

GSBA Tournament Rules & Equipment Requirements

Last Updated: 08/18/20

SAYAW/FORMS

- **Traditional Forms:** Music is not allowed in Traditional Forms divisions. Kicks should be to the belt or below.
- **Open Forms:** Music, high kicks, changing weapons, etc., are all allowed in Open Forms divisions. Music used must be provided by competitor.
- **Time Limit:** For Traditional and Open Forms, 1 minute minimum and 2 minute maximum time limit per form. For Team Form, 3 minute minimum and 5 minute maximum time limit per form. There will be a ONE point deduction for every 15 seconds under minimum or over the max.
- **All Forms Divisions:** Competitors can compete in both Traditional and Open forms. Only traditional weapons or items traditionally used as weapons can be included in form. Weapon use should constitute at least 80% of the form. Dropping of a weapon is scored as part of form and not a disqualification but does result in a 1 point deduction per judge. Competitors should finish near their starting position, unless judges are notified prior to the start of the form. Bladed weapons should be dulled or wooden. Competitors are responsible for damage to gym. Uniforms or costumes should be relative to the form being presented. Forms competitors may wear non-marking tennis, wrestling shoes, or bare feet.

LIVE STICK SPARRING

1. **All Live Stick Divisions:** Competitors can only compete in one single stick division, one double stick division, and one team fighting division. Fighting up one weight class is allowed but fighting in a division below your weight class is not permitted.
2. **Required Equipment:** non-marking tennis or wrestling shoes, helmets, body armour, groin protector (males), stickfighting gloves and tournament sticks.
3. **Recommended:** Mouthguard, elbow, knee, thigh and shin pads, forearm pads, headscarves or bandanas, extra sticks and plastic chest protector (females). Towels to wipe off equipment.
4. **Additional Equipment Info:**
 - Standard Ring size will be 20' X 20' but should venue space be limited, may be reduced to 18' X 18'.
 - The Tournament Organizers will provide the competition stick. A personal stick can be substituted with prior approval of the Referee.
 - Tournament Stick should be skinless and have the following specifications:
 - Length shall be no more than 70 centimeters = 28"
 - Weight shall not be more than 200 grams = 7 ounces
 - Diameter shall not be more than 2.6 centimeters = 1"
 - If borrowing Tournament supplied body armor, short sleeved or long sleeved T-shirts must be worn for sparring. Sleeveless T-shirts are not permitted under borrowed armor. If borrowing Tournament supplied helmets, towels may not be worn under the helmet.
5. **Competitor Match Support:** Competitors may have a maximum of two people in their corner.
6. **Match Duration:** All matches will consist of three rounds with a set rest interval, the duration of each based on age group as listed below.
 - Age 6-9 30-second rounds, with a 30-second rest interval
 - Age 10-13 45-second rounds, with a 45-second rest interval
 - Age 14 – 17 60-second rounds, with a 30-second rest interval
 - Adults: 18-39 60-second rounds, with a 30-second rest interval
 - Seniors: 40-49 60-second rounds, with a 45-second rest interval
 - Super Seniors 50+ 45-second rounds, with a 45-second rest interval

Legal Targets:

- Top, front & sides of helmet, front & sides of thighs & body are legitimate targets.
- Both arms & hands from the shoulders to the fingertips are all legitimate targets, including if the hand and/or arm is struck while being used for blocking.
- Back of Body and Helmet may be hit indirectly while face to face with opponent (Wittiks/Circular strikes).
- The Back of the Body or Helmet MAY NOT be struck if the opponent has turned more than 90 degrees away.
- Strikes to the groin, the knees or below are NOT LEGAL. No penalty will be assessed if strike was determined to be “accidental” and there were no injuries caused but at the Referee’s discretion, a warning may be given to control the match. If the Judge or Referee has determined an illegal strike was “intentional”, the competitor will be immediately disqualified, whether or not there were any injuries.

7. Prohibited Actions:

- Two-handed strikes, thrusting, striking with the butt end of the stick, or strikes with any part of the body.
- Strikes to an unprotected head, neck or hand, or hitting while holding the opponent's stick.
- Grappling, wrestling, foot sweeps, takedowns or throws, spinning or dropping to prone or kneeling position
- Pushing is not allowed. A fighter MAY push themselves to arm's length from their opponent.
- Running out of the ring to avoid the action of the fight, or simply evading the action with no offense. A fighter MAY use the ring to control the action, but MAY NOT use the ring to avoid the action.
- Competitors may not check the helmet or face mask of the opponent.
- Competitors may not hook or hold the opponent's weapon or body, except for an immediate disarm attempt

8. Stoppage: To signal surrender, equipment failure or injury, competitors will raise both hands over their head and back away from the action. DO NOT TURN AWAY! DO NOT BEND OVER! The Referee will pause Match time to quickly address the issue, replacing equipment if necessary. The Referee will also stop the match for any of the following reasons:

- If any part of the body other than the soles of the feet touch the ground.
- If a competitor is leaving the competition area to avoid the fight.
- In the event that a stick is broken, there is a disarm, rule violation, or a safety concern.

9. Rules Violations:

- The first rule violation will receive a warning.
- The next rule violation will receive a penalty point deduction.
- Continuing rules violations or extreme cases may result in a disqualification.
- The above are guidelines but if there is a BLATANT disregard of the rules or when a violation has caused an injury, the referee may take immediate action including disqualification whether or not there have been prior violations.

10. 2-Strike Rule: Competitors MAY NOT strike more than twice in quick succession, the same target with the same type of strike. Repetitive striking in such a manner will not be scored by the judges. Three or more strikes in quick succession to different targets are allowed. Multiple strikes to the same target that are delivered differently are allowed.

11. 4-Second Rule: Competitors MAY NOT exhibit a total lack of defense. If a fighter fails to attempt to evade or block or otherwise minimize the effect of strikes for more than four seconds continuously, they will be warned, and any attacks made during that period will be ignored by judges.

12. **Disarms:** A Disarm is defined by a loss of control of a weapon, whether intentional or accidental, as demonstrated by the opponent's complete control over it, or the weapon hitting the floor.
- Holding the opponent's stick is only allowed to attempt an immediate disarm.
 - Joints MAY NOT be locked or twisted for a disarm and failed disarms must be released immediately.
 - In all Live Stick divisions, disarms shall be scored as part of the match and a point will be awarded to the opponent of the competitor who is disarmed. Three disarms in any match will result in an immediate TKO and end of match.
 - In Double Stick Sparring Divisions, disarms will be scored the same; however the loss of one stick will not necessarily stop the action. Referees will remove the stick from the competition area for safety *as the action continues*. ONLY after there has been a break in action will the referee note the disarm to the judges, return the stick to the competitor and resume action. The loss of both sticks will result in an immediate TKO.
13. **Scoring Criteria:** Scoring in all live stick sparring divisions is based on a 10-point must system, prior to penalties or disarms.
- Each Judge will award 10 points to the better fighter, and 9 points or less to the other fighter. (Less than 9 points would indicate a severe mismatch of demonstrated skill.)
 - Penalties for rule violations or disarms will then be deducted from that score.
 - To score at the end of each Round, Judges will consider the following criteria, in this order:
 1. **4-Second Rule.** Strikes made violating this rule will not be considered for scoring.
 2. **Greatest Number of Effective Hits.** Greatest Number of Effective Hits is determined based on demonstrated power and accuracy. Effectively: which fighter did the most damage?
 3. **2-Strike Rule.** Striking that violates this rule will not be considered in scoring
 4. **Other Considerations.** If the Greatest Number of Effective Hits does not provide a clear winner, and no outstanding penalties sway the decision, the decision will only then be based on the following considerations:
 - Ring Generalship
 - Variety of Target Areas
 - Variety of Tactics
 - Technique Defense
 5. **Tie-Breaker:** If at the end of 3 rounds, the Judges have still scored a Draw, a 4th round will be fought and winner declared by Judges show of hands. In the 4th round, the Judges "**must**" select a Winner based on overall performance in the round utilizing our standard criteria, (i.e. Ring Generalship, Variety of Target Areas, Variety of Tactics and Technique Defense). There can be "**no**" Draw in the 4th round. Note, a disarm in the 4th round would only end the match "if" it was the 3rd disarm which results in a TKO, otherwise the disarm will be scored as part of the above criteria.

PADDED WEAPON SPARRING

- **PADDED ENGAGEMENT EQUIPMENT:**
 - GSBA Standard headgear, the soft foam type with full face protection is required. Any alternative helmet must be approved by the Tournament Director “**prior**” to use in GSBA Tournaments. If you want to use a “non-standard” helmet, contact the tournament staff and provide photos and/or links to the helmet in question. We strongly recommend you do this far enough in advance that should the proposed helmet “**not be approved**”, you have sufficient time make other preparations.
 - Neck protection is required: Soft, hockey type protectors.
 - Recommend competitor bring their own headgear and neck protection but it must be comparable to Tournament provided gear.
 - Tournament Host may have some limited headgear and neck protection available that can be borrowed during the match.
 - Tournament Host will provide some padded sticks of select sizes and nunchakus if permitted by Host Country. Personal equipment may be used with prior approval and must be comparable to provided equipment.
 - Mouth guards are mandatory.
 - Groin Protection is mandatory for males, (hard shell cups) and recommended for females (padded type).
 - Hand protection is required and Live Stick gloves may be used.
 - Elbow/forearm and knee/shin protection of a soft-type is recommended. No hard shell padding.
 - No “over padding” is allowed. The purpose of the protective equipment in this type of competition is to provide for safety, not to eliminate all pain.
 - Thinly padded chest protection *MAY* be provided at the tournament for females.
- **Competitor Match Support:** No coach or corner support permitted for padded engagements.
- **Match Duration for All Divisions:**
 - Each match will consist of a single round, 2 minutes in duration, for all age groups.
 - Competitors are required to wear a padded helmet with face shield and gloves.
- **Single Stick:** Competitors will each use a single 28” padded stick. Juniors 15 and below will use the lighter weight padded sticks.
- **Open Weapon:** Competitors may utilize any of the options below if bringing their own equipment.
 - Single or Double padded nunchakus if use is permitted by Host Country.
 - Single or Double 24”, 26” or 28” padded sticks.
 - Single 31” or 36” padded stick.
- **Engagement Rules:**
 - Each match is scored as a series of mini-fights or *Engagements*. Each Engagement is worth 1 point.
 - The Referee has discretion as to when an Engagement should be stopped for scoring.
 - A Judge may at any time signal the Referee that they believe an Engagement should be scored.
 - Engagements may be allowed to continue (2-3 seconds) to allow the possibility of a counter attack. The greater the probable damage, the sooner the Engagement will end.

- **Disarms:** A disarm is defined by a loss of control of a weapon, whether intentional or accidental, as demonstrated by the opponent's complete control over it, or the weapon hitting the floor.
 - Holding the opponent's stick is only allowed to attempt an immediate disarm.
 - Joints MAY NOT be locked or twisted for a disarm and failed disarms must be released immediately.
 - In all Padded divisions, disarms shall be scored as part of the match and a point will be awarded to the opponent of the competitor who is disarmed. Three disarms in any match will result in an immediate TKO and end of match.
 - In the Mixed Weapons divisions, disarms will be scored the same; however the loss of one weapon will not necessarily stop the action. Referees will remove the weapon from the competition area for safety as the action continues. ONLY after there has been a break in action will the referee note the disarm to the judges, return the weapon to the competitor and resume action. The loss of both weapons will result in an immediate TKO.
- **Scoring Criteria:** At the time of scoring, each judge will score a point for the competitor who affected the most probable damage. The match will be decided by a majority of three judges, who each determine a winner based on their choice of who won the majority of engagements.
 - **Stunning Damage:** Minimum Scoring Criteria - A strike or quick combination of strikes that would have caused enough damage to at least temporarily stop their opponent from continuing.
 - **Stopping Damage:** A strike or quick combination of strikes that did or would have totally stopped the opponent. Stopping Damage will take precedence in scoring over Stunning Damage. If the referee or at least two judges believe the Engagement started with Stopping Damage, that Engagement will be stopped and scored immediately.
 - **Damage Priority:**
 1. Head and thrusts to the groin.
 2. Hands to the elbows and ankles to the knees. This includes when hands and/or arms are struck while being used as a block.
 3. Shoulders, ribs, thighs.
 4. Trunk/hips.
 - **Sudden Death:** If at the end of the 2 minute round, the Judges have scored a draw, the match continues with Sudden Death. Fighting will commence as usual until an engagement is scored. As soon as the action is stopped, the referee will confirm that at least 2 of the Judges scored this as an engagement, AND chose the same fighter as the winner. This confirmation will be done in private conversation with each Judge, because if it wasn't a scoring engagement, or a winner wasn't chosen by at least 2 Judges, the match continues. Once the Referee has confirmed an engagement has been scored and a winner was chosen by at least 2 judges, the Judges will be brought to the center, and the Referee will call for a "show of hands" by the Judges to announce the winner.