

Fighter Kite & Rokkaku Competition Rules

President's Message

The American Kitefliers Association is proud to present this update of the rules and safety guidelines for Fighter Kite and Rokkaku Competition Rules.

Competition rules, judging standards, and the scoring process are published and distributed for the benefit of event participants and coordinators. These guidelines describe in detail the standards and procedures by which the AKA National Competitions will be conducted.

This book is also intended for use at festivals and events around the country, which may modify or use them in their current format. Local competitions are encouraged to adopt AKA guidelines so that contestants, judges, and spectators will have a better idea of what to expect whenever they fly.

The standardized procedures described in this publication are not intended to limit unique events or to stifle originality, expression, or experimentation. These rules and guidelines are intended to be a growing and evolving process. We welcome your comments, suggestions, criticisms, and improvements.

The American Kitefliers Association thanks you, the artists, technicians, crafts people and visionaries of the kitemaking community, for your many contributions and innovations. In particular, we thank you for the joy that your creations have brought to all of us.

Good winds!

David Gomberg
President

Foreword

This rule book is the first update of the Fighter Kite and Rokkaku Competition Rules which were first published in 1992.

AKA competitions have generally focused on line-contact contests. However, to encourage diversity and promote safety, we have added sections for precision, ballet, and freestyle. We have also allowed for a division of competitors into Novice and Experienced classes.

We look forward to seeing these rules evolve and new categories added.

Rules have also been included for individual and team Rokkaku competition. We have tried to reflect the international standards for these popular "battles".

It is important that we emphasize that the contests outlined here are presented as examples of how events might be run, rather than as absolute requirements. Flexibility and creativity should be stressed. However, the rules will be used as written at the AKA national Convention competitions so that contestants know what to expect.

We welcome your comments and criticism of this publication as well as suggestions for future editions. It is hoped that all fliers will conduct themselves with the up-most integrity and sportsmanship.

Andrew J. Selzer
Fighter and Rokkaku Committee Chair

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Line Touch Matches

General Description: Line Touch Matches will consist of pairs of fliers competing to see who can be the first to touch an opponent's line from either above or below. Winners advance to compete with winners of other matches until an overall winner emerges.

Competition may be divided into Novice or Experienced Classes.

Organization, Field, and Safety Guidelines:

Pilot's Meeting: A briefing will be held before the competition to clarify rules, safety issues, and event procedures.

Field Boundaries: A field of 300 by 300 feet is recommended. Marked boundaries are recommended but not required. A safety crew will be responsible for keeping the competition area free of spectators or other kites.

Pilot Flying Area: Pilots compete from within two "Flier Zones" located at the up-wind end of the field. Zones are twelve feet across and may be either square or round. The Flier Zones will be separated by ten feet and clearly marked off with cones, rope or some other defined boundary.

Judges: There will be a head judge and one line-touch judge for each flier. When possible two additional boundary-judges will be used to watch for fliers stepping outside the Flier Zones. Field Crew may also be stationed on the field to manage launches, retrieval and safety.

Line Length: The Head Judge will determine and announce any limits on the length of flying line.

Method of Touching: The Head Judge will determine and announce whether the contest for each point will be to touch an opponent's line from above or from below. The method of touching will be determined randomly and announced as each point begins. Random selection can be done by the flip of a coin. To speed the process, it is suggested that the head Judge pre-flip the five points of each match before it begins.

Flight Order: Pairs of fliers compete in "matches" based on a flight order established by random drawing. Winners of each match advance to the next competition level until a final match determines the overall winner.

Choosing Zones: Before the start of a match, the head judge will flip a coin to determine which Ring will be used by each flier.

Launches: The Head Judge will determine whether kites will be launched by the pilot or by a field crew. When a field crew is selected, the Head Judge will determine the length of line to be used for the launch. Contestants will provide their own field crew.

Number of Points to be Flown: Contests may be conducted as either single or double elimination. In single elimination, a flier is out of the competition after one loss. In a double elimination format, the flier continues to advance through the rounds until losing a second time.

In a single elimination format, matches will be 3 out of 5 points. In a double elimination format matches may consist of 2 out of 3 points.

Final Round: If the final round has three fliers then a round robin fly off between the will be flown. Each match will consist of the best of 3 out of 5 points and the winner will be determined by total number of matches won.

Cutting: Cutting line and devices are prohibited.

Competition Rules:

- 1) Any kite with a single control line is acceptable. However, the Head Judge may prohibit kites determined to be clear or transparent. Maximum kite height is 1 meter (3.28 feet).
2. Kites may be launched by the pilot or by a field crew. When a field crew is used, all contestants will launch on a designated length of line. The Head Judge will determine which process is to be used and will announce that decision at the Pilot's Meeting.
3. Contestants launch on a signal given by the Head Judge or Field Director. Kites will be flown to a "ready" position of similar altitude and reasonable separation. After both fliers indicate they are prepared, the Head Judge or Field Director will announce the start of the match.
4. The first kite to contact an opponent's line in the manner designated by the Head Judge (either from above or below) will score one point. Two out of three judges should see a line touch for it to be awarded. Fliers must continue to engage until a point is announced.
- 5) Points are based on line-to-line contact. Touching the opponents line with a kite and/or bridle will not score a point. In the event of a tangle or unfair advantage to either flier after a kite touch, the head judge will call for a restart of the point.
6. If either kite touches the ground before a point has been scored, the kite remaining in the air, or last to touch the ground scores one point. If both kites touch the ground simultaneously, the point will be replayed.
- 7) Fliers must stay inside their respective Zones during the match. If any part of a contestant's body touches the ground outside of their Ring, the flier will lose that point. However, a flier may use one hand to pick up loose line that has fallen outside the Zone.
- 8) A contestant must maintain control after scoring a point and shall not intentionally ground their kite. A basic criterion for determining control of a kite will be a bottom turn up after scoring. Decisions of the head judge are final.
- 9) Kites may not be changed during a match unless the Head Judge determines that it has been damaged. A flier may change kites between matches.
- 10) Contestants will be given an opportunity to make adjustments to their kites at start of match. After the first point has been flown, fliers may again request to make an adjustment to their kites. Equal opportunity will be given to both contestants. Following the first point, grounding or an obviously poorly tuned kite should be the only reason for allowing further adjustments.
- 11) Fliers assigned to matches from a registration sign-up sheet may be bumped to the end of a round if not present for their assigned time. Fliers who fail to appear within two minutes of the end of a round shall forfeit the match and are eliminated from the competition.

Skills / Precision Contests

General Description: Fliers compete in a series of challenges designed to test and improve overall ability and skill.

Points are awarded to a flier each time they complete the assigned task within a given time limit.

Organization, Field, and Safety Guidelines:

Number of Events: This contest should have a minimum of 3 events to determine a winner.

Pilot's Meeting: A briefing will be held before the competition to clarify rules, safety issues, and event procedures.

Flight Order: Fliers compete based on a flight order established by random drawing.

Field Boundaries: A field of 300 by 300 feet is recommended. Marked boundaries are recommended but not required. A safety crew will be responsible for keeping the competition area free of spectators or other kites.

Pilot Area: A Base Line will be established anywhere from 60' to 100 feet from targets. This distance to the targets will be determined by the Head Judge and based upon prevailing wind conditions. Fliers may stand anywhere along Base Line.

Line Length: The Head Judge will determine and announce any limits on the length of flying line to be used.

Launches: Kites will be launched or re-launched by the pilot or by a field crew. Contestants will provide their own field crew. Field crew may offer advice or instructions to the flier from the field. They may also re-launch the contestant's kite, if necessary, any time during the contest.

Good Effort: Fliers must make a valid attempt to demonstrate the required skill.

Simultaneous Events: If more than one event is held at the same time contestants should be separated by 100 feet.

Time Limits: Time duration for each event will be determined by the Head Judge and announced at the Pilot's Meeting. The timing of each event will begin with launch of the kite.

Goals: The basic idea of a skills event is to test and improve a fliers overall ability. These events should remain a fun opportunity for fliers to meet and enjoy a rewarding experience.

Competition Rules:

- 1) Any single line kite is acceptable. Maximum kite height is 1 meter (3.28 feet).
- 2) Time duration for each event will be determined by the Head Judge and announced at the Pilot's Meeting. The timing of each event will begin with launch of the kite.
- 3) Kites will be launched or re-launched by the pilot or by a field crew. Contestants will provide their own field crew. Field crew may offer advice or instructions to the flier from the field. They may also re-launch the contestant's kite, if necessary, any time during the contest.

At the end of the specified time, the Head Judge or Field Director will give a signal that the contest has ended. No points will be scored for hits after the signal.

4) Fliers must stay upwind of the Base Line during the timed event. If any part of a contestant's body touches the ground downwind of the Base Line, the flier will receive a zero score for that event..

5) Points will be awarded according to the types of events included in the match. The flier with the highest point total is the winner.

6) A minimum of three events will be conducted for a match. Events may include but are not limited to the following:

Cup Targets: A minimum of four cups set on poles at a 5 foot height and placed 75 feet downwind of the Base Line. A distance of 20 feet should separate the poles.

This is a timed event of two minutes and there is no penalty for grounding. Fliers will provide re-launch crew. The object is to knock as many cups off as possible during the time period. Cups should immediately be replaced on the poles by the re-launch crew.

Each cup knocked off shall be scored as 5 points. However, a maximum of 25 points may be scored for this contest.

Banner Spin: Banners are to be set 75 feet from the Base Line. Banners should be 16 to 20 feet high and they should be spaced 20 feet apart. A third banner is placed in the center, 10 feet further downwind. Within a 1-minute time frame fliers will attempt to spin their kite in the space created by the banners. Each time the kite enters the banner space, completes a spin, and exits the space will score 2 points.

Hoop Target: A circle or square target of 5 feet in size is positioned 5 feet off the ground. Contestants are given two minutes to pass their kite through the target. Grounding is an automatic out. Completing the task earns the contestant 5 points.

Pasting: A gauze target, three feet square, is positioned 5 feet off the ground. Contestants are given two minutes to paste their kite to the target. Grounding is an automatic out. Completing the task earns the contestant 5 points.

Landing: A circle or square target of 5 feet in size is positioned on the ground. Contestants are given two minutes to land their kite on the target. Completing the task earns the contestant 5 points.

Controlled Flight: A total of five attempts are given to each flier within a two minute time limit. Points are awarded in descending order as follows: success on 1st attempt is 5 points; 2nd attempt is 4 points; ... 5th attempt is 1 point; no success, 0 points. Skills to be evaluated may include but are not limited to:

- Vertical Dive with Roll: Flier will go from the top of the wind window directly toward the ground and then complete a spin and recovery at 6 foot altitude.
- Horizontal Pass to Left or Right: Flier will go from either edge of wind window and attempt a horizontal pass for a set distance.
- Hitting Pole During a Horizontal Pass: Flier will attempt to hit a 5 foot pole while executing a horizontal pass.

7) Kites may not be changed during a timed event. A flier may change kites between events.

8)) Fliers assigned to events from a registration sign-up sheet may be bumped to the end of a round if not present for their assigned time. Fliers who fail to appear at by the end of a round shall forfeit the match and are eliminated from the competition.

9) At the conclusion of the scheduled events, the flier with the most points is the match winner.

Ballet

General Description: Fliers perform to music and are evaluated on their skill and choreography.

Organization, Field, and Safety Guidelines:

Pilot's Meeting: A briefing will be held before the competition to clarify rules, safety issues, and event procedures.

Field Boundaries: A field of 300 by 300 feet is recommended. Marked boundaries are recommended but not required. A safety crew will be responsible for keeping the competition area free of spectators or other kites.

Music: Fliers provide their own music, properly queued, and marked with their name.

Flight Order: Fliers compete based on a flight order established by random drawing.

Pilot Area: Fliers can perform from anywhere within the designated field.

Line Length: The Head Judge will determine and announce any limits on the length of flying line to be used.

Launches: Kites will be launched or re-launched by the pilot or by a field crew. Contestants will provide their own field crew. They may also re-launch the contestant's kite, if necessary, any time during the contest.

Time Limits: Time duration for each event will be a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 4 minutes. The timing of each event will begin with launch of the kite.

Judges: Three judges should score the event.

Competition Rules:

- 1) Any single line kite is acceptable. Maximum kite height is 1 meter (3.28 feet).
2. Kites may be launched by the pilot or by a field crew.
3. A minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 4 minutes is allowed for each performance. The timing of each event will begin with launch of the kite.
- 4) Points are based 30% on choreography, 50% on execution, and 20% on overall effect.

Judges rank each performance on the three criteria, using a 0-10 score. Scores are then multiplied by three, five, and two respectively and a cumulative final score announced.

5) Kites may be re-launched during the performance. If a kite is damaged and unable to be re-launched, the performance will end.

6) Contestants will not be given an opportunity to make adjustments to their kites after the start of the match.

7) Fliers assigned to matches from a registration sign-up sheet may be bumped to the end of a round if not present for their assigned time. Fliers who fail to appear at by the end of a round shall forfeit the match and are eliminated from the competition.

Cutting Line Contests

General Description: The original form of fighter kite flying involves use of a powdered glass coated line known as manjha and other line cutting devices. Throughout much of the world “cutting contests” are the only type of flying done.

Due to safety considerations for fliers and spectators use of abrasive cutting line is no longer sanctioned by the AKA.

Rokkaku Battles

General Description: Individuals or teams compete to "cut" or "ground" opposing kites. All contestants fly together. The winner is the last individual or team with a kite remaining in the contest.

Organization, Field, and Safety Guidelines:

Pilot's Meeting: A briefing will be held before the competition to clarify rules, safety issues, and event procedures.

Field Boundaries: A flying field with a minimum size of 300 feet square and marked boundaries is recommended. Fliers will stay within the designated field. Because of the danger of loose kites returning to earth, competition should not be conducted in an area where spectators or other kites are located downwind.

Judges: A Head Judge will apply rules and calculate points. Additional judges may be used.

Line Length: The Head Judge will determine and announce any limits on the length of flying line to be used.

Event Start: The Head Judge will determine whether the event will begin with a ground start or in the air. When a ground start is selected, each contestants will provide their own field crew.

A signal to begin competition will be given immediately following the launch. Kites should not engage until that time. During competition, contestants may move about the entire flying area while maneuvering their kites.

Grounding Opponents: Kites may be grounded by flying techniques which include cutting a flying line or bridle, tipping, or blocking their wind. To accomplish this, a contestant may maneuver their own kite or line to contact an opposing kite, line, or bridle.

Prohibited Behavior: Kites may not be grounded by intentional physical contact between contestants, or between contestants and an opposing kite, line, or bridle.

Glass or coated line, metal, blades, or other devices deemed unsafe or not in the spirit of the competition are prohibited.

Safety Equipment: Gloves and appropriate protective clothing and footwear are highly recommended for all contestants. The Head Judge may require gloves and shoes.

Safe Practices: During an engagement, line or winders should not be left loose on the field and team members should remain close enough to minimize extended lines. Once grounded, fliers should take all appropriate steps to remove their kite and line from the field and not interrupt the continuing competition.

Safety Crew: A safety crew will be responsible for keeping the competition area free of spectators or other kites. Safety crew will also be located downwind. Spectators will be informed that trying to catch kites or line is dangerous.

Heats: Three heats or rounds of competition are recommended with ten minutes of rest and repair time between heats. Contestants unable to launch at the end of the repair period will not participate in the next round.

Competition Rules:

These rules cover two competitions, individual and team. The competitions are run separately. A team should consist of two or more members.

- 1) A single line, six-sided Rokkaku with four or more bridle points is the only style of kite allowed. For individual competition the kite must be a minimum of three feet high. Minimum kite size for teams is five feet. There is no maximum size limit.
- 2) Kevlar, metal, or coated cutting line is prohibited. Kites may be flown on only one, single line. Line used must be of an appropriate type that can be cut. The Head Judge will have the authority to disallow any improper flying line or disqualify contestants using it.
- 3) The Head Judge may designate a maximum length of line for the competition. Such decisions shall be announced at the Pilot's Meeting.
- 4) Contestants launch on a signal given by the Head Judge. Kites that fail to launch within 30 seconds of that signal are disqualified. Once kites have launched, the Head Judge will announce that the contest has begun and kites may engage.
- 5) Kites are eliminated when cut or grounded for any reason. Touching of the kite or the kite bridle by the contestant flying it will be scored the same as a ground touch. Kites may not re-enter the heat, even if they can be re-launched or if the cut line is "saved" by a contestant before it flies beyond the competition area.
- 6) Once grounded, fliers should take all appropriate steps to remove their kite and line from the field and not interrupt the continuing competition.
- 7) Contestants are required to compete. Following two warnings, fliers may be disqualified for not engaging in full combat.
- 8) Contestants who engage in intentional physical contact with opposing fliers, kites, or lines will be immediately disqualified.

Scoring Method #1: Points are awarded to the final five kites. The last kite remaining in a heat will receive 5 points. The second, third, fourth and fifth kites will receive 4, 3, 2, and 1 points respectively. In events with time limits, points remaining when time expires will be divided among remaining kites. In a single or multiple round event, the flier or team with the highest point total is the winner.

Scoring Method #2: Points are awarded to the final five kites as in Method #1 above. One additional point will also be awarded for to a contestant whenever they cut or down an opposing kite. Judges should be assigned to each contestant to verify points. At the end of the heat, judges confer to calculate total points. If it is not clear which contestant is responsible for a point, no point will be issued. In situations where multiple kites are involved, the last kite to make contact receives the point.

Scoring Method #3: As a kite is downed it receives a point value based on its order of finish. The first kite down it receives one point; the second kite down receives two points. Point values increase with the last kite in the sky earning the highest score.

If two kites go down at the same time then they receive the same point value and the remaining kites receive the adjusted next point value. If during remaining heats a kite or team does not

return the remaining kites will receive an adjusted point value to equal the total number of kites in the first round.

General Rules for Fighter and Rokkaku Competitions

Safety and Sportsmanship: Safety should be considered the primary concern.

The head judge will assign safety marshals who will be responsible for keeping the flying area free of spectators and other kites. The head judge may stop the competition if there are any safety issues.

Contestants shall conduct themselves in a safe and sportsmanlike manner. They shall not disrupt competition in any way, intentionally or unintentionally threaten the safety of other contestants or spectators, or seek to influence the Judges.

Contestants acting in an unsafe or disruptive manner shall be disqualified by the Event Coordinator or Head Judge.

Wind Rule and Line Length: The head judge shall have the authority to suspend or cancel heats, rounds, or entire events based on wind conditions and safety considerations.

Maximum line length may be increased or decreased by the Head Judge depending on wind and flying conditions. Field boundaries and safety considerations will reflect line lengths being used.

All contestants will begin the contest under the same line restrictions. Maximum line length or launching line length will not be changed in mid-contest. Line lengths may, however, be changed between "levels" in those events where match winners advance.

Pilot's Meeting: A "preflight" or "pilot's" meeting will be held before each contest. Fliers, judges, and field crew should attend.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide contestant flying order (if not previously made available), allow fliers to ask for clarification of rules, scoring, or judging, and announce any last minute changes. The Head Judge will review event rules, determine maximum line lengths to be used, review safety issues, and announce the launching process (pilot-launch or assisted launch). If an assisted launch is used, the amount of line used for the launch will also be announced.

Staging: Contestants are responsible for being on the field at the appropriate time. This requires more attention when fliers compete in a particular order, advance through levels, or are divided into heats.

Fliers are responsible for notifying the Head Judge or Field Director if they have a conflict and are unable to compete as scheduled. An effort will be made to reschedule fliers and accommodate conflicts — so long as the overall event is not delayed. Fliers who are not available and ready when it is their turn to compete will be disqualified.

Protests: A flier who believes that they have been improperly treated, for whatever reason, may file a formal protest. Protests must be filed, in writing, with the Head Judge promptly following the incident.

Protests shall be as specific as possible and must be filed in a manner which is not disruptive to any competition in progress. The Head Judge shall review the relevant information, make a final

decision, and communicate that decision to the person or persons filing the protest within a reasonable period of time.

Responsibilities of Event Participants

Fliers: It is the responsibility of all contestants to be familiar with the event rules, to attend the Pilot's Meeting to learn of any changes, to be aware of the flying order, and to be on the flying field when it is their turn to compete.

Fliers are responsible for their own equipment, for providing a field crew, and for removing loose line and equipment from the field immediately after their performance.

Most important, fliers are responsible for acting and performing in a way which does not threaten the safety of other fliers or spectators.

Judges: It is the responsibility of all judges to be familiar with the event rules, to attend the Pilot's Meeting to learn of any changes, and to fairly score all contests.

Judges must be on the field and prepared to score an event when scheduled. Unnecessary delays are inappropriate.

The Head Judge will coordinate all judges, contest staff and safety crew, will manage the safe, smooth, and efficient operation of the event, and will rule on any protests.

Field Director: The Field Director reports to the Head Judge and is in charge of all activity on the competition field. They are responsible for field layout, direct the safety crew, maintain contestant order, inform fliers when judges are ready for them to compete, and keep time when necessary for a particular event.

A Field Director may be supported by a Pit Boss who directs competitors on and off the competition field.

Safety Crew: The Safety Crew report to the Field Director or Head Judge. They are responsible for the safety of fliers, judges, and spectators. Safety Crew assist with field layout, keep spectators and non-competing kites off the competition field, and warn competitors who are flying improperly.

Field Crew: Field crew are provided by each contestant.

One or more individuals may be permitted on the field to assist with launches or re-launches depending on the type of event or decision of the Head Judge. Crew members are responsible for assisting with the safe and smooth operation of a contest and should stay clear of any kites or line that are engaged in active competition.

Announcer: One or more people may be serving as public address announcers. Their function is to keep spectators informed about what is happening and to coordinate cassette tapes for those events requiring music. The announcer may be used to call competitors to the field, however, reporting on time is the sole responsibility of the flier.