



**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF
ARMWRESTLING
(IFA)**

Revision: December 30, 2021

SECTION 1. REFEREES

1.1. IFA Referee Panel

1.1.1. is responsible for the international educational program for referees, its implementation, as well as timely information about current changes in the rules.

1.1.2. is responsible to elect the Referee-in-Chief which will work with the Panel on the rules and collective decision making for any disciplinary action and rule enforcement. The Referee-in-Chief will represent the Panel in front of the Congress.

1.2. Tournament Head Referee

1.2.1. is responsible for an assignation of referees to IFA tournaments

1.2.2. is responsible for conducting a short briefing for the tournament referee before the competition

1.2.3. is responsible for supervision and assessment of referees during the competition

1.2.4. is responsible for proper applying of IFA rules during the competition

1.2.5. is responsible to handle protests during the competition

1.3. Tournament Referee

1.3.1. is responsible to wear proper IFA dress code for referees with below specifications:

1. referee t-shirt with 1 inch thick of black and white stripes
2. referee level on the right hand sleeve
3. black formal pants and black shoes

1.3.2. is responsible to know thoroughly IFA rules

1.3.3. is responsible to conduct themselves in an unbiased and professional manner (not to referee family members or partners if there is possibility to replace with other referee, to not coach anyone, to not cheer competitors in referee t-shirt, etc)

1.4. General referees' rules

1.4.1. During the match, two referees are used: one referee at the table (the head referee of the match) and one assisting referee (second/downside referee) or technical/camera referee

1.4.2. The referee starting the match will be deemed Head referee of that particular match. Assistant referee will watch for elbow fouls at the start of the match and assist in ensuring a fair start. After the match has started, the two referees will watch each side for fouls or a pin.

1.4.3. If there are video cameras on the table for tracking elbow fouls, only the Head Referee of the match is at the table, and the second referee (technical referee) monitors elbow fouls through the camera monitors.

1.4.4. A technical referee must be able to work on equipment for elbow cameras, do playbacks, etc.

1.4.5. Once a referee is set at a table, he/she cannot be removed, unless for lack of competence, sickness or unsolved dispute.

1.4.6. Assistant referee position at the table for better exposure of the matches:

1. Assistant referee will not stand in front of the table area unless setting up the strap or the referee grip. They may stand aside from the table corner to the exterior.
2. Before the match starts, the assistant referee will not stand with his/her back to the public.
3. Before the match starts, the assistant referee will show hand signs only under the pin pad level.
4. The setup of the referee grip and strap match will be made with one hand from the sides of the table if possible.
5. No match can start if the second referee is standing in front of the table area.

SECTION 2. PROTOCOLS

2.1. Rules of the Tournament

2.1.1. Athletes are obliged to show up at least 15 minutes before the start of their category for a check list verification. A category will be announced and a start list will be checked. Athletes who don't show up at the verification will not be allowed to participate.

2.1.2. Athletes are called to the stage when it is their turn to compete. They will be accounted for as per draw sheet. Then the matches will begin. A specified area will be secured for the pullers whose class is being run. The officials will send these pullers to this specified area.

2.1.3. Athletes are not allowed to wear any type of wrist wraps, straps, elbow bandages/supports or cups, protective wraps, rings or bangles on the competing arm. An arm is defined as a portion of the body starting from the shoulder and continuing on and ending at the fingertips. For religious reasons only a female competitor may have their arm covered. This covering must be made of a sheer material that cannot be so tight as to be considered as a tension bandage. Also it must be inspected by an appointed female to ensure there is nothing beneath the garment.

2.1.4. Individuals (unless authorized by the Head referee at a table) may not approach a table to within 20 feet. Strict penalty may be enforced.

2.1.5. Poor sportsmanship will not be tolerated and it could lead to a penalty and including being barred from the tournament.

2.1.6. No challenge matches allowed during or immediately preceding the competition. No disruption of scheduled proceedings allowed.

2.1.7. IFA tournaments can be refereed with a camera refereeing system instead of an assistant referee. The following requirements have to be met:

1. The two elbow pads must be different colors from each other.
2. The size of the screen must be a minimum of 22" inches.
3. The size of the pad displayed on the screen must be at least 5" inches.
4. Recording equipment must have instant replay as well as recording.
5. There must be two-way microphone communication between the technical referees and the starting referee at the table.
6. The camera angles and display must be set up to the satisfaction of the Head Referee.

2.1.8. If there is a disagreement between the head referee and the video referee, one may call for a review of the match. When this happens the head referee will signal a video review. The head referee using his/her index fingers moving in the opposite direction will draw a rectangle starting at the top centre of the rectangle and finish at the bottom centre.

SECTION 3. COMPETITION RULES

3.1. Double Elimination Seeding

3.1.1. IFA tournaments are double elimination. All contestants must lose twice. No specific seeding prior to championships. Contestants are placed on a draw by a randomized scoring system.

3.2. General Guidelines

3.2.1. Contestants for each weight class will be announced and they will come to the stage to verify the categories and the draw.

3.2.2. Once a contestant's names are called, they will approach the table, shake hands with their opponent and then take a grip as instructed by the referee. Competitor has 60 seconds after his name has been announced to come to the table. Otherwise a loss will be called in this particular match.

3.2.3. Anyone with long hair will have to have their hair restrained properly as to not disturb the opponent or interfere with the referees. Headwear (including those for religious reasons) is allowed as long as this doesn't interfere with the opponent or interfere with the referees during the match (hats with brim or bill are not allowed)

3.2.4. A referee will lightly touch competitor hands and wrists to see that they are properly aligned, wrists straight, thumb knuckle is visible and arm centered to the table top, failure to comply will result in the competitor getting warnings.

3.2.5. Any competitor who intentionally lowers their thumb during the set-up in an attempt to have their competitor have a lower grip will be told they are doing so by using the words

“thumb up”. The referee will not make the opponent grip any lower. The referee must be certain that the competitor is intentionally lowering their thumb before making the call.

3.2.6. No breaks are allowed during a match, unless there is an equipment failure, draw sheet mistake or authorized by officials.

3.2.7. No competitor will be matched twice against the same opponent unless for place standing.

3.2.8. An athlete can only pin their opponent on their winning side of the table. A person cannot win or lose in the neutral zone.

3.2.9. If one referee calls a win and the other referee calls a foul then the match will be restarted without a call being made. However if one referee clearly saw both actions and is certain as to what happened first then that call will stand.

3.2.10. A competitor may protest any call by the table referees.

3.2.10.1. Protest procedure: The competitor has until the start of the next match to lodge their protest. The next match has begun when both competitors have arrived at the table. The competitor must inform their Team Captain and pay the protest fee for the Protest to commence. The Referee in Chief or their designate will write down the Protest and collect the protest fee. The protest will be decided based on the conversation with the table referees or/and video playback, if it's available.

3.2.10.2. The Referee in Chief or their designate will then discuss with the table referees if their call stands. If the table referees disagree on the call or they are not completely sure about their call, then the protest will be upheld and the match will be restarted with no fouls given. If the table referees stand by their call and no video is available then the protest will be denied.

3.2.10.3. In case of reviewing a video playback:

Video playback must be conclusive for the protest to be upheld. If the video footage does not clearly show that the table referees made a mistake or missed the Protested call, then the call stands.

If a Protest concerns a foul and it is observed during the video playback then the foul will be issued to the offending party.

If any other infraction is observed during the video playback that doesn't involve the Protest that infraction will be disregarded.

3.2.10.4. If the Protest is upheld the competitor or their Team Captain will be reimbursed. If the Protest is denied the money will be forfeited.

3.3. Setting up / Start of Match

3.3.1. The grip is palm to palm, grip at thumb, thumb knuckle must be visible. The grip should be at the center of the table. Free hand will grip the hand peg provided at the table edge. This arm may or may not touch the table top. Fingernails should be trimmed so as not to injure your opponent. Stickum/ rosin/ chalk are permitted.

3.3.2. Back pressure to the extent that it pulls your opponent's arm across the marked center of the table will not be allowed. Referee will instruct the athlete to release the back pressure to centralize the grip or a warning will be given for delaying the fair setup.

3.3.3. Shoulders must be squared. Difference in heights for left and right shoulder is allowed.

3.3.4. There should be at least 1 fist size between hand and chin, shoulder, chest before the "Ready?..Go!".

3.3.5. Wrists must be straight, still and in the centre of the table. Wrists cannot be pronated or supinated and must be parallel to the end (short edge) of the table

3.3.6. The signal to start a match given by the Head Referee is "Ready?...Go!" Athletes are only allowed to start on "GO" and only stop the match when the referee gives verbal "STOP" and holds the competitors hand. Referee will then show a signal either foul or winner to the athlete.

3.3.7. A pin is when any part of the natural wrist line to fingertips touches or goes below the touch pad.

3.3.8. Competitor's legs can be wrapped around the table leg or braced against an opposite table leg prior to the start of the match, providing they are not interfering with their opponent. Feet can be off the ground during competition and legs can be moved in any fashion as long as they don't interfere with their opponent. At least 1 leg must touch the ground before the "GO".

3.3.9. In case of injury during competition, the competitor's name will still continue in the double elimination system until he/she has fulfilled the two loss commitment. The match in which the competitor was injured will be regarded as a loss.

3.3.10. There is no time limit during a match.

3.3.11. Competitors can start a match in a strap, in the referee's grip, or referee's grip and the strap if both athletes agree to do so.

3.3.12. A competitor may place their foot on their opponent's table leg (a competitor's table legs correspond to the side of the table they are competing on). However if their opponent does not want it there then the competitor must remove it. Failure to remove it or putting it back after being told not to do so will result in a foul. If the opponent knocks the foot off either intentionally or accidentally the match will continue without a call being made unless the competitor was previously told not to put it there.

3.3.13. A competitor may not place any part of their body below their waist on the top of the table. They will be told to remove it. Failure to remove it will result in a foul.

SECTION 4. UNIVERSAL WORDS

4.1. Each competitor should know the following words

Center	Coincidental	Dangerous position	Don't move	Down
Elbow	Foul	Grip	Intentional	Knuckles
Losing position	Pad	Peg	Pin	Ready Go
Referee Grip	Rotate	Shoulders	Simultaneous	Slip out
Stop	Strap match	Thumb	Up	Warning
Winner	Wrist			

SECTION 5. WARNINGS

5.1. Any movement of the arm during or after “Ready” before “GO” will result in False Start which equals 1 warning.

5.2. If a competitor causes delay for setup either in grip, backpressure, covering thumb knuckles, wrist, knifing and arm-center, after 3rd notification by the referee, he/she will get a warning.

5.3. Losing contact with the peg will result in a warning without stopping the match. Referee will look at the competitor and call one warning and show the proper hand signal. If letting go of the peg results in gaining an advantage for the athlete or remains off for more than 2 seconds, then the referee will stop the match and give the foul to the athlete. If the athlete already carries 1 warning earlier, then letting go of the peg will result in a STOP and a foul for 2 warnings.

SECTION 6. FOULS.

Note: Two warnings equal to a foul and two fouls equal to a loss.

6.1. Fouls

6.1.1. Elbow Fouls

A foul will be given when a competitor's elbow loses contact with the elbow pad. A competitor is considered to lose contact with the pad when:

1. The elbow lifts vertically of the pad with clear spacing between the elbow tip and the pad. It is not considered an elbow foul if the competitor is maintaining the elbow tip above the pad and his triceps or forearm is touching the elbow pad. An elbow foul will be called if the competitor is riding on their triceps or forearms and the elbow extends beyond any side of the elbow pad,
2. Competitor's elbow comes off from any side of the elbow pad surface.

6.1.2. Intentional Slip Out

The foul for an intentional slip out will be called when one of the competitors caused the slip out.

The foul will be called when:

1. a competitor lifts his fingers off his opponent's hand prior to a slippage;
2. a competitor closes his fingers as to make a fist inside his opponent's hand;
3. a competitor is in a flip wrist position and he pulls his fingers inside his opponents hand, therefore he is unable to hold his grip.

6.1.3. Dangerous position

When a competitor puts themselves in a dangerous position, the referee will caution them loudly with a command 'shoulder'. If the competitor does not correct their position within 2 seconds or correct their position but then goes back to the dangerous position again, the match will be stopped and a foul for the dangerous position will be given.

Two dangerous positions are distinguished:

1. A competitor does not keep their arm and shoulder in a straight line and turning their head and shoulder in an opposite direction,
2. A competitor who drops his shoulder below the level of the elbow pad on his losing side or center line.

6.1.4. Competitor's shoulder must not cross the centerline between pegs during competition. This will be a foul.

6.1.5. Competitor's hand cannot touch any part of their body such as chin, shoulder or head. A foul will be given.

6.1.6. Intentionally making the opponent get a foul will result in the offender getting the foul. Example: pushing your opponent's elbow off the pad using a forward motion.

6.1.7. Any movement during a referee's grip will result in a foul.

6.1.8. A competitor cannot compete with a straight arm in any position. This is considered a non-armwrestling move. This will result in immediate stoppage and a foul issued.

6.1.9. If a competitor puts his foot on their opponent's table leg after being told not to do so, a foul will be given.

6.1.10. If a competitor places any part of their body below their waist on the top of the table and does not remove it immediately after being cautioned by the referee, it will result in a foul.

6.1.11. Foul language, poor sportsmanship or abuse towards an official will result in a foul. If it continues, a competitor or official will be barred from the tournament.

6.1.12. Any foul given when a competitor's hand is in a losing position is a loss. A losing position is defined as 2" (5 cm) above the pin pad on the losing side of the table. This is equal to the height of the hand pegs.

6.1.13. Any foul that occurs simultaneously between both competitors is considered as a coincidental foul, the match will be stopped and restarted without any foul given to both athletes.

6.1.14. A 30 second rest is permitted after a foul.

SECTION 7. REFEREE'S GRIP

7.1. Referee's Grip

7.2.1. Competitors have 30 seconds to "Grip Up". If in that time, they have not gripped up, they will be given a referee's grip. Competitors also have the right to ask for referee grip providing that both athletes agree to do so. No movement is allowed during referee grip. Any movement after a referee says "Don't move" will result in a foul.

7.1.1. A referee's grip consists of the following procedure:

1. Referee will ask competitors if they want their thumbs to be closed up or down with showing both types of grips to assure proper understanding.
2. Referee will set open palms on the center of the table and call "don't move"
3. Second referee will assist head referee by holding competitors wrists to feel any possible movement
4. Head referee will set shoulders square for both competitors and call "don't move"
5. Head referee will start setting grip by announcing which competitor will be closed first. Referee closes fingers and thumbs with the manner competitors asked for, while ensuring both competitors have their wrist straight.
6. Once the first hand is closed the second referee will return to their designated position for starting a match.
7. After the second hand is closed the head referee starts a match with a command "Ready?... Go"

SECTION 8. STRAP MATCH

8.1. Straps

8.1.1. Straps will be used when a clean slip out occurs (non-intentional slip). If the referee is not certain if the slip is clean or intentional, proceed with a strap match. Referee **must see** the intentional slip to award the competitor with a foul.

Straps can be used also when competitors ask for it.

8.1.2. Strap match procedure:

1. Referee will ask competitors to put their elbows down on the elbow pads and open their hands. Referee may ask competitors to move their elbows in order to properly apply the strap.
2. Referee will set the competitor's hands on the same level, palm to palm, without unnecessary gap between thumbs.
3. Second referee will assist the head referee in maintaining the proper hand position by holding both hands during applying straps. They will hold the strap in place to keep the strap from slipping.
4. Head referee will apply straps starting from the competitor's hand on his side of the table.
5. Referee will ask competitors if they want straps applied UP or DOWN

6. (UP means the strap will be applied on the wrist line, and DOWN means not more than 1 inch from the wrist line).Referee will make sure that the strap remains tight as they wrap the wrists.
7. After going around the second wrist the end of the strap will then be fed below the wrist and above the strap between the wrists.
8. Referee will tighten the strap to their own discretion. Competitors may ask to tighten or loosen the strap. If both competitors agree, then the referee will apply necessary changes in the strap if necessary. When tightening the strap it must be pulled in the direction away from the knuckles.
9. Once the strap is applied, competitors are allowed to take their grip.

Section 9. Hand Signals

1. Winner - Hand pointing in the air to the left or right side to signify the winner
2. Warning - Finger pointing at competitor, who made the offense
3. 2nd Warning - Two fingers pointing at competitor, who made the offense, then the foul gesture
4. 1st Foul - Hand (with 1 finger out) pointing at the ground on the side of the offender.
5. 2nd Foul - Hand (with 2 fingers out) pointing at the ground on the side of the offender.
6. Elbow Foul - Tapping elbow and pointing at the ground on the side of the offender.
7. Wrist bent - flexion - Downside Ref with arm and hand straight.
8. Wrist bent - pronation/supination - Downside Ref with arm straight and rotating hand
9. Straight arm foul - Referee will straight his arm to the hyperextension position and pointing at the ground on the side of the offender.
10. Intentional Slip-Out - Put your fingers of one hand inside the grip of your other hand and pull them out. Then point at the offender and motion for the foul.
11. Shoulder Foul - across centre - Tap shoulder and signify centre. Then point at the offender and motion for the foul.
12. Shoulder Foul - Touching - Tap shoulder. Then point at the offender and motion for the foul.
13. Dangerous position - Break-Arm -Referee will put themselves in a break-arm position pulling the bent arm towards the back and at the same time turning his head in the opposite direction. Then point at the offender and motion for the foul.
14. Simultaneous elbow foul - Referee will bend both hands at the elbows and raise them simultaneously. Then he will cross both arms in front of him and move them outward in a gesture of cancellation
15. Foul in a losing position - Show the sign for the foul. Then make a side to side motion with your hand over the pin pad, then signify the winner.
16. Straps - arms straight in front with fist closed and thumbs up.
17. Referee Grip - Hands clenched together overhead
18. Video review - Referee using his/her index fingers moving in the opposite direction will draw a rectangle starting at the top centre of the rectangle and finish at the bottom centre.

SECTION 10. Glossary of Terms

1. Back Pressure - Pressure which when applied pulls the grip to one side of the table.
2. Elbow - For calling and elbow foul it is the centre point of the elbow joint. For persons with no visible point it will be the centre of the elbow.
3. Elbow Pad - A 7' x 7" dense foam pad where the elbow must have contact at all times.

4. End of the Table - That part of the table where the referees are positioned, which is 26" long.
5. False Start - Starting before the Referee says Go.
6. Head Referee - The referee that starts the match.
7. Intentional Slip-out - When one competitor causes the grip to come apart.
8. Long Edge - The part of the table where the competitors are positioned which is 36" long
9. Losing Position - That area on the losing side of the table from 2" above the pin pads to the pin pads. This is equal to the height of the hand pegs.
10. Losing Side - That area of the match from the centre of the table to the pin pad. In a right hand match it will be on the right side of the table.
11. Neutral Zone - A neutral zone is an area within the elbow pads. From the front corners of the elbow pads to the front corners of the opponent's elbow pads but below the level of the pin pads.
12. Pin - When the wrist or fingers go below the level of the pin pads on the winning side of the table.
13. Pin Pad - A 2" wide by 10" long x 4" high pad that determines a win.
14. Protest - An act that allows a competitor to appeal the decision of the referees.
15. Referee Grip - When the competitors can't get a grip in 30 seconds and the Referee will close the hands.
16. Referee-in-Chief - The Referee that oversees the referees at the competition.
17. Short Edge - The part of the table where the officials are positioned, which is 26" long
18. Side of the table - That part of the table where the armwrestlers are positioned, which is 36" long
19. Straight Wrist - Wrist must be parallel to the end of the table. Straight is defined as not having any flexion, extension, pronation or supination. A wrist may have adduction (radial deviation) or abduction (ulnar deviation).
20. Strap - A piece of material 1" (2.5cm) wide and approx 40" (100cm) long with a plastic buckle that is used to hold the competitor's hand together when a slip-out occurs and no foul is issued.
21. Winning Position - That area on the winning side of the table from 2" above the pin pads to the pin pads. This is equal to the height of the hand pegs.
22. Winning Side - That area of the match from the centre of the table to the pin pad. In a right hand match it will be on the left side of the table.