

INTERNATIONAL SUMO FEDERATION REGULATIONS ON REFEREEING

Chapter 1 Judges

Article 1

Judges shall be restricted to authorized International Sumo Federation (hereinafter referred to as “IFS”) judges chosen by the IFS Board of Directors.

Article 2

1. A judging panel shall consist of a head judge, a *gyoji* (referee) and four judges for a total of 6 members.
2. The head judge is entirely responsible for determining the result of a bout.
3. The *gyoji* assumes control of a bout from the time when the competitors mount the *dohyo* until they step down from the *dohyo* upon completion of the bout.
4. The duties of the four judges are to assist the head judge to ensure that there are no errors in the decision.
5. The *shomen* (front) judge shall also function as the timekeeper.

Article 3

The judging manager (*shinpan kanji*) is responsible for the assignment of judges and *gyoji* in addition to all other general affairs pertaining to refereeing.

Article 4

The clothing of judges shall be in accordance with the following regulations.

(1) The head judge and judges shall wear suits, white shirts and ties. (If the International Sumo Federation designates a particular jacket, pants or tie, these shall be worn.)

(2) The *gyoji* shall wear white pants, white shirt and a black bow tie.

Article 5

When the head judge deems a judge or *gyoji* to be incompetent, he shall report that person to the Competition Committee. The Competition Committee's Chairperson shall announce the decision regarding the matter after deliberation made among the Committee members.

Chapter 2 Refereeing Rules

Article 6

1. The *gyoji* shall signal the *tachiai* (jump-off) by calling out "Hakkeyoi!" (Get moving!).
2. The competitors' hands must touch down behind the *shikiri-sen* (starting lines).
3. A "*tachiai*", where the hands are placed on the *dohyo* for a moment, shall not be permitted.
4. If a competitor jumps off without waiting for the call, the *gyoji* must call out "*Matta!*" (Wait!) and start the *tachiai* again.

Article 7

1. If the head judge considers the *tachiai* to be incomplete, he shall immediately raise his right hand and stop the bout.
2. In the above case, the *tachiai* shall be begun again immediately.
3. The decision on whether a *tachiai* was correctly or incorrectly carried out shall be left to the head judge.

Article 8

Unless otherwise provided herein, the following criteria determine the winner of a bout.

- (1) The competitor who moves his/her opponent out of the *shobu-dawara* (straw bales that form the circle of *dohyo*)
- (2) The competitor who forces any part of his/her opponent's body, other than the soles of his/her feet, to touch the ground before the opponent does the

same

Article 9

1. When the opponent is in the *shinitai* position (dead body, i.e., in a falling position where the competitor has completely lost his/her balance), the competitor shall not lose even either of the following occurs.
 - (1) The competitor puts his/her hand to the ground a moment before the opponent lands.
 - (2) The competitor steps out of the ring of *shobu-dawara* a moment in advance of the falling opponent.
2. The above Items (1) and (2) shall be known as the *kabaite* (protecting hand) and *kabaiashi* (protecting feet) respectively.

Article 10

When a competitor has lifted his/her opponent clear of the ground and carries him/her forward out of the *shobu-dawara*, it shall not be a loss if his/her foot goes out first (*okuri-ashi*). If, however, the competitor steps out backward, it shall be considered a loss.

Article 11

It shall not be a loss if the *orikomi* (front fold) of the *mawashi* (loincloth belt) touches the ground.

Article 12

When a bout is won by one of the throwing techniques etc., the competitor who executes the throw does not lose if his/her instep turns over and touches the ground before the opponent lands.

Article 13

After a deliberation by the judges, a competitor may be judged to have lost the bout in any of the following cases:

- (1) if the competitor is ruled to be unable to continue the bout through injury etc.

- (2) if the competitor is ruled to have used a *kinjite* (prohibited move)
- (3) if the competitor arbitrarily terminates the bout
- (4) if the competitor is ruled that he/she deliberately failed to jump-off to begin the bout
- (5) if the competitor does not abide by the judges' instructions
- (6) if the *maebukuro* (front pouch part) of the *mawashi* comes undone and falls away during the bout
- (7) if the competitor does not appear in the *dohyo-damari* (ringside waiting area) after being called twice by the broadcasting staff.

Article 14

When a competitor is injured during a bout, the *gyoji* must stop the bout immediately. The judges must consult Medical Committee members and respect their diagnosis in deciding whether or not the bout can be resumed.

Article 15

1. The following moves are deemed *kinjite* (prohibited moves):
 - (1) punching the opponent with a closed fist
 - (2) poking the opponent with fingers
 - (3) kicking the opponent in the chest or abdominal regions
 - (4) taking hold of the opponent's hair
 - (5) taking hold of the opponent's throat
 - (6) taking hold of clothing other than the *mawashi* (i.e. underpants, leotard, bandages, support pads, etc. This rule shall apply hereafter.) twice or more
 - (7) taking hold of the *maebukuro* or *maetatemitsu* (front vertical part of the *mawashi*), or sticking fingers in at the side and pulling
 - (8) bending back one or two of the opponent's fingers
 - (9) biting
 - (10) slapping the opponent's face with an arm outstretched more than a shoulder width.
2. When any *kinjite* is used, the *gyoji* must stop the bout immediately.

Article 16

The *gyoji* must in all cases determine the winner at the instant the bout is over.

Article 17

1. If the head judge or any of the judges has an objection or a doubt (hereinafter referred to as “objections etc.”) to the *gyoji's* decision regarding the result of a bout, he shall raise his right hand immediately and lodge objections etc.
2. The objections etc. must clearly point out a *kimarite* (officially recognized technique) and be stated plainly and concisely.
3. In the event of an objection or doubt, the video recorded by the equipment installed under the dohyo shall, in principle, be viewed for the purpose of contributing to the consultation.
4. Once the *gyoji* has given the *kachi-nanori* (formal announcement of the winner), the decision is final and no objections etc. may be raised.

Article 18

1. When an objection etc. has been raised, the whole judging panel must immediately move to the center of the *dohyo* and discuss the matter.
2. In their deliberation, the judges shall identify the reasons for the *gyoji's* decision as a point of reference and take this into consideration.
3. A judge may abstain from the deliberation in situations where the bout ending move was hidden from the judge's view, or for other legitimate reasons.
4. A judge must not express the validity of his own opinion so strongly as to impede the deliberation.

Article 19

1. The head judge shall make the final judgment in a deliberation and shall announce a clear and concise explanation of the decision.
2. In principle, the decision shall be reached by a majority vote of the judges (excluding the *gyoji*).
3. The head judge shall try to convince the minority of the validity of the majority decision.

Article 20

When the head judge or one or more of the judges has confirmed that a bout has been decided but the *gyoji* does not call a decision and allows the bout to continue, the following measures shall be taken:

- (1) In the event of a *fumikoshi* (stepping out of the *dohyo*) etc., where there is a visible mark on the ground, the judge who observed the evidence shall raise his right hand to clearly signal the end of the bout. If this happens, the head judge shall instruct the *gyoji* to stop the bout and the final decision shall be made through deliberation among the judges.
- (2) In case no visible mark is confirmed on the *janome* (circle of swept sand immediately outside *shobu-dawara*) as evidence to decide the winner, an objection shall be lodged at the end of the bout, and the decision shall be reached through deliberation.

Article 21

If the *gyoji* mistakenly calls out "*Shobu atta!*" (The contest has been decided!) when a bout is in progress, the head judge or any of the judges shall lodge an objection and a *torinaoshi* (re-match) shall be declared following a deliberation.

Article 22

1. If a bout goes on for over three minutes without coming to a conclusion, the bout shall be stopped and a *torinaoshi* shall be ordered.
2. At a signal given by the timekeeper, the head judge shall instruct the *gyoji* to stop the bout.

Chapter 3 Duties of the Judges

Article 23

Bearing in mind the strong impact, which their words and actions have on the competitors and the general audience, the judges shall strive to be fair and neutral in their decisions, and not show the slightest sign of hesitation or

emotion.

Article 24

1. In addition to judging and making decisions, judges should offer guidance and advice to the competitors.
2. A judge must immediately admonish a competitor whose speech or conduct, while on the *dohyo* or in the *dohyo-damari*, are inappropriate.

Article 25

The judges shall pay attention to the manner in which supporters, bandages, etc., other than the *mawashi* worn by the competitors (no metal posts, stones or other hard objects shall be included) and the condition of the *dohyo* to ensure that bouts be carried out safely, and they must immediately take corrective measures if necessary.

Article 26

The *gyoji* must endeavor to bring the two competitors and himself into complete synchronization at the *tachiai*.

Article 27

1. When a *mawashi* becomes loose during a bout, the *gyoji* shall call out "*Matta!*" (Wait!) to halt the bout temporarily. Both competitors must freeze in their positions (*kumite*) until the bout is restarted.
2. The *gyoji* shall not order the temporary halt of a bout during offensive moves of competitors.
3. After tightening the *mawashi* and confirming with the judges that neither competitor has shifted from his/her *kumite*, the *gyoji* shall place his hands on the backs of both competitors, call out "*Hikimasuyo! Hikimasuyo!*" (Get ready. Get ready) and restart the bout by lightly tapping their backs and calling "*Hakkeyo!*"

Article 28

When a competitor does one of the following, the *gyoji* must order him/her to let

go immediately. This is not the case if it is not possible to give the order at that time.

- (1) gripping *tatemawashi* (rear vertical part of the *mawashi*) or *orikomi*
- (2) grasping clothing other than the *mawashi* (when it is the first time)
- (3) having the opponent in the '*gassho*' hold (both arms around the opponent with the hands clasped together)

Article 29

The actions of the *gyoji* are as follows:

- (1) When the competitors mount the *dohyo* and carry out the '*chirichozu*' (hand-cleaning ritual), the *gyoji* shall position himself at the rear (*muko-jomen*) of the circle in front of the *tokudawara* (privilege bale that is set a little beyond the main circle) (hereinafter referred to as 'the basic position').
- (2) At the time when the competitors move to the center of the *dohyo*, the *gyoji* shall take two steps forward from the basic position.
- (3) When the competitors go down into the *sonkyo* (squatting) position, the *gyoji* shall confirm that they have synchronized their breathing and call out "*Kamaete!*" (Take positions!), and take one and a half steps backward to stand with legs apart. Gyoji shall then call out "*Ryote o doujini tsuite!*" (Put both hands on the ground simultaneously!) and slightly bending his knees, with arms stretched out a little and palms facing inward, and call out "*Hikimasuyo!*" (Get ready!) upon confirming that both competitors have placed their hands on the *dohyo*. Then gyoji shall complete the *tachiai* by calling out "*Hakkeyoi!*"
- (4) If a *tachiai* is not achieved, the above procedure shall be repeated.
- (5) The *gyoji* shall call out "*Madayo, Madayo*" (Not yet. Not yet) to the competitor who places his/her hands on the *dohyo* before the opponent to hold back a *tachiai*. On the other hand, the *gyoji* shall urge the other competitor to place both hands on the *dohyo* by calling out "*Te o tsuite. Te o tsuite.*" Upon confirming that both competitors have placed their hands on the *dohyo*, the *gyoji* shall complete the *tachiai* by calling out "*Hakkeyoi!*"
- (6) When the bout has begun, the *gyoji* shall urge the competitors with the

calls "*Nokotta!*" (Hang in there!) and "*Hakkeyoi!*" The call "*Nokotta!*" shall be used when the competitors are in motion, whilst "*Hakkeyoi!*" is used when both are at a standstill.

- (7) At the moment when the winner is determined, the *gyoji* shall call out "*Shobu atta!*" and indicate the winner by pointing his hand to the east or west side of the *dohyo*.
- (8) Before the *kachi-nanori*, the *gyoji* shall return to the basic position. After having both competitors stand and bow to each other by calling out "*Rei!*" (Bow!), he shall call out "*Higashi no kachi*" (East side's victory) or "*Nishi no kachi*" (West side's victory) while pointing his hand at the winner, who remains in the *sonkyo* posture. If there has been a judges' deliberation, however, the *kachi-nanori* shall not be given until all the judges have returned to their assigned positions and an explanation has been given by the head judge.

Article 30

The *gyoji* must observe the following requirements while the bout is in progress.

- (1) He must ensure that he does not step on any of the *shobu-dawara*, or the *janome*.
- (2) He must endeavor to avoid turning his back to the *shomen*.
- (3) His movements must be quick, so as not to get in the way of the competitors.
- (4) He must endeavor to be in the best location, posture and angle for making a good decision.

Article 31

At the beginning and end of the team competition, the *gyoji* shall stand in the basic position, have all the competitors of the east and west line up and give the command "*Rei!*" (Bow!), to have them make a standing bow.

Article 32

When the judges enter or exits, they shall line up in their assigned places in the *dohyo-damari* and bow on the *gyoji* 's command.

Article 33

The judges' shifts change over in the following manner:

- (1) The current judges shall stand up and bow from their respective positions around the *dohyo* on the *gyoji*'s command, after which they move to the assigned positions in the *dohyo-damari*.
- (2) The judges for the next shift shall line up in the *dohyo-damari*, bows on the *gyoji*'s command as specified in the preceding item, and they then move into their individual seats.
- (3) After the movement specified in (1) and (2), the *gyoji* for the next shift shall give the command for a standing bow; and the changeover is completed.
- (4) When giving the command "*Rei!*" for the bow as described in (1) and (3) above, the *gyoji* shall stand in the basic position.

Chapter 4 Revisions to the Regulations on Refereeing

Article 34

Recommended revisions to the Regulations on Refereeing shall be discussed by the IFS Competitions Committee and sent to the Board of Directors for final approval.

Supplementary Provision

These regulations shall come into effect as of 1 April 1997.

Revised Supplementary Provision

These regulations shall come into effect as of 22 October 1998.

Revised Supplementary Provision

These regulations shall come into effect as of 24 June 2002.

Revised Supplementary Provision

These regulations shall come into effect as of 6 September 2024.