

# TOURNAMENT RULES & PROCEDURES FOR TAIJIQUAN EVENTS

officially adopted by the  
UNITED STATES CHINESE KUOSHU FEDERATION

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## **Part 1: SOLO FORMS & WEAPONS EVENTS,**

PURPOSE. These tournament rules and evaluation procedures focus on improvement and sharing as well as on scoring and judging, on education and communication as well as on competition and performance. They were designed to assist in the creation of a friendly environment within which participants and judges (herein referred to as “evaluators”) collaborate to raise the level of play, foster a sense of collegiality and community, and promote the classic principles and philosophy of taijiquan.

HOLISTIC SCORING. Evaluators use a general impression or holistic method to assign scores, so they can also focus on offering feedback to participants. This differs from the point-deduction or atomistic method used in some tournaments. The validity of holistic scoring is based on the ability of expert observers to reach consensus on the **comparative rank order** of medal-winning performances within a division.

Point-deduction scoring, in its pure form, relies on a judge’s ability to distinguish deviations in a performance from a normative or high-standard performance, and to subtract point values assigned to these deviations from a “perfect” score. Advocates of this method claim for it a certain objectivity because it is based in specific, often minute observation. However, two judges will never notice exactly the same things, and it is very difficult to notice enough significant minutiae to bring a score down by tenths of a point from 10 to 7.5, for example, in three or even five minutes. Also, there is no guarantee that this method will actually place competitors in the rank order for medals that they deserve. In practice, therefore, the atomistic method is often combined with holistic elements: 4 of 10 points reserved for general impression scoring and 6 points for deduction-based scoring, for example.

In the purely holistic method used in these rules, evaluators assign each performance a placement within a range of scores with room both above and below for placement of subsequent scores. Unlike the point-deduction method, in which a judge’s focus must inevitably be almost entirely on negatives because they arrive at a score by reduction, holistic evaluators focus on the whole performance: the positive aspects as well as the negative. The evaluation sheets with their three categories of “Good, Adequate/Lesser Faults, and Needs Work” facilitate this holistic approach.

Evaluators view the performances of the first three competitors in any division before scoring. They then meet and place those performances first, second, and third relative to each other by consensus, and agree on an approximate score for each performance. These three scores anchor the division. Evaluators return to their seats and score each successive performance so as to place it in rank order relative to all previous performances.

**The primary duty of an evaluator is to calibrate his/her scoring to the scoring of the other evaluators.** Evaluators must therefore forget their own scores as soon as they give them, record the FINAL score for each performance, and base their scores for successive performances on

the actual emerging rank order of the division. There is no “right” score for any performance, only its comparative standing in relation to other performances within a scoring range set by the tournament director. The better evaluator is not one who is personally consistent, but one who can work with other evaluators as a team to arrive at a satisfactory rank order for an event.

**OFFICIALS.** Five judges (evaluators) evaluate forms and weapons events. In addition, a chief judge manages each event, coordinates the work of the evaluators, and announces scores. The chief judge does not participate in scoring unless only four or fewer evaluators are available. A scorekeeper and timekeeper sit at the head table with the chief judge.

**PROCEDURE.** At the beginning of each event, officials stand in their respective places and are introduced to spectators and competitors by the announcer or the chief judge. All competitors enter the performance area, are briefed by the chief judge, and seated beside the area. The chief judge calls each competitor in turn, as follows: “[Name of competitor A] **up**, [name of competitor B] **on deck**, [name of competitor C] **prepare**.” Competitor A comes to the edge of the area, salutes the chief judge who returns the salute and invites the competitor to take the field with an open palm pointing to the center. Competitor A enters, and time begins at the competitor’s first movement after wuji (the still preparation posture). Time allotted to each participant in forms and weapons events is divided into three parts: performance, evaluation, and scoring.

**PERFORMANCE.** In forms events, each participant performs for a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 3.5 minutes. A warning is sounded and time is announced at both times. There is a deduction for under and overtime in open-hand events. In weapons events, each participant performs for a minimum of 1.5 minutes, and a warning is sounded then and at 3.5 minutes; there is a deduction for under time, but not for over time in weapons. Competitors may face any direction to begin, and may step outside the boundary without penalty, as long as the performance remains for the most part within the field.

**EVALUATION.**

- 1) **WRITTEN.** During the performance, evaluators put checkmarks in categories on an “Evaluation” sheet. After all participants in an event have performed, these sheets are collected, collated, and given to participants during the medal ceremony.
- 2) **VERBAL.** If time allows and at the discretion of the tournament director, the evaluators meet the participant in the center of the field immediately after the participant’s performance. The evaluators offer feedback on the performance, with each evaluator speaking in turn following a standard two-part format:
  - a) complimenting at least one thing the participant did well (positive comment), and
  - b) suggesting at least one thing the participant might improve (critique).
 Comments from all evaluators must not exceed 3.5 minutes, after which evaluators return to their seats.

**SCORING.** The chief judge calls for scores, and each evaluator holds up a numerical score. High and low scores are dropped, and the scorekeeper computes the average of the middle scores. The final score is the average score minus any deductions made by the chief judge. If four evaluators or fewer are available, the chief judge also scores. If four or fewer are scoring, high and low scores are retained, and all scores contribute to the average. In case of a tie for medals, high and low scores are averaged back in-- or the medal will go to the competitor whose *lowest* score is higher (or the next lowest score, etc., until the tie is broken).

The chief judge announces either “Final Score for [name], [score]” or if there are deductions, the chief judge says “Evaluators’ average score for [name]: [score]” announces the deduction, then says “Final score for [name]: [score].” The competitor then salutes the chief judge, who returns the salute.

Evaluators record the **final score** as well as their own score for the performance on the bottom of the evaluation sheet.

**SCORING CRITERIA.** Posture and stance (xing: shape, configuration) are the keys to correctness of form. Unity (whole body matching) is the key to movement. Vigor (power) is the key to overall technical skill.

- 1) **POSTURE & STANCE** are the main factors which determine whether the player's forms are correct. The body should be relaxed, the movements easy but not soft, stretched but not stiff. The head should be lifted, the pelvis settled; the feet strongly placed, the knees stable; the arms rounded, the shoulders lowered.
- 2) **UNITY** (integrity) is the key to coordination. The waist must act like an axle, all body parts should correlate, arms and legs match.
- 3) **VIGOR** (energy, spirit). The impression of vigor reveals the player's overall technical level. Any action, should display lightness, agility, steadiness, calmness, and a combination of solidity and emptiness. Movements should be smooth and continuous.

Each evaluator's score represents their holistic impression of a performance based on the above categories, in comparison to other competitors' performances in a division, and in relation to the scoring range. The scoring range for U.S.C.K.F. tournaments is:

8–9.5	ADVANCED
7–8.5	INTERMEDIATE
6–7.5	BEGINNER

**DEDUCTIONS BY THE CHIEF JUDGE.**

1. **Time.** The chief judge deducts 0.1 for a performance that is up to five seconds short of the minimum or over the maximum required time, 0.2 for a performance that is six to ten seconds short or over, and so forth. There is no overtime deduction for weapons performances.
2. **Re-performing.** A competitor may re-perform without penalty if the chief judge rules that the performance was interrupted by uncontrollable circumstances. If a competitor stops for any other reason, he/she may elect to re-perform at the end of the group, but half a point (.5) is deducted from the final score.
3. **No scores shall be given to a competitor who leaves the field without completing their routine.**

**DIVISIONS.** Taijiquan forms events may be divided into categories by style as desired, such as: Chen, Yang, Guang Ping, Other Styles, etc. They may be further subdivided into experience levels, such as: Beginning/Intermediate (up to four years of taijiquan study is suggested as a criterion) and Experienced (more than four years of taijiquan study is suggested as a criterion). A "Senior" event (50 and over) might also be useful. There should not, however, be separate divisions for men and women in forms and weapons events.

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## **Part 2: PUSH-HANDS EVENTS, “CONTINUOUS FLOW FORMAT” & THE FIVE-POINT MUST SCORING SYSTEM**

PURPOSE. These rules are designed to produce a continuous exchange of discernible techniques, with an emphasis on matching: that is, the appropriate alternation of yielding and adherence to demonstrate that “a force no greater than four ounces may neutralize a thousand pounds.” This interaction should be clearly distinguishable from wrestling, shoving, and boxing.

DISCUSSION. Push-hands events are exhibitions that give spectators perhaps their first impression of taijiquan as a martial art, as well as competitions that determine the relative skill levels of the participants. Push-hands events are not intended to be simulations of real-world combat; they are games which are won by players who can apply taiji principles within limits set by the rules.

The goal of this method is to discourage interactions that do not exemplify skills characteristic of taijiquan and to reward those that do, including:

- unbalancing an opponent with finesse rather than excessive strength,
- applying force into vulnerable places (*na*) and not against resistance,
- disrupting an opponent’s equilibrium rather than just causing an opponent to move forward, backward, or sideways,
- neutralizing (*hua*) or evading an incoming force and redirecting (returning) it.

These skills can be classified under the general category of “**effective subtlety.**” In close rounds, judges may also take into consideration “**positive control:**” the impression of which competitor seems to be responsible for the best aspects of the match, and “**postural dynamics**” that give the impression of rooting, coordination, and active listening (e.g., head up? hips, waist, and torso active? arms give the impression of responsiveness and positive shape? steps well-timed?). Theoretically, these three categories are weighted equally, but in practice “effective subtlety” is given the most emphasis with the other two entering into the judges’ consideration only in very close or “even” matches.

This method of judging push-hands is based on methods currently used to judge professional boxing. Though both are inherently subjective, they are grounded in **expert observation:** push-hands judges are teachers with many years of experience in taijiquan in addition to having undergone specialized training in this method.

OFFICIALS. The event staff consists of 1 referee, 3 judges, 1 scorekeeper, and 1 timekeeper.

- The referee is responsible for starting and stopping the action, ensuring that all rules are followed, maintaining standards of safety, calling violations, asking for consensus from judges on calls, instructing the scorekeeper and timekeeper during the action, announcing the winner of each match, and instructing competitors and the audience in the goals and mechanics of this method of tournament push-hands play.
- The judges are responsible for deciding the winner of each round, basing their decision on the total marks recorded on their “tally” (see below) for that round. They may also call “stop” for violations they observe except for “excessive force,” which can only be called by the referee.
- The scorekeeper records official warnings given to each player in each round as instructed by the referee, records the points judges award each player in each round, calculates and announces the total for each player in each round, and calculates and announces grand totals for each player after two rounds.
- The timekeeper times each round, stopping time whenever the referee calls “stop,” resumes timing on the referee’s signal, and rings a bell or blows a whistle to announce the end of each round.

FIELD: LIMITED AND MOVING STEP EVENTS.

- 1) **In limited step events**, the area of play, or field, is an alley 4 feet wide and 10 feet long, with sides marked by tape, but with no tape at the ends. The center of this alley will be marked by a cross (“center mark”) of two 2-foot pieces of tape, oriented so that one piece is perpendicular to the sides, and one piece is on the center of the alley and parallel to the sides. Within this alley, single shuffle steps are permitted, initiated by either the front or rear foot and followed by the opposite foot. Single shuffle steps must be separated by at least a two second interval. Competitors must keep to the orientation of the alley; they may not step outside the alley to defend or to gain an advantage.
- 2) **In moving step events**, the field consists of a single circle or “threshold” 12 feet in diameter with a center mark as in limited step, within which competitors may move freely. They are expected to maintain contact with one another while in the circle, and will be judged on their exchanges inside the circle as well as on their ability to remain within the threshold.

ELIGIBILITY. To be eligible to participate in push-hands events, competitors must:

- 1) have been studying taijiquan for at least one year;
- 2) have competed in a taijiquan form event either in the current year or a previous year at a USCKF sanctioned tournament; and
- 3) attend the rules meeting scheduled by the Taijiquan Division director prior to the start of all push-hands events-- only competitors who attend the full meeting will be allowed to compete.

EQUIPMENT. Participants wear a T-shirt, martial arts pants, and athletic or kung fu shoes. No long sleeved shirts or short pants are permitted. Contestants may not wear any objects (including jewelry) that may cause injury to themselves or their opponents. Fingernails must be clipped to within a sixteenth of an inch, and will be inspected by the officials. The tournament will provide competitors with solid-color shirts or tank tops of contrasting colors to be worn over their own t-shirts.

TALLIES. Judges keep a **scorecard or “tally”** on which they record significant interactions. Tally marks are objective notations of subjective observations. The quantity of marks will vary among the judges, depending on what they observe and record, but judges are expected to record as many interactions as possible, and **MUST** base their decision of who won each round on the total marks recorded for that round. Judges should discuss tallying in advance, and agree on visual cues that indicate whether actions should receive positive or negative tally marks.

*Positive Marks.* Marks are NOT awarded for off-balancing an opponent per se. Judges must not simply make a mark for each “off balance” and award the match to the competitor with the highest total. Judges must keep in mind that push-hands is not really about pushing: a skillful taijiquan attack is not based on strength or speed, yet it is easy for these to masquerade as superior if we were only rewarding instances where a competitor is made to lose balance. **Judges must ask themselves if the technique which caused an off-balance utilized taijiquan energies.** Did the competitor lead his/her opponent to emptiness? Did it seem relatively effortless? Was the opponent’s force neutralized before the off-balance, or was force used against force? Further, off-balancing is not simply causing an opponent to reset their stance: to count as a successful attack, an off-balance must shake up an opponent’s structure in a way that requires the opponent to regain equilibrium as well as to reestablish stance. Judges must also be alert for defensive techniques-- frequently harder to see than offensive ones.

*Negative Marks.* Judges may make negative marks on their tallies based on visual cues that generally indicate when inappropriate or flagrant force is being used. For example, a competitor who leans on his/her opponent in a posture that would not be stable if the opponent were not being used for support is “bracing” or “steeping,” and should receive a negative mark. Hooking (wrapping a hand around behind an opponent’s back) is a prelude to throwing and should be negatively noted. It is legitimate, however, to push on an opponent’s back if the opponent’s back is exposed. It is also legitimate to stick a hand behind an opponent without hooking it. “Hauling,” an obvious use of greater force against a stable opponent, should be noted negatively. Use of hard shoving and fajin, while legitimate in combat taijiquan, have no place within these limited events, and should receive

negative marks. Judges should also give a negative mark to a limited step competitor who retreats excessively, so as to lose contact with the opponent.

**EXCHANGES.** For tallying purposes, an “exchange” begins with an intentional use of force, and ends when that force is neutralized or evaded without being redirected **or** when either competitor loses equilibrium. Judges must be alert for **three kinds of action**:

- 1) appropriate use of force,
- 2) inappropriate use of force, and
- 3) flagrant use of force.

In addition, judges must watch for **three kinds of reaction**:

- 1) loss of equilibrium,
- 2) neutralization or evasion, and
- 3) redirection-- a combination of neutralization and the application of an appropriate force that causes the opponent to lose equilibrium.

In moving step, stepping outside the circle constitutes a fourth kind of reaction.

**TALLY MARKS.** Every exchange holds the potential for a single player to gain one to four positive marks on a judge’s tally. Competitors may receive equal marks for an exchange (cells c, e, and f in the table below), which cancel out. Appropriate force has a value of +1. Inappropriate force has a zero (0) value. Flagrant force has a value of -1. Instances of force that judges deem excessive but which are not called “flagrant” by the referee should be scored as “inappropriate.”

Neutralizations and evasions have a value of +1. Loss of equilibrium has a value of zero (0) when caused by flagrant force or inappropriate force, and a value of -1 when caused by appropriate force. In moving step, moving outside the field has a value of -1.

<b>A/B</b> <i>Reaction</i>	<b>B</b> <b>loses</b> <b>equilibrium</b>	<b>Moving Step:</b> <b>B out of the</b> <b>circle</b>	<b>B neutralizes</b> <b>or evades</b>	<b>B redirects,</b> <b>A loses</b> <b>equilibrium</b>
<i>Action</i>				
<b>A uses</b> <b>appropriate force</b>	a +1/-1: A = +2	b +1/-1: A = +2	c +1/+1	d (+1-1)/(+1+1): B = +2
<b>A uses</b> <b>inappropriate force</b>	e 0/0	f 0/0	g 0/+1: B = +1	h (0-1)/(+1+1): B = +3
<b>A uses</b> <b>flagrant force</b>	i -1/0: B = +1	j -1/0: B = +1	k -1/+1: B = +2	l (-1-1)/(+1+1): B = +4

In the chart above, cell (d) is essentially the same as (a). Cell (h) is a combination of cells (g) and (a), and cell (l) is a combination of cells (k) and (a). This chart may seem daunting, but in practice, marking tallies using this method is quite easy. The use of three judges allows for triangulation, and the five point must system, described below, converts the accumulated tally marks into a simple decision for winner and loser.

**TALLY MARKS (suggested).**

- a horizontal “minus” line, “X” or “F” (for flagrant force) may be used to indicate a mark against a competitor if a judge is marking negatives;

- 1 a vertical hashmark, number one, checkmark, “N” for neutralization may be used to indicate a positive mark for a competitor;
- 2 “2” may be used as a shortcut for two hashmarks, or for “plus for one and minus for the other,” counted for the competitor receiving the positive mark. (“3” and “4” may also be used.)

PROCEDURE.

1. PRELIMINARIES. The referee assures that all competitors’ clothing, jewelry, equipment, and nails conform to tournament guidelines, and instructs them in the procedure of the competition.
2. RANKING. The referee assigns a numerical rank to each competitor in a division and gives each competitor a tag with the number of their rank on it. Competitors turn these tags in to the scorekeeper, who records their names in the correct spaces on a bye chart (see “Push-Hands Bye Chart & Event Report” and “Setting Up a Bye Chart” appended to these rules).

Rank competitors within divisions based on the following criteria in order:

1. Top rank (#1) is given to last year’s champion, or another medal winner, from this tournament.
2. Gold, Silver, Bronze medal winners in other tournaments in that order, or number of medals won.
3. Those with the most tournament push-hands experience.

If the above criteria are not sufficient to rank all competitors, then:

4. Those with the greater number of years experience in taijiquan.

If the above criteria are not sufficient to rank all competitors, then:

5. Heaviest/tallest in their weight class.

Even if lower ranks (#5, #6, #7, etc.) must be juggled, try not to match classmates up with one another in early tiers.

3. COLOR ASSIGNMENT. The scorekeeper will randomly assign “RED” to one player and “WHITE” to the other. Colors are indicated by tank tops or sashes.
4. SALUTE. Before and after each match, competitors bow to the referee and then to each other.
5. TIME. One match consists of two 90-second rounds with a 30-second break in between rounds during which coaching is allowed. The tournament director may make the rounds shorter depending on the number of entrants and the time available.
6. STARTING. **In limited step**, opponents face each other and place a foot on the center mark (see “Field,” above): in the first tier, right foot forward for the first round, left foot forward for the second round; in the second tier, left foot forward for the first round, etc. When prepared to begin they make contact with the back of one wrist and touch their opponent’s elbow with the open palm of the free hand. The referee instructs them to move either in a horizontal circle or in a standard circle of *peng, lu, ji, an*. When both seem ready, the referee says “Time begin” accompanied by a hand signal. At this signal, the timekeeper starts timing, and the competitors perform a minimum of two additional revolutions before initiating other techniques.  
**In moving step**, competitors start in wuji (narrow shoulder-width stance) catty-corner from one another on the center cross mark. The referee will say “touch” and competitors will join the backs of their near-side wrists held above the waist, after which the referee will say “go.”



7. CONTINUOUS FLOW. The action is continuous within each round unless fairness dictates a restart, safety demands that the action be stopped, or a competitor has committed a violation. The referee does NOT stop the action when a competitor is off balance, as no points are awarded for this. Competitors are responsible for resuming play fairly after an off-balance has occurred. The referee monitors the flow of the match, making sure that the interaction is safe and watching for violations.
8. WARNING. If the referee sees a violation, he/she says “stop!” to stop action and timing. If a judge sees a violation, he/she says “stop” as a signal to the referee, who confirms the judge’s call by immediately calling “stop” to officially stop the action and timing. The referee or judge then states the violation and violator (e.g.: “Double grabbing, RED”). The referee calls for confirmation by the judges (“Judges confirm?”) **The vote of two judges or one judge and the referee is sufficient to confirm a violation** even if the referee did not see or call the violation. If confirmed, the referee says “confirmed,” restates the violation, and the scorekeeper makes a note of this.
9. CAUTIONING. The referee may issue a verbal “caution” which incurs no penalty (as opposed to a “warning” which incurs a penalty of one point) to one or both competitors in the first instance of a personal or technical violation. This serves an educational purpose; but a competitor should not be allowed more than one caution for the same infraction.
10. OUT OF THE ALLEY. **In limited step events**, the referee stops the match if both competitors are beyond the end of the 10-foot alley or if their orientation has become inadvertently skewed and restarts them in the center.
11. OUTSIDE THE CIRCLE. **In moving step events**, out-of-bounds are marked by the individual judges, NOT by the referee. Each instance of a competitor crossing the 12-foot threshold (considered to be the *inside* of the taped circle) is worth two tally marks for the opponent on individual judges’ tallies *if* the judge feels that the force used was appropriate. The competitor must reenter the 12-foot circle with both feet before another “out” penalty can be marked. Judges also continue to score exchanges within the circle as they would in limited step events. If both competitors step over the threshold in the same exchange (“Both out”) the out-of-bounds does not count against either although judges may mark the interaction for other considerations.

The aim of the referee is to allow the action to continue without interruption if possible, but to stop time and restart expeditiously if warranted. At a break in the action, the referee may simply say “continue,” or he/she may call “center, please” as a signal for competitors to move expeditiously to the center and resume action on their own. However, the referee **must** stop time (“Time!”) and restart if one or both fall, and may choose to do so in other instances if he/she feels it is warranted.

If one competitor seems to be “guarding the threshold,” making it difficult for the other competitor to reenter the circle, the referee calls “center, please” so that the action can resume with competitors on an equal footing.
12. HOLDING. **In moving step**, there are special considerations for the violation “holding.”
  - a) If a competitor holds his/her opponent to prevent loss of balance on the edge of the circle but does not step on or out of the perimeter, the competitor should receive a warning for holding. The competitor is not penalized for the possibility that he/she might have moved out of the circle had it not been for the holding.
  - b) If the competitor holds but then releases and crosses the threshold without drawing his/her opponent over, the competitor should be penalized on judges’ tallies for going over but should **not** be warned for holding.
  - c) If the competitor goes over the perimeter and draws his/her opponent over as a result of holding, the competitor should be warned for the holding **and** marked on judges’ tallies for crossing the threshold.
13. RESTARTING. **In limited step** the referee restarts the match by resetting both competitors on the center mark, configuring their arms as in the beginning, getting them moving, and saying “time begin” after which competitors must make *one* additional circle. **In moving step**, the

referee restarts the action either by calling “center, please” and allowing competitors to initiate a fair start on their own, or by using the original starting procedure.

14. JUDGES. Each tier of an event should be evaluated by the same set of judges. Judges position themselves, either seated or standing, at good vantage points around the field, equipped with a pencil, tallies, and clipboard. At the start of each match, judges write the necessary identifying information on their tallies, and **orient their tallies to match the position of the competitors from the judge’s perspective.** During the match, judges record in some shorthand code (see “Tally Marks,” above) as many significant interactions as they can.
15. SWITCHING SIDES. Competitors switch sides of the field at the end of round one. Referee reminds judges to rotate their tallies to match the respective positions of the competitors for round two.
16. SCORING. At the end of both round one and round two, each judge assigns a score to each competitor using a **five-point must system.** The judge assigns 5 points to the competitor who won the round, in that judge’s opinion, and 4 points to the loser. The judge *may* assign 3 points to the loser if, in that judge’s opinion, the winner *completely dominated* the interaction. In the vast majority of rounds, however, the loser should be given 4 points even if the outcome was clear rather than close.

[There is no standard spread in the tally that distinguishes these point categories, as the number of marks on individual tallies may vary among judges. However, judges **must** base their decision of who won the round on the marks recorded on their tallies, or on credit given for “positive control” and “postural dynamics” if marks are tied.]

- a) At the end of each round, the referee says: **“Competitors stand apart. Judges total your marks”** [to give judges time while they are still looking at the competitors to make sure they will vote for the correct competitor].
  - b) The referee then says **“Judges face away. Judges’ scores for RED?”** [Referee asks the judges to face away from the field so as not to be influenced by one another and always calls scores for RED first.]
  - c) The three judges respond by holding a hand upward with all five fingers spread if they believe RED to have won the round (5 points). If they believe RED lost the round, they may either extend their arm horizontally with four fingers showing (4 points) or angle the arm downward at 45° with three fingers showing (3 points).
  - d) The referee announces the votes in the following manner: **“First judge, 5 points; second judge, 4 points; third judge, 5 points.”**
  - e) The referee then calls: **“Judges’ scores for WHITE?”** and the same procedure is followed.
17. TOTALLING THE SCORES. The scorekeeper records the points given to the competitors by each judge, **deducts one point for each warning** in a round from the competitor’s total score for that round, and announces each competitor’s total score after each round.

THREES. To reduce the effect of bias or inattention on the part of judges, scorekeepers will treat 3s in the following manner. If the judges’ scores for one competitor are 5, 4, 3 for a round, the scorekeeper will record the 3 as a 4. If the judges’ scores are 5, 5, 3 the scorekeeper will record the scores as 5, 5, 4. In other words, a 3 given to a competitor will only be scored if all three judges scored that competitor as the loser (4, 4, 3 or 4, 3, 3 or 3, 3, 3). Exception: if judges’ scores are 5, 3, 3 the scorekeeper will record them as is: 5, 3, 3, allowing the 3s to pull down the total score without changing the *vote* of the judge that assigned the 5.

18. TIE-BREAKING. Current tournament push-hands custom does not allow draws. If competitors’ total points at the end of two rounds are equal, the majority of votes cast for winner over both rounds breaks the tie. If this is also a tie, a third tie-breaking round is held. In this round, the win goes to the competitor with the greater number of points unless points are tied, in which case it goes to the competitor who received two “5s.”

**TARGET AREAS.** Contact may be made on the front of the body from the collarbone down and from the iliac crests (top of the hip bones) up; on the back from the base of the neck to the hips, and anywhere on the arms. Contact to the head, neck, hip joints, groin area, or legs is illegal.

PERSONAL VIOLATIONS. (Referee administers a “warning,” and one point is subtracted from the competitor’s total score for that round. Three warnings in a match result in disqualification.)

1. Using flagrant force [called by the referee, not by individual judges]
2. Grabbing the opponent’s clothes
3. Double grabbing (gripping the opponent with both hands)
4. Holding (gripping the opponent with one or both hands to prevent loss of balance)
5. Arm entrapment (a milder form of joint locking, see “Serious Personal Violations”)
6. Throwing or tripping
7. Contacting an illegal target area
8. Endangering oneself (as by holding the head down and forward so that it is difficult for the opponent to avoid making contact with it)

In the Limited Step event:

9. Charging (taking a rapid series of steps so as to overwhelm an opponent. In limited step, single shuffle steps are permitted, initiated by either the front or rear foot and followed by the opposite foot. Single shuffle steps must be separated by at least a two second interval.)
10. Reversing the stance or stepping outside the alley to gain an advantage (a competitor who inadvertently reverses stance should not receive a warning, but should be penalized for “loss of equilibrium” on individual judges’ tallies)

SERIOUS PERSONAL VIOLATIONS. (Committing one results in disqualification.)

1. Striking, hitting, punching
2. Jerking or pulling forcibly
3. Using the head to attack
4. Using the legs, knees, or feet to attack
5. Twisting or locking the joints (grappling or qin na [chin na])
6. Using pressure points
7. Pulling hair or beard
8. Violent attacks to illegal target areas.
9. Using any technique determined to cause injury to the opponent
10. Unsportsmanlike conduct

TECHNICAL VIOLATIONS. (Referee administers a “warning,” and one point is subtracted from the competitor’s total score for that round. Three warnings in a match result in disqualification.)

1. Not following the instructions of the referee
2. Not completing the mandatory revolutions
3. Receiving coaching during the round

DISQUALIFICATION. Competitors will be disqualified for committing three Personal and/or Technical Violations, or one Serious Personal Violation. The inability to avoid these violations indicates a competitor’s unreadiness to participate in a public demonstration of taijiquan skills using these guidelines. Any competitor may be disqualified if the referee in consultation with the judges feels a competitor’s behavior poses a safety risk.

DIVISIONS. There will be men’s and women’s divisions, and various weight categories. The following are rough guidelines; actual categories will be determined on-site by the tournament director based on the pool of competitors:

Men	Women
Lower weight: under 150	Lower weight: under 130
Mid weight: 150 to 174	Mid weight: 130-160
Heavy weight: 175 to 199	Upper weight: over 160
Superheavy weight: 200 and over	

MEDALS. A GOLD medal is awarded to the winner of each division, SILVER to the runner up. BRONZE medals may be awarded to the losers of the two semifinal matches as if they were tied for

third place. If BRONZE is being awarded only for third place, another match between the two competitors who lose in the semifinals would need to be held.

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### **Part 3: TWO-PERSON BAREHAND SET EVENT**

This event is for two players performing choreographed empty hand (not weapons) taijiquan movements and utilizing taijiquan principles.

Time. The set must be longer than 2 minutes, with no upper time limit. A bell will be rung at two minutes. Standard deductions by the chief judge for under time, re-performing, and incomplete routines are the same as for solo routines.

Evaluation Criteria. Evaluators will score performances based on the following criteria:

1. Participants conform to taijiquan's postural principles (this is a composite impression, although judges may direct comments to each player separately).
2. Interaction is alert and lively; players seem to be responding to each other in the moment, rather than merely performing a mechanical routine ("**ting jin**").
3. Partners maintain appropriate distance or spacing (movements not cramped or impinged, nor stretched or separated ("**zou jin**").
4. Partners maintain contact and adhere throughout the routine in conformity with applications unless a break is clearly appropriate to the intent of a move. Quality of touch is sticky and soft, not jarring ("**nian jin**").
5. Partners blend well, and movements are continuous and well-coordinated: each move supplies the returning energy for the next move in a smooth, well-defined fashion ("**hua jin**"), yet the intention of movements is clear, and applications are energetic ("**fa jin**").
6. The movements are characteristic of taijiquan, and are performed at a pace that allows competitors to illustrate taijiquan principles and energies (neither too fast nor too slow).

Protocol. Participants bow to the chief judge from opposite sides of the field, and after being acknowledged will move directly into starting positions without hesitation or adjustment. At the beginning of their performance, partners bow to one another and timing begins. At the conclusion of their routine, partners bow to one another (at which point timing will end), walk out of the field together, and await their score at the edge of the field. When they have received their final score, participants will bow again to the chief judge.

Scoring Range. Entrants will be judged using the scoring range for advanced level performances: 8.0-9.5. Partners will also receive evaluations from each evaluator.

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## **Part 4: PROTESTS AND ARBITRATION**

Matters eligible for arbitration include errors of administration, procedure, or fact, including registration errors, enrollment in incorrect division, misidentification of an athlete, scores incorrectly recorded, mathematical errors, time keeping errors, timing signals incorrectly presented, interference from events or persons outside the ring, inappropriate actions by an official.

Matters not eligible for arbitration include requests with regard to another athlete's bout, performance, or scores. Nor may an athlete request reexamination of his/her bout or performance with the purpose of obtaining a different evaluation or score. In fairness to all athletes, scores must be given by the judges based on their observation during the actual bout or performance and from their particular vantage point and with the general framework of the tournament in progress.

Requests for arbitration must be submitted in writing by the competitor or his/her designated representative and must be made in good faith. Only one person may sign a request for arbitration. The writer should stick to provable matters of fact and should not venture opinions. The request should state clearly and specifically what error he/she believes was committed, who committed it, and what action or changes he/she requests.

For forms competition, the competitor must notify the chief judge prior to the end of his/her event that a formal arbitration request will be submitted. The chief judge will then notify all competitors of a delay in final results, pending arbitration. The written request for arbitration must be submitted within half an hour following the incident in question. In push-hands competition, where subsequent matches would be affected, the competitor must notify the referee of his/her intent to protest or seek arbitration prior to the start of the next tier of matches in the same division, and a written request for arbitration must be submitted within half an hour following the incident in question. Protests presented after this time will not be considered. Once all bouts in a weight division have been completed, no changes in outcome will be made.

The competitor must pay a filing fee of \$100 cash along with the written arbitration request, which will be refunded if the decision favors the competitor. The chief judge/referee will notify the tournament director, who will submit the written request to the tournament arbitrator(s).

The arbitrator is an impartial individual empowered to examine the facts and render a decision. This official should be separate from all other tournament officials. The arbitrator may review official records, examine equipment, interview appropriate personnel, and take any other steps necessary to a thorough investigation. The arbitrator then states his/her findings and decision in writing, responding to the specifics of the matter. The decision of the arbitrator is final and binding on all parties.

Officials will treat as confidential all matters related to cases of arbitration.

(Part 4 of these rules is standard in many tournament formats. See for example: "Competition Rules and Regulations," U.S.A. Wushu Kungfu Federation, Release #3, August 1996)