



REGULATIONS FOR KATA

The IJF Kata Commission is responsible for all IJF kata activities.

B1.1 Eligibility to Participate

National federations must follow IJF nationality rules – refer to Section 1.7

Number of entries can be found under Section 4.4

Participants must be a minimum of 15 years of age in the calendar year of the competition. They shall have a minimum of 1st dan for seniors age group. For the U21 age group both tori and uke must be under 21 years old in the calendar year of the competition and shall have a minimum of 1st kyu. For the U18 age group both tori and uke must be under 18 years old in the calendar year of the competition and shall have a minimum of 3rd kyu (green belt).

Athletes can participate in two (2) kata.

Participants will have the opportunity to play the same role in the second kata or reverse roles or to do the second kata with a different partner. U21 athlete can participate for his second kata in the senior division in a different kata than the one performed in U21. U18 athlete can participate for his second kata in the junior or senior division in a different kata than the one performed in U18. The nage-no-kata 5 sets is considered a different kata than the nage-no-kata 3 sets.

A pair can be made up of athletes of any gender.

B1.2 Kata

Seniors group:

A pair can do the following kata: nage-no-kata, katame-no-kata, ju-no-kata, Kodokan goshin-jutsu, kime-no-kata, itsutsu-no-kata and koshiki-no-kata.

Pairs participating in Kodokan-goshin-jutsu and kime-no-kata are responsible to bring their weapons.

For itsutsu-no-kata and koshiki-no-kata, tori must be 6th dan and up and uke must be at least black belt.

U21 group:

A pair can do the following kata: nage-no-kata, katame-no-kata and ju-no-kata.

U18 group:

A pair can do the following kata: nage-no-kata (first 3 sets), katame-no-kata and ju-no-kata. Athletes should prepare to do either role in nage-no-kata. The role of tori and uke will be decided randomly at the draw.

B1.3 Accreditation

The times and place for check-in and accreditation will be specified in the event outlines.

Number of accreditations for officials:

- One – three (1-3) pairs: five (5) officials
- Four – ten (4-10) pairs: ten (10) officials

B1.4 Draw

The draw to establish the groups and the sort of each group will be done the day before the competition.

The top six (6) pairs on the ranking list will be considered seeded and will be divided into two (2) groups if there are 17 pairs or less and divided into three (3) groups if there are 18 pairs and more.

Seeded pairs for two (2) pools will be divided as follow:

A 1st, 4th, 6th B 2nd, 3rd, 5th

Seeded pairs for three (3) pools will be divided as follow:

A 1st, 6th B 2nd, 5th C 3rd, 4th

The draw of the finals will be done in the sports hall after the preliminary rounds.

B1.5 Ranking Points

A pair can earn points in the following events: Continental Open, Continental Championships, Kata World Series (KWS) and World Kata Championships.

Ranking points for kata pairs				
Placing	Continental Open	Kata World Series	Continental Championships	World Championships
1 st place	350	700	1000	1500
2 nd place	250	500	750	1000
3 rd place	150	300	500	600
4 th to 6 th place	75	150	300	300
Participation	25	50	100	100

The lists are updated following ranking events where athletes can earn points. The ranking point system takes into consideration the five (5) best results annually (same partner and same role, except for U18 where same partner can be different role).

Annually or the following year, for the same event, regardless the number of weeks (e.g. World Championships 2023 held on 28-29 October 2023 and World Championships 2024 held on 9-10 November 2024 - a span of 54 weeks), points either reduce or expire.

The dividing line for reduction or expiration is as follow:

100% period

- Events taken place in the actual year.
- Last World Kata Championships (e.g. 2025).

50% period

- Events taken place in the previous year (e.g. KWS Louvain 2025 if there is a KWS Louvain 2026).
- Previous World Kata Championships (e.g. 2024).
- If an event is not reconducted, points are divided by 50% at the date the event was conducted on the previous year.



If two (2) or more pairs have an equal number of total kata ranking list points, the higher ranking will be decided by:

- The highest sum of the current points from all World Kata Championships.
- The highest sum of the current points from all Continental Championships.
- The highest sum of the current points from all Kata World Series.
- The highest sum of the current points from all Continental events.

B1.6 Competition Formula

Kata will be divided into two (2) groups for kata with 17 pairs or less: the top three (3) pairs with the maximum points from each group (that is six (6) pairs for each kata) will compete in the finals.

Kata will be divided into three (3) groups for kata with 18 pairs or more: the top three (3) pairs with the maximum points from each group (that is nine (9) pairs for each kata) will compete in the finals.

If the number of pairs is less than ten (10), there will be only one (1) group: the top six (6) pairs from the group will compete in the final. A pair who had a forgotten technique or major mistake in the preliminaries will not participate in the final.

Three (3) or four (4) mats will be used for the preliminary rounds and the finals.

B1.7 Judges and the System of Judging

At the World kata championships, the contests will be judged by IJF qualified kata judges. The number of judges per national federation is limited to:

- Participating countries may enter four (4) judges.
- Non-participating countries may enter three (3) judges.

At the Kata World Series events, the contests will be judged by either IJF or Continental qualified kata judges. There is no limit to the number of judges per national federation at Kata World Series events.

A judge cannot be an athlete.

The IJF “2025 Criteria for Kata Evaluation” will be used to judge the kata with reference also to the official Kodokan kata textbooks.

Judges must attend the technical meeting the afternoon before the first day of competition to confirm participation as judge in these championships. Time and place are stated in the event outlines.

For each performance, the five judges will award points on the official IJF electronic scoring system.

Three scores will be added up to obtain the score of a technique (the maximum score and the minimum score will be cancelled for each technique). The final score of the whole kata will be the sum of the scores for each technique.

The evaluation of every technique of kata must consider the principle and the opportunity of execution: the evaluation (including the opening and closing ceremony) must be comprehensive. In the nage-no-kata, right and left techniques will be evaluated comprehensively (only one score).

Definition of mistakes:

- Forgotten technique/major mistake - will score zero and in addition the total final score of the kata pair will be halved. If more than one technique is forgotten the score for that technique will also be zero but the total final score for the pair will not be halved again.
- Big mistake - when the execution of the principle is incorrect (5 points are deducted, and the maximum number of crosses is 1).
- Medium mistake - when one or more elements of the principle are not applied in the correct way (3 points are deducted and the maximum number of crosses is 1).
- Small mistake - imperfection in the application of the technique (1 point is deducted and the maximum number of crosses is 2).

The total score for each technique can be increased or decreased by 0.5 point adding in the column of the "correction value" a "+" or a "-".

The five (5) judges will be positioned on the shomen side and they will sit at approximately 1.25 m apart, the central judge will be seated at the center of the competition area. The rule of neutrality will be applied so the judge must be of a different nationality than the competing pair. The position of the five judges will be the same throughout the competition. If a judge is temporarily replaced, he will take place in the same original position when he returns to the competition. The judges must take up their position before the arrival of the pair in the competition area.

The pair enters and leaves the mat at the opposite side of shomen: the beginning and end of kata (opening and closing ceremony) is at an 8 m or 10 m distance apart depending on the dimension of the tatami (bow to the tatami). Any behaviour of tori or uke inside the competition area that is contrary to the spirit of kata will result in disqualification.

The pair who has the better score will win.

In case of equal score between pairs, the following criteria will be applied as a tie breaker:

- Total number of big mistakes of all five (5) judges will be considered - the pair who made the fewer big mistakes wins.
- If still equal, total number of medium mistakes of all five (5) judges will be considered - the pair who made the fewer medium mistakes wins.
- If still equal, total number of small mistakes of all five (5) judges will be considered – the pair who made the fewer small mistakes wins.

If two pairs, both placing 3rd in the eliminations (or 6th place in case of only one (1) group) are still equal after all the above-mentioned criteria, both pairs will qualify for the final. If two pairs placing 1st, 2nd or 3rd during the final are still equal after the above-mentioned criteria, the kata will be repeated so that the medals can be assigned.

Any material or product that might give an advantage is prohibited.

B1.8 Competition Area

The competition area dimension is 10 m x 10 m for world championships or 8 m x 8 m for other events and shall be covered by tatami. Two strips of visible white adhesive tape, approximately 5 cm wide and 50 cm long, shall be fixed 3 m apart from the centre, to indicate the starting position of tori and uke. The centre of the competition area shall be indicated with a strip of adhesive tape of the same colour. The safety area between and around the mat must be a minimum of 2 m. The IJF Kata Commission Chair or his representative can modify the competition area dimension.

B1.9 Awarding Ceremony

For each kata, the pair with the maximum points in the final will be awarded the gold medal, the pair with the second most points will be awarded the silver medal; and the third pair, the bronze medal.

Medals will be awarded following a performance by a pair according to standings regardless the number of pairs.

At the World Kata Championships, all finalists, including 4th to 9th place will receive a certificate.

B1.10 Coaches

Coaches will be admitted, but coaching is not allowed. The coach's chair will be at the center on the opposite side of shomen.

B1.11 Medical Situation

Minor injury and illness:

- In case of a minor injury like bloody wound, broken nails or a problem with contact lenses etc., and according to the decision of the judges, the kata performance will be stopped, and the athlete will be assisted by a doctor out of the competition area if needed. The competition will continue, and the pair will repeat entirely the kata after the last pair has performed.
- In case another minor injury happens to the same athlete during the second performance of the kata or after a forgotten technique or a major mistake, the pair will be given a score of 0 for the technique where the injury occurred as well as for the following techniques including the closing ceremony. A ranking will be assigned to them in the pool or in the final. If ranking them allows them to participate in the final, and they are not physically able to compete, the next pair in the ranking from the pool will participate in the final.

Major injury or illness:

- When tori or uke is unable to continue to perform the kata because of an injury, illness or accident during the execution of the kata, the pair will be given a score of 0 for the technique where the injury occurred as well as for the following techniques including the closing ceremony. A ranking will be assigned to them in the pool or in the final. If ranking them allows them to participate in the final, and they are not physically able to compete, the next pair in the ranking from the pool will participate in the final.

B1.12 Judogi Control

Participants must wear a white judogi, a black belt and a backnumber in accordance with the IJF Judogi rules (refer to Appendix C). A red and white belt must be worn by tori for itsutsu-no-kata and koshiki-no-kata.

A brown belt without an IJF label is authorised for the U21 age group. A green, blue or brown belt without an IJF label is authorised for the U18 age group. A red and white belt without an IJF label is authorised for koshiki-no-kata and itsutsu-no-kata.