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# Kobudo Competition Rules

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WGKF Competition Document 5 of 6  
*Effective from June 2026 Version 01*

*These regulations supersede all previous editions and remain in effect for the current competition cycle.*

## Table of Contents

<i>General Kobudo Principles and Philosophy</i> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1. General Kobudo Rules</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 2. Kobudo Officials and Judging Process</b> .....	2
<b>Chapter 3. General Judging Criteria</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter 4. Kobudo Category Protocol</b> .....	6
<b>Chapter 5. Kobudo Rounds</b> .....	7
<b>Chapter 6. Kobudo Categories:</b> .....	8
<b>Chapter 7. Weapons</b> .....	10
<b>Chapter 8. General Weapon Requirements</b> .....	14
<b>Chapter 9. Other Matters</b> .....	15
<i>Appendix #1. Kobudo Kata List</i> .....	16
<i>Appendix #2 Documents completing WGKF Competition Rule Set:</i> .....	16

# General Kobudo Principles and Philosophy

Kobudo represents the traditional extension of Karate-Do through the disciplined study and application of classical martial weapons; it is not a demonstration of spectacle, nor an exhibition of weapon manipulation for entertainment. Consequently, Athletes have an obligation to preserve the authenticity and spirit of the art by executing each technique in accordance with traditional values of control, precision, respect, and discipline. This requires a deep understanding of the characteristics, intended application, and historical context of each weapon, combined with the ability to demonstrate seamless coordination between body movement and weapon handling. Thus, athletes are expected to constantly display the highest standards of concentration, composure, technical mastery, safety, and martial spirit in full accordance with WGKF rules.

## Chapter 1. General Kobudo Rules

### 1.1 Competition Format

Individual Kobudo matches shall be conducted using a points-based scoring system. The Athlete with the highest total score will be declared the winner.

The WGKF Executive Committee (ExCom) reserves the right to replace the points system with a flag system when required.

**1.2 Competition Structure:** Kobudo competition is conducted exclusively as an individual event.

**1.3 Approved Weapons:** Only weapons approved by WGKF, may be used.

**1.4 Approved Kata:** Athletes may perform only traditional Okinawan or Japanese Kobudo kata included on the official WGKF Kobudo Kata List. Non-traditional, freestyle, or modified kata are strictly prohibited.

**1.5 Style:** Kobudo competition is conducted as an open-style event. Athletes may perform according to their own recognized Kobudo style.

**1.6 Competition Area:** The match area for Kobudo competition shall be the same as the official Kata competition area.

**1.7 Uniform Requirements:** Athletes must comply with the General Karate uniform requirements. Additionally, they are permitted to wear a black Dogi Jacket during Kobudo events.

## 1.8 Weapon Divisions: All age categories are divided into two weapon divisions:

Long Weapons	Short Weapons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bo</li><li>• Ekku</li><li>• Katana (Bokken)</li><li>• Jo</li><li>• Tsue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nunchaku</li><li>• Kama</li><li>• Tonfa</li><li>• Sai</li><li>• Tinbe</li></ul>

Athletes may change weapons between rounds provided the weapon belongs to the same division. Examples:

- Round 1: Kama
- Round 2: Nunchaku
- Final: Sai
- Tie-break: Tonfa

The choice of weapon is entirely the Athlete's responsibility. Referees may not assign or select weapons for any round or tie-break.

## 1.9 Declaration of Main Weapon

- The preliminary registration must include the Athlete's primary weapon.
- If more than eight Athletes are entered using the same weapon in a division, WGKF may organize a separate category for that weapon.
- When this occurs:
  - Only the declared weapon may be used throughout the competition.
  - The decision must be made officially by the WGKF ExCom.
  - The decision must be announced before the competition begins.

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# Chapter 2. Kobudo Officials and Judging Process

## 2.1 Judging Panel

Each Kobudo match shall be judged by:

- 1 Central Referee
- 4 Corner Judges

## 2.2 Authority of the Central Referee

All matches shall be conducted solely under the direction and commands of the Central Referee.

## 2.3 Equipment of Officials

The Central Referee and each Corner Judge must have:

- A scoreboard
- One red flag
- One white flag

## 2.4 Flag System Decisions

When the flag system is used and the Central Referee calls “Hantei,” the winner shall be determined by majority decision according to the official judging criteria.

## TIES

### 2.5 Tie-Break Procedure – Minimum Score

If a tie occurs in Round 1 or Round 2, the lowest remaining score (after the highest and lowest scores are removed) shall be added to the total.

### 2.6 Tie-Break Procedure – Maximum Score

If the tie remains, the highest remaining score shall then be added.

### 2.7 Additional Kata

If the tie continues, Athletes must perform an additional kata different from the kata already performed in that round. Exceptions may apply.

### 2.8 Hantei Decision

If no winner is determined after the additional kata, the judging panel shall decide the result by Hantei using flags.

The decision shall be based on the final kata performed.

### 2.9 Determining the Competition Winner

Only the original score from Round 2 shall be used in determining the winner of the overall competition.

### 2.10 Deleted Scores

Deleted scores may not be used in any ranking or classification.  
Only the remaining valid scores shall be used.

## FINAL RESULTS

### 2.11 Final Calculation

Only the remaining valid scores from Round 2 and the Final Round shall be combined to determine the final ranking.

## 2.12 Tie in the Final

If Athletes are tied in the Final standings, they must perform an additional kata different from the kata used in the Final. Exceptions may apply.

## 2.13 Additional Minimum Score

If the tie remains, the minimum remaining score shall be added.

## 2.14 Additional Maximum Score

If the tie remains, the maximum remaining score shall be added.

## 2.15 Final Hantei

If no winner can still be determined, the judging panel shall decide the winner by Hantei using flags. The decision shall be based on the final kata performed.

# Chapter 3. General Judging Criteria

## 3.1 Evaluation Standards

Performances shall not simply be judged as good or bad.

Each performance shall be evaluated according to:

- Kata judging principles
- Kobudo-specific technical requirements
- Correct use of the selected weapon

**3.2 Kihon:** Athletes must demonstrate correct and consistent Kihon according to the style being performed.

## 3.3 Traditional Principles:

### 3.3.1 The kata must demonstrate:

- Technical competence
- Understanding of traditional principles
- Realistic martial application
- Proper fighting spirit
- Kobudo kata is not theatrical performance or dance.

### 3.3.2 The performance must display:

- Concentration
- Power
- Speed
- Rhythm
- Balance
- Martial realism

### 3.4 Judging Criteria:

#### 3.4.1 **Etiquette (Reigi)**

- Proper etiquette
- Correct attitude
- Respectful presentation

#### 3.4.2 **Bunkai:** Understanding of technique application

#### 3.4.3 **Kime:**

- Timing
- Rhythm
- Speed
- Focused power
- Control

#### 3.4.4 **Breathing:** Correct and controlled breathing

#### 3.4.5 **Chakugan:** Proper focus and concentration

#### 3.4.6 **Dachi:**

- Correct stances
- Stability
- Balance
- Proper leg tension
- Feet correctly positioned

#### 3.4.7 **Hara Control:**

- Proper abdominal tension
- Stable hip movement
- No unnecessary body movement

#### 3.4.8 **Embusen:** Correct kata line and movement pattern

#### 3.4.9 **Weapon Kihon:** Correct handling and technical use of the weapon

#### 3.4.10 **Body Mechanics:** Athletes must use correct body movement and footwork to transfer power effectively into the weapon.

#### 3.4.11 **Weapon Control:** Athletes must maintain full control of the weapon throughout the entire performance.

Point deductions shall follow the Kata deduction criteria in addition to the following:

- 3.4.12 **Loss of Weapon Control:** A temporary loss of weapon control shall result in a deduction of 0.1 to 0.3 points.
- 3.4.13 **Weapon Contact with the Floor:** If the weapon touches the floor unintentionally, a deduction of 0.1 to 0.3 points shall apply.
- 3.4.14 **Intentional Impact for Sound Effects:** Striking the weapon against the Athlete's own body to create sound effects is prohibited.
- This includes, for example:
- Bo striking the body
  - Ekku striking the body
  - A deduction of 0.1 to 0.3 points shall apply.

### 3.5 Disqualification

- 3.5.1 **Dropping the Weapon:** A Athlete who drops the weapon during performance shall receive Hansoku. The judging panel shall award a score of zero.
- 3.5.2 **Dangerous Conduct:** Any dangerous action that threatens the safety of Officials, Jury table members, other Athletes shall result in disqualification.
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## Chapter 4. Kobudo Category Protocol

### Starting

#### 4.1 Declaration of Kata

Before each round, Athletes must inform the Jury Table of the Kobudo kata they intend to perform so it can be recorded officially.

#### 4.2 Repetition of Kata

Athletes may not repeat the same kata performed in the previous round. Exceptions apply to Children and Cadet categories.

#### 4.3 Entering the Competition Area

When called by the Announcer or competition software, the Athlete shall:

- a) Enter the competition area immediately
- b) Bow to the Central Referee
- c) Clearly announce the name of the kata to the judging panel

#### 4.4 Confirmation by the Referee

The Central Referee shall clearly repeat the name of the kata.

#### 4.5 Beginning the Performance

After confirmation, the Athlete may begin the performance.

Upon completion, the Athlete shall remain in position and await the judges' decision.

## Ending

### 4.6 Display of Scores

At the completion of the kata, the Central Referee shall call “Hantei”.  
The Central Referee and all Corner Judges shall simultaneously display their scores.  
The Announcer shall clearly announce:

- The Central Referee's score
- Each Corner Judge's score

### 4.7 Calculation of Final Score

From the five (or seven) scores awarded:

- The highest score is removed
- The lowest score is removed
- The remaining scores are added together
- The official WGKF software may perform this calculation automatically.

### 4.8 Announcement of Final Score

The final total score shall be announced clearly by the Announcer or competition software.

### 4.9 Leaving the Area

After the score is announced, the Athlete shall:

1. Bow to the Central Referee
2. Leave the competition area

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## Chapter 5. Kobudo Rounds

### 5.1 Structure of Rounds

- Round 1
  - If less than 16 Athletes are entered, this round shall be skipped.
  - Highest 12 scoring Athletes shall advance to round 2
  - Scoring range 5.0 – 7.0
- Round 2
  - The 6 highest-scoring Athletes advance to Round 3.
  - Scoring range: 6.0 – 8.0
- Round 3 (Final)
  - Scoring Range 7.0 – 9.0

**5.2 Order of Performance:** The running order in Round 1 and Round 2 is the same.

### 5.3 Round 3 (Final)

- The kata performed in the Final must be different from the kata used in Round 2.
  - The order of performance in the Final shall be determined electronically.
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## Chapter 6. Kobudo Categories:

### 6.1 Children Categories

#### 6.1.1 Age Categories

Children's Kobudo competition is divided into:

- Children A: Under 10 years old
- Children B: 11–13 years old

#### 6.1.2 Belt Categories

All belt grades compete together within each age category.

#### 6.1.3 Weapon Divisions

Children's categories include:

- Long Weapons Division
- Short Weapons Division

#### 6.1.4 Kata Selection

There is no mandatory or prohibited kata for specific rounds.  
Athletes may change weapons within their division.

#### 6.1.5 Repetition of Kata

Children A and Children B Athletes may repeat kata in all rounds and tie-break situations.

### 6.2 Cadet Categories

#### 6.1.6 Age Requirements

Cadet Athletes must be between 14 and 17 years old.  
Cadets may not compete in Senior Kobudo categories.

#### 6.1.7 Belt Categories

All belt grades compete together in one Cadet category.

#### 6.1.8 Weapon Divisions

Cadet competition includes:

- Long Weapons Division
- Short Weapons Division

#### 6.1.9 **Kata Selection**

There is no mandatory or prohibited kata for specific rounds.  
Weapon changes within the same division are permitted.

#### 6.1.10 **Repetition Rules**

Cadets may repeat kata in every second round.

In tie-break situations, Athletes must perform a different kata from the one used as the main kata in the current round.

A kata used during a tie-break may later be used again as a main kata in another round. Example:

- Round 2: Bo kata
- Tie-break: Ekku kata
- Final: Ekku kata

Athletes may also change weapons within the same division during tie-breaks.

### 6.3 Senior and Veteran Categories

6.3.1 Senior Athletes must be between 18 and 35 years old.

6.3.2 **Veteran Age Categories:** Veteran categories are divided into:

- Veterans A: 36–50 years old
- Veterans B: 51 years and older

6.3.3 **Belt Categories:** All belt grades compete together within each age category.

6.3.4 **Category Restrictions:** Senior and Veteran Athletes may compete only in their own age category. Competing in multiple age categories is not permitted.

6.3.5 **Weapon Divisions:** Senior and Veteran categories include:

- Long Weapons Division
- Short Weapons Division

6.3.6 **Kata Selection:** There is no mandatory or prohibited kata for specific rounds.

6.3.7 **Repetition Rules:** Senior and Veteran Athletes may not repeat kata in any round or tie-break situation. Weapon changes within the same division are permitted during tie-breaks.

## Chapter 7. Weapons

### 7.1 **BO**

#### 7.1.1 Construction

- The Bo must: be made of hardwood, be round, and have no tapered ends
- Approved woods include Oak and Ebony.

#### 7.1.2 Length

For Children and Cadets:

- One fist above or below the top of the Athlete's head

For Seniors and Veterans:

- Standard length: 180 cm (6 feet)
- Or one fist above or below the top of the Athlete's head

#### 7.1.3 Minimum Weight – Male

- Senior and Veteran male Athletes: Minimum weight: 800 g

#### 7.1.4 Minimum Weight – Female

- Senior and Veteran female Athletes: Minimum weight: 600 g

#### 7.1.5 Ultra-Light Bo

- Ultra-light Bo may be rejected following referee inspection.

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### 7.2 **EKKU**

#### 7.2.1 Construction and Length:

- The Ekku must be made of hardwood
- The Ekku's length must be from the Athlete's chin height to the top of the head when standing on the floor

#### 7.2.2 Blade Design

The blade must:

- Have one flat side
- Have one rounded or bevelled side
- Not have a sharp point

#### 7.2.3 Minimum Weight – Male

Senior and Veteran male Athletes:

- Minimum weight: 900 g

#### 7.2.4 Minimum Weight – Female

Senior and Veteran female Athletes:

- Minimum weight: 700 g

#### 7.2.5 Ultra-Light Ekku

- Ultra-light Ekku may be rejected after referee inspection.
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### 7.3 **NUNCHAKU**

#### 7.3.1 Construction

Nunchaku must consist of:

- Two hardwood handles
- Connected by chain, rope, or thong
- Each handle should be approximately the length of the Athlete's forearm.
- Both handles must be equal in length and may be Rounded or Octagonal.
- Exception: Children AK categories may use nylon or aluminium nunchaku.

#### 7.3.2 Number of Weapons

- Only one nunchaku may be used during competition.
- Kata requiring double nunchaku are prohibited.

#### 7.3.3 Prohibited Equipment

- Sansetsukon
  - Lighting effects
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### 7.4 **TONFA**

#### 7.4.1 Construction

- Tonfa must: Be made entirely of hardwood and reach the Athlete's elbow when held by the handle

#### 7.4.2 Number of Weapons: Two Tonfa must be used.

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### 7.5 **SAI**

7.5.1 **Number of Weapons:** Two Sai must be used. Kata Using 1 or 3 Sai are prohibited.

7.5.2 **Material:** Sai must be made of steel.

7.5.3 **Length:** The tip of the Sai should extend approximately 1 cm beyond the Athlete's elbow.

#### 7.5.4 **Minimum Weight – Male**

- Senior and Veteran male Athletes:
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- Minimum weight per Sai: 650 g

#### 7.5.5 Minimum Weight – Female

- Senior and Veteran female Athletes:
- Minimum weight per Sai: 550 g

7.5.6 **Prohibited Actions:** Throwing the Sai or piercing the floor with the Sai is strictly prohibited.

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## 7.6 **KAMA**

7.6.1 **Number of Weapons:** Two Kama must be used.

### 7.6.2 Construction

- Kama must have:
  - Wooden handles
  - Unsharpened steel blades
- The following are prohibited:
  - Rope
  - Chord
  - String attachments
  - Holes in blades

### 7.6.3 Safety Requirements

- Sharp blades and sharp tips are prohibited in Children and Cadet categories.
  - Kama blades must be:
    - Blunted
    - Taped
    - Otherwise secured for safety
- 

## 7.7 **TINBE**

### 7.7.1 Description

- Tinbe is a combined weapon consisting of:
  - A shield
  - A spear

### 7.7.2 Shield Specifications

- The shield is generally:
  - Oval or round

- 45–50 cm in diameter

### 7.7.3 Approved materials include:

- Steel
- Aluminium
- Tortoise-shell style materials

### 7.7.4 Spear Specifications

- The spear is generally Forearm length from wrist to elbow
- Permitted designs include:
  - Wooden shaft with metallic tip
  - Metal short stick
  - Machete-style metal weapon

### 7.7.5 Safety Requirements

- Sharp spear blades and sharp tips are prohibited in Children and Cadet categories.

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## 7.8 **KATANA / BOKKEN**

7.8.1 **Choice of Weapon:** Athletes may perform kata using either Katana or Bokken.

### 7.8.2 Katana Specifications

- Katana must:
  - Be made from solid metal
  - Follow traditional construction standards
  - Include a scabbard
  - Only non-pointed execution-style blades are permitted.
- The following are prohibited:
  - Handmade sharp weapons
  - Iaido blades intended for cutting
  - Battodo cutting swords
- Approximate dimensions:
  - With sheath:  $104 \pm 2$  cm
  - Without sheath:  $100 \pm 2$  cm
  - Weight: 1.0–1.15 kg

### 7.8.3 Bokken Specifications

- Bokken must be made of hardwood and have no Tsuba

- Approved woods include:
    - Oak
    - Beech
    - Hornbeam
  - Approximate length: 95–105 cm
- 

## 7.9 **JO**

### 7.10.1 Specifications

- Jo must:
    - Be made of hardwood
    - Be sized according to the Athlete's height
  - Approximate specifications:
    - Length: 128–150 cm
    - Diameter: 2.5–3 cm
    - Weight: 0.55–0.7 kg
- 

## 7.10 **TSUE**

### 7.10.2 Specifications

- Tsue must be a walking stick with a rounded handle and must be made from a single solid piece of wood.
  - When held naturally by the handle, the stick must reach the floor.
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# Chapter 8. General Weapon Requirements

## 8.1 **Inspection**

All weapons must be inspected before competition by the designated official.

Weapons must comply with:

- Authentic design.
- Proper construction.
- Approved materials.

## 8.2 **Unfair Advantage**

Referees may reject any weapon considered to provide an unfair advantage.

Reasons for rejection include:

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- Extremely light weight
- Grip-enhancing coatings
- Decorative markings
- Different wood colouring
- Poor construction quality

### 8.3 **Wood Requirements**

- All wooden weapons must be made from hardwood such as: Oak, Teak, Ebony, and Mahogany.
- Rattan weapons are prohibited.

## **Chapter 9. Other Matters**

- 9.1.** This rule document is Document 5 of 6. Links to all related documents can be found in Appendix #4.
  - 9.2.** Any matter not covered within this document should be referred to in the General Competition Document (Document 1) Please read it and understand it for completion.
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## Appendix #1. Kobudo Kata List

- The Official WGKF Kobudo Kata List can be found on the WGKF website.
- New kata may only be added following approval by the WGKF ExCom.
- Any changes to the official kata list must be finalized before the start of a WGKF major competition.

## Appendix #2 Documents completing WGKF Competition Rule Set:

- 1) General Competition Rules – Document 1 – Link
- 2) Kata Rules – Document 3 – This document 2 – Link
- 3) Kumite Nihon/ Sanbon - Document 3 - Link
- 4) Kumite Ippon – Document 4- Link
- 5) Kobudo – Document 5 - Link
- 6) Inclusive Karate – Document 6 – Link