



WORLD KARATE FEDERATION

Issued December 2025

CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR REFEREES 2026

1. KARATE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

World Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships 2026

- **License requirements:**
Referees with minimum Kumite Judge B and/or Kata Judge B license.
- **Annual* attendance requirements for registering as a Referee:**
Minimum participation requirements in K1 events for an aggregate of four (4) K1 events, with a minimum of:
 - 1 Series A
 - 2 Youth League
 - 1 K1 event at free choicein at least 2 Continents.
- **Registration:**
 - The appointment of Referees will be done directly by the NFs.
 - The appointment of Referees by the NFs will not be limited to a maximum number.
- A **Referee Course** for qualified Referees will take place (*see 3. for details*).

Teams World Cup 2026

- **License requirements:**
Referees with highest licenses Kumite Referee A and Kata Judge A license.
- **Annual* attendance requirements for registering as a Referee:**
 - 1 Premier League
For the members of the RC and those wishing to be eligible for the list of WKF appointed referees, the minimum requirement will be of 2 Premier Leagues.
 - 1 Series A
 - 2 Youth League



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in at least 3 Continents.

- **Registration:**

- WKF RC members (see Annex 1)
- Referees appointed by WKF (see Annex 1)
- NFs will be allowed to register a maximum of two (2) referees per NF that comply with the overall established annual requirements, regardless of those nationalities already included with the RC Members and those Referees appointed by the WKF

** Note: The term "annual" refers to the time span starting from (and including) the first K1 tournament after the World Championships until (and including) the last K1 tournament before the next year's World Championship.*

2. KARATE 1 EVENTS

Online registration of Referees will be structured in separate registrations as follows:

For Premier League events:

- Referees with a WKF License: limited to 75 (the WKF reserves its right to stop the registration once it has reached the number of 75)
- Referee Commission members
- Referees ranked within the top 30 of the WKF Referee Ranking on the opening date of registration for each event.
- Note: Only Referees with a WKF Kata Judge-A and/or Kumite Referee-A License are entitled to register for Premier League events and to officiate in the respective category/categories, where they hold the highest license.

For Series A and Youth League events:

- The WKF reserves its right to stop the registration once the number of registered referees with WKF and/or Continental License has reached the number of:
 - 90 in Series A
 - 120 in Youth League.
- Referee Commission members
- Referees ranked within the top 30 of the WKF Referee Ranking on the opening date of registration for each event.
- NF Referees without WKF and/or Continental License

General

Taking into account the overall situation and adequate conditions for a successful event at the highest level, special requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis after the closing of the registration.



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3. WKF REFEREE COURSES

There will continue to be two (2) separate Referee Courses per year, that will be included in the WKF Calendar:

Course for Referees at a Karate1 Event

- a. Referees without WKF license
- b. Referees who have their WKF license expired in the previous year

The event at which the course will be held, shall serve as confirmation event.

This annual Referee Course will take place, preferably between February and July and preferably at the occasion of a YL event.

Course for Referees at World Championships (World Championships for Cadets, Juniors & U21 in 2026)

- a. Referees already having a WKF license
- b. Referees who have their WKF license expired in the previous year

The World Championships at which the course will be held shall serve as confirmation event.

4. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE WKF LICENCE RENEWAL

- Participate annually in at least one Karate1 event
- Participate in at least one World Championships during the period of validity of the license
- Pass the written License Renewal exam every 4 (four) years

Those who do not comply with the above will have to attend and pass the examination at a WKF Referee Course in Kata and/or Kumite to reinstate the license(s). After a year has passed without having a valid license, it is necessary to attend a WKF Referee Course and begin from the beginning.

- Payment of License Renewal (PLR) needs to be done every 4 (four) years



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ANNEX 1

Methodology for the selection by the WKF of the Officials for refereeing in the Teams World Cup 2026

The WKF will assume the flight ticket and the full board accommodation in the HQ hotel for the full RC Commission.

In addition to the RC members, WKF will appoint a maximum of 30 referees complying with the established requirements and will assume for each of them a benchmark lump sum for the flight ticket as well as the full board accommodation in one of the official hotels.

Requirements:

1. **Highest WKF license Kumite Referee-A and Kata Judge-A**
The full Referee Commission, plus all selected referees must be WKF qualified with the highest licenses in Kata and Kumite.
2. **Compliance with the Referees' requirements for attending a WKF World Championships, including one extra Premier League**
The selected referees must have attended on the relevant year a minimum of two (2) Premier Leagues, two (2) Youth Leagues and one (1) Series-A, in at least three (3) continents.
3. **Activity attendance according to the WKF Referee Ranking**
The referees will be selected among the list of the 70 first in the Referees Ranking, taking into consideration the breakdown between Continental Federations as per point 4 below and compliant with point 2 above.
4. **Universality (Continental Federations)**
The breakdown of the Referees between Continental Federations and maximum numbers by continent will be as follows:

EKF: 11 Officials (40%)
AKF: 7 Officials (~25%)
UFAK: 5 Officials (~15%)
PKF: 5 Officials (~15%)
OKF: 2 Officials (~5%)

Methodology for the selection of the referees

The preliminary selection of the referees will be made within a deadline of around five (5) months before the 2026 Teams World Cup. Those selected will receive an appointment letter from the WKF and will have to answer accepting the appointment and the conditions associated, including the commitment to fulfil the requirements in place - as per point 2 above - before the date of the Championships.



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The selection will be made by taking the number of referees specified in point 4 before for each of the 5 Continents, continent by continent, using the top 70 (seventy) referees in the ranking list by the date of the selection. There will be no limitation in the number of referees selected for specific citizenship.

Those referees initially selected that for whatever reasons excuse themselves from attending the World Championships will be replaced by another one in the ranking from the same Continent within the top 70.

When the substitution line is exhausted, then the replacement will be made using the Ranking list irrespective of the Continent, starting with the best ranked and following the same path within the top 70.

Once the selection of the Referees has been made, and the confirmations have been received, the NFs will be informed of the names of their respective Referees on the list, in order to be able to make their respective appointment of the up to two (2) referees there are entitled to appoint per NF.