

KIF Rules Relative to Referees: Detailed Rules (Referee License Certification Guidelines)

Established in December 2025

(Purpose)

Article 1 These Detailed Rules supplement the “KIF Rules Relative to Referees” and establish the qualification requirements for official referees and the procedures for license certification.

(Qualifications for Official Referees)

Article 2 Official referee license grades shall consist of five ranks: S-class, A-class, B-class, C-class, and D-class. The qualifications for officiating at official tournaments shall be as specified in Appendix 1.

(Qualifications for Referee License Certification)

Article 3 The following individuals are authorized to certify official referees:

1. S-class and A-class referee licenses shall be certified by the Head Director of KIF.
2. Referee licenses of B-class and below shall be certified by qualified individuals such as the chairpersons of each continental committee. These qualified individuals shall be certified by KIF.
3. National representatives holding a B-class license or higher, or equivalent individuals, are qualified to recommend candidates for licenses up to two ranks below their own license level.
4. Qualified certifying persons are obligated to utilize the referee training materials provided by KIF to educate referees on the knowledge required for officiating. However, some countries may allow exceptions.

(Requirements for License Certification)

Article 4 Referees must accurately understand the “KIF Tournament Rules” and acquire the knowledge required of a referee through the Referee Training Materials (Appendix 2).

Article 5 Applicants must pass the practical examination at the tournament for the requirements specified in Appendix 3. The examiners shall be the tournament Chairperson of Referees or the Inspector.

1. To obtain a A-class license or higher, one must pass a practical skills examination at a World Championships or Continental Championships.
2. To obtain a B-class license, one must pass a practical skills examination at an international tournament such as continental championships.
3. C-class and D-class licenses may also be obtained through practical skills examinations at tournaments within each member country.

Article 6 Referees must hold the Kudo dan rank specified in Appendix 1 corresponding to their referee license grade.

Article 7 Persons who have obtained a license must register as referees and pay KIF the registration fee and actual costs for items such as the official tie, as specified in Appendix 4.

(Duties of Referees)

1. Referees must always make fair and impartial judgments.
2. Individuals holding referee qualifications must actively participate and give priority to officiating at tournaments officially recognized by this Federation.

3. To maintain skill proficiency, referees must officiate at tournaments at least four times (including domestic tournaments, but for those in S-class through B-class, at least one international tournaments) within their qualification validity period (refer to Article 10, Paragraph 1).
4. Referees must attend referee training seminars when they are held.
5. S-class and A-class licensed referees must contribute to referee training by serving as instructors or examiners at referee training seminars.
6. Referees must comply with the KIF Code of Ethics.

(License Management)

Article 9 License management shall be conducted as follows.

1. KIF shall manage data for holders of S-class and A-class licenses, while management of holders of B-class and lower licenses shall be conducted by the Continental Committee or national federations approved by KIF.
2. Practical skills assessments may be conducted from time to time, even for referees who have already been certified. Should an individual be deemed unsatisfactory according to the requirements specified in Appendix 3, suspension or downgrading of their license may occur.

(Validity Period of Qualifications)

Article 10 The validity period of qualifications shall be as follows.

1. The validity period of a referee's qualification shall be from the date of certification until December 31 of the third year thereafter.
2. Within this validity period, the obligations stipulated in Article 8, Paragraphs 3 and 4 must be fulfilled.

(Loss, Suspension, or Downgrade of Qualifications)

Article 11 Qualifications as an official referee shall be suspended or revoked in the following cases:

1. KIF may suspend or revoke a referee's qualification if the referee fails to fulfill the obligations stipulated in Article 8, or if the referee exhibits conduct unbecoming of a referee or engages in inappropriate actions.
2. If the Chief Referee or Inspector determines that a referee does not meet the examination requirements specified in Appendix 3, they shall report this to KIF, which may then decide to suspend or demote the referee's qualification.
3. If a referee license holder loses their KIF membership for any reason, their referee license shall automatically expire.
4. Referee qualifications are valid only when all of the following requirements are met. Qualifications become invalid if any single requirement is no longer met, even if they were previously valid.
 - (1) Referee certification is valid and within its effective period
 - (2) Membership registration and referee certification registration are complete
 - (3) Referee certification has not been suspended

(Rule Change)

Article 12 The Head Director of KIF shall have the authority to amend or repeal these detailed rules.

Appendix 1 Qualification for official tournaments

Category, Authority, Qualification of the Referee License

License Grade	Authority						Dan Grades	Other Requirement
	World Championships	World Cup	Continental Championships	International Tournaments	National Championships	The others (Regional Tournaments)		
S	Inspector, Chief Referee, and Corner Judge	//	//	//	//	//	3rd Dan and above	After obtaining Grade A, possess at least 4 years of experience
A	Corner Judge	//	Inspector, Chief Referee, and Corner Judge	//	//	//	3rd Dan and above	After obtaining Grade B, possess at least 3 years of experience
B	No	No	Corner Judge	//	//	Inspector, Chief Referee, and Corner Judge	2nd Dan and above	After obtaining Grade B, possess at least 2 years of experience
C	No	No	No	No	No	Inspector, Chief Referee, and Corner Judge	1st Dan and above	After obtaining Grade B, possess at least 1 years of experience
D	No	No	No	No	No	Corner Judge	1st Kyu and above	-

Appendix 2 KIF Referee Training Materials List

1. Training Material Part1:
Designed to provide a broad but basic understanding of Kudo rules and make extensive use of video contents.
Can be used not only by referees but also by athletes seeking understanding.
2. Training Material Part2:
Explains referee actions, making extensive use of videos.
3. Training Material Part3:
Provides detailed explanations of several key points referees should understand.
4. Training Material Part4:
Explains the refereeing team's crucial roles, assuming familiarity with the above materials.
This is the material referees should review carefully before serving as a referee at the tournament.
5. Training Material Part5:
Illustrates judgment examples in the general division using videos.
6. Training Material Part6:
Illustrates judgment examples in the junior division using videos.
7. Training Material Part7:
Workbook.
This is an effective resource for confirming whether one accurately understands the judging criteria outlined in Article 72 of the Tournament Rules.

Appendix 3 Requirements for the practical skills examination

Evaluation Items (For Chief Referee)	Requirement Level				
	S	A	B	C	D
【Etiquette and Match Control】 ① Proper etiquette for entering and exiting the competition field, and guidance on etiquette toward athletes ② Appropriate positioning as Chief Referee ③ The timing of “MATE” calls, and instructions regarding player positioning during fight are appropriate ④ Appropriate response to damage or injury	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	-
【Attitude and Fairness】 ① A dignified standing posture ② Even when the decision is split, they remain unshaken and do not easily settle for a draw, making their own judgment ③ Making fair and impartial judgments	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	-
【Action and Vocalization】 ① Appropriate gestures for evaluating techniques and indicating violations ② Pronunciation is correct and easy to hear ③ Accurately identifying and counting the corner judge's flags ④ Promptly responding when ground time ends or match time ends	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	-
【Determination of Effects and Penalties】 ① Evaluation of effective techniques are appropriate ② Judgments and evaluations of violations are appropriate ③ The timing of imposing penalties are appropriate	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	-
【Checking the scoreboard and clock】 ① Checking the scoreboard at the start and end of the match ② When assigning points or violations, check the scoreboard ③ If there is an error in the scoreboard, request correction	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	-

Evaluation Items (For Corner Judge)	Requirement Level				
	S	A	B	C	D
【Etiquette and Posture】 ① Proper etiquette when entering and exiting the competition field ② The timing for taking a seat is appropriate ③ Maintaining proper posture while seated	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Generally satisfactory
【Understanding Tournament Rules and Fairness】 ① Thoroughly understand the tournament rules and make appropriate judgments ② Making fair and impartial judgments	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Generally satisfactory
【Determination of Effects and Penalties】 ① Quick judgment on effective techniques ② Judgments and evaluations of violations are appropriate	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Generally satisfactory
【Flags and whistles】 ① The flag actions for evaluating techniques and penalizing violations are appropriate ② Blow the whistle strongly, making it easy to hear ③ Do not blow the whistle when the decision	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Generally satisfactory
【Confirming scores, etc.】 ① Checking the scoreboard at the start and end of the match ② When assigning points or violations, check the scoreboard ③ When the referee fails to notice their flag and whistle, make an appropriate appeal	Excellent	Good	Good	Generally satisfactory	Generally satisfactory

※ S-class and A-class referees must also possess the skills required to serve as instructors at referee training seminars.

Appendix 4 Costs incurred when obtaining a license

	Tie	Wristband	Authorization Certificate	Shipping Fee	Registration Fee (¥)	Total (¥)
S-class certification	○	-	○	○	5,000	16,000
A-class certification	○	-	○	○	4,000	15,000
B-class certification	-	-	○	○	3,000	6,000
C-class certification	-	-	○	○	2,000	5,000
D-class certification	○	○	○	○	1,000	14,000

※ Ties, wristbands, certification cards, and shipping fees are charged at cost.

※ After the certification results are reported to the Headquarters Office, these items will be shipped once payment for the above fees is confirmed via PayPal or cash.

