

Melbourne Push Hands Open



Format and Rules – September 2019

NOTE – the organisers reserve the right to update these rules at any point before the actual competition

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Principles

- **What is competition Push hands?** Pushing hands is an activity that may be defined as ‘fighting without strikes’, where continued hand contact between two people is fundamental to ‘understanding intention’ and ‘redirecting force’. As such, it has much in common with grappling arts such as wrestling, shuai-jiao, and aspects of Judo and Ju-jitsu. There is however no ground-fighting, and in competition, the set of rules severely constrain the set of allowable techniques. The use of applied force is a given – superior technique is shown in how a competitor is able to manage force.
- **Why these rules?** The format, rules and allowable techniques are evolved from the organisers’ experience, notably drawing on Push hands competitions in the following: Tai Chi Federation of Europe (TCFE), Tai Chi Union of Great Britain (TCUGB), Daqinghsan International Push Hands Competition (Chen Practical Method)

- **Our approach** is to provide a competition format that is true to the martial spirit of those who are practicing push hands, across any martial art (or none). It is part of martial arts practice, and allows a wide range of realistic techniques that may lead to injury. However, we have elected to remove or limit the more dangerous techniques, notably throws.
- **Allowable techniques** should be safe, but of course some techniques can be done in more or less dangerous ways. We allow sweeps, trips and takedowns – sometimes a sweeping foot is similar to a low kick, and a leg trip is almost a throw. It is for the referee to call a fault where s/he sees a kick or a throw. Video examples are published and a pre-competition briefing will be held to make these things as clear as possible.

Format

- 4*4 space (mats, each mat being 1m²)
- Moving step
- One match is 2 rounds of 90 secs – 30 sec break between rounds
- A match is won on 'match points' (see below)
- Round-robin format - competitors are grouped together by weight (3-4 in a group or 'pool', depending on turnout) - each person pushes against all others.
- A pool is won on 'pool points', which are NOT the total of 'match points'
- The winner of a pool goes to the next round
- Depending on turnout and competitor weight differences, one or more winners may be awarded (ie. one or more finals may be held - eg. one for <90Kg, one for >90Kg)

Competitors

- Mixed men & women (may change, depending on demand)
- Protections are strongly recommended, but not mandatory
 - Tooth guard
 - Groin guard
 - Breast guard for women
- Competitors must produce
 - Medical certificate of aptitude for competition martial arts, signed by a practicing doctor
 - Signed waiver by competitor (TBD)

Rules

Each bout is subject to adjudication by a referee (nominated by the organising committee). The referee's decision is final. An appeal may be made on a decision after the contest – the plaintiff must provide compelling evidence of a fault.

General

- Competitors must not wear any jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, piercings etc.
- Long hair must be tied back
- Nails must be clipped
- No biting, scratching or gouging

Points

Match points

Points are awarded in a match between two competitors following allowed/disallowed techniques that lead to a competitor exiting the area or falling on the ground

Basic principle – no special points are awarded for types of techniques which may favour any particular style. Control of execution of techniques is required such that a competitor is not disadvantaged by his/her own technique.

- 1 point for you if your opponent exits the area

Examples.

1. A pushes B out of the area - A is awarded one point.
2. A pushes B to the edge of the area, but B turns so that A falls out of the area – B is awarded one point
3. A executes a technique that causes B to 'fly' out of the area – A is awarded one point

- 1 point for you if your opponent touches the ground with any part of the body except the feet

Examples.

1. A executes a technique that causes B to lose balance and touch the ground with knee, arm or hand – A is awarded one point
2. A succeeds in sweeping B who falls on the back – A is awarded one point

- No points are awarded if both competitors are in breach

Examples.

1. A pushes B out of the area but falls on one knee in doing so – no points are awarded
2. A sweeps B but both fall (B before A) – no points are awarded
2. A pushes B out of the area but B pulls such that A also exits the area (even with just one foot) – no points are awarded.

NOTE – the point is awarded at the Referee's call, and no points are counted after that moment. For example, if A puts a foot out of the area, and this is called, then even if B exits the area following, the point is allowed for B.

Pool points

Within a pool, points are awarded according to match results:

- Match winner: 3 points
- Draw: 1 point to each competitor
- Lose: 0 points

Total points are calculated for the pool to determine who goes through to the next round.

Draw

TBD

Excluded Techniques

- No techniques above the torso (ie. neck and head excluded)
- No techniques attacking the groin

- No throws (hip or shoulder)
- No clasping behind back
- No elbow strikes (point of elbow - pushing with forearm is allowed)
- No closed hands (ie. fists) - a 'fist-push' is deemed a punch
- No kicks or punches – a foot technique for sweeping is not a kick

Included Techniques

- Sweeps, trips and takedowns are allowed
- Open hand pushes and pulls, in all directions, with or without prior contact (but note intent to injure disqualification rule)
- Accidental holding on to clothing is allowable but attempts to execute techniques are not

Disqualification

- For a breach of the above rules, Competitors are given one initial warning. A second breach leads to a point awarded against the competitor. A subsequent breach will lead to disqualification
- 'Intent to injure' - where the referee judges that a competitor is not interested in 'fair play' but wishes to hurt their opponent - for example with continuous open hand strikes targeting organs, then one initial warning is given. A subsequent breach will lead to disqualification.