



# Summary *of* Rules

22nd Edition MALTA OPEN 2024

# SUMMARY OF RULES

## Malta OPEN Championships



The following is a Summary of the Rules for the Individual, Pair, Team, Kumite Shobu Nihon, Shobu Sanbon, Shobu Ippon Categories, including Shadow Kumite, Kobudo Kata, and Para Categories.

### A. Choice of KATA For Individual Categories - MAINSTREAM

- Table 1 shows the choice of kata for each Round. Kata for each Round MAY be repeated or CANNOT be repeated as indicated in the last column. The categories where Kata CANNOT be repeated applies also in the case of a TIE, where a different Kata must be performed.

**TABLE 1: Individual Kata**

Category/ Ages	1st Round	2nd Round	3rd Round	Choice of Kata
<b>Children (Up to 12 years)</b>				
Novices – 7th Kyu	<b>Not applicable - 2 Round Event</b>	Shitei	Shitei	May Repeat Kata
6th Kyu – 4th Kyu		Shitei or Sentei	Shitei or Sentei	Must <b>NOT</b> repeat Kata
3rd Kyu – DAN Grades		Shitei or Sentei	Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	Must <b>NOT</b> repeat Kata
<b>Mini Cadets – Cadets – Juniors – Seniors - Masters</b>				
Novices – 7th Kyu	<b>Not applicable - 2 Round Event</b>	Shitei	Shitei	May Repeat Kata
6th Kyu – 4th Kyu		Shitei or Sentei	Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	Must <b>NOT</b> repeat Kata
3rd Kyu – DAN Grades		Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	Must <b>NOT</b> repeat Kata

- If there are 8 competitors or less, only 1 Round will be held, and choice of kata is that of the 3rd Round. If there are 9 or more competitors, 2 Rounds will be held, and choice of kata is that of the 2nd and 3rd Round respectively.
- Flags may be used in the case of a tie in the final round.

4. Contact lenses or glasses may be worn during kata performance at competitor's own risk. However, if glasses fall on the tatami, this will result in disqualification.
5. The 6 highest scoring competitors will pass for the final Round.
6. No jewellery, no piercings, no heavy make-up.
7. **NAILS MUST BE KEPT SHORT EVEN FOR KATA**, otherwise, competitor is **PENALISED (*kata is a simulated fight*)**.
8. No bandanas or headbands are allowed.
9. Women/ Girls **MUST WEAR a white t-shirt/ white crop top underneath karate Gi jacket**.
10. Karate Gi jacket sleeves and trousers must not be rolled up.
11. When 5 scores are given for the Kata performance, the lowest and highest score are crossed out (discarded). The remaining 3 scores will be added to give the total score for each round. If there is a tie in the 1st round, the lowest score is added. If tie persists, highest score is added. In the case of a continuing tie, competitors are asked to perform an extra kata – repeat kata or a different kata, depending on the age and category. If after performance of the extra kata, there is still no winner (tie persists), competitors will be asked to change their belts to red or blue, and repeat kata. Judging will be by way of Hantei, using red and blue flags.

The same procedures are adopted in the 2nd round, in the case of continuing ties. In the final round, the scores of the 2nd and 3rd rounds are added up. If added scores are equal, that is, competitors tie, an extra kata must be performed.

12. Disqualification (Lowest score within the round is given): This occurs if competitor:
  - a) Announces one kata and performs another; b) adds or forgets a technique in a kata; c) stops or pauses a kata for more than 5 seconds; d) loses balance completely and falls; e) does not perform kata of style as required in the category, or (f) objects fall from competitor during kata.
13. For individual kata categories, competitors can enter in their **OWN AGE and BELT category as is usually the normal procedure, AND they are ALLOWED to compete in higher AGE and/ or BELT categories, HOWEVER, they MUST follow the RULES for that Category as shown in TABLE 1 on page 2 (e.g., changing Kata with every round or TIE, if Categories are from 6th Kyu and above) despite being lower belts.**

**HIGHER Belts CANNOT enter lower belts categories; similarly, older ages CANNOT enter younger age categories, except for Veterans who can enter the SENIORS Category in Kata.**

## **B. Choice of KATA For PAIRS, and TEAMS**

14. Table 2 shows the choice of kata for 1 ROUND only since these categories are a 1 -Round Event.
15. In the case of a TIE, For PAIR KATA and TEAM KATA, Kata cannot be repeated, except for children and Cadets. In the case of a Tie, flags may be used.
16. Both Pairs and Team Categories are mixed categories; that is; pairs and teams may be comprised of both males and females within the same pair or team (boys and Girls). A competitor cannot participate in more than 1 team within the same category.

**TABLE 2: Pairs and Team Kata**

Category/ Ages	1st Round	2nd Round	3rd Round	In Case of a TIE
Children (up to 10 yrs)	Not applicable – 1 Round Event		Shitei or Sentei	May Repeat Kata
Cadets (11 - 15 yrs)			Shitei or Sentei	May Repeat Kata
Seniors (16 yrs & up)			Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	Must NOT Repeat Kata
<b>BUNKAI CATEGORIES</b>			Shitei or Sentei or Tokui	<b>May Repeat Kata</b>

**17. For Team kata with Bunkai:**

Performance of Team kata with Bunkai initiates in the same way as in team categories. After team kata is performed, team proceeds with the Bunkai of the SAME Kata performed as a team. The duration of the Bunkai from the first rei towards the central referee till the final rei, must NOT exceed 5 minutes.

When a team member is taken down during the Bunkai, referees expect the team member to stand up or to remain raised on one knee. Bunkai is **NOT** a theatrical performance – lying down on the tatami will be penalised. Scissor take downs to the body are allowed, however, these are prohibited to the neck area. Each team member is expected to perform both attacking and defending techniques.

**C. KUMITE**

**(1) Shobu Nihon Individual Kumite - For Children aged 12 years and under**

18. **Each bout in Shobu Nihon** is stopped when scores reach 2 Ippon or 4 waza-ari or when time is up (1 minute 30 seconds effective time). Scores reached can be a combination of both Ippon and waza-ari.
19. **Compulsory equipment:** white Helmet (blue or red to match blue and red belt), white chest guard, red & blue gloves, red & blue belts, red & blue shin guards with **SAME COLOUR Insteps**. (Groin guards are allowed).
20. **If there is a TIE**, Hantei is implemented (Panel votes for best fighter). The Mirror system will be used in all bouts. Leg sweeping techniques and grabbing opponent or other inappropriate body contact are prohibited and will be penalised. Atoshibaraku is at 15 seconds before bout ends.

21. **Warnings/ Penalties are:** Atenai, Kinshi, Shikkaku (disbarment from whole Championships). Penalties/ Warnings may be skipped and can be imposed directly according to the severity of the foul. Warnings/ penalties do not cross-cumulate, however, these reflect negatively on competitor. ***DISRESPECTFUL behaviour from coaches will lead to KINSHI warnings on competitor.***

## (2) Shobu Ippon Individual Kumite

22. **Each bout in Shobu Ippon** is stopped when scores reach 1 Ippon or 2 waza-ari or when time is up (2 minutes running time). Time is stopped only when Referee requests 'TIME'.
23. **Compulsory equipment:** white or transparent gum shield, white breast guard for females (underneath karate Gi jacket), **red & white gloves** (like sanbon gloves but **white NOT blue**), red & white belts, groin guards for males. Contact lenses and spectacles (glass or plastic) are **NOT** allowed.
24. **In the case of a draw**, Hantei is implemented, and Sai Shiai (extra match) is announced if decision is Hikiwake. The 4-flag system will be used. Atoshiharaku is at 15 seconds before bout ends.
25. **Warnings/ Penalties are:** Atenai, mubobi, Jogai. Shikkaku is disbarment from whole Tournament. Penalties/ Warnings can be skipped and may be imposed directly according to the severity of the foul.

## (3) Shobu Ippon Team Kumite

26. At the beginning of each match, only the **3 team members** will line up in the match area.
27. Teams which do not have 3 competitors at the start of 1st Round, will not be allowed to compete but will be declared **kiken** (renunciation).
28. **Only 1 reserve** is allowed per team and will fight if Competition Doctor declares one of the team members to be injured and unable to fight again. Injured member will be substituted from the 2nd Round onwards.
29. Prior every team match, coaches must hand in the **fighting order** of the team members to the table officials. Fighting order can be changed for each round, however, once notified, it cannot be amended. A team will be disqualified if coach or competitors change the fighting order without notifying the Referee.
30. If competitors **tie in a bout**, result is left as a draw. It is only during an extra match where competitors' bout results in a tie, that sai shiai is called for.
31. In the case of **Kiken** (disqualification) of a Team, the opponent's score is set to **Ippon**.
32. **Compulsory equipment:** same as individual Ippon kumite.  
**Duration of each bout:** 2 minutes running time.  
**Atoshiharaku:** 15 seconds before bout ends.  
**Warnings/ Penalties:** same as individual Ippon Kumite.

## (4) Shobu Sanbon Individual Kumite

33. Each bout in Shobu Sanbon is stopped when scores reach 3 Ippon or 6 waza-ari or when time is up (**2 minutes effective time for mini-cadets, cadets, and Masters, or 3 minutes effective time for Juniors and Seniors**).

34. **Compulsory equipment:** white or transparent gum shield, white breast guard for females (underneath karate Gi jacket), red & blue gloves, red & blue belts, groin guards for males (underneath karate Gi trousers). Contact lenses and Spectacles (glass or plastic) are **Not** allowed. **(FOR MINI CADETS 13/14 years, red and blue shin guards are compulsory).**
35. If there is a draw, Hantei is implemented. If tie continues, 1-minute extra time (**Enchosen**) is given (warnings/ penalties carried forward). The one to score first in that extra minute wins (Sudden death).
36. The Mirror system will be used in all bouts. Atoshibaraku is at **15 seconds** before bout ends.
37. **Warnings/ Penalties:** Atenai, Kinshi, Shikkaku (disbarment from whole Tournament). Penalties/ Warnings can be skipped and may be imposed directly according to the severity of the foul.

### (5) **Shobu Sanbon TEAM Kumite**

38. At the beginning of each match, only the 3 team members will line up in the match area.
39. Teams which do not have 3 competitors at the start of 1st Round, will not be allowed to compete but will be declared **kiken** (renunciation).
40. Only 1 reserve is allowed per team, and s/he will fight if Competition Doctor declares one of the team members to be injured and unable to fight again. Injured member will be substituted from the 2nd Round onwards.
41. Prior every team match, coaches must hand in the fighting order of the team members to the table officials. Fighting order can be changed for each round, however, once notified, it cannot be amended. A team will be disqualified if coach or competitors change the fighting order without notifying the Referee.
42. If competitors tie in a bout, result is left as a **draw**. It is only during an extra match where competitors' bout results in a tie, that **Enchosen** (extra time of 1 minute) is given.
43. In the case of **Kiken** (disqualification) of a Team, the opponent's score is set to Sanbon.
44. The Mirror system will be used in all bouts.
45. **Compulsory equipment:** same as individual Sanbon kumite  
**Duration of each bout:** 2 minutes effective time.  
**Atoshibaraku:** 15 seconds before bout ends.  
**Warnings/ Penalties:** same as individual Sanbon Kumite

### (6) **Shobu Sanbon TEAM ROTATION Kumite**

46. Team will be composed of 3 competitors and **ONLY** one reserve. At the beginning of the match, only the 3 competitors will line up in the match area. Teams which do not have 3 members at the start of the **FIRST** round will not be allowed to compete (will be declared Kiken).
47. Reserve competitor will fight if Competition Doctor declares one of the team members to be injured and unable to fight again. Injured team member may be substituted from the second round onwards.

48. The duration of each match will be **4 minutes running time** and timekeeper stops clock when Referee requests "Time". The Mirror system will be used and Atoshibaraku is at 15 seconds before match ends.
49. ALL 3 COMPETITORS on the Team **MUST FIGHT AT LEAST ONCE FOR 15 seconds** (minimum). If after 4 minutes, one team member has not fought team will be disqualified (exception of 6 points advantage).
50. The coach must announce 'CHANGE' to the Control Judge to substitute the fighter. CHANGE Requests by coaches will NOT be accepted during the last 30 seconds. Change requests cannot be made by both coaches at the same time.
51. It is the Referee who decides when to stop the fight for a change of competitor when requested, and this may not be immediate. The other 2 members of the team must be fully equipped and ready to be called on the tatami by the central Referee. 3 seconds are given for team members to change, otherwise team will be penalised with Kinshi.
52. Points gained by each member of the team are accumulated and carried forward till end of match. Each team may score as its team members are capable. *If, however, one team reaches an advantage of 6 points (3 Ippon or 6 waza-ari or a combination of both) ahead of the other team before the 4 minutes, his/ her team will be declared the winner, even though the other 2 team members did not fight.*
53. All penalties/ warnings incurred by each competitor in the team are carried forward. If a team member is penalised with shikkaku during a team match, the whole team is disqualified or eliminated for the entire Tournament.
54. After 4 minutes, the team with the most scored points will be the winner.
55. If after 4 minutes, there is a tie, the team who has most Ippon will be declared the winner. In the case of a persisting tie, the team with the least total number of warnings/ penalties, wins. If tie continues, Enchosen of 2 minutes is Given and who scores first wins. Coaches choose team member to initiate the Enchosen. Requests for substitutions is allowed after 15 seconds fight. All previous penalties/ warnings are carried forward.
56. **Compulsory equipment:** same as individual Sanbon Kumite.
57. If a team member is substituted without the Referee's command, the team will be penalised with Kinshi.

## D. KOBUDO

1. ONE ROUND.
2. Any choice of TRADITIONAL kata. Name of kata must be clearly pronounced before performance on tatami. Kata may be repeated in case of a TIE.
3. KAMA must be wooden.
4. Nunchaku must be wooden (or soft), with rope in between (NOT chain).
5. Sai must NOT have a pointy tip but must be flat.
6. Both BO and EKU must be wooden.
7. TIMBE must not have any stickers or writing on the shield.
8. Tekko must be made of metal.
9. Spectacles/ glasses are NOT allowed. Any contact lenses worn are at the competitors' own risk.

10. Piercings, jewellery, bandanas, or head bands are NOT allowed. Full uniform is expected to be worn. No fancy attire is allowed. No compliance to the rules means competitor would be disqualified.

## E. PARA

1. ONE ROUND. Any choice of Kata. Kata may be repeated in case of a TIE.
2. Kata or Combos can be repeated.

## F. SHADOW KUMITE

1. Competitors will be given 30 seconds to show case their technical baggage. Criteria are the same as those observed in Kumite. Techniques are expected to be shown by both the right- and left-hand side of the body.
2. Standing kick bag must be hit lightly and with control since it represents the opponent.
3. If standing kick bag falls, competitor will be disqualified.
4. Kias and zanshin are also part of what is observed.
5. Pauses longer than 1 second are a waste of time and will be penalised.
6. Judgement will be given by way of HANTEI through flags.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

At the start of every category, competitors are called and lined up by members of the Refereeing panel. Name tags are collected and checked. These are then handed back when category finishes. It is the coach's/ competitor's responsibility to ensure that tag is collected after each category.

✚ *Participation tokens will be given.*

✚ *Trophies will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place in Mainstream, Para, Kobudo Kata categories, and in Shadow Kumite categories.*

✚ *Joined 3rd place will be awarded in Shobu Ippon, Nihon, and Sanbon Kumite categories Only.*

Once lined up, competitors are checked for any irregularities, i.e., jewellery, piercings, long nails, heavy make up, inadequate hair style (which obstructs vision, headbands, etc.) Coaches must ensure that their students present themselves according to rules. If competitors' presentation does not conform to the rules, they are given only 1 minute to redress. These rules apply to both Kata and Kumite. (A correct punch or closed fist cannot be performed correctly with long nails, even during kata performance).

Any competitor who is not present on the tatami area will be called twice on the microphone. If there is still no sign of the competitor towards the end of the round, competitor will be declared Kiken (renunciation).



- ✚ For Kumite, SCORING areas are head, sides of the neck, chest and Back (excluding shoulder blades), abdomen, sides from beneath arm pits downwards up till above hip bone.
- ✚ It is forbidden to attack the throat, groin, and back of the neck. Attacks to the joints will be penalised.
- ✚ Forbidden techniques include open hand techniques, hiza -geri, empi- uchi, atama- uchi (heat butt strikes), flying/ jumping kicks, jumping uraken- uchi, kakato -geri,, leg sweeping techniques which land high on the leg and which may cause knee injuries, dangerous throws with no safe landing.
- ✚ For Shobu Nihon Categories (12 years under), ashibarai is not allowed and will be penalised.
- ✚ For Shobu Sanbon kumite, ashibarai as distractions with no follow up techniques are ALLOWED. If inappropriate, however, these will be penalised.

For kata lists, [click here](#) and refer to *pages 19 -25*.

## NOTE TO COACHES

**Coaches** are to wear their uniform (not in karate Gi) and their name tags. If rules are not followed, they will be asked to leave. Respectful behaviour is always expected. Referees' final decisions will not be contested. Coaches are not the referees for these Championships, so they are expected to perform the duty of a competent coach, who encourages his/ her students to give their best, be polite, view success as well deserved and view any defeat to improve, without any unnecessary shouting.

