



ICO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Official Grappling Rulebook

Gi & No-Gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu — Points & Submission-Only Divisions

ONE EVENT. TWO FORMATS. ONE STANDARD.

Points: Advance, Dominate, Finish • Submission-Only: The Only Way to Win Is to Finish

Edition 1.0 — World Championships

Governs all Kids, Teens, and Adult divisions at ICO World Championship events

General Rules and Officiating

These rules are designed for fair and safe competition in grappling matches organized by the International Combat Organization (ICO). All participants — competitors, coaches, and officials — must follow them strictly. The referee's decision is final.

A referee may stop any match at any moment — including during a legal submission — if injury appears imminent. This authority needs no justification and is not reviewable. Rulings are final and may not be contested on the mat by any competitor, coach, or spectator.

Divisions and Format Overview

ICO World Championships events run two competition formats — **Points** and **Submission-Only** — each offered in both **Gi** and **No-Gi** divisions. Competitors register for the specific format and division they intend to compete in; the age and belt/rank structure for bracketing is published separately for each event.

*Age divisions referenced throughout this rulebook are **Kids** (youth competitors), **Teens** (13–17), and **Adults** (18+). Unlike ICO's regular-season club events, World Championship technique legality is not staggered by belt rank within an age division — each age division competes under one unified technique standard, detailed in the technique matrices in each part of this rulebook.*

Clothing and Preparation

Competitors must wear attire appropriate to their division (Gi or No-Gi). All clothing must be clean and in good condition. Fingernails and toenails must be trimmed short to prevent injury. Protective cups are not permitted in any division.

No-Gi Attire

- Rash guard (long or short sleeve)
- Leggings or shorts — no pockets, or pockets stitched shut; must reach at least halfway down the thigh; no metal or plastic parts
- Men: brief-style underwear mandatory; no t-shirt under the rash guard
- Women: elastic top or rash guard; sports bra or similar undergarment

Gi Attire

- Gi jacket and pants made of cotton or cotton-like woven fabric — not too thick or hard to grip; fabric weight between 380 and 650 GSM
- Uniform color throughout: white, royal blue, or black only. No mixed colors between top and pants
- Colored belt matching rank, tied in a double knot with ends hanging 20–30 cm
- Gi top must reach the thighs; sleeves must extend no more than 5 cm from the wrist with arms straight
- Pants must reach the ankles, with no more than a 5 cm gap at the ankle when standing
- Men: no t-shirt or rash guard under the Gi jacket; brief-style underwear mandatory
- Women: elastic top, rash guard, or sports bra permitted under the Gi jacket
- Patches and logos must be placed in approved areas — none within 15 cm of the pant cuffs; back patches no wider than 10 cm

Universal Illegal Actions

The following apply in every division, every age group, and both competition formats. They are strictly prohibited and result in immediate disqualification:

- No-Gi divisions: grabbing or using clothing
- Grabbing small joints (fingers or toes)
- Heel hooks — banned at every rank and every age, in both Points and Submission-Only
- Throwing an opponent onto their head (spiking)
- Slamming or any scissor takedown
- Pinching flesh or gouging eyes
- Twisting spine locks and neck cranks without a choke
- Aggressive or unsportsmanlike behavior, abusive language, or disrespectful behavior toward the referee

Any other offense noted by the referee may also result in disqualification.

PART I

POINTS COMPETITION

1. How to Win — Points

A match can be won in the following ways:

- By submission (opponent taps out or verbally submits)
- By accumulating more points than the opponent
- By referee decision if scores are tied at the end of the match
- By opponent disqualification

2. Match Time

Match length is fixed by age division and does not vary by belt rank at World Championships:

Division	Match Length
Kids	3 minutes
Teens (13–17)	5 minutes
Adults (18+)	6 minutes

3. Scoring

Points are awarded only for progressive, attacking actions. No points are given for backward or defensive movements.

Action	Requirement	Points
Takedown / throw	3 seconds of control after execution	2
Sweep	Must start from a recognized guard; 3 seconds of control	2
Knee on stomach	Hips facing head, one leg off the ground; 3 seconds of control	2
Guard pass	3 seconds of control	3
Mount	Front or back; 3 seconds of control	4

Scoring is progressive and cumulative — for example, a sweep followed immediately by a mount scores 6 points total. If scores are tied at the end of the match, the winner is decided by referee decision.

Scoring Indication

- The referee indicates points by raising one hand straight up (red or blue side) and showing the number of fingers for the points scored
- The referee wears armbands — one red, one blue
- Competitors wear one anklet (red or blue) for clear identification

4. Warnings and Penalties

Competitors may receive warnings and penalties for rule violations or passivity. The referee may skip levels if the offense is severe.

Offense	Penalty
1st offense	Verbal warning
2nd offense	1-point deduction
3rd offense	2-point deduction
4th offense	Disqualification

- A yellow card results in a 1-point deduction
- A red card results in disqualification
- A maximum of two verbal warnings is allowed before escalating to point deductions

Passivity

Fighters must continuously attempt to progress, dominate, or finish the fight. A fighter deemed inactive may receive a warning or penalty.

5. Points Technique Matrix

Legal and illegal submissions at World Championships are set per age division as a single standard — not staggered by belt rank. Anything not listed is prohibited by default. The referee's decision on legality is always final.

Armbar is available to Kids only from ages 13–15; younger competitors require referee confirmation before the match.

TECHNIQUE	Kids	Teens	Adults
ARM & SHOULDER LOCKS			
Armbar (guard, mount, or side control)	✓	✓	✓
Kimura / Americana	✓	✓	✓
Omo-plata	✗	✓	✓
Wrist lock	✗	✗	✓
CHOKES			
Rear naked choke	✓	✓	✓
Guillotine	✓	✓	✓
Triangle	✓	✓	✓
Bow and arrow / cross choke	✓	✓	✓
Ezekiel choke	✓	✓	✓
Head-and-arm choke (other than triangle — e.g. anaconda, D'Arce)	✗	✗	✓
LEG ATTACKS			
Straight ankle lock (must turn away from the knee)	✗	✗	✓
Kneebar (straight hyperextension only)	✗	✗	✓
Toe hold (small-joint caution applies)	✗	✗	✓
Knee reaping	✗	✗	✗
Estima lock / other twisting foot locks	✗	✗	✗
Lockdown	✗	✗	✗
COMPRESSIONS, CRANKS & PROHIBITED			
Bicep / calf slicer	✗	✗	✗
Neck crank / spinal lock (without a choke)	✗	✗	✗
Twisting spine locks	✗	✗	✗
Heel hook	✗	✗	✗
Scissor takedown / slam / spike	✗	✗	✗

General Guidelines

- Winning by submission: a clean submission ends the match immediately, regardless of time or points
- Application: submissions must be technical and controlled — no "cranking" to injure. Referees will stop dangerous attempts
- Disqualification: using an illegal submission, even accidentally, results in DQ. The referee may issue warnings for near-illegal moves
- Train under qualified instructors. If in doubt, ask the referee before the match

PART II

SUBMISSION-ONLY COMPETITION

6. Format, Staffing, and Coaching

Required Staff

- Referee with expertise in submission holds
- Timekeeper for overtime (may be handled by the referee if necessary)

Coaching

Each competitor may have one coach and one assistant (e.g., parent or videographer) mat-side during the match.

Match Format

- Single-elimination tournament
- Competitors grapple for submissions only; no points are scored
- If no submission occurs in regulation time, the match proceeds immediately to overtime
- A coin toss determines who chooses offense or defense first; the winner selects their preference

7. Ways to Win

- Submission during regulation time
- Fastest submission in overtime
- Fastest escape in overtime

8. Match Durations

Division	Match Length
Kids	3 minutes
Teens (13–17)	4 minutes
Adults (18+)	5 minutes

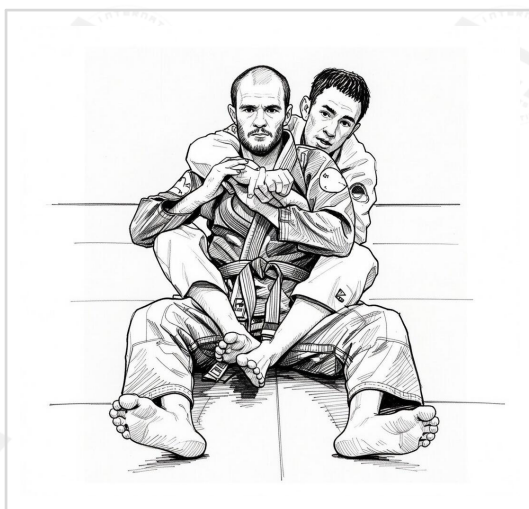
9. Overtime Rules

If no submission occurs in regulation time, the match goes to a single overtime round. There is no multi-round overtime at World Championships — the outcome is decided in this one round.

Starting Positions

- Kids and Teens — back control only, for both competitors
- Adults — back control or the armbar (spiderweb) position, at the discretion of the coin-toss winner

Back control: the offensive competitor starts seated upright behind the defender with two hooks and a seatbelt grip. The referee ensures a fair start from directly behind the defending competitor. Time starts on the timekeeper's mark, tracking whichever comes first — the fastest submission or the fastest escape.



Back control starting position — all divisions



Armbar (spiderweb) starting position — Adults only

Armbar (spiderweb) — Adults only: competitors set up in the standard armbar position. The defender's grip is at their own discretion; the offensive competitor's free hand rests on the mat next to the defender's hip.

Overtime Cap

Maximum overtime duration is 2 minutes per position. If both competitors' overtime turns reach 2 minutes without a submission or escape, the winner is decided by referee's decision.

Overtime Strategy

Victory is based on the fastest escape (defense) or fastest submission (offense). Act quickly: escape positions rapidly on defense, and secure submissions swiftly on offense.

10. Warnings and Illegal Techniques

Submission-Only has no points to deduct, so penalties escalate directly toward disqualification.

Offense	Consequence
1st offense	Verbal warning
2nd offense	Verbal warning — final
3rd offense	Disqualification

In addition to the universal illegal actions listed earlier in this rulebook, Submission-Only enforces:

- Kids and Teens: no leg locks or wrist locks of any kind
- Adults: all wrist locks and leg locks are permitted except heel hooks, which remain banned at every rank and age
- No neck cranks or slamming
- No high-impact throws or spiking
- Violation of any rule may result in disqualification or other penalties, at the referee's discretion

11. Submission-Only Technique Matrix

Submission-Only allows a broader range of leg attacks for adults than the Points ruleset, since finishing is the entire objective of the format. Heel hooks remain banned at every age and rank in both formats. Anything not listed is prohibited by default.

TECHNIQUE	Kids	Teens	Adults
ARM & SHOULDER LOCKS			
Armbar	✓	✓	✓
Kimura / Americana	✓	✓	✓
Omoplata	✗	✓	✓
Wrist lock	✗	✗	✓
CHOKES			
Rear naked choke	✓	✓	✓
Guillotine	✓	✓	✓
Triangle	✓	✓	✓
Bow and arrow / cross choke	✓	✓	✓
Ezekiel choke	✓	✓	✓
Head-and-arm choke (other than triangle)	✓	✓	✓
LEG ATTACKS			
Straight ankle lock	✗	✗	✓
Kneebar (straight or twisting)	✗	✗	✓
Toe hold	✗	✗	✓
Knee reaping	✗	✗	✓
Calf slicer	✗	✗	✓
Estima lock / other twisting foot locks	✗	✗	✓
Lockdown	✗	✗	✓
COMPRESSIONS, CRANKS & PROHIBITED			
Bicep slicer	✗	✗	✓
Neck crank / spinal lock (without a choke)	✗	✗	✗
Twisting spine locks	✗	✗	✗
Heel hook	✗	✗	✗
Scissor takedown / slam / spike	✗	✗	✗

ICO World Championships Rulebook, Edition 1.0 — governs Points and Submission-Only competition, Gi and No-Gi, across Kids, Teens, and Adult divisions. Specific division breakdowns, weight classes, and event brackets are published separately for each World Championship event.