

# TAMESHIWARI

## (Test-Breaking)

# Official Competition Rules

**Version:** 2024-10D

This version replaces Version 2024-10C

**Last revised:** October 2024.

The rules of Tameshiwari (Breaking) competition for all tournaments, matches, and competitions shall be as stated herein.

These rules have been developed by Goju Karate and are always located here: (<https://GOJUKARATE.COM/tameshiwari-rules>). The First Version of these rules was published on August 3, 2012. They have been in constant use since October 2014. This version was published on October 29, 2024. This version replaces all other versions. It is designated Version 2024-10D.

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### Section 1: COMPETITION RULES

These rules have been adopted as the official rules of the Karatedō Kizuna Association (KKA) for all international, national, and local competitions in tameshiwari. They are also the official rules of the tameshiwari competition of the New York Karatedō International Championship.

These rules follow the general form of competition rules for the World Karate Federation (WKF) and the US Olympic Committee (USOC) National Karate-do Federation (NKF) — however, these rules are specific to competition in Tameshiwari and where there is a conflict between these rules, and the rules for Kata, Kumite, or Kobudo competition of either the WKF or NKF, these rules shall supersede them.

Whenever a specific rule specified herein is in conflict with a more general rule, the specific rule takes precedence. Exceptions to these rules may be made only with the prior approval of the Tournament Referee Committee for special circumstances attendant to a particular event, tournament, match or competition. In that event, however, the rules modifications shall be made known to all competitors prior to registration, or if made after registration, in a timely manner.

Ultimately, the Tournament Director makes the irrevocable final determination regarding the implementation, enforcement, and interpretation of these rules. However, he may appoint as many Chief Referees, Referees, Scorekeepers, Timekeepers, and other Tournament Officials as may be required to perform his duties.

## Section 2: COMPETITOR CATEGORIES

Tameshiwari competition may be divided into appropriate categories or divisions based upon age, gender and experience.

At a minimum, all competitions must be divided into a male and female division, and if Teen competitors are present, into a Teen Division and an Adults Division.

Teen competitors are defined as boys or girls who have reached a minimum age of 15 on the day of competition, and who are not 18 years of age on the day of competition. The Tournament Director may authorize exceptions to this rule and reclassify a competitor as eligible (in the case of a competitor outside the age range of 15-18) or ineligible, as the case may be. As stated above, there must be a Male Teen Division and a Female Teen Division.

The Adults Division shall consist of competitors who have reached the age of 18 or more on the day of competition. As stated above, there must be a Male Adults Division and a Female Adults Division.

Beyond the above categories, and at the decision of the Tournament Director, categories that also include weight ranges, rank ranges, and age ranges may be specified. For instance, there may be a Teens 15 year of age division in both male and female categories, or there may be an Adults Division Seniors for competitors above the age of 50 (again, in both male and female categories). However, these divisions and categories are not required for a sanctioned tournament that conforms to these rules.

The ultimate placement of karateka athletes in the correct rank, age, and weight ranges is the responsibility of both the athletes, their instructors, and the Tournament Director and the Tournament Referees. Any dispute arising out of the classification of competitors shall follow the dispute resolution procedure as outlined in these rules.

## Section 3: APPROVED COMPETITION MATERIALS

All materials used in a sanctioned tournament must be either provided by the Tournament or be inspected and marked via an identifying ink stamp by Referees designated by the Tournament Director.

The use of any material that does not conform to the specifications in this section are expressly prohibited, as is the use of any material provided by competitors that isn't inspected and marked by tournament Referees. The violation of this provision will result in disqualification from

competition, or if a competitor has already competed, any results from such a disqualified competitor shall be discarded as if that competitor had never competed.

The suitability of any materials used in a sanctioned tournament shall be determined entirely by Referees designated by the Tournament Director. Their decision regarding suitability of materials is final. While Referees are encouraged to communicate the reasons for a decision to disqualify materials, they are not required to do so.

For all competitors: spacers used in any event shall conform to the following specification:

They shall be 1/2 inch by 3/4 inch or 1/2 inch by 7/16 inch in height and width.

They shall be 10 inches in length.

They shall be composed of any species of pine wood or a similar wood.

**NOTE THAT SPACERS MAY BE STACKED IN ANY ORIENTATION DESIRED BY COMPETITORS TO ACHIEVE EITHER A 1/2 INCH GAP or a 3/4 INCH (OR 7/16 INCH) GAP BETWEEN BOARDS.**

For TEEN COMPETITORS: boards used in any event shall conform to the following specification:

They shall be 12 inches in length and 10 inches in width.

They shall be 1/2 inch in height (this is the actual measured height; this is also referred to as “3/4 inch dimensional”)

They shall be composed of #2 Eastern White Pine wood, or the equivalent.

They may not have been treated with any chemical or foreign substance (other than being marked by Tournament Referees after inspection). In addition, they may not have been exposed to heat or cold in excess of any standard shipping temperature changes.

For ADULT COMPETITORS: boards used in any event shall conform to the following specification:

They shall be 12 inches in length and 10 inches in width.

They shall be 3/4 inch in height (this is the actual measured height; this is also referred to as “one inch dimensional”)

They shall be composed of #2 Eastern White Pine wood, or the equivalent.

They may not have been treated with any chemical or foreign substance (other than being marked by Tournament Referees after inspection). In addition, they may not have been exposed to heat or cold in excess of any standard shipping temperature changes.

Cinder blocks are used as a support mechanism for most rounds in a Tameshiwari tournament. When used, they shall be of the following specification:

They shall be composed of poured concrete.

They shall possess two hollow areas, equal in size.

They shall be 16 inches in height, and 8 inches in width and 8 inches in depth.

#### Section 4: APPROVED COMPETITOR UNIFORMS AND DRESS

All competitors shall conform to the following uniform:

Standard white karate gi consisting of a gi jacket, gi pants, and rank belt. The gi may be of any manufacture and of any weight desired by the competitor.

The gi shall display appropriate dojo affiliation patches in the chest area and on one or more shoulders, if applicable to the dojo that the competitor is affiliated. If the competitor is a member of the USOC NKF, then the competitor may wear a USOC-approved patch on his or her right shoulder. If the competitor is a member of another country-specific internationally recognized karatedō organization, then the competitor may wear a similarly supplied patch on his or her right shoulder.

Manufacturer's logos may be displayed provided that they are (a) discrete; (b) pertain solely to the manufacturer of the gi; (c) are embroidered onto the gi as shipped from the manufacturer and have not been added after manufacture.

No other patches, advertising materials, or other symbols may be displayed or worn on any part of the uniform, including but not limited to the back of the uniform.

In the event that a competitor has his or her name (in characters or letters) embroidered on their gi jacket hem or on their pants, such name embroidery shall be permitted provided that it is of reasonable size, color, and substance – such determination of suitability shall be solely at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

In the event that the competitor is affiliated with a dojo that utilizes a black gi instead of a white gi, a black gi may be worn provided that (a) it conforms to all other provisions of this section; and (b) prior permission to do so has been received in writing from the Tournament Director or his representatives.

In addition to the above, the following provisions regarding dress shall be followed:

No shoe, sock, or other foot covering shall be worn, excepting if: (a) the foot covering partially covers the foot or ankle area, and is medical in nature; (b) the foot is not in any way involved in the break being performed by the competitor.

No competitor may wear any covering, including tape of any kind, on any striking surface used in any proposed break. In addition, no tape, bandage, or other method of external support is allowed on any joint (ankle, wrist, knee, hip) adjacent to a breaking surface.

## Section 5: COMPETITION AREA

Breaking shall occur in the event space as designated by Tournament Officials.

At the discretion of the Tournament Director, competition events may be divided into groups if the competition area isn't large enough to accommodate the entire competition group at one time. In the event that this occurs, competitors shall be grouped by a random draw conducted at the beginning of each round.

Prior to breaking, competitors shall have a minimum amount of time to setup their breaks. This time shall be five minutes for qualifying rounds or no-spacer traditional break events; ten minutes for all other traditional breaking events; and twelve minutes to setup for creative break rounds.

At the end of the time allotted, competitors shall stand in their designated area, but may not have any contact with the boards to be broken or any other support which is part of the break, and await instructions from the Chief Referee for the round.

Only competitors are allowed in the competition area. All competitors are permitted one assistant to setup, even if the assistant is not holding material during a break. However, any assistants not part of the break (for holding) must leave the competition area once the setup time period is over or at the command of the Chief Referee. In the case of creative break rounds, holders are permitted to remain in the competition area in order to perform their roles as holders, but they may also not have contact with any materials or support apparatus other than materials that they will hold for the break.

Only Referees, Timekeepers, and Scorekeepers are permitted in the competition area. They shall observe the tournament rules and regulations, as well as the dress code, specified by the Tournament Director.

## Section 6: TYPES OF ROUNDS

There are four types of rounds in a sanctioned tournament. The first three types, listed below as (a) Qualifying/Seiken-No-Spacers, (b) Traditional Break, and (c) Creative Break are required for any sanctioned traditional tournament.

The fourth type listed below in this section, the Challenge round, is optional, and may be omitted if there are no competitors eligible in this round. However, as the Challenge round is an excellent demonstration and exposition of true karatedō, holding this round is strongly encouraged.

#### A. Qualifying Round (or alternatively: Seiken with no spacers round).

This round is the only type of round that may have two formats.

The break in this round consists of regulation boards stacked one upon another, and supported by two standard cinder blocks. No spacers are permitted and in the event that this round is a qualifying round, only seiken may be used as a weapon.

If this round is used as a qualifier, no scoring is recorded other than success or failure.

If this round is a competition round, the round is scored as specified below in the rules. Only seiken may be used as a weapon.

If this round is a qualifying round, all Teen Division competitors are required to break one board; Adult Division Males are required to break two boards; and Adult Division Females are required to break one board.

This round is usually the first round in any tournament.

#### B. Traditional Break

This round requires the use of spacers between boards. Competitors may stack as many boards as they wish, using regulation boards and spacers, and stacking the boards on two standard cinder blocks.

Any weapon may be used in this break; however, the choice of weapon does not effect the score.

This round is usually the second round in any tournament.

#### C. Creative Break

This round permits any configuration of boards, and the use of up to three holders holding any configuration of boards and spacers in any manner and, if desired, the use of one set of standard cinder blocks.

This round is usually the third and last round in a tournament. Beginning with version 2024-10C of these rules, the Creative Break round is required to be present in any traditional tournament conducted under these rules.

The overall design of the break must conform to the rules in this section. The Tournament Director may grant exceptions to these rules, but competitors are responsible for obtaining exceptions prior to the competition.

No design shall use or propose an action that may put fellow competitors or spectators at risk. Care must be taken to minimize the risk of injury to holders and the competitor.

No design shall employ the use of combustible or explosive materials.

In the event that boards are broken “in the air”, each holder and the competitor is permitted to launch boards, but each may only launch boards once. There is no limit on the number of boards launched.

In the event that the distance to the board being broken is a characteristic of the break, the referee is the sole judge as to whether that distance was maintained as part of the break. This decision may not be contested, protested, or appealed. The judgement of the referee in that round is final.

A competitor may propose a break that has up to five individual separate breaks, although only one break is required. No more than one break may be done on cinder blocks.

Spacers may be used for all or some of the breaks.

No material may be taped together, or otherwise held together, except by being held by an assistant during a break.

No material that is involved in a break may be padded or taped, nor may a cover be placed over material to lessen impact or contact damage to the competitor.

#### D. Challenge Round

This round is the only type of round that excludes participation by competitors in any other type of round.

Qualification for participation in this round is made solely at the discretion, and by the judgement of, the Tournament Director. Any decisions by the Tournament Director regarding the suitability or qualification of a competitor in this round is final.

The break in this round consists of a number of regulation boards stacked one upon another, and supported by two standard cinder blocks.

The type of the board used is exactly equal to the boards used by a similarly-aged competitor in any other round; i.e., adult boards are used in this round if the competitor is an adult and teen boards are used in this round if the competitor is a teen.

In general, the number of boards permitted in the break is equal to one board. However, at the discretion of the Tournament Director, and upon request of the competitor, more than one board may be used. In the case of more than one board being authorized for use by the Tournament Director, the competitor may choose to use spacers between boards, but is not required to do so. Any decision regarding the number of boards to be used is entirely at the discretion of the Tournament Director and his decision is final.

Any weapon of the hand, foot, or leg may be used in the break.

A competitor in this division is permitted up to and including five attempts to break the board(s) that he or she has put up. If the competitor is successful in breaking the boards put up, the round shall be scored as "SUCCESS" – this is regardless of the number of boards broken, but if more than one board is put up, all the boards must be broken in order to achieve this score. In the event that one or more of the boards put up is not broken, then the round shall be scored as "FAIL".

## Section 7: COMPETITION SEQUENCE

A. At the start of competition, the Chief Referee shall instruct competitors as to whether they will break simultaneously, or in smaller groups, or individually.

B. The referee(s) shall examine the break setup for conformance to all rules. Successful conformance with rules shall be announced.

C. In the event of a traditional qualifying break, traditional no-spacer break, or a traditional breaking round, the total number of boards shall be noted and recorded for each competitor.

The total number of boards shall be announced at each station.

In the event of a creative break round, the setup and action of the break shall be inspected and confirmed, and the total number of boards shall be recorded.

In the event of a creative break round, all scores for creativity, difficulties, weapon-type, etc. shall be computed and recorded. No intermediate scores of any kind shall be announced, other than the total number of boards.

D. The Chief Referee shall instruct the timekeeper to prepare the start signal.

E. The start signal shall sound.

Competitors have 120 seconds from the start signal to begin their break and complete it. In the event the competitor does not make contact with a breaking target surface within that 120 seconds, he or she shall be disqualified and the score set to zero.

Once the 120 second time period has elapsed, the finish signal shall sound. Once the signal has sounded, competitor(s) must step back and stand in fudo dachi and await final scoring based on break success. Failure to do so shall result in a success score of zero.

F. Once the finish signal has sounded, and all competitors have stepped back, the Referees will inspect each break and note its success, and if all boards haven't been broken, the total number of boards broken.



G. At the conclusion of all breaks, the final scores will be announced. The winner, and if the Tournament Director indicates, the second and third place scores, will be announced.

## Section 8: SCORING

### A. Qualifying Round (or alternatively: Seiken with no spacers round).

If this round is used as a Qualifying Round, the only score is Success or Failure. To be scored a success, all the boards setup must be broken. In the event a competitor sets up more than the minimum number of boards required, and fails to break all the boards, the score shall be considered Fail.

If the round is a full competition round (Seiken with No Spacers), then the total score is equal to 2 to the power of the number of boards setup and successfully broken; i.e.,  $2^X$  where X= the number of boards broken.. If any boards setup are not broken, then the total score for the round is zero.

Example #1: a break consists of a a stack of three boards, and two of the three boards are broken, but the last board is not. The score for this round would be zero (the break failed).

Example #2: a break consists of a stack of four boards. The break is successful and all four boards are broken. The score for this round would be 16 (i.e.,  $2^4$ ).

### B. Traditional Break

If one, two, or three boards are setup in this round, the total score is equal to the number of boards setup and successfully broken. If any boards setup are not broken, then the total score for the round is zero.

If four or more boards are setup in this round, the total score is equal to the number of boards setup and successfully broken multiplied by two. If any boards setup are not broken, then the total score for the round is zero.

Example #1: a break consists of a a stack of three boards, separated by spacers, and two of the three boards are broken, but the last board is not. The score for this round would be zero (the break failed).

Example #2: a break consists of a stack of four boards, separated by spacers. The break is successful and all four boards are broken. The score for this round would be 8 (i.e., four boards multiplied by two, or eight).

Example #3: a break consists of a stack of three boards, separated by spacers. The break is successful and all three boards are broken. The score for this round would be 3 (i.e., equal to the number of boards broken).

### C. Creative Break

The total score is the sum of six different scores.

Number of boards broken. In the event that all the boards are not broken, this score is zero. This rule takes precedence over all other rules in this section.

If the boards are separated by spacers, and the number of boards is three or less, than this score shall be exactly equal to the number of boards broken. If the boards are separated by spacers, and the number of boards is four or more, than this score shall be exactly equal to two times the number of boards broken.

Similarly, if the boards are held or positioned singly, the score for those boards so-situated shall be reported as equal to the number of boards successfully broken.

If more than one board is broken while not separated by spacers, then the score for that part of the break shall be equal to 2 to that number of boards' power; i.e.,  $2^X$  where X= the number of boards broken.

Example #1: a break consists of a hiji elbow break downwards on a stack of eight boards, each separated by spacers. The score for this section would be eight (the number of boards broken).

Example #2: a break consists of a tettsumi break downwards on a stack of four boards, not separated by spacers. The score for this section would be 16 (i.e.,  $2^4$ ).

Example #3: a break consists of two koken strikes to single boards held by two holders, and one downwards tettsumi strike to a stack of three boards, not separated by spacers. The score for this section would be 10 (one point each for the two single boards, plus  $2^3$ , or 8, for the stack of three boards, totaling 10 points).

Example #4: a break consists of two koken strikes to single boards held by two holders, and one downwards tettsumi strike to a stack of three boards, not separated by spacers. However, one of the two boards designed to be broken by a koken strike remains intact and that part of the break fails, even though the second koken strike is successful as is the downwards tettsumi strike. The score for this section would be zero.

Position of the boards. Fixed on cinder blocks = 1; held by assistants = 3 (per hold; maximum of 9 points); boards broken in the air = 10 (not per board; total of 10 points). These points are cumulative: for example, a break consisting of a break on blocks plus two breaks of boards held by two assistants would have a score in this section of 7 (one point for the boards on blocks, and three points each for the two assistants).

Weapon Used (per break). Hiji [Elbow] = 2; Tettsumi [hammer fist] = 2; Seiken = 3; Sunei [shin] = 3; Shotei [palm heel] = 3; Shuto [knife-edge of open hand] = 4; Uraken ([backfist strike] = 4; Chusoku [ball of foot] = 4; Kakato [heel]= 4; Heisoku [top of the foot] = 6; Atemi [head/

forehead]= 6; Koken [wrist] = 7; Heito [ridge of hand opposite shuto] = 9; Nakadakaken [middle knuckle of hand] = 9; Nukite [spearhand/fingertips] (any, except ippon or nihon) = 20; Nukite (nihon) [two fingers] = 22 Nukite (ippon) [single finger] = 25. If a weapon not listed here is used, the Chief Referee shall determine the closest equivalent weapon and score it appropriately.

Difficulty of break [1-5]. A score of one is equivalent to a shuto break with spacers; a score of two is akin to a seiken break with no spacers; 3-5 is based on the judgement of the referee.

Creativity [0-3]. 0 is a standard break on blocks with or without spacers; 1-3 points is based on the judgement of the referee.

Successful break (all boards broken) 10 points

Note that the scores for items 2-5 are computed BEFORE the break, but may be modified by the referees in the event that the break is not performed according to the specifications of the break. The modification is noted as a penalty, equal to the points granted beforehand (effectively, to zero-out that part of the break not performed).

In addition, while the score for item 1 can't be computed in advance, the total number of boards is noted BEFORE the break and the total score computed for the boards is noted as well, in the event of a successful break. For item 1, if the break fails, the score will be zero. If the break succeeds, it will be the score pre-computed for item 1.

After the break, the scores for item 1 and item 6 is added and the final score is computed.

#### D. Overall Tournament Champion

In the event that a tournament champion in each division is named, the score shall be computed as the simple sum of each competitors' score in all three of the required rounds in the tournament: i.e., the competitor's overall score shall consist of the sum of the points scored in the seiken/no-spacer round (section 8A, above), the traditional round (section 8B, above), and the creative break round (section 8C, above).

Note that in the event that the first round, the Section 8A round as described above, is a qualifying round, no score shall be computed for that round, but if the competitor fails to qualify a successful break, that competitor may not compete in any other rounds in the tournament and shall have an overall score of zero.

#### Section 9: REGISTRATION

All competitors are required to have completed and submitted all registration materials prior to entry to the Tournament. The Tournament Director may, at his sole discretion, allow on-site registration.

All competitors are required to have submitted a description of their intended break (using text and/or diagrams) prior to the Tournament. At the discretion of Tournament Officials, a late-

entrant may be permitted to compete, but must submit such a description prior to the start of competition.

Tournament Officials have the unlimited right to disqualify a proposed break for any reason. In the event that a break is disqualified, the Competitor may submit a revised break plan; however, Tournament Officials may decide that a competitor may not resubmit a plan, and disqualify him or her from competition.

## Section 10: CONDUCT

At all times, Competitors will conduct themselves in the full spirit of karatedo; failure to do so is grounds for immediate disqualification by the Chief Referee for the round or any other senior Tournament Official. Violations under this section are entirely subject to the interpretation of the Tournament Director, and all decisions taken under this section are final.

Further, instructors and dojo officials are also expected to conduct themselves according to the full spirit of karatedo. This includes respectful speech and actions towards other competitors and all tournament officials.

Spectators are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and in the spirit of good conduct and proper manners as with any public event.

## Section 11: APPEALS, PROTESTS, REQUEST TO RECONSIDER, PENALTIES

Scoring decisions, including requests to reconsider and recompute scores may be made to the Chief Referee for the round within five minutes of the ending of the round and announcement of scores and the winner. No request may be made after five minutes have elapsed.

In the event that the Chief Referee declines to reconsider or recomputed a score, a further appeal may be made within five minutes of the decision of the Chief Referee. This appeal may only be made to the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may decline to consider the request for any reason, or may reconsider or recompute the score. In any event, no further appeal is permitted.

Any other appeal, protest, or request to reconsider a decision made under these rules must be made directly to the Tournament Director. The Tournament Director may decline to consider the appeal, solely within his own discretion. No further appeal or request to reconsider is permitted once the Tournament Director has made his determination.

In the event that these rules are violated, the Tournament Director, by and through his duly authorized representatives, may impose one or more of the following sanctions: verbal reprimand, written warning, monetary fine, or disqualification or suspension.

## Section 11: AGREEMENT TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES; ACCEPTANCE OF RISK

All participants, including spectators, competitors, and instructors supporting competitors, agree to abide by, and be subject to, these rules.

FURTHERMORE, ALL PERSONS WHO ELECT TO COMPETE IN ANY EVENT AUTHORIZED AND SANCTIONED UNDER THESE RULES DO SO AT THEIR OWN RISK, RECOGNIZING THAT KARATE COMPETITION NECESSARILY INVOLVES SOME RISK OF SERIOUS, PERMANENT PHYSICAL INJURY OR DEATH.

NO LIABILITY FOR ANY LOSS, INJURY OF ANY KIND, OR DEATH, SHALL ATTACH TO THE ORGANIZERS OF ANY TOURNAMENT CONDUCTED UNDER THESE RULES OR ANY OF THEIR OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, MEMBERS OR EMPLOYEES, ETC. FOR ANY CAUSE OF REASON ARISING OUT OF, OR SUSTAINED IN ANY COMPETITION CONDUCTED HEREUNDER, INCLUDING NEGLIGENCE OR GROSS NEGLIGENCE.

### Revision History

October 2024: Added more examples of scoring; clarified additional weapons; clarified the total number of breaks in the Creative Breaks and their nature; added formatting changes to enhance readability.

October 2024: Added clarification of how scores are computed, including examples, as well as more specifics on how scores are computed when boards are stacked together without spacers.

October 2024: A requirement that the Creative Break round must be included in a traditional sanctioned tournament is now specified. This normalizes scores across tournaments that before may not have included this round.

October 2024: Added Challenge Division and rules.

October 2024: Added specifications for cinder blocks.

October 2024: Modified scoring in Creative rounds to more closely align with difficulty.

October 2024: Added more detail for wood species.

October 2024: Added additional certifications for usage of these rules.

September 2024: Added more detail for specific rounds.

November 2022: Revision History Section added to track changes over time.