

# ATA TEAM SPARRING COMPETITION

From ATA Rules

**THESE GUIDELINES AND RULES APPLY TO BOTH SPARRING AND COMBAT SPARRING TEAMS.** This is a complete rework of the rules. Please read carefully.

## National and Regional Teams

As of the 2018 Season, Team sparring will be broken down into two distinct and separate categories. These categories have teams that are considered either a “National Team” or a “Regional Team”.

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## National Teams

National Teams represent a country. Each country’s “National Team” will be selected by the ATA governing body of that country. This same governing body will select all coaches and assistants under the guidance of the presiding Grand Master of that year.

- National Sparring/Combat Teams will compete as a 5-person team (plus alternates) a international competitions.
- ATA-USA National Team Members will be selected at the ATA-USA National Training Academy “Team Trials”.
- ATA-USA National Members and ATA-USA National Training Academy members may still be part of their 3-person regional teams. Three-member Regional teams may not represent ATA-USA in international competitions.

## Age/Rank Divisions – Junior National Team Members

- 1st/2nd/3rd Degree Black Belts – Ages 15-17 (**Varsity**)

## Age/Rank Divisions – Adult National Team Members

- 1st through 7th Degree Black Belts – (**Elite**) - Ages 39 and under (minimum age requirement is 18)
- 1st through 7th Degree Black Belts – (**Legends**) - Ages 40 and older

**Special Note:** In the Adult divisions, a person older than 40, may compete in the 18-39 year- old division, however, a person 18-39 age group may NOT compete in the 40+ division.

## Other Important Information about National Teams

- In the USA, the National Team will be “TEAM ATA-USA”. Other countries represented will have similar names, associated with the country of origin.
- The National teams are the only teams eligible to earn the title of “World Champion”, “Pan-American Champion”, and “European Champion”. There may be local competitions at the events for “Regional 3-person teams”, but those competitions are not for the purpose of earning a title.

**EXAMPLE:** Team Stevens from School 1494, travels to Argentina for the Pan-American Championships. This team may compete against other 3-member teams for points, but not for a “title” at the Pan-American Championships.

- Individual school/state “regional teams” are not eligible to earn World Champion titles, but are eligible to win “National Champion” titles. There are different levels of “Championship Titles” depending on the age of the division. [Regional Team - Championship Opportunities](#)
- National teams will be comprised of more members, coaches, and alternates. Each country will compose the rules and guidelines pertaining to how teams are comprised, how to become eligible for a National Team, and when try-outs will occur.
- Please see your instructor for more information concerning how to become eligible for your country’s “National Team” for either sparring or combat sparring.

## Regional Teams

- Regional Teams will consist of 3 competitors plus alternates. [Regional Team Composition](#)
- All team members must be from the same state.
- Regional teams can/will compete at Regional Tournaments & National Tournaments (Orlando, Las Vegas, Pan American, European) in order to accumulate points toward State and/ or District Champion.
- Team members must meet the State Championship Eligibility Requirements to earn points. [State Championship Eligibility Requirements](#)

## Regional Team Composition

Teams can be formed by any ATA Licensee who has become a certified team sparring coach, or has a certified coach on his/her staff. All members of a Regional Team must be from schools in the same state. A licensee, wanting his/her student to be on a team, may not move students from one state to another for the purpose of composing a team. The student should be attached to the school for the state where their primary residency exists. The International Tournament Director is the final arbiter considering team sparring eligibility. Any determination concerning the interpretation, applicability or necessary exceptions to the rules shall be made in the sole discretion of the International Tournament Director.

**Example:** School 0182, from Pennsylvania, wants to create a Team. The licensee for School 0182 (Team A) also has a school in Ohio, school number 1559. The students from School 1559 cannot be on Team A, because they reside in another state, and are attached to school 1559 at HQ. The Licensee from School 0182 cannot move students from one school to another just to create the team.

## **Beginning in the 2018-2019 tournament season, teams are comprised as follows:**

Number of competitors:

- Each regional team, Junior or Adult, will be comprised of 3 persons; 1 female competitor and 2 male competitors. Teams may choose to have 1 female and/or 1 male alternate. These teams will be eligible for STATE, DISTRICT, AND NATIONAL TEAM TITLES, depending upon their age group. Regional Team - Championship Opportunities
- All members of a team must be from the state in which the School creating the team is located. Licensees with multiple schools may only coach a team in the state in which they live. At every competition, each team may have 2 coaches on the sideline. Each team must have 1 certified coach at the tournament, but not necessarily at each ring-side competition.

**Example:** School 1494 fields 6 different teams. The coaches for each team do not have to be certified, but the “Certified Coach” must be onsite during the team sparring or team combat sparring events in order for teams, associated with that school, to compete.

### **Age/Rank Divisions – Junior Regional Teams**

1st/2nd/3rd Degree Black Belts – (**Rookies**) Ages 12 and Under - eligible for State Titles only

1st/2nd/3rd Degree Black Belts – (**Jr. Varsity**) Ages 14 and Under - eligible for State and District Titles only

1st/2nd/3rd Degree Black Belts – (**Varsity**) Ages 17 and Under - eligible for State, District, National Titles.

#### **Special notes:**

- For all divisions, the minimum age eligible is 9 years of age as of 12/31/2018.
- In all divisions, no consideration will be given to a person small in stature who has been placed in an older age group.

**Example:** A junior competitor, with an age of 9, is considered eligible for a 12 and under division. However, the coach must realize that he/she may be at a height/weight/size disadvantage when competing against other competitors that are age 12.

### **Age/Rank Divisions – Adult Regional Teams**

1st through 5th Degree Black Belts – (**Elite**) -Ages 39 and under (minimum age requirement is 18)

1st through 5th Degree Black Belts – (**Legends**) Ages 40 and older

#### **Special Notes:**

- In the Adult divisions, a person older than 40, may compete in the younger division, however, a competitor 39 or under, may not compete in the “Elite” division.

### **Eligibility Requirements for ATA Team Sparring/Combat Participants and Coaches**

- There is a strong possibility that Junior Teams and Adult Teams will compete at the same time. Coaches should consider this when selecting additional coaches. Competition will not be held because an adult coach is competing at the same time a Jr. Team is competing.
- Must meet all tournament participation requirements. Permission/Eligibility to Compete
- All competitors must be at least a first degree decided black belt.

- 6th and 7th degrees black belts are **not** eligible to compete on a regional team, however, they are eligible to compete as a member of the national team if selected. Regional Team - Championship Opportunities
- All members of junior or adult teams, including alternates, must compete in the corresponding Traditional Sparring/Combat Weapons Sparring event at the tournament in which the team is to compete.
- No student may be contacted by any person from a different school concerning team participation without prior approval from his/her instructor. Sanctions will be enforced upon any school/coach not adhering to this rule.
- For junior and adult teams, their members and coaches may either be citizens of the country they represent or in the case of USA teams the State in which they represent. A citizen of a country outside of the United States, who works for a school owner in the United States, may compete on a “Regional Team, and still be a member of a different country’s “National Team”. This would include school owners who are citizens of another country but have schools in the U.S. Members of a country’s “National Team” may only try out for a team for the country in which they are a citizen.

**EXAMPLE:** A school owner in the United States, is a citizen of Brazil. He/she may be on a “Regional Team” here in the U.S., but he/she cannot try out for Team ATA-USA, because they are not a U.S. citizen. They could, however, Try out for Team ATA-Brazil.

- Members of each team must be currently competing in Black Belt divisions in their respective countries. (Students age 17 and under may not participate in adult divisions)
- Once an individual is member of a "qualifying team", they are not eligible to compete on any other team for that tournament season.

## **Regional Teams - Championship Advancement Opportunities**

### **Regional Team Sparring Program**

Individual school/state teams may attempt to earn titles at the State, District, and National Level. This is for both sparring and combat sparring teams. Individual school/state teams are **not eligible** to earn World Champion titles.

### **STATE CHAMPION**

The team that has acquired the most points in their state will be awarded the title of “STATE CHAMPION”. Points are awarded to teams at all Regional and National Tournaments.

- Placing at a **Regional Tournament** will award points in the following manner, regardless of that Regional Tournament’s classification.
  - 1st Place – 5 points
  - 2nd Place – 3 points
  - 3rd Place – 1 point
- Teams are eligible to receive points from best 5 regional events.
- Placing at a **National Tournament** will award team points in the following manner:
  - 1st Place – 10 points
  - 2nd Place – 8 points
  - 3rd Place – 5 points
- Teams are eligible to receive points from best 2 of the 4 National events.(Fall, Spring, Pam-Am and European tournaments)
- Competition at the World Expo, will **not** be a point earning tournament for regional teams. The point tabulations for team sparring will start at the first regional tournament after the World Expo.

## Special Note about point calculations:

- Teams may compete at multiple regionals. The standard point tabulation method, used for all other events, will apply. Teams are eligible to receive points from their best 2 of the 4 national events and best 5 regional events.
- Full points will be awarded, regardless of the number of teams competing.

## DISTRICT CHAMPION

In order to earn the title of “District Champion”, a team must:

1. Qualify for Districts by being in the “Team Top Ten” of their state.
2. Register for, compete at, and win the District Championship team competition.
3. **Note:** Winners of each District Championship, in the 17 and under age division, and both adult divisions, are eligible to compete at the World Expo for the title of “National Champion”.

## NATIONAL CHAMPION

To be eligible to compete for and earn the title of “National Champion”, a team must:

1. Be ranked in the "Team Top Ten" of the nation.
2. Qualify for Worlds by placing 1st at a District Championship.
3. Register for, compete at, and win the competition held at World Expo team competitions.

**Note:** Winning the title of "National Champion" does *not* make that team, "Team ATA-USA."

## AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHAMPION TITLES

Teams are eligible to earn certain titles at certain levels of age and experience.

- **Rookie teams**, Age 12 and under, may only compete regionally, with the possibility of earning a “STATE” title. For the 12 and under age group, “State Champion” is the highest title they can earn.
- **Jr. Varsity teams**, Age 14 and under, may compete for “STATE” and “DISTRICT” titles. For the 14 and under age group, “District Champion” is the highest title they can earn
- **Varsity teams**, Age 17 and under, as well as Elite & Legends adult teams, may compete for “STATE”, “DISTRICT”, & “NATIONAL” titles.

## COMPETITION TIMES AT TOURNAMENTS

- Team competitions at National events will be held on the Friday of the event. (Fall, Spring, Pam-Am and European tournaments)
- For Regional Tournaments, Teams must check with the host of each tournament to know when Team Sparring events will be held at that regional event.

## Roster for Qualifying Teams and Result Tabulations

After each Regional/National tournament, the Data Entry Team will fill out a spreadsheet with the names of all members of the teams placing either 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, for each division and type of team sparring event. This information will be sent to ATA HQ with the rest of the tournament results. ATA International will record this information, and tabulate points. State “Team Top Ten Points” will be posted 1 time each month.

- For regional competitions, team rosters must be submitted to the RTTL of that tournament by 8 am Friday of the tournament weekend. [Link to RTTL contact information](#)
- Once a team has earned “State Top Ten Points, teams will be assigned a team ID number that must be used for all 2018-2019 team competitions. Failure to include your team ID number may result in the loss of earned points. Members of that team may not compete on any other team for the remainder of the tournament season.
- The team roster must at all times contain at least 50% of the original qualifying roster.
- If in the event of the loss of a team member for some reason, (i.e. moves, is injured, or as a disciplinary action), and the coach feels an additional name should be added to the roster, this may be permitted up until the District Championships, as long as the team maintains 50% of the original roster.
- Alterations in team rosters must be submitted in writing to the Master Kelly Harman, National Tournament Director, at [ATATSpoints@gmail.com](mailto:ATATSpoints@gmail.com).
- For District Championships, a coach must submit his/her final roster during the online registration process.
- The total number of team members does not change.
- The removed member may not compete on any other team regardless of the reason for removal.
- Only the members listed on the qualifying team’s roster may compete. If a member does not attend or cannot compete, a qualifying team must choose from the substitute list they submitted when they submitted their “District” roster. No other or additional substitutes may be added.
- The roster for teams that place 1st, 2nd or 3rd will be "set" at this point because they have earned Top Ten points.
- For each national event, team registration requirements will be communicated on ATA's website [ataonline.com](http://ataonline.com) and must be followed explicitly.
- Members of each qualifying team will be checked to insure eligibility.
- If it is discovered that a team uses a “non-qualified” person on his/her team (i.e. incorrect age, ineligible player, etc.) that team will be disqualified, and any events in which they placed, will be null and void.

## Coaches Qualifications

All Regional Team coaches must be certified. Certification can be obtained by attending a Coaches Training Seminar at any National or World event. There is no charge for a person getting a coaching certification. Any person who has previously coached a team at the 2018 District and/or World Championships will grandfather in as a certified coach. The official list of certified coaches will be maintained by tournament department of the ATA.

This “no charge rule” may change for future years certifications.

Coaching certification is necessary to ensure the coaches:

- Know the rules/guidelines for forming teams and competitions
- Learn coaching strategies pertaining to team sparring/cumulative scoring.
- Understand the training nuances connected with team sparring vs individual sparring
- Limit the coaching liability
- Ensure the integrity of the selection process for teams

## General Definitions, Rules and Guidelines for ATA Team Sparring

**A MATCH** is the sparring competition between two members of opposing teams.

**A ROUND** is the total matches in one section of a sparring bracket between two opposing teams. There will be 3 matches per round.

**TEAM AREA** - A 10 foot or more perimeter should be established around the competition ring for team sparring events. Only team members and coaches will be allowed inside the perimeter. Warnings, and penalty points will be awarded if spectators are entering the coach’s area.

**COMPETITION MAT/RING** -The padded floor marked for Team Competition. Team members who are not a part of the current match may not step into the competition ring at any time. Warnings and penalty points will be awarded for each violation.

**STARTERS** – Names listed on the starting line-up, submitted to the center judge prior to the team sparring competition.

**ALTERNATES** – Members on a team, not listed as the starting line-up.

**CUMULATIVE SCOREBOARD** – A separate scorecard, visible to spectators, where a team's total cumulative score for the round are posted.

**REGULATION TIME** - Each match has a regulation time of 1minute-30 seconds.

## **Regional Team - Competition Procedures**

- Prior to the beginning of a round (before the first match), the center judge will ask one coach from each team to come forward to review the rules, and turn in the line-up for this competition. The names on the line-up sheet are considered the “starters” for the matches between those two teams.
- The first match of the round will be between female competitors.
- At the end of match #1, the scores from each team will be shown on the “Cumulative Scoreboard”.
- At the completion of match #1, the losing team from match #1 must put forth their competitor for the match #2. If in this first match, the score is tied at the end of regulation time, this match will go into “Sudden Victory”, so that the winner of the match can be determined.
- In subsequent matches, if tied at the end of regulation time, the match does not go into “Sudden Victory”. Each Team's scores from subsequent matches will be added to the Cumulative Scoreboard at the end of the match.
- All 3 matches will occur, regardless of the cumulative score.
- If there is a tie in the cumulative team points at the end of the 3rd match, sudden victory will apply to the match in progress.

## **Substitutions**

At the beginning of the team sparring at a tournament, the coach must declare the 3 primary competitors (starters). This is the starting line-up. An alternate can be used as a substitute, prior to the beginning of a match, during a round. However, once a player has been used as a substitute for one of the 3 “starting” competitors they may not re-enter the competition until the completion of the round. The "starter" may re-enter for subsequent rounds of the day. This does not exclude the starter from competing in other rounds that day. *If the substitution occurred during the match because of injury, the injured competitor is not allowed to compete in team sparring or team combat sparring for the rest of the day.*

## **Match Scores**

In each match, all points and/or warnings will be given using the current sparring/combat sparring rules of the ATA with the following exceptions:

- For a point to score, direct contact must be made unless, in the opinion of the judges, the person throwing the technique intentionally did not contact his/her opponent for the safety of his/her opponent. "Close Contact", as applied in traditional sparring, will not constitute a point.
- The act of running around the ring to avoid the fight will not be allowed. If in the opinion of the judges, the competitor is running around the ring, not just evading techniques, the following penalties will be enforced. For clarification as to what is "running around the ring to avoid the fight" please see your RTTL.
  - 1st time - penalty is a verbal warning-no point awarded.
  - 2nd time - Point awarded to the opponent.
  - 3rd time - Competitor is disqualified, and the opponent is awarded seven cumulative points, plus the current number of points he/she obtained in the match. The disqualified person's team does not receive any cumulative points for that match.

- Each match will last 1 minute and 30 seconds.
- Unlike traditional sparring, or combat sparring, there is no limit to the number of points a team can accumulate in a match.
- The winner is the competitor whose scores the most points during the match.

## **Team Scores**

Team points are awarded in the following way:

- Each team will be awarded the points scored during the matches.
- A competitor can earn an additional MATCH POINT for their team if they defeat their opponent by more than 7 points. This is referred to as a “Superior Decision”.

**Example 1:** Score at the end of the match is team A-2, Team B-5. The cumulative team score is Team A-2, Team B-5

**Example 2:** Score at the end of the match is team A-0, Team B-7. The cumulative team score is Team A-0, Team B-7

**Example 3:** Score at the end of the match is team A-0, Team B-8. The cumulative team score is Team A-0, Team B-9 (superior decision)

**SPECIAL COACHING NOTE: For the 2018-2019 season, the additional "match point" is for winning by a superior decision.**

## **Round Winner**

The team with the most points at the conclusion of all three matches will be declared the winner of the round. If, at the conclusion of the third match, the cumulative score is tied, the competitors of that match will continue in "sudden victory".

## **Awarding of Byes**

Should it be necessary for a bye to be awarded for the bracket, a random draw will be used to choose the team(s) that will be given the bye. This random draw will be done by the Center Judge at ring-side.

## **Competition Opportunities and Fees**

Junior and Adult teams may compete at any ATA sanctioned regional tournament assuming the team has a certified coach. It is the responsibility of the team coach to check with the tournament host to see at what time he/she will be conducting this event. Team Sparring will be offered on the Friday of National Tournaments. (Spring, Fall, Pan Am, European)

- The fee to participate in Team Sparring at a qualifying event is \$75 per team per event. This amount does not change for multiple teams in multiple events.
- The same fee structure will apply to teams who qualify for District and/or World Expo.
- All travel expenses of team members are the responsibility of the individual. Teams may try to obtain sponsorships to defray their cost of travel.
- At regional events, should only one team register to compete in team sparring at a tournament, that team will automatically earn 5 points towards a State Title. Registration fees will not be returned to a team that “wins” by default at a regional/district/national event, unless the team forfeits the team “top ten” points.
- At Districts, if only one team registers for the event, that team will automatically qualify for World Expo. In order to qualify for the District Championships, a team must be listed in their state’s “Team Top Ten”.



## Disqualification

- If a competitor is disqualified, for any reason other than running around the ring to avoid the fight, and the opposing team is behind in points, they shall be awarded either:
  - The greater of the difference in the total team score at the time of the disqualification or seven points.
  - **Example 1:** Team A is disqualified, and the match score was 10-7, with Team B in the lead. Team B is awarded 7 points, and Team A is awarded 0 points for that match.
  - **Example 2:** Team A is disqualified, and the match score was 10-1, with Team B in the lead. Team B is awarded 9 points, and Team A is awarded 0 point for that match.
- If the opposing team is behind in points, they shall receive 7 points, and the disqualified team shall forfeit any points earned in that match.
- If in the opinion of the judges, the disqualification was intentional, meaning the team member got themselves disqualified intentionally to prevent the opposing team from catching up in points, or for unsportsmanlike behavior, (including running around the ring) the offending team shall lose the round entirely.

**SPECIAL NOTE: Instances of a team being disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct will be evaluated by the presiding Grand Master and the International Chairman of Tournaments for future participation in ATA tournaments. A team disqualified at multiple tournaments will be eliminated from participating in future tournaments and forfeit all top ten points.**

## Competitor Behavior

Coaches are responsible for the attitude and behavior of all team members as well as the spectators supporting their team. All competitors and spectators should maintain the same positive behavior as required in all ATA competitions. If, in the opinion of the judges, competitors, coaches, or spectators demonstrate poor sportsmanship and/or negative behavior, the team in violation will be warned for the 1st event, and disqualified for multiple infractions.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Arguing calls made by the judges, including visible gestures or visible signs of disagreement.
- Taunting one's opponent or other team members.
- Over-exuberance when scoring a point.

Judges should be mindful that team sparring is expected to be a high energy competition. Appropriate cheering for one's team, including chants, is acceptable. The judges present at ringside and the RTTL will determine appropriate behavior and issue warnings if necessary.

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