

US Challenge Official Judges Manual

“Where Excellence Meets Encouragement”

I. Our Core Philosophy

“The US Challenge celebrates growth, not just victory. Scores reflect current performance; feedback builds future champions. Our duty is to uplift every athlete, medalists and newcomers alike, with respect, clarity, and inspiration.”

Key Principles:

1. Encouragement Over Punishment:

- Scores are **growth tools**, not penalties.
- Feedback must **motivate**, not discourage.

2. Holistic Development:

- Judge both **technical execution** (stances, power, accuracy) and **artistic spirit** (expression, flow, passion).

3. Transparency & Fairness:

- Athletes deserve to know why they scored what they did.

II. The Judge’s Role: Technical Expert + Spiritual Guide

You are both an **evaluator** and **mentor**:

Technical Duty	Spiritual Support Duty
Score strictly against 9-tier benchmarks	Write feedback that fuels an athlete’s fire
Apply trimmed-mean scoring (drop high/low)	Highlight strengths before growth areas
Identify top 5 for medals	Use language like “When you....” Not “You failed”
Preserve scoring integrity	Remind athletes: “This score is where you are today, not your limit.”

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III. Skill Levels & 9-Tier Scoring System

All scores based on fixed benchmarks, not peer comparison.

Emerging Levels

Tier	Score	Focus	Feedback Example
1	5.5-5.9	Foundations, safety, sequence recall	“Your horse stance is stabilizing! Hold finished 2 seconds longer to boost control”
2	6.0-6.5	Linking basic, moderate flow	“Love your rhythmic intent! Speed up transitions to reduce pauses.”
3	6.6-6.9	Confident fundamentals, minor errors	“Your kicks are crisp! Now push power through the target.”

Established Levels

Tier	Score	Focus	Feedback Example
4	7.0-7.5	Power, consistency, complexity	“Explosive opening! Add wrist snaps to elevate strikes to Tier 5.”
5	7.6-7.9	Linking basic, moderate flow	“Your jumping technique is elite! Extend landing poses to mesmerize.”
6	8.0-8.5	Flawless, intermediates, artistry	“Masterful flow! Vary pacing in combos to surprise judges.”

Advancing Levels

Tier	Score	Focus	Feedback Example
7	8.6-8.9	Elite technique, minor nuances	“9.0 potential! Tighten pinky finger in sword form for perfection.”
8	9.0-9.5	Innovation, zero errors, storytelling	“You made the tradition feel new! Add a 0.5 second pause before the finale for drama.”
9	9.6-10	Transcendent mastery	“A gift to Kungfu/Wushu. Every move whispered and shouted.”

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IV. Delivering Transformative Feedback

Use this Framework:

STRENGTH → **GROWTH** → **VISION**

*“Your (specific strength) was thrilling! To reach (next tier), focus on (actionable tip).
Imagine (inspirational outcome) when you master this!”*

Dos & Don'ts

 DO	 DON'T
“Your backfist speed improved since last year!”	“Basic strikes need work.”
“Deeper stances = 0.3 higher power score.”	“Weak stances.”
“I felt your passion in your form!”	“Artistry: 6/10.”

V. Scoring Fairness Policy

To guarantee impartiality and accuracy in scoring, the US Challenge uses a “Trimmed Mean Scoring System”:

1. Five judges independently score each performance.
2. The highest and lowest scores are excluded.
3. The remaining three middle scores are averaged for the athlete's final result.

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Why this system is fair:

- **Reduced Subjectivity:** Eliminates potential outliers (whether unusually high or low) that could skew results.
- **Minimizes Bias:** Prevents any single judge’s personal preference or error from disproportionately impacting an athlete’s outcome.
- **Focuses on Consensus:** Prioritizes the collective assessment of the majority, rewarding consistent execution.
- **Equal Treatment:** Every athlete is evaluated identically, ensuring no one is advantaged or disadvantaged by extreme scores.

VI. Critical Procedures

1. Pre-Event:

- Study tier descriptors

2. During Performance:

- Score independently. NO discussion with other judges.
- For first athlete: Apply benchmarks only (no anchoring).

3. Post-Performance:

- Complete feedback notes immediately (mandatory for all athletes).

4. Medal Considerations:

- Top 5-ranked by final averaged score.

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VII. Judge’s Oath

*“I vow to score with rigor, give feedback with heart,
and honor the warrior spirit in every athlete.
I am the guardian of their dreams.”*

Final Note: You hold more than a clipboard, you hold futures. When an athlete reads your words years from now, will they remember you as the judge who saw their potential?

Make it so.

Sample of the Scoring Sheet

Time	Name	Gender	Event	Your Score	Final Score
10:20 AM	Kent, Clark	M	S Kungfu Broadsword	8.9	9.0
<i>Athlete’s Strength: Techniques very clean and clear</i>					
<i>Focus On Next: More flow in connecting techniques together</i>					
10:23 AM	Rogers, Steve	M	S Kungfu Broadsword	8.8	8.9
<i>Athlete’s Strength: Using both hands well in coordination</i>					
<i>Focus On Next: Footwork lighter will make it faster</i>					
10:26 AM	Parker, Peter	M	S Kungfu Broadsword	8.9	9.1
<i>Athlete’s Strength: Excellent motions and flows well</i>					
<i>Focus On Next: Striking point’s power stronger</i>					
10:29 AM	Blake, Donald	M	S Kungfu Broadsword	9.0	9.3
<i>Athlete’s Strength: Broadsword in your hand is like a magic</i>					
<i>Focus On Next: Looser in muscle makes form flow faster</i>					
10:31 AM	Stark, Tony	M	S Kungfu Broadsword	8.9	8.9
<i>Athlete’s Strength: Strong performance with emotions</i>					
<i>Focus On Next: Faster speed like flying</i>					