

ISKF

Tournament Director's

Handbook



ISKF Tournament Committee

2nd Edition

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Introduction

The ISKF *Tournament Directors' Handbook* is designed for individuals conducting ISKF tournaments. It is meant to be a guideline and should not be construed as a set of rules. This document will make the reader aware of proven and suggested practices, some of which may produce different results depending on the size and nature of the event.

All tournaments must follow the rules outlined in the *ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations*. The rulebook is available on the ISKF's website (www.ISKF.com).

This document is not meant to replace or supersede any official ISKF documents or instructions already in place by the ISKF.

The Tournament Director must take ownership of the entire process and assign individuals with skill sets related to the importance of the job.

Note:

The ISKF Tournament Committee produced the 2nd edition of the Tournament Directors Handbook to add information and clarification to improve our ISKF tournaments. Under the auspices of Chief Instructor Shihan Hiroyoshi Okazaki, this project was initiated by Bob Hoffman and completed by Cathy Cline, Jeff Weber and Kim Weber. (1st Edition, 2018; 2nd Edition, 2026)

Initial Planning

(8–12 Months Prior to the Event)

Successful tournaments are the result of careful planning initiated months in advance. Early organization allows adequate time to secure authorization, facilities, accommodations, staffing, and financial commitments essential to the professional execution of the event.

Event Format and Duration

For national or international competitions, the hosting committee should plan for a two-day event and prepare facilities, staffing, and scheduling accordingly. Regional events may be conducted as either one or two-day competitions at the discretion of the Tournament Director or Regional leadership, based on anticipated participation and available resources. Large competitor turnout may create time or space limitations that justify a two-day format. Divisions may be structured to separate junior events from collegiate, adult, and Adult 45+ (senior divisions) on different days, or to conduct elimination rounds on one day and finals on another, as deemed appropriate.

Authorization and Approval

The first essential step is obtaining official authorization. Permission to host any tournament must be secured from ISKF headquarters within the applicable region or country. Authorization for national and international tournaments is granted by the ISKF Board of Directors. The hosting committee should contact ISKF headquarters early to determine the proper procedures and requirements for approval.

An ISKF tournament represents the organization to the public and must reflect the highest standards of professionalism. Approval will depend in part on whether the host location demonstrates adequate staffing, organization, and infrastructure to conduct the event efficiently and in accordance with ISKF standards. Insufficient staffing often results in delays, scoring errors, and operational inefficiencies. Hosts must ensure that qualified personnel are available to manage all essential functions.

In addition to securing authorization, the hosting committee should clearly establish, in consultation with regional, national, or international leadership, the responsibilities of each party regarding financial support, manpower, equipment, and technical expertise.

Hotel Accommodations

Because tournaments frequently require significant travel and may occupy most of the day or weekend, securing appropriate lodging is critical. Establishing a reserved room block at a designated hotel is recommended; however, unsold rooms may impact the tournament budget. Hosts should carefully negotiate room commitments, seek reduced rates when possible, and consider compiling a list of alternate accommodations that provide reasonable cost and convenient access to the venue. Identifying a secondary hotel is advisable in case the primary hotel

reaches capacity. For collegiate events, arrangements such as student hosting may also be considered.

At minimum, the hosting organization should arrange accommodations for the Chief Instructor of the ISKF. Any additional lodging support for senior members may be extended at the discretion of the host. Whenever possible, these officials should be housed at the event hotel. If that hotel is fully booked, accommodations should be secured at the closest available property.

Hotel as Tournament Site

When utilizing a hotel as the competition venue, hosts must carefully assess total space requirements beyond the competition floor. Adequate areas must be reserved for registration, meetings, warm-up areas, examinations, seminars, luncheons, and banquets. For National and International events, hotel rooms are typically required from Wednesday through Sunday, with meeting and competition space needed from Thursday through Sunday.

Early coordination with ISKF headquarters and Regional leadership is essential to determine which auxiliary events—such as seminars, dan examinations, or administrative meetings—will be conducted, and to ensure appropriate facilities are secured for each.

Venue Requirements

The venue is a critical component of tournament success. Adequate floor space is essential to conduct competition safely and efficiently. For large tournaments, hosting the event within the designated hotel may provide logistical advantages, though associated costs are often significant and may represent the largest portion of the budget. Alternatively, schools and universities may offer cost-effective facilities. When selecting an off-site venue, ensure that it is easily accessible from the official hotel(s) and convenient for participants who are traveling.

The size of the competition floor and the number of available qualified judges will determine how many rings may operate simultaneously. Larger events should provide a minimum of four rings. As a general guideline, the venue floor should measure approximately 100 feet (30 meters) by 150 feet (50 meters) to accommodate competition rings, officials, staff, and spectators. Each ring should allow approximately 50 to 65 feet (15–20 meters) of space. These dimensions serve as a baseline and may require adjustment based on anticipated participation.

A designated staging area should be arranged near the competition floor with sufficient space to assemble competitors prior to entering their assigned ring. A separate room is preferable to ensure that announcements and instructions are clearly communicated. The staging area is used to verify that all competitors are present and properly equipped (mitts, mouthpieces, etc.) before proceeding to competition.

Additional venue considerations include adequate space for concessions offering water, beverages, fruit, and packaged snacks, subject to venue regulations. Tournament merchandise such as mitts, mouthpieces, and apparel should also be accommodated. Registration tables should be located in a clearly identifiable and accessible area. Space should also be reserved for judges' meetings and luncheons, ideally separate from the competition floor to minimize disruption.

“Save the Date” Announcement

As soon as the date and location are confirmed, a formal announcement or promotional flyer should be distributed to all clubs, regions, and participating countries. Early notification allows participants sufficient time to prepare and promote the event. For international tournaments, early communication is especially critical to allow time for visa applications and travel arrangements. Strategic use of social media and digital platforms has proven effective in increasing awareness and participation.

Staff

Staffing should be addressed at the earliest stage of tournament planning. Insufficient staffing will adversely affect efficiency of the event. The Tournament Director shall review projected staffing requirements and, when necessary, secure assistance from affiliated clubs or regions.

At a minimum, staffing levels should include the following: a single-ring event requires approximately ten (10) staff members; a two-ring event requires approximately fifteen (15) staff members; events utilizing four (4) or more rings should require no fewer than thirty-five (35) and may require up to fifty (50) staff members to execute all required functions. Smaller tournaments (one or two rings with fewer than 100 contestants) may combine compatible duties.

All staff members must be readily identifiable. Distinctive tournament staff attire (such as a staff-designated shirt differing in color from competitor merchandise) shall be required. The Tournament Director should be clearly distinguishable from judges and officials and should dress in professional business attire separate from the standard judging uniform.

The following staff positions shall be appointed and briefed prior to the event:

- **Tournament Director:** Shall serve as the chief authority and principal point of contact. The Director shall assign duties, oversee all operations, and render final decisions in administrative matters.
- **Assistant Tournament Director:** Shall coordinate with judges, supervise table staff, and direct floor operations throughout the event. This official shall act on behalf of the Tournament Director when so delegated.
- **Staging Manager and Assistants:** Shall organize and prepare competitors prior to entering the ring. One (1) individual shall coordinate ring assignments with Ring Managers. One (1) individual should supervise bracket accuracy and staging flow. Additional runners (one or two as required) shall escort competitors to assigned rings and ensure continuity of events.
- **Registration Packet Designer:** Shall prepare and produce all official tournament documentation. This individual shall possess proficiency in document preparation software and digital form platforms.
- **Technical/Data Processor:** Shall manage competitor registration data, process tournament forms, and distribute official communications. This individual shall maintain continuous coordination with the Tournament Director regarding updates or revisions.

- **Financial Officer:** Shall prepare and administer the tournament budget, collect all revenues, disburse authorized expenses, and submit a final financial report upon conclusion of the event.
- **Medic:** Shall be a licensed medical professional (e.g., physician, physician assistant, nurse, paramedic, or EMT). A Medic must be present during all competition sessions, including elimination rounds and finals. The Medic must be familiar with and integrated into the venue's Emergency Action Plan and must be within sight at all times.
- **Program Designer:** Shall design and coordinate production of the official tournament program, including sponsor materials and advertisements.
- **Judges:** Each ring shall have no fewer than six (6) judges. Seven (7) to eight (8) judges per ring is recommended to provide for substitutes and an arbitrator.
- **Table Staff:** Each ring shall have no fewer than three (3) table staff members; five (5) to six (6) is preferred to allow rotation and breaks. Table Staff shall be trained in scorekeeping, timekeeping, and recording procedures as set forth in the Appendix.
- **Announcer:** Shall operate from a central location, preferably near the Head Table, and shall be responsible for announcing ring assignments, results, and official announcements. The Announcer shall possess a clear and projecting voice sufficient to overcome ambient noise.

Additional operational roles shall be appointed as required, including but not limited to:

- Registration personnel (one or two individuals available the evening prior and on event day)
- Merchandise sales staff
- Head Table assistant
- Runners assigned to the Assistant Tournament Director
- Ring set-up and dismantling crew
- Equipment movers
- Contestant control assistants (wranglers/youth ring assistants)
- Regional Banner Coordinator(s) for opening ceremonies at national events
- Banquet check-in personnel, when applicable
- Entertainment Coordinator for banquet or evening programming

Volunteer coordination tools (e.g., online sign-up platforms) may be utilized to assign defined roles and reporting times.

Funding

The production of a tournament requires advance financial planning. While registration revenue may offset expenses, host organizations shall be prepared to assume initial start-up costs, including but not limited to venue deposits, room guarantees, printing, and administrative expenses.

Fundraising initiatives may be authorized, provided they comply with applicable organizational and legal requirements. Crowdfunding platforms may be utilized, subject to disclosure of service fees and verification of legal eligibility. Sponsorships and program advertisements should be actively pursued. Tournament packets should include formal solicitation for advertisements. Martial arts vendors may also be invited to purchase program advertisements and, when appropriate, authorized to exhibit and sell merchandise at the venue.

Additional revenue streams may include the sale of branded apparel, equipment, and related merchandise. Clinics and seminars may be conducted in conjunction with the tournament, provided separate registration fees are established. Instructor compensation shall conform to applicable organizational guidelines, and net proceeds shall accrue to the tournament fund.

Comprehensive financial planning, diversified revenue generation, and prudent expense management shall materially increase the likelihood of a successful and profitable tournament.

The Second Planning Stage

(2–6 Months Prior to the Event)

This phase represents the core of event preparation and begins once initial planning has been established. During this period, all major operational plans are developed and executed concurrently to ensure the successful administration of the tournament.

Registration Packet

The Registration Packet shall serve as the primary informational document for participants. It should be distributed no fewer than two (2) and no more than four (4) months prior to the event. Distribution earlier than this period may result in being forgotten or lost; distribution later than this period may restrict participation. Electronic registration platforms may be utilized, provided they allow secure payment processing and accurate data export.

The Registration Packet should include, at minimum, the following sections:

- **General Information:**
 - Event date and location
 - Registration deadlines
 - Submission instructions for forms and fees
 - Official points of contact
 - Hotel accommodation details
- **Judge's Uniform:**
 - For a 1-day event - judges who are competing wear gis, judges who are not competing wear the judge's uniform.
 - For a 2-day event – 1st day judges who are competing wear gis, judges who are not competing wear the judge's uniform; 2nd day – all judges wear the uniform.
- **Fee Structure:**
 - Itemized entry fees and related costs
- **Directions:**
 - Travel directions to the venue and official hotel(s)
- **Tourism Information:**
 - Local information relevant to visiting participants

- **Schedule of Events:**
 - Activities occurring prior to, during, and following the competition
- **Division Rules:**
 - Youth, Collegiate, Young Adult, Adult, and Adults 45+ (Senior) divisions
 - Any deviations from official ISKF Tournament Rules must be clearly identified in precise language
 - Where no deviation exists, reference shall be made to the official ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations booklet without duplication
- **Registration Forms:**
 - Individual and team registration forms
 - Shirt order information (design image is recommended)
 - Seminar or clinic registration
 - Examination registration
 - Banquet registration
 - Judges' registration
 - Dojo Registration form – used to collect all competitors from a dojo on one form
- **Medical and Legal Documentation:**
 - Competitor Medical Questionnaire (ISKF standard form)
 - Waiver and Release Agreement listing ISKF, the hosting region, dojo, venue, and other required entities
 - Parental Consent and Release Form where applicable
- **Advertising Form:**
 - Tournament program advertisement submission form

Electronic, fillable forms are strongly preferred to reduce transcription errors and improve administrative efficiency as they allow for export into spreadsheet-compatible formats

Website

An official tournament website or webpage should be established as a centralized information resource. This may be incorporated into an existing regional or dojo website or created through a commercial platform or approved social media page.

An individual should be assigned to maintain current information and respond to inquiries in a timely manner. The website should include, at minimum, the Registration Packet, payment

instructions, frequently asked questions, hotel information, schedules, and post-event results. Electronic posting can also reduce printing and mailing costs.

Shirt Design

Tournament apparel should be designed and approved no fewer than several months prior to the event to allow for production and delivery. A vendor should be selected, and artwork should be finalized in coordination with overall tournament branding. Shirt sales shall serve as both commemorative and fundraising purposes.

Program Design

The official tournament program should be professionally designed and shall require coordination with a qualified graphic designer and printing vendor. Content collection should begin early to ensure timely production.

The program may include, but shall not be limited to, the following sections:

- Cover artwork.
- Welcome letters from:
 - Tournament Director
 - Local officials
 - ISKF Regional Director(s)
 - ISKF President
 - ISKF Chairman and Chief Instructor
 - Country Representative
 - Japanese Consulate (where applicable)
- Spectator and participant information, including:
 - Tournament logistics
 - Overview of karate
 - Tournament theme or essays
 - Kata and Kumite overview
 - Judging signal descriptions
 - Prior tournament winners
 - List of tournament officials
 - Adult finals brackets (blank)
 - Advertisements

- Meritorious Service Award biographies

Insurance

An event-specific insurance rider shall be obtained, listing the venue as a certificate holder. Coverage limits shall meet or exceed venue requirements, typically no less than two million dollars (\$2,000,000), subject to confirmation. The certificate shall also list the hosting club, region, and ISKF as additionally insured entities.

Medals and Trophies

A reputable supplier should be identified for medals and trophies. Production timelines should be confirmed in writing, including allowances for minor quantity adjustments. Medal design can be coordinated with program and apparel branding. Delivery, receipt, and secure storage should be planned in advance.

For National tournaments, Best Competitor Awards and Meritorious Service Awards shall be provided by the ISKF.

Banquet Arrangement

The Tournament Director shall determine whether to conduct a banquet or a social gathering. National tournaments shall include such an event to facilitate announcements of team selections, examination results, and awards.

The banquet venue shall be conveniently located and reasonably priced to encourage broad participation.

Financial Considerations

During this phase, the Financial Officer shall monitor projected revenue against anticipated expenditures. Certain expenses may require payment prior to receipt of registration and advertising income. Vendor contracts should be reviewed carefully, and payment schedules should be negotiated where possible.

If financial constraints arise, consultation with Regional or ISKF leadership should occur promptly. The hosting group shall retain primary financial responsibility for the event. Venue expenses should typically constitute the largest single expenditure and therefore requires careful advance planning.

At National tournaments, the hosting group will bear the costs associated with obtaining space for ISKF meetings, testing, seminars, and official luncheons conducted in conjunction with the event.

Prudent financial management during this stage is imperative and communication with the previous host is key to determining what works, and what does not work for profit and loss.

The Third Planning Stage

(3–4 Weeks Before the Event)

At this point in the timeline, many individuals in supporting roles will either be concluding their responsibilities or just beginning final preparations. Communications with participants should now be in full swing, with registrations being received and processed.

Registrations

Registration packets should be incoming and processed on a consistent basis. Examinees, judge and dan registrations should be sent to ISKF HQ ahead of time to check for eligibility. A registration deadline — along with a late-fee deadline — should be established no later than two weeks prior to the tournament to allow adequate time for data processing and event scaling. Incoming registrations must be handled by the Technical/Data Processor. If registration numbers appear low during the final week before the deadline, outreach to regions or dojos that have not yet submitted participants is advisable. Weekly reminders via the website, mass emails, and social media platforms will help maintain visibility and encourage participation. Payment should be required at the time of registration to ensure sufficient working capital for event expenses.

Medical contact information forms must be stored in a readily accessible location in case of emergency. The Tournament Director and Medical Staff must know exactly where these forms are located. Options include:

- Maintaining hard copies in a clearly labeled file folder at the Medical Team's table.
- Storing electronic copies on a dedicated, accessible computer.

All medical documents must be destroyed at the conclusion of the tournament; however, the waivers must be kept for 3-5 years.

Tournament Advertising

Advertising submissions should be finalized before registration closes, as time is required for program design and production. Ideally, advertisement revenue should offset the cost of printing the program. All materials should be sent to the program vendor as early as possible. Confirm the following with the vendor:

- Final proof must be provided at least two weeks before the event.
- Completed programs must be delivered to the Tournament Director one week prior to the event.

Anticipate potential vendor delays and avoid last-minute submissions.

Program Design

By this stage, the Program Designer should have all necessary data. While preliminary work can begin earlier, missing information may cause layout shifts due to the cohesive nature of the document. Before sending the program to print, an additional editor should review the document for:

- Missing components
- Spelling or grammatical errors
- Incorrect data
- Necessary revisions

Tournament Entertainment and Demonstrations

Arrangements for musicians or recorded music for the tournament anthem and procession should be finalized. If demonstrations (karate or otherwise) are planned, they must be organized during this period. The hosting region or dojo is responsible for coordinating demonstrations.

- Children's demonstrations should be held during the children's competition segment.
- Adult demonstrations should occur during the adult segment.

Participants must be organized several weeks in advance to allow adequate rehearsal time.

Medals, Plaques, and Participation Awards

Award orders must be submitted to the vendor early enough to meet production deadlines. Confirm vendor production timelines and ordering cutoffs. The initial medal order should reflect all age groups and events outlined in the ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations booklet. Depending on competitor numbers, events may later be combined or omitted to maintain competitive balance.

General medal guidelines:

- Printed with event name (kata or kumite) and placement (1st, 2nd, 3rd).
- Two third-place medals may be awarded in kumite events.
- If medals are color-coded (gold, silver, bronze), printed placement may not be necessary.
- Do not include division, age, or rank-specific information (for flexibility).
- Date and event location may be added if space permits.

Larger events may also present plaques or trophies for:

- Team events
- Individual special awards
- "Best Competitor" recognitions

It is customary to award plaques or trophies for team events so they may be displayed at the dojo or regional headquarters. Youth Shiais may include participation awards such as medals, certificates, or ribbons.

Best Competitor awards for Male and Female should be presented in the Adult Division. For National events, ISKF Headquarters will purchase these two awards. Depending on event size, “Adult 45+” (Senior) and/or “Youth” Best Competitor awards may also be issued at the discretion of the Tournament Committee or Director.

Best Competitor Criteria:

- Must place 1st in either kata or kumite.
- Must also place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in the other individual category.
- Precedence is given to 1st place kumite over 1st place kata (e.g., 1st kumite & 3rd kata ranks higher than 1st kata & 3rd kumite).
- Team events are not considered.
- Prior tournament wins are not considered.
- Two second-place finishes do not qualify.
- The Tournament Director must submit official results to the head table for final determination.

All medals, trophies, and awards must be received at least one week before the event. Confirm vendor turnaround time for last-minute emergencies. Carefully inspect the entire shipment to verify:

- Correct quantities
- Proper engraving
- No missing items

It is advisable to order a small surplus of extra gold, silver, and bronze medals.

Tournament Materials

A substantial amount of equipment is required to operate rings efficiently. Before purchasing new items, consult regional headquarters or local dojos to borrow available equipment.

Permanent Hardware (per ring, unless noted):

- Bell (1)
- Stopwatch (1 minimum; backup preferred — digital timers or cell phones are acceptable)
- Judge scorecards (5–7 depending on event)
- Flag sets (5; one spare set is recommended)

- Kata cards:
 - Shitei/Heian (2–5)
 - Tekki or Heian Shodan (1)
 - Sentei kata (Jion, Kanku Dai, Bassai Dai, Empi, Hangetsu)
- Red belts (minimum 3; ideally 5–6 in varied sizes)
- Calculators (2–3; cell phones are acceptable)
- Kata cheat sheet (for correct kata spellings)
- Copy of the latest ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations booklet
- Scoreboard (scores, fouls and out-of-bounds tracking)
- Mats

Consumable Supplies:

- Floor tape (red, white, black or blue) Confirm venue restrictions
 - Painter's/masking tape may be required as a base layer
 - Hazard tape recommended for boundary clarity
- Kumite and kata scoring forms (approximately 5 times the anticipated rounds per ring)
- Notepads, pencils, sharpener, pens, permanent markers
- Adhesive name tags (primarily for youth)
- Water (with lids), coffee, snacks for officials
- Bio-hazard kit (recommend one per ring)

Venue Equipment Requirements:

- Raised officials' platform (4–10 seats)
- Ring tables
- Medal/trophy table
- Medical and registration tables
- Chairs per ring:
 - 5–7 judges
 - 4 table staff
 - 1 arbitrator

- Additional reserve judges seating
- Spectator seating (bleachers/chairs)
- Public address system
- Radios for senior staff (with spare batteries)
- Remote hands-free headsets for director/announcer coordination
- Registration area (outside competition area)
- Officials' placards (Chairman, President, Chief Judge, Chief Arbitrator, Tournament Director, Announcer, Medical Staff, etc.)
- Ring designation signage
- Directional signage (parking, entrance, registration, staging)
- Country flag(s) and Japanese national flags – obtain permission from venue to hang flags
- Portraits of Masters Funakoshi, Nakayama, and Okazaki (aligned left to right: Okazaki, Funakoshi, Nakayama) - obtain permission from venue to hang portraits
- Competition mats (if required)
- Club or regional banners

Brackets

After all registrations — including late submissions — are finalized and bracket design begins. ISKF Headquarters can provide competition software developed by East Coast members. The following serves as guidance and does not supersede the ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations booklet.

Bracket organization principles include:

1. Refer to the latest edition of the ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations booklet for age divisions.
2. Divide competitors into divisions: Youth, Collegiate, Young Adult, Adult and Adult 45+ (Seniors).
3. Split Adult divisions by gender; children may be split by gender at higher ages.
4. Divide events by rank.
5. Consider combining brackets when events have two or fewer competitors.
6. Confirm proper age grouping for team events; splitting teams into separate rings may be necessary before moving the final two teams to a single ring for the finals.
7. Use bracket sizes of 2, 4, 8, 16, etc.
8. Assign byes to seeded competitors when possible.

9. Avoid first-match pairings between competitors from the same dojo or region.
10. Avoid double byes in the first round.
11. Use full first and last names (no abbreviations); include dojo, region/country.
12. Collegiate brackets should include school names.
13. For six or more competitors, use a flag round bracket to reduce ties and rematches.
14. With fewer than six kata competitors, they will automatically advance to the point round.

Judges'/Officials' Gift

It is customary to provide judges and officials — who volunteer and often travel significant distances — with a commemorative gift as a token of appreciation. The scale of the event should guide the budget for this item.

Judges' Lunch

Judges require a scheduled lunch break and a prepared meal. A vegetarian option must be available. A la carte meals are preferred, ideally selections that will not stain a gi. Water, coffee, and snacks should be accessible throughout the day. Rather than stopping the entire competition, excuse no more than half the rings at a time for a 20–30 minute lunch break, typically three to four hours after the tournament begins.

Table Staff Accommodations

Ring Managers and assistants are also essential volunteers. If funding permits, they should be included in meal planning. At minimum, they must have access to water, coffee, and snacks throughout the day.

List of Judges

A complete list of judges must be submitted to the Chief Judge prior to the tournament. Required information includes:

- Full name
- Dan rank
- Judge rank
- Region
- Country (if applicable)
- Whether they are competing or not

The Chief Judge will assign rings accordingly.

Training of the Staff

Properly trained staff are essential to a successful tournament. Staff must be thoroughly familiar with procedures, forms, and assigned responsibilities. Conduct mock events prior to the tournament to rehearse workflows. Refer to Appendix I (Table Staff Manual) for detailed ring procedures.

All staff members should wear a distinctively colored tournament T-shirt for easy identification.

Staff must also be trained on the Emergency Action Plan and review the ISKF Pre-Tournament First Aid/Safety Checklist. This briefing should include medical personnel. Planning must address:

- Role and location of medical staff
- Emergency communication protocols
- Emergency transport procedures and contact methods
- Available emergency equipment and its location
- Location of nearby medical facilities
- Potential complications (weather, crowd flow, traffic)

Venue staff should be consulted about local emergency procedures and facility-specific information.

Two Weeks Prior to the Event

By the final two weeks before the tournament, most planning and preparation should be complete. This period focuses on finalizing schedules, confirming staff and participants, and ensuring all materials are ready.

Event Schedule

Once brackets are finalized, the order of events can be set. The schedule should be designed to maintain a smooth flow and maximize efficient use of personnel. Following a prescribed line of events is strongly recommended to minimize downtime:

- Kata events are always scheduled before kumite events within each division.
- Team kata should be the first event in a division (Adult 45+, Youth, Collegiate, Adult).
- Team kumite should conclude the division.
- Adult 45+ events run first, as many senior competitors serve as judges later in the day. This should be followed sequentially by youth competition, adult kyu ranks, brown belt divisions, collegiate competition, young adults and finally adult black belt events.
- Demonstrations should generally be scheduled only on the final day of a two-day tournament. Ideally, they occur at a natural break to allow competition to resume quickly and smoothly.
- For one-day tournaments, running all events through to the finals allows medals to be awarded at the end, saving time. In two-day tournaments, certain finals are held on the second day, with awards distributed at the end of each event.
- Event packets containing ladders and medals should be prepared and given to the Ring Manager at the start of each event. If finals occur the following day, only ladders need to be included.
- Events concluding on day one of a two-day event (youth, collegiate kyu, adult kyu, young adult, and adult 45+ kyu divisions) should include medals in the event envelopes with the brackets.

Table Packets

Late or missed entries may require bracket adjustments. Only the Tournament Director or their authorized agent may modify brackets. Each table packet should contain all materials needed to run the event:

- Minimum of three copies of brackets (six if splitting is possible).
- Medals, plaques, and awards.
- Any forms or paperwork not already included in the table binders/folders.

Table Binders/Folders

Each ring should have a dedicated binder/folder containing all instructions, forms, and reference materials for easy access throughout the day. Items should include:

- Task lists and instructions for each staff member.
- All kata and kumite forms (team and individual) for the event.
- Names and spellings of kata for reference.
- Sufficient forms for three staff members to ensure continuity without running out.

Late Recruitment

If participation is low, it is worthwhile to recruit additional participants even after the deadline. Redoing brackets is justified to ensure a full, successful event.

- The number of judges affects the number of operating rings. Additional ranked or unranked judges may be needed if staffing is insufficient.
- Decisions regarding additional judges should be made in consultation with the Chief Judge, who has final authority.
- A late fee may be imposed upon those competitors who do not register by the posted deadline. Timeliness in registering is critical to ensure that all events are scheduled and competitors are placed onto the ladders.

Review Cycle

Conducting a review cycle with staff 1–2 weeks prior is critical to ensure nothing is overlooked.

- Schedule at least two mock events with students or staff using the Table Staff appendix to practice running events. This ensures all staff members understand their roles and responsibilities on tournament day.

The Day Prior to the Event

Registration Check-In

If possible, display the event ladders during registration. This can help resolve potential issues before the tournament begins. For one-day tournaments, registration must occur early in the morning before contests start. For two-day tournaments, registration should occur one or two evenings before the event. Coordinate with the hotel to use announcements (lobby screens, billboards, etc.) to inform participants of event locations and times throughout the schedule.

During registration, it is recommended to distribute:

- Programs, t-shirts, and other sale items (e.g., mitts, mouthpieces).
- Detailed schedules of events before, during, and after the tournament.
- Maps to local restaurants, attractions, and other points of interest.
- Precise times and locations for meetings, exams, luncheons, and other official events.

Training/Warm-Up Area

Provide a designated area for competitors to warm up or train prior to and during the tournament. Include this information in the registration materials.

Venue Set-Up

Set up the facility as early as possible, preferably the night before the tournament. This includes rings, tables, chairs, and/or bleachers, and any other necessary equipment. Best practices include:

- Prepare a scale floor plan for the setup crew.
- Arrange tables and chairs to accommodate the opening bow-in ceremony.
- Place the officials' table away from traffic but with a clear view of all rings. Only designated officials may occupy this area.
- Maintain ample space for judges, staff, and competitors, with a minimum two-meter safety zone between rings. Additional spacing is recommended to prevent crowding.
- Keep spectators on the perimeter of the venue and ensure staff tables are within, not along, the outer edges of the competition area.
- Designate a medical table with adequate equipment, positioned for quick access to all rings.
- Hang flags, master's portraits, banners, and other décor in appropriate locations. Include a photo area with the event banner, if space allows.
- Conduct a walk-through after setup to identify and correct safety hazards, tripping hazards, blocked exits, fire risks, or unstable platforms. Test the audio system before the event.

Tournament Office

An on-site office equipped with a computer and printer/copier is recommended. This allows the staff to produce signs, print documents, or handle other administrative tasks as needed during the tournament.

Meetings, Exams, and Clinics (National Tournaments)

- For national tournaments, events typically begin on Friday, elimination rounds on Saturday and finals on Sunday. Officials and prospective dan or judge examinees often arrive on Thursday. Proper planning includes allocating rooms for meetings, clinics, and examinations. Identify a point of contact for meetings and exams, reviewing locations and plans, and assigning staff to support these events.

Meetings – Friday meetings may include:

- **National Collegiate Meeting** at 9:00 a.m.
- **National Board of Directors Meeting** at 10:00 a.m., concluding at noon.
- Coffee and light pastries for morning meeting attendees.
- A complimentary lunch following the board meeting.

Judge's Exams and Clinics – Afternoon events may include:

- **Written exam** for judges at 1:00 p.m.
- **Judge's clinic** reviewing tournament rules and procedures.
- **Practical exam** for judges, with at least one ring set up for testing. Ensure all necessary equipment is available.

Dan Exams – Conducted after judge exams, with adequate seating, tables, supplies, and medical support.

Exam Preparation – The tournament committee is responsible for:

- Organizing lists of examinees for all dan and judges' exams.
- Providing several copies of exam forms, obtained from ISKF headquarters.

Clinics – Offer instructional classes for participants, trainees, instructors, and members, which may also generate additional income. Recommendations include:

- Divide classes into beginner, advanced (brown and black belt), and instructor categories.
- Assign instructors at least a week prior to the tournament to allow adequate preparation.
- Classes are typically taught by Shihankai or ISKF Technical Committee members.

Allocate space for team and individual training on Friday evening, if venue permits.

Tournament Day

Table Supplies

Ensure each table is stocked with essential materials, including:

- Scrap paper, pencils, and water for staff and judges.
- Extra scoring sheets (from the ring binders/folders prepared in advance).
- Timers, a bell, and scoring placards, if available.

Posting the Brackets

Posting brackets prior to the tournament allows competitors to verify matchups and correct any errors (age, gender, name typos). Brackets may be displayed outside the venue or in any location accessible to competitors. This step is recommended but not mandatory.

Ring Assignments

Assigning all groups to predetermined rings can slow the event. Best practices include:

- Assign only the first events to specific rings; subsequent events can be assigned as rings become available.
- Schedule kata team events before individual kata to avoid delays.
- Begin the tournament with the Adult 45+ (Senior) Division.
- As a group nears completion, the Staging Manager or assistant should prepare the next group for the ring.

Staging Area Function

A staging area near the competition site accelerates event flow. Procedures include:

- The Tournament Announcer should use the PA system to notify competitors of upcoming events and when to report to staging.
- Conduct an initial roll call and escort competitors to their assigned ring.
- For junior divisions, attach name tags to competitors' backs during staging.

Competitor Roll Call

Once a group enters the ring, an assigned staff member with the bracket in hand should:

- Confirm all competitors are present for a final headcount.
- Perform this procedure for every kata and kumite group.

- Refer to Appendix I for detailed roll-call procedures.

Announcing Winners, Distributing Medals, and Documenting Results

- If competitors participate in both kata and kumite, award medals after both events are completed.
- A table staff member should provide medals to the referee once contestants and judges are lined up, before bowing out.
- Medals should be awarded in order: kata first, then kumite; 3rd place, 2nd place, then 1st place.
- Staff should deliver a copy of results to the announcer for PA reading.
- Place a complete results copy back in the event envelope and deliver immediately to the Tournament Director or assistant.
- Send documented results to the regional or ISKF Headquarters.
- Reminder: Awards should be presented immediately after each event. Awards for Best Competitors are presented at the end of the tournament.

Judges' Meeting

Post the time and location at registration. Light refreshments should be provided for attendees.

Judges'/Staff Lunch

Dismiss judges and staff about 3–4 hours into competition for a 20–30 minute break. Do not dismiss more than half the rings simultaneously to maintain pace and energy of the competition.

Opening Ceremonies and Anthems

- The ISKF can provide CDs or other sources for national anthems (American and Japanese).
- Elimination day ceremonies: line up, bow in, head officials introduction, and Tournament Director instructions for the day's events.
- Finals day ceremonies (two-day event): full opening with competitor march-in, color guard (if available), anthems, introductions, contestant oath, and demonstrations.

Splitting Brackets

- Split brackets to expedite events by dividing the ladder into top and bottom halves and sending each half to separate rings.
- For one-day events, the two finalists from each ring compete in a central ring.
- For two-day events, competitors advance to the next-day finals, with no further competition that day.

Spectator Management

- Keep spectators away from competition areas; tape off restricted zones as needed.
- Report unresolved disturbances to the Tournament Director immediately.

Judges' Area

- Provide additional chairs near the ring for extra judges.
- For two-day events, designate a seating area for all judges during finals.

Closing Ceremonies

- All judges and competitors line up for a formal bow-out.
- Present trophies for Best Competitors.
- Head official provides a brief farewell to conclude the event.

Post-Tournament Days

Venue Tear Down

Careful attention is required when dismantling the tournament venue. Key considerations include:

- Remove tape from floors or marked areas carefully to avoid surface damage.
- Dispose of all trash and debris left behind.
- Break down tables, chairs, mats and other equipment as required by the venue.
- Ensure the space is left in good condition.

Tournament Results

Maintain accurate and accessible results.

- Keeping two sets of results is recommended:
 - The original copies are maintained by the hosting region or country for at least year.
 - A second set is saved electronically for future reference.
- Submit a digital copy of the results to ISKF headquarters within one to two weeks after the event, to be uploaded to the ISKF's website.
- Include the dojo (Regional Tournament), region (National Tournament) or country (International Tournament) of each participant, if known, when announcing results at banquets or post-competition ceremonies.

Financial Report

A detailed financial report should be prepared and submitted to the Hosting Organization:

- Determine reimbursements, payments, and any required follow-up with the organization.
- Provide a report for future tournaments and guidance for subsequent tournament directors.

Post-Tournament Report (Warm Wash)

The Tournament Committee should meet and discuss the following points before completing the Tournament Directors [Report Form](#), which is provided at the end of this manual.

- The overall success of the event
- Any problems or challenges encountered
- Financial results
- Planning for the future

The completed form should then be sent to ISKF Headquarters.

Appendix I

Table Staff Manual

Composition and Function of the Table Staff for ISKF Tournaments

I. Composition

A properly trained Table Staff is essential for efficient management of the competitors. Staff members should be selected and trained in advance of the tournament.

A complete Table Staff should consist of the following:

- One (1) Ring Manager
- One (1) Ring Manager's Assistant
- One (1) Scorekeeper
- One (1) Announcer
- One (1) Timekeeper
- Two (2) Wranglers / Youth Ring Assistants

Depending on the size and scope of the event, certain duties may be performed by the same individual. Additional table workers are recommended in order to give breaks.

II. Duties and Responsibilities

A. Ring Manager

The Ring Manager is the primary authority at their ring table and the only Table Staff member authorized to communicate directly with the Referee or Arbitrator.

The Ring Manager shall:

- Oversee the processing and progression of competitors through the bracket (ladder).
 - Ensure all equipment and required paperwork are present prior to the start of competition.
 - Assign competitors as red and white sides during check-in.
 - Verify that competitors are ready to begin before notifying the Referee.
 - Ensure no changes are made to official brackets without approval of the Tournament Director.
-

B. Ring Manager's Assistant

The Ring Manager's Assistant shall support the Ring Manager and perform duties as assigned. Responsibilities may include:

- Timekeeping during kumite
- Assisting with score recording
- Managing paperwork
- Making announcements
- Fill any vacancies at the table

C. Announcer

The Announcer is responsible for clearly and audibly conducting all ring announcements.

Duties include:

- Calling competitors to the ring
- Announcing competitors "on deck"
- Announcing individual and total kata scores (point rounds)
- Announcing winners
- Repeating official referee decisions in English when necessary

When calling competitors to the ring, their name is stated first, followed by side designation.

Example:

"Next up: [Name], Red Side; [Name], White Side.

On deck: [Name], Red Side; [Name], White Side."

The first competitor announced is always Red Side. The second competitor announced is always White Side.

D. Scorekeeper

For larger tournaments, a separate Scorekeeper may be appointed at the discretion of the Ring Manager.

The Scorekeeper shall update the brackets accordingly:

- Accurately record all scores
- Circle the winner's name upon official decision

- Advance the winner correctly
 - Maintain accurate and legible tournament documentation
-

E. Timekeeper

During timed events (kumite), the Timekeeper shall:

- Maintain the official match time, which is 2 minutes
- Stop the clock only upon the Referee's command of "Jikan" or "Time"
- Resume time only when instructed by the Referee

The Timekeeper should not independently stop or start the clock.

F. Wrangler / Youth Ring Assistant

Wranglers/Youth Ring Assistants are required for youth competitors and may be used in other divisions when advisable.

Prior to the start of competition, the Ring Manager shall assign:

- One Wrangler/Youth Ring Assistant to the Red Side
- One Wrangler/Youth Ring Assistant to the White Side

Wranglers/Youth Ring Assistants shall:

- Maintain discipline and decorum among competitors
 - Ensure competitors are properly lined up and prepared (to include mouth pieces and mitts for kumite events)
 - Escort competitors into position when called
-

III. Ring Function and Procedures

A. Pre-Event Preparation

Upon assignment to a ring, the Ring Manager shall:

1. Confirm that all required equipment and paperwork are present.
2. Conduct competitor check-in using the official bracket (ladder).
3. Confirm that kumite competitors have hand mitts and a mouth piece
4. Assign competitors to Red or White side.

5. Note absent competitors directly on the bracket.
6. Notify the Tournament Announcer to call any missing competitor.

If a competitor is not present when called, their match will be forfeited.

If a competitor is present but assigned to another ring, the Staging Manager will assist the competitor. No bracket modifications shall be made without authorization.

B. Commencement of Competition

Once competitors are prepared, the Ring Manager shall inform the Referee that the ring is ready.

At the Referee's discretion:

- Officials and competitors shall line up.
- The formal bow-in shall be conducted.

The Announcer will then call the first two competitors.

C. Match Completion and Winner Advancement

Upon completion of a match, the Referee shall indicate the winner by raising the appropriate flag and declaring:

- "Aka no kachi" (Red Side Winner), or
- "Shiro no kachi" (White Side Winner).

The decision can be repeated in English by the announcer.

Announcer:

"Winner is Red Side" or "Winner is White Side. Winner please report to the table."

If a discrepancy occurs between the flags and the Referee's decision, the Arbitrator should immediately stop the proceedings and correct the decision before continuing.

If there is a bye, the Announcer will say "Bye" in place of the absent competitor's name. The Referee will immediately declare the present competitor the winner.

D. Post-Match Procedure

After the winner is officially determined, Table Staff shall proceed in the following order:

1. Circle the winner's name.
2. Announce the winning side.

3. Announce the next competitors.
4. Announce competitors on deck.
5. Advance the winner to the next bracket position.

This order shall be strictly followed to prevent bracket errors.

EVENTS

I. Order of Events

The general order of the events will include:

- Kata (Individual and Team)
- Kumite (Individual and Team)

II. Division Categories

Divisions will include:

- Youth
- Collegiate
- Young Adult
- Adult
- Adult 45+ (Senior)

INDIVIDUAL KATA

I. Types of Rounds

Individual Kata competition shall consist of the following round types:

- Shitei (Flag Round)
- Sentei (Flag Round)
- Tokui (Individual Point Round)

At the beginning of each round, the Announcer shall clearly state the type of round (Shitei, Sentei or Tokui) being conducted. The official tournament bracket (ladder) should indicate at the top of each division the specific round being administered.

II. Finals Procedures for Kata

A. One-Day Tournament Format

When elimination rounds and finals are conducted on the same day within a single ring, elimination scores may be used to seed finalists.

Order of performance is determined as follows:

- Lowest total elimination score performs first.
 - Highest total elimination score performs last.
 - Remaining competitors perform in ascending order of total score.
-

B. Two-Day or Multi-Ring Tournament Format

When eliminations occur:

- In multiple rings; or
- Across two (2) separate days;

Scores from separate rings will not be compared for seeding purposes.

Finalists will determine their order of performance by drawing numbers. The kata ladder is completed only after the drawing has occurred.

All first-day records will be secured and delivered to the Tournament Director or their designee.

III. Point Round Scoring Procedure

Following each performance:

1. The Referee and Judges will simultaneously display their scores.
2. The Announcer begins by announcing the Referee's score first, then proceeds clockwise around the ring, indicating each score by facing each judge and flexing and extending the arm using a vertical shuto as the score is read.
3. A brief pause should occur between each score to ensure accurate recording.

The highest and lowest scores are discarded.

The remaining scores are independently totaled by:

- The Ring Manager or their designee; and
- The Assistant Ring Manager or designated Scorekeeper.
- It is common practice for the arbitrator to also add the score.

If both totals agree, the score is declared official.

If the totals do not agree, the scores are recalculated until they do agree.

The final total score is then announced.

IV. Tie-Breaking Procedures

If a tie exists at the conclusion of a Point Round, the Ring Manager will notify the Referee and the competitors. Tie-breaking is conducted in accordance with current ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations.

The following Tie-Breaker Protocol shall apply:

Protocol 1:

Each tied competitor will perform a different kata. Only the new scores shall be compared.

Protocol 2:

If a tie remains, the previously discarded lowest score from the second kata shall be added to each competitor's total.

Protocol 3:

If a tie remains, the previously discarded highest score from the second kata will be added.

Protocol 4:

If a tie remains, competitors will perform a third kata, which may be either a new kata or the original individual kata. Protocols 2 and 3 are then repeated as necessary.

Tie-breaking scores will determine only the tied placement and do not alter higher placements previously established.

V. Recording of Results

Upon completion of competition and resolution of all ties, the Ring Manager will record final placements.

The official division record shall include:

- Event name
- Names of winners
- Dojo, regional or national affiliation of winners

Each division shall announce awards in the following order:

- First; One (1) or (2) Third Place Awards
- Second; One (1) Second Place Award

- Third; One (1) First Place award (last award)
-

TEAM KATA

I. Order of Competition

Team Captains will report to the Ring Manager for check-in prior to the event.

When multiple rings are used in preceding rounds, teams will determine order of performance by drawing numbers.

When a single ring was used in preceding rounds, order of performance ascends from lowest to highest scores.

The Ring Manager will:

- Record team names in proper order on the official scoring sheet.
- Inform the Referee of the total number of teams.

II. Scoring and Tie-Breaking

Scoring procedures for Team Kata are identical to those used in Individual Kata Point Rounds.

All announcements should reference team names rather than individual names.

All tie-breaking protocols established for Individual Kata will apply equally to Team Kata.

INDIVIDUAL KUMITE

I. Competition Format

Individual Kumite competition will use a single-elimination bracket format until the finalists remain.

If finals are conducted on the same day, the Announcer will clearly announce the final matches accordingly.

In a two-day tournament format, the final match is conducted on the second day as published in the schedule.

II. Recording Kumite Results

Upon conclusion of the final match, the Ring Manager will record final placements on the official bracket (ladder).

The official division record will include:

- Event name
- Names of winners
- Dojo, regional or national affiliation of winners

The Tournament Director may authorize either one or two Third Place awards.

TEAM KUMITE

I. Pre-Match Procedures

Before beginning the Team Kumite event, Captains will submit their team's fighting order to the Ring Manager.

Team Captains may alter the fighting order at the beginning of each Team Kumite event, subject to applicable tournament rules.

The Ring Manager will:

- Transfer competitor names to the official scoring sheet;
- Assign designation of Red (Aka) and White (Shiro) sides;
- Notify the Referee when competitors are ready to begin.

II. Match Announcements

All announcements will begin with the Red (Aka) side.

- The first individual match is announced by saying: "First up."
- All subsequent matches are announced by saying: "Next up."
- Competitors "on deck" are not announced in Team Kumite competition.

III. Determination of Winner

The winning team is determined by the total number of individual match victories.

The Referee may confirm match totals with the Ring Manager or designated Scorekeeper prior to announcing the official result.

If a tie exists at the conclusion of regulation matches:

- The Arbitrator will determine the appropriate tie-breaking procedure in accordance with current ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations - Section 3.02 (c)(i).

- The final team result shall be decided on the basis of the number of individual winners. However, when the number of winners from the two teams is the same, the team which has scored more ippon or quality of wins shall be the winning team. In case both teams are equal, the match shall be decided on the basis of, and in the order of “awase waza,” and decision-win. Victories won through a foul or disqualification of the opponent shall be counted as ippon. When a team ties with the opposing team under these methods of decision as mentioned above, the decision shall be made on the basis of the results of an extra match conducted between the representatives of the contending teams.
- The extra match shall be fought between one chosen representative from each team, repeatedly and successively, until a winner is established. However, in case the number of extra matches is extended beyond two, the representative from each team shall be replaced by another member of each team.
- Each Team Captain will designate one (1) competitor to participate in a tie-breaking match.
- The designated competitors’ names will be recorded on the scoring sheet and clearly identified as “Tie Breaker”.

TIMEKEEPER — FREE SPARRING MATCHES

Each free-sparring match will be two (2) minutes in duration.

There is no time limit for:

- Basic One-Step Sparring; or
- Semi-Free Sparring

I. Match Time Procedures

The following procedures will apply:

Start of Match

The Referee brings the competitors into the ring and declares:

“Shobu Ippon” followed by “Hajime.”

Upon the command “Hajime,” the Timekeeper immediately starts the stopwatch at two minutes (02:00).

Thirty (30) Seconds Remaining

When thirty (30) seconds remain, the Timekeeper will clearly announce:

“Thirty seconds!”

The Referee then declares, “Atoshi Baraku.”

Expiration of Time

At the completion of two (2) minutes, the Timekeeper clearly and audibly announces:

“TIME!”

Conclusion of Match

The Timekeeper will ring the bell continuously until the Referee commands, “Yame.”

II. Stoppage of Time

Once the match has begun, the stopwatch will only be stopped when:

- The Referee commands “Jikan”
- The Referee signals a time-out by forming a “T” with both hands
- A competitor is injured or down and an assessment must be made

Upon the Referee’s command “Tsuzukete Hajime” to resume the match, the Timekeeper immediately restarts the stopwatch.

The Timekeeper should not independently stop or restart the clock.

CLERICAL ERRORS

If a clerical or recording error is discovered that may influence the outcome of an event, the Ring Manager will immediately notify the Arbitrator.

The matter will be resolved in accordance with current ISKF Tournament Rules and Regulations prior to continuation of competition.

POST-EVENT PROCEDURES

Upon completion of all assigned divisions, the Ring Manager will:

1. Collect all score sheets, brackets, and related documentation.
2. Review all materials for accuracy, completeness, and proper labeling.
3. Ensure all tie-breaking procedures and final placements are properly recorded.

The Ring Manager will then follow the instructions of the Tournament Director regarding submission, storage, or distribution of official records.



Tournament Director's Report Form

To: ISKF Headquarters

From: _____, Tournament Director

Date	Event
------	-------

The following are statistics from our event:

Number of judges: _____

Number of competitors: _____

Number of T-shirt sales: _____

Number of seminar attendees: _____

Number of banquet attendees: _____

Total hotel room-nights sold: _____

Tournament Financials:

The event made a profit ☐

The event broke even ☐

The event had a loss ☐

What went well at the tournament:

What challenges were encountered?

Recommendations or Comments:
