



CMA Rules

Point Sparring

The sparring guidelines at Challenge Martial Arts are based on the ATA traditional point sparring rules and procedures. Fairness, integrity, and respect are crucial to safe and successful sparring and are expected of all Competitors, Judges, and Spectators. It is the intention of CMA that all involved in our sparring events (whether classes, tests, or tournaments) conduct themselves honorably, and that mistakes be met with both accountability and grace.

SPECTATORS

- Spectators are encouraged to clap and cheer, but are not allowed to coach or heckle. This includes parents, coaches, and other students. Misbehavior from friends, family, and coaches/instructors may result in warnings or disqualification of Competitors.
- Spectators, including parents, instructors, and coaches, are not permitted in or around the sparring ring during an active match.
- In general, parents and other observers are expected to understand that they do not have all of the information about what is going on in a match and that the Judges are acting with knowledge, experience, and integrity. Judging a sparring match is complex and subjective, which is why there are a total of five Judges per match. Mistakes may be made; nevertheless, respect for the Judging process is crucial.
- Urgent, significant concerns of Spectators may be brought up with the highest rank on the floor who is not currently judging, or, at a Tournament event, by approaching the Event Director's table (which is usually centrally located towards the back). Contact should be as respectful and low key as possible.

GEAR

- All Competitors must wear required sparring gear.
- Required sparring gear includes: hand and foot pads, arm and shin guards, a chest protector, helmet with a face shield, mouth guard, and, for males only, groin protection.
 - Black Belts may be exempt from sparring gear requirements during classes, but should defer to the direction of the highest rank on the floor.

- Groin protection and mouth guards are recommended but are optional during regular training practice. They are, however, **required** during testing and tournaments.
- In sparring **classes**, students are required to keep their helmets on during training activities—unless they have explicit permission to remove them. Judging is not considered a “training activity,” therefore, students may remove their helmets during judging; the helmet, however, must be kept well away from the sparring square.

COMPETITOR/MATCH PROTOCOLS

- Each round is a maximum of 2 minutes, with time running continuously unless the Center Judge calls for the time to be stopped; time resumes at the Center Judge’s indication.
- Competitors respond with “Yes, Sir/Ma’am!” when called to the ring, immediately run to the edge of the ring, bow, and take their designated place in the center of the ring. Competitors face each other in the Set position. The Center Judge will direct them to bow to the Judge/Instructor (Competitors bow to the Center Judge as representative of all Judges), to bow to each other, and to step back into a sparring/fighting stance (either foot may be forward, but the step must be back).
- Competitors may ask the Center Judge to suspend the match in order to speak to the Center Judge regarding an issue if the issue is urgent and important. Such issues include safety and health concerns, such as asthma attacks, equipment malfunctions, fear that the Opponent is using excessive power or dangerous, uncontrolled techniques, etc. If the issue is not addressed to the Competitor’s satisfaction, then the Competitor may withdraw from the match, thus forfeiting the match.
- There is to be no “cross talk” between the Competitors during the match. This applies to negative comments as well as to positive/encouraging ones. This also applies during actual fighting as well as during wait times and suspended times. For the duration of the match, Competitors may only address the Center Judge, from the time they enter until their match is declared over, except for the opening and closing bows to one another, during which they may say something along the lines of, “Good luck, sir/ma’am,” “Congratulations, sir/ma’am,” or any formal words of respect or greeting.
- Competitors are also not allowed to communicate with anyone outside of the ring during the match. This includes coaching-related questions, show-boating, etc.

- When a Judge calls “Break!”, both Competitors immediately stop and return to their place in the center of the ring and take a Set position; there is no discussion or talk from the Competitors (to each other, under their breath to themselves, to Corner Judges, or to the Spectators); all Judges immediately place their forearms together at chest level and parallel to the ground, ready to vote at the call of the Center Judge. Any Competitor or Corner Judge who has questions or needs to address an issue should bring it to the Center Judge’s attention at this time.
- If a Competitor is injured or falls, the Opponent must turn away and kneel on one knee until told otherwise by a Judge.
- The winner of the round is the first Competitor to reach 5 points or the Competitor with the most points at the end of 2 minutes.
 - Ties are determined by “sudden victory” competition—the first Competitor to score a point wins. There is no time limit on “sudden victory” competition.
- Once a winner has been determined, the Center Judge will instruct the Competitors to bow to each other, and then to bow to the Judges (Competitors bow to the Center Judge as representative of all Judges). Competitors are then dismissed and may leave the ring.

POINTS

- Light to moderate contact is allowed for scoring points. **Excessive force is grounds for penalty points or disqualification.**
- Although in most matches, moderate contact is preferred, contact is **NOT** always required in order to score points. In the interest of safety, if a Judge/Instructor believes that the technique was close enough to score, the Opponent did not adequately block or evade, and contact was *intentionally* not made due to exceptional control by the attacking Competitor for the safety of the Opponent, then a point may be awarded when no contact has been made.
- 1 point
 - Non-jumping or jumping hand techniques
 - Non-jumping foot techniques to the front torso
- 2 points
 - Non-jumping foot techniques to the head. [In ATA rules, foot techniques to the neck, but not the throat, are allowed also; however, neck strikes are **not** allowed at CMA.]
 - Jumping foot techniques to the front torso.
- 3 points

- Jumping foot techniques to the head.
- In order for a technique to qualify for a point as a jump kick, the non-kicking foot must be off the ground at the time that the kick makes contact with (or comes close to) a legal target area.
- Techniques do not score if the attacking Competitor falls during the execution of the technique, nor should a point be given to a technique that was delivered while the Competitor was unbalanced or otherwise out of control of their body. If the Opponent falls, however, the Competitor may still be awarded points for a successful, controlled technique to a legal target area.
- No technique can score if any part of the Competitor other than the feet is touching the ground.
- A Competitor that receives a warning may not be issued a point at the same time; however, the Opponent of the Competitor who received the warning may receive a point at the same time, in addition to any point that he/she received from the warning.
- No point may be counted for any technique delivered after a Judge calls, "Break!"

WARNINGS

- There are two types of warnings: noncontact and contact.
- NON-CONTACT WARNINGS
 - Examples
 - Any unsportsmanlike conduct, such as taunting, speaking disrespectfully to the Judges, complaining about judging calls, repeatedly striking neutral areas, etc.
 - Inappropriate Spectator behaviors that are associated with a specific Competitor
 - Techniques that do not make contact, but are directed toward or come close to an illegal target area, including fakes/feints and kicks thrown with excessive power
 - Illegal techniques used as feints, even if they are directed toward a legal target area; including stomps, head butts, spearhands, elbows, etc.
 - Running out of the ring, falling down, or turning the back to avoid being scored on
 - Delaying the match (i.e. by being slow to return to their position, slow getting up, etc.)
 - Coaching from the sidelines
 - Penalties
 - First infraction receives a warning.

- Additional infractions result in a penalty point awarded to the Competitor's Opponent.
- ***Disqualification is at the discretion of the Center Judge.***
- CONTACT WARNINGS
 - Examples
 - Excessive contact—strikes, kicks, or blocks that are delivered with an unnecessary amount of power
 - Any hand techniques to the head
 - Any technique made to an illegal target area (i.e. the back & below the waist)
 - Illegal techniques that make contact anywhere (such as spearhands, elbow/knee strikes, head butts, etc.)
 - Grabbing or pushing an Opponent. (Push kicks are the only exception.)
 - Penalties
 - Penalties may be given even for non-intentional contact if the Judges do not consider that all of the requirements under the No-Fault Rule (see below) have been met.
 - 1st infraction: penalty point awarded to Competitor's Opponent
 - 2nd infraction: ***automatic disqualification of Competitor***
- No-Fault Rule
 - If a Competitor throws a technique that is *intended for a legal target area*, but *due to actions outside of his/her control*, strikes or nearly strikes the Opponent in an illegal target area, the Competitor might not be penalized. Whether or not the Competitor *recognized what was about to happen and tried to further control* (stop or redirect) the technique is an important factor for the judges to consider when determining if the no-fault rule should be exercised. The Competitor's *attitude* is also taken into account.

LEGAL & ILLEGAL TARGET AREAS

- Hand and foot techniques may be delivered to the front of the torso, which is defined as starting at the ***bottom*** of the belt and going up to the ***collarbone***, and from one ***side seam*** of the uniform to the ***other side seam***. (In practice, this includes nearly the entire chest protector, but might not include the bottom of it if it goes lower than the belt, or the entirety of the side sections if they wrap around to the back. This also means that if the chest protector scoops down below the collarbone, then there may be an unprotected area at the top of the chest that ***is allowed*** as a target.)
- Foot techniques may also be delivered to the head, including the front, sides, back, and top of the head.

- Neutral areas are areas of the body that are not illegal to contact, but do not score points. The arms and top of the shoulders are neutral areas. A raised leg is also a neutral area.
 - Neutral areas may be struck, kicked, blocked, parried, etc.
 - Actions to the neutral areas may still be called as a warning if they are otherwise illegal or are delivered with excessive force. Repeated, intentional strikes/kicks to neutral areas may also warrant a warning as unsportsmanlike.
- No techniques of any kind are allowed to the neck, the back, or below the Belt.
 - All of the neck is an illegal area—no strikes or kicks can be directed anywhere on the neck.
 - The back includes just behind the side seams of a uniform and around the back. The back does not include the back of the head, which is a legal target area for kicks.

LEGAL & ILLEGAL TECHNIQUES

- Legal hand techniques are limited to: punch (including jab, cross, reverse punch, & side punch), backfist, hammerfist, ridgehand, and knifehand.
- Only the use of hands and feet are allowed—no elbows, shins, knees, or head butts are allowed.
- Blind hand and foot techniques are all illegal. A technique is considered “blind” if the attacker is not looking at the target at the time the technique is thrown, or if the Competitor cannot be reasonably expected to see the technique land. Examples include: spinning backfist and spinning heel kicks if the Competitor does not turn their head to look as they are turning, and hook punches to the Opponent’s chest when the Competitor is standing behind the Opponent.
- Any hand technique to the head is illegal.
- Fingertip techniques, such as spearhand, are not allowed.
- No axe kicks are allowed.
- Any kicks delivered with excessive power, even if they do not make contact, may be considered dangerous and illegal.
 - Example 1: Back leg kicks swung hard in order to reach the head (even if they fail to reach the head)
 - Example 2: Snapping front kicks that would, if carried through, have to pass “through” the groin in order to reach a legal target area
- No grabs, sweeps, stomps, shoving, or leg snaking are allowed.
- No takedowns are allowed, and if a Competitor ends up on the ground, no further attack may be made; the Opponent must immediately step back. If the

Competitor remains on the ground due to injury, the Opponent must turn away and take a knee until a Judge indicates otherwise. The Opponent is not to approach the down Competitor even to offer aid or apology without permission from the Center Judge.

OUT OF BOUNDS

- An out of bounds Competitor cannot score. An out of bounds Competitor, however, **can be** scored upon.
- A Competitor is considered **completely out of bounds** when **any part of at least one foot** is touching the edge of the ring boundary or beyond.
- Judges/Instructors may tap the floor if they see a Competitor out of bounds in order to point it out to the Competitor.
- A Competitor is **not required** to allow an out of bounds Opponent to return into bounds. The competition continues with a Competitor out of bounds as long the Judges/Instructors see no danger to the Competitors or Spectators.
- If the Competitor who is out of bounds with a single foot picks that foot up to kick, he/she is now considered in bounds (because the foot is no longer on the mat outside of bounds and the base foot is in bounds) and may score with the kick.
- A Competitor can score on an out of bounds Opponent with a jump kick if the technique is initiated inside the ring and the scoring occurs while both feet are still in the air.

JUDGING

- **The most important purpose of the Judges is the safety of the Competitors.**
- Although judging is, by nature, somewhat subjective, judges should strive to be impartial.
- Judges must see the contact point of a strike or kick in order to vote for it (point or warning). Believing that the strike or kick most likely made contact is **insufficient for voting**; if the Judge does not actually see the contact, then they must signal “No See.” Hearing a contact without seeing it does **NOT** count.
- SIGNALS
 - Immediately when a break is called, all Corner Judges take their position on their corners, standing with their forearms together and parallel to the ground at shoulder height, and wait for the Center Judge to call for the point or warning. Corner Judges must not vote until the Center Judge calls for the vote. This is the moment to call out “Warning!” or “Conference!” if the Corner Judge is not simply voting for a point.

- Judging signals include: **Verify** (Point or Warning), **Disagree** (No Point or No Warning), **No See**, and **Conference**
 - A point is indicated by raising a hand in the direction of the Competitor that the Judge wishes to award the point to.
 - If a Judge wishes to indicate two or three points, then they hold those number of fingers out on the signaling hand.
 - A warning is indicated by lowering a hand in the direction of the Competitor that the Judge wishes to issue a warning to.
 - No Point and No Warning are both indicated by extending both arms, which are crossed at the wrist/forearm, low (in a low X block position).
 - No See is indicated by the Judge crossing both open hands in front of their own eyes.
 - A request for a conference with the Center Judge should be made before the point or warning is called. The Corner Judge may call out “Conference” and raise a hand to gain the Center’s attention.
- **PROTOCOL**
 - If a Competitor requests to speak with the Center Judge, the Center should pause the timing and address the Competitor as privately as necessary. Judges are encouraged to be considerate, respectful, and fair. The Center Judge’s decisions are final. If Competitors disagree with how the issue is addressed, they may withdraw from the match.
 - Judges may move side to side along the outer edge of the ring up to half way across either side of their corner, but must stay out of the way of the Competitors.
 - Judges should be prepared to get out of the way of the Competitors if they move towards the corners—Judges are not immovable posts.
 - Any Judge may call, “Break!” to stop the action. This may be to call for a point or a warning or for another reason such as a perceived safety issue. If the break is called for a warning, the Judge who calls for the break must also immediately call, “Warning!” (A warning call means that the Judge saw a Competitor do something illegal.)
 - When, “Break!” is called, Competitors immediately stop their activities and return to their original position in the center of the ring. They stand at “set” until the Center Judge indicates otherwise.
 - Corner Judges must wait in their “ready” position for the direction of the Center Judge to vote, at which time each Judge will indicate one of the following: point, no point, warning, no warning, no see, or conference.
 - This is the time to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the Center Judge—**before voting occurs**.

- All Judges, including the Center & Corner Judges, are required to show their vote at the same time.
- VOTING
 - Every Judge's vote carries the same weight.
 - Points, warnings, and penalties are awarded based on majority. "No See" votes do not count at all—neither for nor against.
 - If only a single Judge indicates either a point or a warning and all other Judges indicate "No See", then no point or warning will be issued and "No Confirmation" will be announced.
 - In the case of a warning that is not given due to No Confirmation, points may then be awarded to either Competitor if a Judge has also called for points.
 - If there is a tie among the Judges, then no point or penalty is awarded (unless the tie is for a variation of point numbers—see below).
 - If Judges vote for different points for the same Competitor, then the highest common score called by the majority of Judges is awarded. (In the case of a tie, the higher point value is awarded.)
 - Example 1: 2 Judges call for 3 points, 2 Judges call for 2 points, and 1 Judge calls for 1 point → Competitor is awarded 3 points
 - Example 2: 3 Judges call for 2 points and 2 Judges call for 1 point → Competitor is awarded 2 points
 - Example 3: 2 Judges call for 2 points and 3 judges call for 1 point → Competitor is awarded 1 point
 - Example 4: 2 Judges call No See, 2 Judges call for 2 points, 1 Judge calls 1 point → Competitor is awarded 2 points
 - Example 5: 2 Judges call for 2 points, 1 Judge calls for 1 point, 1 Judge calls No Point, and 1 Judge calls No See → Competitor is awarded 2 points
 - A vote of "No Point" or "No Warning" means that the Judge saw the technique but does not feel that it qualified as a point or warning. Possible reasons for this may include but are not limited to the following.
 - No Point
 - The technique was not close enough to the Opponent.
 - The technique was blocked by the Opponent.
 - The technique was weakly or poorly thrown.
 - The Competitor was not in control when the technique was thrown (too much power, off balance, etc.).

- The technique was thrown when the Competitor was out of bounds.
- No Warning
 - The hit/kick was hard because both Competitors were moving together (therefore, like a head-on collision, the power of each was additive, although neither individual was striking/kicking too hard on their own).
 - The hit/kick made contact with or went towards an illegal area through no fault of the Competitor throwing it (most likely, the Competitor's Opponent moved swiftly and unexpected) – see the “No-Fault Rule” above.
 - The Judge disagrees that the infraction was made. For example, the Judge believes that the hit/kick/feint was actually directed at a legal target or that the technique was not blind.
- “No See” means that, because the Judge did not see the technique make contact, they cannot Verify or Disagree with the call.
 - This may happen due to several reasons, including that a Competitor was facing away from the Judge, a Competitor's arm or leg was blocking the Judge's view, or the Judge was looking at the one Competitor when the event in question occurred on the other Competitor.
 - “No See” does not count for or against points or warnings; it removes the Judge from the voting tally.