

Our Simple Guide To The WTF Taekwondo Sparring Rules

On this page we give you the important taekwondo sparring rules - so you can understand the basics of a taekwondo sparring match.

What You Need To Wear In A WTF Taekwondo Sparring Competition

You need

chest (or trunk) protector

head guard

groin guard

forearm guards

shin guards

hand protectors

and a mouth-guard

Your sparring gear needs to be WTF approved.

You should wear your groin, forearm and shin guards underneath your taekwondo uniform.

Taekwondo Sparring Techniques You Can Do



Basically you can **punch** (with a clenched fist).

And you can **kick** with any part of your foot below your ankle.

And that's it.

No other techniques are allowed only punches and kicks.

You can kick to two places. Your opponent's chest protector or head.

You can punch your opponent's chest protector. (Although it's got to be a very powerful punch to score!)

You can't punch your opponent in the head or face.

You can't kick or punch your opponent's spine or below their chest protector.

Taekwondo Sparring Rules - Scoring Points



You get one point for a basic attack to your opponent's chest protector (for example a basic turning kick).

You get two points for a kick to your opponent's chest protector if the kick involves a spinning technique - (this includes back kick).

You get 3 points for a kick to your opponent's head.

To score a point your punch or kick has to be accurate and powerful. **Light tapping kicks do not score.**

In major competitions, chest protectors have electronic scoring systems in them. These are adjusted to take into account the weight category of the competitors. (Heavier players have to kick harder to score a point.)

For head kicks and if non-electronic hogus are used then at least 3 judges have to see the point and score it at the same time. The judges push a button when they see a point.

How Do You Win In Taekwondo Sparring



At the end of 3 rounds (2 for juniors) the winner is the player with the most points.

You can also win by knocking out your opponent.

If it's a draw after 3 rounds then there is a golden point round. The first player to score a point in this round wins.

If no-one scores a golden point then the winner is the player who shows the best technique in the golden point round.

Taekwondo Sparring Rules - What You Can't Do

These are the common things that give your opponent penalty points

Stepping both feet out of ring

Evading by turning your back on your opponent

Intentionally falling down

Avoiding the match

Grabbing, holding or pushing your opponent

Attacking below your opponent's waist

Pretending to be injured

Butting or attacking with your knee

Hitting your opponent's face with your hand

Recent Changes To The WTF Sparring Rules

At the last Olympics the taekwondo didn't go down well as a spectator sport. Audiences didn't think there was enough action.

The WTF have made some changes to the taekwondo sparring rules. The aim of the rule changes is to make WTF tkd fairer, and more interesting to watch.

The taekwondo sparring ring is now smaller. Officials hope this will result in more action. And penalty points are now deducted for inactivity.

Players at high level taekwondo tournaments now wear electronic hogus or chest protectors. This means that body shots are scored automatically.

In the past at least 3 judges had to see the same point for it to count. This meant valid points could easily be missed.

If a player and their coach think there has been a mistake with the score they can now make a protest. A decision is then made using a video replay of the bout.

With the old taekwondo sparring rules if you were ahead by 7 clear points you won. And if you got to 12 points you won. Now the match goes the full distance and the winner is the player with the most points at the end.

(Sometimes in the past 7 points were scored very quickly and the fight was over in seconds. This new rule allows people time to get into the fight which is good for beginners. At the last NSW state championships we saw a young lad come back from 9-0 down to win.)

All body shots used to be 1 point. Now spinning kicks to the body (including back kick) are worth 2 points. This is to try to encourage taekwondo players to try more flamboyant techniques (and not to just to stick to turning kicks all the time.)

We hope our summary of the important taekwondo sparring rules is useful.