

NASKA FORMS AND WEAPONS CRITERIA

NASKA has separated the forms and weapons competition into four categories: (1) Traditional; (2) Creative; (3) Extreme; and (4) Musical. In addition, the Board has decided to separate the Grand Championship competition between Traditional and Creative/Extreme, and further separate the Youth Grand Championship competition by age and gender (i.e., 13 & Under, and 14-17). This format will result in 16 Youth Grand Champions, and 4 Overall Youth Grand Champions combining boys and girls in the 13 & Younger and 14-17 age groups for forms and weapons. The adult grand championship competition will remain the same, except that 2 additional grand championship competitions were added for the 30 & Older age group in forms and weapons.

- Traditional Forms and Weapons – These forms must capture the essence of classic martial arts movements, showcasing the traditional techniques, stances, footwork, and weapons. Emphasis is placed on execution of technique, application of technique, balance, speed, power, solid stances, and focus. Forms may be unmodified or modified from what a system or school considers to be the original version of the form; however, performance of the following movements will result in a downgrade of the form, or upon unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division: more than two kicks with the same leg without putting the foot down in between; front or back flips; cartwheels; front or side leg splits; releases of the weapon other than simple hand switches; or any other gymnastic movements or extreme exhibitions of flexibility or agility with the body or weapon that are deemed in the opinion of the judges to be inappropriate for the division pursuant to the general guidelines set forth here.

Commentary: There has been a great deal of debate among reputable martial artists regarding whether a form or series of moves are outside of the bounds of the Traditional Division. Because NASKA is a tournament circuit open to all styles and schools (across the nation and around the world) and from which judges are utilized, each competitor must make his or her own decision regarding whether to include movements which might be to be objectionable for the Traditional Division.

- Creative Forms and Weapons – The Creative Division allows forms to include contemporary martial arts techniques that have evolved over the last 30 years. These may be added to a traditional form, or the form may be devised in its entirety by the competitor. The Creative Division was formerly known as the Open and before that the *American* Division. A form in the Creative Division must **ONLY** include techniques which originate from martial arts and like the Traditional Division, emphasis will be placed on execution of the techniques, application of the techniques, balance, speed, power, solid stances, and focus. Spinning kicks, jump spinning kicks, flying kicks, multiple kicks, splits, weapon twirls, weapon releases, and other creative martial arts techniques are permitted. Movements that involve more than a 360 degree spin, require the body to be inverted more than parallel to the floor, or are similar to movements found in gymnastics and/or non martial arts disciplines, or forms that meet the above definition of strictly traditional forms, will result in a downgrade by the judges or, upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division.

Commentary: The Creative Division is intended for those competitors who do not wish to compete with a strictly traditional form, and/or do not wish to compete against other participants who execute extreme gymnastic-type movements. Over the past several years, it was often observed that judging these “creative” forms in the same division with forms including extreme martial arts “tricks” was essentially comparing apples and oranges, and to be more fair to the participants these divisions should be separated. NASKA has therefore created a separate “Extreme Division”, as detailed below, separate and distinct from the Creative Division, thus allowing the Creative Division to include only those forms with movements that originate more inherently from the classic martial arts systems.

Regarding the Creative Weapons Divisions, it is important to note that any particular weapons movement shall NOT be a factor in determining whether the weapons form constitutes a Creative or Extreme Form. The determining factor shall be the particular body movements as defined below in the Extreme Divisions. Consequently, a Creative Weapons competitor is permitted to perform any weapons move (i.e., twirls, releases, spins, etc.), but is not permitted to perform “Extreme” body movements (i.e., flips, 540 and above spins or any inverted body moves, etc.).

- Extreme Forms and Weapons – The Extreme Divisions allow the competitor to perform any movements whether they originate from traditional or contemporary martial arts systems or otherwise. However, (1) at least half of the form must originate from martial arts techniques, and (2) the competitor must execute at least one technique that involves an inverted move or greater than 360 degree spin. Emphasis is placed on the quality of execution of techniques and movements, martial arts skills, balance, speed, power, degree of difficulty, and showmanship. In addition, only those movements that portray a definite offensive or defensive martial arts purpose, or are included to illustrate extreme flexibility or agility, are allowed. Inclusion of other movements, or the performance of

a form or weapons form meeting the criteria above for a Traditional or Creative form, will result in a down grade by the judges, or upon a unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division.

Commentary: As martial arts evolves from the Traditional to Creative to Extreme, this category allows for the integration of techniques and movements from all martial art styles, gymnastics, acrobatics, dance, and athletic disciplines. If a competitor wishes to participate in a division with moves not permitted in the Traditional and Creative Divisions but meeting the guidelines described here, the competitor should compete in the Extreme Division.

- **Musical Forms and Weapons:** The Musical Divisions requires a form or weapons form meeting the above criteria for a Traditional, Creative, and Extreme form, choreographed in a general sense to the beats or rhythm of music chosen and provided by the competitor. Primary emphasis shall be placed on innovative choreography of moves to the music, however, the basic criteria listed above for all forms must also be observed. Simply performing a Traditional, Creative, or Extreme form with background music, or a form not meeting the basic criteria for all forms above, will result in a downgrade by the judges, or upon unanimous vote of the judges, a “no score” as a form inappropriate for the division.

Each competitor must provide a music player of reasonable and non-intrusive size at ringside to play his or her music, and an attendant at the player who must be present at all times during the performance. As each form begins, a music volume check must be made, during which time the player attendant will look to the center judge for a nod of approval or a signal to lower the volume. Once this volume is set, it may not be increased during the performance of the form.

Commentary: The Youth Creative Weapons Division permits music as an option. Because such divisions are not Musical Divisions by the above definition, choreography to the beats or rhythm of the music is not required. Likewise, because the Grand Championships are not considered Musical Divisions, choreography to the beats or rhythm of the music is not required. Please note that even though your form does not have to be choreography to the beats and rhythm of the music in the above circumstances, if a competitor decides to use music, the music will be judged as part of their form or weapon form performance.

Commentary: If a competitor receives a “no score” decision by the judges because they feel the competitor’s form is not appropriate for the division, the competitor is not allowed to redo his/her form or weapon form in that division. It is the responsibility of the competitor to read and understand the rules of the division he/she is competing in before competition starts.

Grand Championships: Traditional Forms and Weapons have their own Grand Championship. Accordingly, the winners of their respective divisions must compete with a Traditional Form. **No** music is allowed in the Traditional Forms and Traditional Weapons Grand Championships.

The Creative, Musical and Extreme Divisions in Forms and Weapons are combined in the Grand Championship Round. Consequently, the winner of the separate Creative and Musical Divisions **may** incorporate Extreme moves and/or music in the Creative/Musical/Extreme Grand Championships.

In the **Overall Youth Grand Championship**, each Grand Champion **MUST** compete with a form or weapon form that represents their individual Grand Championship. For example, if a competitor won his Creative forms division, and then went on to win the Creative/Musical/Extreme Grand Championship, that competitor may compete with an Extreme Form in the Overall Grand Championship even though the competitor may have won the Creative or Musical Division. A Traditional Grand Champion winner **MUST** always compete with a Traditional Form or Traditional Weapon Form when competing for any Overall Youth Grand Championship. Traditional form and weapons Grand Champion winners **MAY** use music in their form or weapon form **ONLY** when competing in any *Overall Youth Grand Championship*.

Adult Form and Weapons Grand Championships: 30 & over Form and Weapons competitors have a choice to compete in the 18 & older overall form and weapon grand championship or the 30 & older Weapons and Form Grand Championship. If a 30 & Older Winner decides to compete in the new 30 & Older Weapons and Forms Grand Championship, he/she is precluded from entering the 18 & older Form and Weapons Grand Championship.

Splitting of Black Belt Weapons and Form Divisions.

Black Belt Form and Weapons Divisions that have 24 or more competitors will be split into two separate divisions, a NASKA rated and a non-rated division. The process of splitting a division will be as follows: First, all NASKA seeded competitors, NASKA rated competitors and anyone who wants to compete to be NASKA rated will be moved into one division (This division will award NASKA points and any prize money that is noted). Once these competitors are taken out, to even out the division in number of competitors, competitors will be selected randomly until the divisions are as close to equal in size as possible. In the event that more than half of the competitors want to compete in the rated division, they will be allowed to do so.