competing.
- 1.16. Competitors are expected to display self-control and good competition manner. A display of poor sportsmanship (profanity, etc.) may be penalized by either 0.1 or 0.3 in the Technical Execution score, depending upon severity. When a competitor commits excessive misconduct and does not follow the referee’s command, he/she may be disqualified.

Article 2. Classification of Competition

2. Creative Breaking Competition

2.1. Male and female divisions shall be divided according to age as follows:

Division	Dragons	Tigers	Youth	Cadet	Junior	Senior	Ultra
Age	6 – 7	8 – 9	10 – 11	12 – 14	15 – 17	18 – 32	33+

2.2. Athlete Protection and Gender Participation Guidelines: In accordance with directives issued by the USOPC, no person who is born as a male shall be permitted to enter any USA Taekwondo event in any category designated as "Female." For purposes of this policy, "male" means a person belonging, at conception, to the sex that produces the small reproductive cell as set out in Executive Order 14168 (January 20, 2025).

Article 3. Scoring Guidelines

3. Judging will be based on three criteria:

Difficulty (30%) Number of boards broken (30%)	Technical Execution
Presentation (40%)	Demonstration of Taekwondo Skill & Creativity

3.1. The total combined score for Technical Execution (i.e., Difficulty of Techniques plus Number of Boards Broken minus Technical Deductions) cannot be less than zero. Even if a competitor fails to break any boards at all, he/she will still receive a score for Presentation.

3.2. Difficulty

3.2.1. Difficulty is individually assessed by each judge on a scale of 1.0 to 3.0, based on the judge's consideration of the difficulty of the overall performance. The guidelines for assessing difficulty are as follows:

3.2.2. Difficulty of Kicking Techniques will be assessed on the following order of superiority:

3.2.2.1. Standing kick technique

3.2.2.2. Kicking technique with turning motion

3.2.2.3. Jumping or flying kick technique

3.2.2.4. Jumping or flying kick with turning motion (the greater the number of rotations, the higher the assessed difficulty)

3.2.2.5. Multiple consecutive breaking using jumping or flying kick

3.2.2.6. Multiple consecutive breaking using turning jumping or flying kick

3.2.3. Difficulty of Hand Techniques will be assessed on the following order of superiority:

3.2.3.1. Basic skills such as straight or reverse punch, palm heel strike and hammer fist

3.2.3.2. More technical skills such as knife hand strike, ridge hand strike and back fist

3.2.3.3. Advanced skills such as spear finger strike, long fist, chicken beak strike, etc.

3.3. Presentation: Points may be awarded from 1.2 to 4.0 in the following four categories:

- 3.3.1. Use of Correct Taekwondo Technique: Points may be added from 0.3 to 1.0 for Athlete demonstrates correct application of Taekwondo Techniques. For example, boards are broken in the center, techniques have full extension, striking with correct surface for technique.
- 3.3.2. Creativity: Points may be added from 0.3 to 1.0 for the creativity of the actions and components of the breaking demonstration.
- 3.3.3. Balance & Rhythm: Points may be added from 0.3 to 1.0 for the rhythm and balance between different components of the breaking routine. For example, proper landing on techniques, flow between different techniques, stability after completing a break.
- 3.3.4. Style / Attitude / Expression of Energy & Confidence: Points may be added from 0.3 to 1.0 for accurate expression of energy in the breaking demonstration. For example, spiritual strength through volume of kiyap.

Article 4. Competition Procedure

4. Competition Procedure

- 4.1. The officiating team shall consist of one Referee and four Judges; or alternately, one Referee and two judges.
- 4.2. The Referee will be responsible for recording the number of boards attempted before the performance begins, and for keeping track during the performance (either electronically or manually) of all 0.1 and 0.3 technical deductions—missed boards, missed breaks, illegal “assistance” from holders, instances of poor sportsmanship, etc.
- 4.3. The Referee will also record his/her scores for Difficulty and Presentation.
- 4.4. Each of the Judges will record a score for Difficulty and Presentation.
- 4.5. The Scorekeeper is responsible for operating the computer (if using an electronic scoring system) or managing the scoring paperwork (if using a manual scoring system). The Scorekeeper will also start and stop the timer and will alert the Referee if a competitor has exceeded the allowed three minutes for setup, performance and cleanup.
- 4.6. When the Coordinator calls “Chool-jeon”, the competitor and board holders will enter the competition area and bow to the judges upon the Coordinator’s command of “Charyeot” (attention) and “Kyeong-rye” (bow). The Coordinator will then declare, “Shi-jak.” The competitor will begin the performance, and the Scorekeeper will start the timer.
- 4.7. At the end of the performance, the competitor will come to attention and face the officiating team. The Coordinator will declare “Charyeot” (attention), and wait, if necessary, for the holders to finish removing broken boards from the competition area. When cleanup is done, the Coordinator will declare, “Kyeong-rye” (bow), and the Scorekeeper will stop the timer.
- 4.8. The final score shall be displayed on the computer monitor or announced immediately after totaling the judges’ scores.
- 4.9. When using an **electronic scoring system**, the Referee and Judges shall input Difficulty and Presentation scores into the electronic scoring instruments after the breaking performance and total points shall be automatically displayed on the monitors. As described above, the Referee shall also record all Technical Deductions during the performance.
- 4.10. When using **manual scoring**, the Referee or Coordinator shall collect all scoring sheets and convey the results to the Scorekeeper immediately after completion of the breaking. The Scorekeeper shall report the score to the Referee and have the final score displayed or announced.
 - 4.10.1. In order to avoid waiting while scores are tallied, a competitor’s score may be announced after the next competitor’s performance.
- 4.11. Declaration of Penalties for Exceeding Time Limit
 - 4.11.1. One Procedural Deduction penalty is equal to 0.3 point. Deduction penalties will be declared by the Referee after the performance is completed by stating the number of deductions, and what they are for. Example: “Two deductions for exceeding performance time by 16 seconds.” (If using an electronic scoring system, time and deductions will be displayed automatically.)

Article 5. Decision & Declaration of Winner

5. The winner shall be the competitor who is awarded the highest total score, based on the following computation:
 - 5.1. When using the five-judge system, the highest and lowest scores are dropped from the Difficulty score, and a mean score calculated by dividing by 3. This total is then added to the score for Number of Boards Attempted.
 - 5.2. Technical Deductions, determined by the Referee, are then subtracted from the sum of the Number of Boards Attempted and the mean Difficulty score. The result is the total score for Technical Execution.
 - 5.3. Then, the highest and lowest scores are dropped from the Presentation score, and a mean score calculated by dividing by 3. This subtotal is added to the Technical Execution total, above, giving a total combined Technical and Presentation score.
 - 5.4. Procedural Deductions, if any, are subtracted from the total combined score, to give a Final Score. (See example below.)

Number of Boards = 12 (x 0.2)							2.40
Difficulty	2.2	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.2	Total	2.00
Technical Deductions							– 2.10
Total Technical Execution							2.30
Presentation	3.2	2.6	3.2	2.4	2.8	Total	2.87
Technical + Presentation							5.17
Procedural Deductions							– 0.3
FINAL SCORE							4.87

- 5.5. With the three-judge system, all scores are used. A mean Difficulty score is calculated by dividing by 3. This total is then added to the score for Number of Boards Attempted.
- 5.6. Technical Deductions, determined by the Referee, are then subtracted from the sum of the Number of Boards Attempted and the mean Difficulty score. The result is the total score for Technical Execution.

- 5.7. Then, a mean score is calculated by dividing the Presentation score by 3. This subtotal is added to the Technical Execution total, above, giving a total combined Technical and Presentation score.
- 5.8. Procedural Deductions, if any, are subtracted from the total combined score, to give a Final Score.
- 5.9. In case of a tie, the winner will be the competitor having the highest Presentation score. If still tied:
- 5.9.1. Five judge system - The highest and lowest scores will be added back into the Difficulty and Presentation totals, and mean scores calculated by dividing each of them by 5. New totals will be computed, following the procedure of Article 5.1, above.
- 5.9.2. Three-judge system (and five-judge system if still tied after steps in 5.9.1 above)
- The competitor with the lower value of Technical Deductions will be the winner.
- 5.9.3. If the competitors remain tied after these steps, multiple medals will be awarded.

Creative Breaking Score Sheet

Competitor: #: _____

Ring Number: _____

Gender (circle): Male Female

Age: 7 & Under | 9 & Under | 11 & Under | 13 & Under | 17 & Under | 32 & Under | 33 & Over

Judge's Name: _____

Signature: _____

Judge Number: _____

(Referee only) Number of Boards Attempted (number of boards x 0.2, maximum 15 boards (Example: 10 boards x 0.2 = 2.0; 15 boards x 0.2 = 3.0; 12 boards x 0.2 = 2.4)															
Difficulty					3.0	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.1	
					2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	
Technical Deductions	(Referee only)														
	Major Deductions: Completely missed attempt, extreme display of poor sportsmanship, crossing the boundary line, holders "helping" (Use ● for 0.3)														
Presentation	Use of Correct Taekwondo Technique				1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3			
	Creativity				1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3			
	Balance & Rhythm				1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3			
	Style / Attitude / Expression of Energy & Confidence				1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3			
	Total Presentation														
	(Referee only) 0.3 Procedural Deductions: Too much time— 0.3 for each 10 seconds over (Use ● for each deduction.)								Procedural Deductions						

Creative Breaking Scorekeeper's Worksheet

Competitor Name: _____

Male Female Age: _____ Belt Division: _____

Number of Boards				<i>(Multiply by 0.2)</i>		
Difficulty*	Referee	Judge #1	Judge #2	Judge #3	Judge #4	
Subtract Referee's Technical Deductions						-
Total Technical Execution						
Presentation*	Referee	Judge #1	Judge #2	Judge #3	Judge #4	
Total Technical + Presentation						
Subtract Referee's Procedural Deductions						-
FINAL SCORE						

* 5 Officials: Drop high and low; divide by 3; enter mean score.

3 Officials: Divide by 3, enter mean score.

Name: _____ Ring Number: _____

Male Female Age: _____ Belt Division: _____

Number of Boards				<i>(Multiply by 0.2)</i>		
Difficulty*	Referee	Judge #1	Judge #2	Judge #3	Judge #4	
Subtract Referee's Technical Deductions						-
Total Technical Execution						
Presentation*	Referee	Judge #1	Judge #2	Judge #3	Judge #4	
Total Technical + Presentation						
Subtract Referee's Procedural Deductions						-
FINAL SCORE						

* Five Officials: Drop high and low; divide by 3; enter mean score.

Three Officials: Divide by 3, enter mean score.

Ring Number: _____ Date: _____ Page # _____