

Adapted from the All Japan School Kendo Federation, Coach Workshop Handout

**How judges should move
about, and respond to various
match situations**

▪ **General Rule**

1. Referees should move in response to the competitors' movements. Each referee should position him/herself in good balance with respect to the other two judges while moving to acquire good position. The position should place the judge in a vantage point that is conducive to observing the match and delivering judgments according to the circumstances.
2. Referees should maintain the positions that will create the shape of isosceles triangle, keeping the chief referee as the apex of the triangle. However at times the sub-referee's may become the apex momentarily. It is the responsibility of the judges to be in a position to see the match.
3. The boundaries of the referee movement must not be pre-determined so that as a group they may move freely about the court (shiai-ji). (See basic chart of positions)
4. Each referee should have the two other referees as well as both competitors in their peripheral vision at all times.
5. The referees should maintain an even distance from both competitors as much as possible. When moving the referee should maintain their distance from two competitors as if to cut-in. Move in

a straight line that creates an angular path moving towards the competitors that maintains the correct distance from them.

6. It is desirable to consider the position of the chief referee as the center of the competition; assistant referees should move around the chief referee.
7. Referees should stay within the boundary of the court as much as possible. It is permissible to move outside in order to maintain all relationships to other referees and competitors.
8. In case the competitors are near the corner of the court, one referee should stand outside of the court and the other two referees should be inside of the ring.
9. In the case where one of the competitors is performing jodan no kame the sub-referee may need to modify their position in order to more clearly observe the throat target (nodo) of the jodan player.

How to judge the competition

- **How to carry out a role of referee** --- Posture of referee/ How to hold the flag/ How a referee should enter the ring/ How to unfold the flag/ How to fold the flag/ The fixed positions of referees/ How to line up the group of competitors in case of a group match/ How referees should move about and switch shifts/ How to carry out a shift change on site/ How to switch referees after the end of duty, etc.
- **How to display and deliver the judgment** --- Begin/ restart. Finish/ Valid point / Decision/ How to call the match/ Draw/ Halting the match/ Split/ Consultation/ Foul/ Simultaneous foul/ Post-

consultation/ What to do when an assistant referee announces a consultation/ what to do when an assistant referee orders match halt.

- **How referees should be positioned** --- How the competitor with "jodan" form should be positioned,
- **Ordering a halt in a case when either competitor drops the shinai or falls**
- **Differentiate the judgment displays for dropping out of the match and invalid point**
- **Timing of displaying the "foul" judgment, and timing of finishing the display**
- **Referee consultation during the match/ How the competitors should wait while the match is suspended**
- **How to cancel the "valid point" call**

Valid points that are easily missed, take special care to prevent these cases

- Point made just as the match ends at the calling of time. Note that there is a conflict as to when a match is over. That is; at yame or at end of regulation time. This should be designated as part of the tournament rules since in all other competitions regulation time ends the match. However if the play is in motion as time runs out such as the ball is in the air then it counts. So should it be with kendo, if the waza has started then the strike should count if valid.
- Point made just as the competitor is going out of the ring. Referees should not let the boundary lines or hansoku drive the match. Remember your number 1 duty is to call points.
- When one competitor hits "men" slightly faster than the other competitor hits "men" (there is no such thing as aiuchi, only the judges inability to see which is first) try to see the seme and which has gained the advantage.
- "Doh" waza-many valid doh strikes are not taken, judges should not be prejudicial towards these strikes.
- "Men" right after "debana kote" (missing "kote"), if the kote is not valid be prepared to take a valid men strike.

- Reasonably good "waza" such as "suri-age"/ "kaesi-waza" The standard must be adjusted by degree of difficulty on more complex waza. Especially when judging children. "What gets rewarded is what gets done" Referees are crucial in teaching kendo and moving the students to expand their skills.

Things to keep in mind upon making judgments

- Unexpected "waza" and/or some "waza" that referee themselves are not capable of utilizing. If you are to judge you must be familiar with all waza and capable of judging them even if you cannot do them yourself.
- Strive to validate only the hit ("datotsu") with sharp "tenouchi (note: term for skill, performance, capability)" which is executed thoroughly with the core of the body leading the movement. Dismiss the hits ("datotsu") that are lightly executed and/or disappeared in the flow (?). This means that the strike must be accurate, have sufficient power, and continue to completion. Definition of a valid strike (yukodatotsu): a waza is complete when an accurate strike or thrust is made onto the datotsu-bui or the opponent's kendo-gu with shinai at its datotsu-bu in high spirits and correct posture being followed by zanshin. Zanshin: the body posture and state of mind at the completion of an attack such that the attacker is able to defend against a counter attack. In considering the competitors degraded "zanshin" form the referees should assess the proper mind/mental readiness as the extension of as an extension of improper spirit (kisei) and posture.

- Avoid raising the flag as soon as seeing the "datotsu". Judgment should not be displayed until the following items are sufficiently assessed: what led up to the "waza", physical balance and mental spirit immediately before and after the hit ("datotsu"). Special attention is required when the referee is on the left side of the competitor.
- To require that the natural upright posture ("shizentai") at the moment of the strike or immediately after is maintained at the time the strike ("datotsu"). Dismiss the strikes ("datotsu") that were executed while the physical balance/posture is lost, and/or that barely made contact.
- In considering the cases that are seen occasionally where competitors maneuver shinai only by its tip using just hand and wrist ("kotesaki") and hit target blandly, try to validate only the hits ("datotsu") that are executed thoroughly and completely.
- Assistant referees should check competitors on respective sides thoroughly for the use of unauthorized equipment/ "tabi"/ supporter, etc., as well as the length of "men-himo" prior to beginning of the match, so that fouls can be prevented from occurring.
- "Tsuba-zeri-ai" is the most dangerous and highly charged situation, thus both parties must have pure attitude. Therefore, in case there is an unauthorized and underhanded action, the referees should take counsel (gogi) together immediately and take appropriate action in order to prevent reoccurrences. Do not overlook any fiddling and/or defense-only defense actions (stalling). These cases are common

when one opponent has a point and is trying to kill the clock, especially in team situations. Again this refers to tsuba zerai situations.

- Call arbitration (gogi) quickly and strictly assess if the competitors call for time is valid. Invalid stoppage should be given a foul. Insure to assess the halting request from an "impartial" point of view upon referees' consultation.
- Offensive and defensive battle of both parties near the edge of the ring should be the scene where one side is trying to get out of the difficult situation and the other side trying to get advantage of the situation. Therefore, referees should not halt the match hastily nor should they allow it to continue to wait for out of bounds foul. In other words do not let a wrestling match continue. In particular pay attention when judging children's matches where one is much larger than the other and tries to use the size to just throw the smaller child out of the court. Judges must control the match at all times and not allow dangerous and negligent situations to continue that can cause personal injury.