



KATA 2025-26 HANDBOOK

JULY 24, 2025

*Judo Canada's programs are sponsored in part by Sport Canada.
This version replaces all previous versions.*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Mission Statement:

The National Kata Committee (NKC) aspires to develop, support, and promote kata for all levels in Canada, for athletes and judges, through seminars, educational materials, and opportunities to perform and officiate at events across Canada and internationally.

1.2 Mandate:

The NKC is an operational committee, under Judo Canada (JC), responsible for ensuring a planned and consistent approach to kata development as part of sport programming and implementation.

1.3 Key Duties:

- Uphold the promotion and standardization of kata in Canada;
 - Compiling a list of reference material
 - Hosting clinics and camps
- Develop a national certification program for kata judges;
- Develop selection criteria and standards for kata judges officiating national or international events;
- Develop selection criteria and standards for kata judges' eligibility for international certifications;
- Provide educational resources and continuing training on International Judo Federation (IJF) kata rules for both competitors and judges;
- Develop selection criteria for kata teams representing Canada at international restricted entry level competitions;
- Develop selection criteria for kata judges representing Canada at international competitions;
- Assist the JC Tournament Committee in developing tournament standards and hosting national kata competitions;
- Set criteria for selecting judges for the Canadian Open Judo Championships (**COJC**) and international events;
- Collaborate with Provincial, National, and International Kata Committees;
- Provide a pathway for kata judges development in Canada; and
- Assist the Grading Committee in developing Grading Jury certification programs.

1.4 Operations:

The NKC operates under JC, aligning with its mission and principles. The NKC regularly updates policies to reflect global and domestic changes in kata judging. Kata grading governance is handled separately by the National Grading Committee.

1.5 Limitations:

This document will be reviewed yearly, and certain policies may be changed from time to time. A policy change is considered effective upon its date of publication by JC. Policy changes will be posted on JC's website, and we encourage everyone to visit it regularly.

1.6 Coverage of this Handbook:

Policies specified in this handbook apply to all athletes and judges who wish to participate or judge in national or international kata tournaments and be selected to compete and judge in restricted entry events, such as the Pan-American Kata Championships (**PanAms**) and the IJF World Kata Championships (**Worlds**).

2. Kata Competition

2.1 Definition:

A kata competition is where tori and uke perform a kata in a competition setting, with five presiding judges, against other judoka who performs the same kata. All kata competitions are evaluated according to the *IJF Kata Competition – Criteria for the Evaluation*.

2.2 IJF Recognized Kata:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Nage-no-kata | Forms of Throwing |
| • Katame-no-kata | Forms of Grappling and Holding |
| • Ju-no-kata | Forms of Gentleness |
| • Kodokan Goshin jutsu | Forms of Kodokan Self-defence |
| • Kime-no-kata | Forms of Decision |
| • Itsutsu-no-kata | Forms of Five |
| • Koshiki-no-kata | Forms of Classics |

2.3 Educational Kata:

- Kodomo-no-kata Forms for teaching of basics to young children (competed provincially).
- Seiryoku Zenyo
 Kokumin-Taiiku-no-kata Forms of national physical education based on the principle of maximum efficiency (practiced in clubs).

2.4 Definition of a Kata Team:

A kata team is any two judoka who compete together in one or more judo kata regardless of age, gender, or level of competition. These are currently the age categories for kata competitors: U18 (cadet), U21 (junior) and senior. The two judoka who compose and compete as a team may be reconfigured (introduce a new partner or change roles) at the discretion of the team and the Event Outlines of the competition. However, any alteration in partner, role, or kata will impact the teams' points and standing as they will be considered a new team. Please consult the national kata coach for further details. In addition, all teams must compete provincially and/or nationally prior to competing internationally.

2.5 Eligible Kata Team:

To be considered **Eligible** to represent Canada at restricted entry kata tournaments, athletes must participate in kata tournaments to gain points to be selected. Once the kata teams have been announced after the COJC, those wishing to represent Canada at restricted entry tournaments should make their intention known to the national coach as well as the NKC.

Restricted Entry Tournaments: PanAms and / or Worlds

2.6 Eligibility Essentials:

- A participant is eligible to participate at PanAms or Worlds provided they are:
 - Not under a disciplinary suspension;
 - Not under suspension for anti-doping rule violation; and
 - Not carrying any communicable diseases that may risk other delegates' health.
- In addition to the above athletes must:
 - Not be under medical suspension;
 - Be healthy and fit for competition; and
 - Follow the IJF nationality rules.

- For U18 and U21 categories, both the tori and uke must meet the maximum age requirement and minimum belt requirement.
- For U18 and U21 categories, teams are eligible to compete in more than one kata at PanAms and Worlds according to the PJC or IJF technical package.
- If a senior team member would like to compete in two categories at the PanAms or Worlds the same points system will be used as their first kata.
- All judoka must abide by the [Code of Conduct and Ethics of Judo Canada](#).

2.7 Selected Teams:

Selected team members are chosen from Eligible kata teams to represent Canada at restricted entry level tournaments based on their total points over the tournament year (June to May) and in accordance with criteria outlined in this Handbook. Teams are only considered “Selected” once they have met all criteria to be Eligible, they have attained top points in their kata in accordance with policies outlined in this Handbook, they have been selected and approved by the NKC, the team has agreed and committed to attending the tournament, and the Event Outlines for the tournament has been released.

Note: The selected teams for restricted entry tournaments are generally a maximum of two or three teams per kata (as guided by the tournament’s Event Outlines) however, there may be a “**Reserve**” kata team as well. The Reserve teams will be chosen using the same processes but will not attend the event unless one of the selected teams in that kata cannot attend the event for any reason. This is at the discretion of the NKC.

2.8 Selection Procedure:

Selection for restricted entry events will be based on the points system outlined in section 2.9-2.10. Teams with the highest points will be eligible for selection.

The process is as follows:

- Records for the tournament year are calculated by the national coach;
- Evaluation of top point earners are reviewed;
- Provincial and national tournaments where there were limited number of competitors (three teams or under) or where there were less than five judges will have its points cut in half;
- Recommendations are made to the NKC for Canadian Selected and Reserve team members by the national coach, for approval;
- The NKC reserves the right not to select athletes for any category if there is a lack of competitive readiness and seasonal performance;
- The teams will be notified, and they must indicate their commitment to attend or decline; and

- Once they have agreed and the Event Outlines is out, names will be submitted to JC for registration.

2.8.1 U18 and U21:

- At the time of publication of this Handbook, only Nage-no-kata, Katame-no-kata, and Ju-no-kata have U18 & U21 categories at the PanAms and Worlds.
- The Event Outlines (under review every year) determines the number of categories and katas that can be performed at these events.
- If a team would like to compete in two kata, they must have competed in both kata within the last two seasons.
- If U18 and U21 competitors in Kodokan Goshin-Jutsu and Kime-no-kata wish to compete at PanAms or Worlds, they will have to qualify and compete in the senior division as currently there are no U18 & U21 divisions for these katas.
- Points gained in U21 tournaments cannot be applied to senior level events unless approved by the NKC and applied by the national kata coach.

2.9 Recording of Points:

The national kata coach will keep track of tournament records, but each kata team is encouraged to send in tournament results. If teams compete outside of Canada, they must provide all results to the national kata coach as soon as possible. Records are kept yearly and begin in June and end in May after the COJC.

2.10 Point system for Provincial, National, and International Events:

Canadian Tournaments	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Unranked
COJC	200	150	100	25
Eastern Canada Open Kata Championship	175	150	125	25
Western Canada Kata Championships and other National A and B sanctioned kata tournaments Must be sanction by NKC (2 per year max)	30	20	10	5

International Tournaments	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Finals from two / three pools	Unranked
IJF World Kata Championships	2000	1800	1600	800	100
IJF World Series	1500	1300	1100	550	75
EJU: Italy, Spain, and Germany	800	700	600	300	60
EJU: Poland and Portugal	500	400	300	150	50
Pan-American Championships	300	200	100	N/A	25
International Kata Tournament	175	150	125	N/A	25

Clinics

National Team Training Clinic – End of August	100 per clinic
National Open Clinic – Other clinics request sent to the NKC	25 per clinic (max 2 per year)
International Clinics – approved by NKC	75 per clinic

For PanAms and Worlds the following procedures may be used:

- Participants apply online via JC registration portal;
- JC will make the arrangements as specified by the organizers of the event;
- A deposit may be required when the online registration is filled in; and

- JC will invoice all participants for the expenses incurred.

Seeding for events will be defined by the Event Outlines or [IJF SOR Appendix B1.3](#) For Canadian tournaments that have pools, seeding will be established based on the teams accumulated points to date – for that competition year.

2.11 Clarity of Selection Process:

After announcement has been made, teams are welcome to contact the national kata coach, within one week, should they seek clarity on the selection process.

- Teams can contact the national kata coach in writing (via email) for a clear and transparent explanation of the decision based on the policies and procedures.
- The national kata coach is obliged to respond in writing within two weeks of receiving notice.
- The team may contact the national kata coach for a discussion to ensure the email is clearly understood by the team, if they so desire.

If the parties cannot come to an understanding, the national kata coach will:

- Then inform the NKC and present documentation of communication and calculation of points used for determination;
- The Chair of the NKC will call a special meeting to discuss the merits of the claim;
- The NKC and national kata coach will discuss and the NKC will determine if an alteration to team selection must be made; and
- The Chair of the NKC will contact the appellant team in writing with the rational and decision made at the special meeting.

If the team does not agree with the results from this process, the athletes may make a formal appeal with JC based on JC's *Policy on Grievance and Appeal* which can be found on the JC's website.

2.12 Team Withdrawal Procedure:

If a team chooses to withdraw from a restricted entry level tournament, for any reason, they must inform the national kata coach and NKC, in writing (via email) as soon as possible so that a reserve team can be informed of an opening and registered for the event before the deadline.

The NKC chair will inform JC of all changes made to entry. No registration fees will be refunded.

2.13 Medical Indemnity and Insurance:

For each JC and NKC sanctioned or recognized international event, kata athletes must complete and sign a medical summary form and sign a release, indemnity, warranty, and/or assumption of risk form before participation in the event is permitted.

Kata competitors who compete in events abroad must ensure that they have adequate out-of-country medical insurance and liability insurance.

2.14 Uniform and Weapons:

- For all kata competitions, athletes are required to wear a clean, properly fitted and IJF approved white judogi (IJF approved judogi and belt are not required for national events).
- Tops and bottoms must have a matching approved manufacturer's logo.
- U18 and U21 competitors are allowed to wear a coloured belt unless specified that Shodan or above is required.
- Senior athletes must wear an IJF approved black belt. Red and white belts are only permitted in Itsutsu-no-Kata and Koshiki-no-Kata.
- Embroidery and insignia on judogi or belt are at the athlete's discretion but must meet IJF standards of size, location, and colour.
- Approved IJF back patches are required at all PJC and IJF events and must meet IJF standards.
- For kata competitors who compete in a kata that require replica weapons, these replicas must meet IJF standards for size, colour, materials, and engraving.
- Please note, airlines do not allow the transport of replica weapons onboard flights and therefore accommodation must be made to check your equipment as luggage. This may incur an extra cost that the athlete must anticipate and provide for.

2.15 Athlete Funding:

Any athlete or kata team may seek funding to help cover the costs of being a competitor. Athletes are highly encouraged to seek funding to support training and competing at the national and international level.

Please note: the athlete or team must **not** state or imply that any solicitation request is being made on behalf of JC.

Any publicity on a judogi must first be approved by JC.

2.16 Other Documents:

Code of Ethics: [https://static.judocanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Code of Conduct April 2025 EN.pdf](https://static.judocanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Code_of_Conduct_April_2025_EN.pdf)

JC Policies: <https://judocanada.org/policies-and-fees/>

3. Judging

3.1 NKC's role:

The NKC aspires to:

- Establish policies to develop high-quality kata judges;
- Implement a National Kata Judging Certification program;
- Provide educational resources and training on IJF rules;
- Collaborate with Provincial, National, and International Kata Committees;
- Conduct certification seminars and continuous education programs;
- Set selection criteria for judges for the COJC and international events; and
- Provide a pathway for kata judges development in Canada.

3.2 National Certification:

There are two levels of National Kata Judges Certification in Canada for each of the IJF recognized kata.

New judges, as of now, will be certified as National B level for each kata they wish to qualify.

3.2.1 Progression

For a judge who wishes to qualify for a National A must follow the following procedure:

- Must be an active judge for twelve months after receiving the National B;
- Must have judged a minimum of five NKC approved tournaments in that kata; and
- After evaluation of the performance and approved by the NKC, a certification to National A will be granted.
- Currently, certified kata judges that hold the rank of National B under the previous system, will now go through the same process to obtain the rank of National A judge.

- Certified National C judges from the previous system will be required to requalify under the new guidelines.

3.2.2 NKC Approved Tournaments – pending sanctioned level B or higher:

- Pacific International Kata Tournament;
- Edmonton International Kata Tournament;
- Western Canadian (Saskatchewan) Kata Championships;
- Manitoba Kata Tournament;
- Ontario Provincial Kata Tournament;
- Eastern Canadian Kata Championships; and,
- Edmundston Kata Tournament.

3.2.3 National Certification Process:

- Attend an NKC approved certification seminar – two days.
- Pass the kata judge written examination;
- Be a JC member in good standing;
- Hold a minimum rank of Shodan;
- Demonstrate a solid knowledge of kata and IJF evaluation criteria;
- Apply via the JC website; and
- If completed, will receive a National B certification.

3.2.4 Once a judge is certified National B in a kata, it is their responsibility to:

- Strive for excellence in ongoing education of international kata and kata judging;
- Continuously attend national and international kata clinics;
- Keep up to date on the evolving IJF kata competition criteria;
- Maintain a spirit of humility and continue to learn and grow in their role;
- Be self-reflective after each seminar/event to seek out areas of improvement; and
- Encourage athletes with positive feedback as well as areas they can improve.

3.3 International Certification:

3.3.1 To be eligible to become a Pan-American Judo Confederation (PJC) judge, a candidate must:

- Be a member in good standing with JC;

- Be certified as a National A judge in all five IJF / Kodokan basic katas. Additional katas are Itsutsu-no-kata and Koshiki-no-kata;
- Be an active kata judge for at least three years as a National A kata judge or unless invited by the NKC;
- Must have judged at least two level A tournaments (e.g. Western or Eastern Championship);
- Must have judged at least two COJCs;
- Hold the minimum rank of Sandan; and
- Write and pass the PJC kata judge's exam.

3.3.2 To be eligible to become an IJF judge, a candidate must:

- Be a member in good standing with JC;
- Be certified as a PJC judge in all five IJF/Kodokan basic katas. Additional katas are Itsutsu-no-kata and Koshiki-no-kata;
- Must be recommended to the IJF Kata Commission to write the exam by the NKC;
- Must be active for a minimum of three years as a fully certified PJC kata judge in all five IJF/Kodokan basic katas. Additional katas are Itsutsu-no-kata and Koshiki-no-kata.
- Must have judged at least two COJCs and one international level tournament;
- Must hold a JC rank of Yondan or higher;
- Must attend an approved IJF kata judge's seminar;
- Write and pass the IJF kata judge's exam; and
- Must know the *IJF Judges Guidelines 2020*.

3.4 Judges Selection for Tournaments:

3.4.1 General Qualifications

Judges wanting to participate in National A and B kata tournaments in Canada must:

- Be a member in good standing with JC and their provincial association;
- For all tournaments, other than the COJC, judges must register on the tournament website;
- Demonstration proficiency through active tournament participation and assessment by the NKC; and
- Continuously attend relevant seminars and stay updated on the IJF rules.

3.4.2 Selection for National Tournaments

For tournaments other than the COJC, it is the responsibility of the judges to participate.

- No invitation by the NKC will be made other than asking those interested to register on the tournament website;
- Must be a member in good standing;
- Must be an active judge and up to date; and,
- Must be National B or A or higher.

To participate in the COJC, All National A judges or higher will be picked by the NKC Chair and approved by the NKC from those that have participated the most and have shown good knowledge in the tournaments.

3.4.3 Judging Outside Canada

- Judges must submit a written request (via email) to the NKC well in advance to ensure proper registration and approval;
- Must attend the associated EJU/PJC seminars and training sessions both before and after the tournament;
- For EJU/PJC tournament where the number of judges is limited, a call for those interested will be communicated and the most qualified and active will be chosen by the NKC;
- For EJU/PJC tournaments where the numbers are open, judges must be active and qualified and meet all criteria outlined in this Handbook;
- Receive an endorsement from the NKC based on performance and commitment to kata judging development; and
- Be prepared for potential additional evaluations or assessments required by international governing bodies.

3.4.4 Code of conduct

The following is a summary only which all kata judges are expected to abide by. Please refer to documents in reference for full explanations.

Behavior:

A judge must:

- Respect the JC Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- Attend all meetings for the event and be on time prior to each event;
- Not have contact with competitors and coaches during the day of the kata tournament until the competition has end;

- Be responsible for protecting the spirit of judo by rendering fair and impartial decisions and remaining free of bias;
- Not look at other judges' evaluation during a presentation;
- Not compete and judge at the same event;
- Must have knowledge of any updates and changes to the kata competition criteria for the evaluation; and
- At all times demonstrate respect for the athletes, judges, and officials.

Violations may result in disciplinary actions as per JC's policies.

Please note that any judge who have, or have had, any disciplinary action restricting their participation will only be allowed to judge with the approval of NCK and within the restrictions of that disciplinary action.

3.5 References

[IJF Kata commission Tournament Handbook 2024](#) – (English only)

[2020 IJF Kata Judges Guidelines V3](#) – (English)

[2020 IJF Kata Judges Guidelines V3](#) – (French)

[2025 Kata Competition Criteria for the Evaluation](#) – (English)

[2025 Kata Competition Criteria for the Evaluation](#) – (French)