



GLOBAL COMBAT SPORTS FEDERATION

For All Combat Sports, One Federation

Grading System Guidelines

Muay Thai & Kickboxing

Amsterdam, The Netherlands
globalcombatsportsfederation.com



COLOPHON

Title

Grading System Guidelines Muay Thai & Kickboxing

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This document was produced under the leadership of the coordinator, in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team of specialists from the combat sports world. Experienced coaches, competition coaches, sports pedagogues and experts in the field of training theory and sports safety contributed to its development. This joint expertise has resulted in a guideline that respects the traditional values of combat sports while aligning with modern insights in sports development, safety and didactics.

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FOREWORD

The development of Muay Thai and kickboxing in the Netherlands is the result of decades of dedication, technical innovation and pioneering work within the combat sports community. Grandmasters such as Thom Harinck and Johan Vos have played a defining role in shaping the modern foundation of Dutch kickboxing. Through their vision, training methods and organisational leadership, they have not only produced successful fighters but also created a training culture in which discipline, respect, technical precision and mental resilience are central.

Thanks to the work of these pioneers, the Netherlands has developed into one of the most influential countries within the international kickboxing and Muay Thai world. The Dutch approach to training and competitive sport has gained worldwide recognition and has significantly contributed to the further development and professionalisation of the sport.

Within this historical development, a recognisable fighting style has emerged that is internationally known as Dutch style kickboxing. This style originated from a unique combination of Japanese kickboxing and Kyokushin karate, Muay Thai and Western boxing techniques. Characteristic elements of this approach are powerful punch-kick combinations, a high pace of competition, constant forward pressure and a strong emphasis on combination training, conditioning and tactical discipline.

Despite the Netherlands' strong international position within the kickboxing and Muay Thai world, differences still exist in the way technical development and grading structures within the sport are organised. Unlike several other combat sports disciplines, Muay Thai and kickboxing often lack a widely supported and standardised structure for technical development and grading. As a result, examination requirements, techniques and training pathways can differ considerably between gyms, training centres and organisations.

This document has been developed with the aim of contributing to greater structure, transparency and quality within the sport. It describes a grading system in which techniques, skills and knowledge are systematically built up from the first kyu grades to the Dan grades.

The system combines the structured grading methodology from the Japanese martial arts tradition with the technical richness of Muay Thai, including punches, kicks, knees, elbows and clinch techniques, and the Dutch competitive culture in which combinations, pressure and conditioning are central.

The guidelines in this document are intended to provide a common basis for technical development, coach education and the structured development of athletes. They are not intended to limit the diversity of styles within the sport, but rather to provide a framework within which further development, professionalisation and quality assurance can take place, in line with international standards for the development of combat sports.



Within the framework of the Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF), continuous work is carried out to strengthen the structure, governance and professional standards of martial arts and contact sports worldwide. This document contributes to that objective by setting out transparent and consistent guidelines for technical development and grading within Muay Thai and kickboxing.

By defining clear training pathways and grading criteria, a solid foundation is created for athletes, coaches and organisations who wish to develop within a safe, structured and internationally oriented sporting environment.

This document therefore serves as a reference framework for the further development of technical training structures within the sport and supports the joint effort to promote the sustainable, safe and professional growth of martial arts and contact sports worldwide and beyond.

Adopted and ratified by the Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF) as the leading framework for technical development, grading structures and training standards within affiliated organisations. This grading system also forms the technical foundation for the development of coach education programmes and training structures within the GCSF.

Adopted by the Executive Board of GCSF

Amsterdam, 2026



1. ABOUT THE GLOBAL COMBAT SPORTS FEDERATION (GCSF)

The Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF) is committed to the development, professionalisation and international cooperation within combat sports. The federation supports initiatives that contribute to the quality, safety and sustainable growth of various martial arts disciplines, including Muay Thai, Kickboxing, Savate, Jiu Jitsu and MMA.

Within this vision, the coach fulfils a central role. Coaches and instructors form the foundation of every combat sports community. They pass on technical knowledge and guide athletes in their physical, mental and personal development. In addition, they bear responsibility for creating a safe, respectful and professional training environment.

To strengthen this role, the GCSF encourages the development of training programmes that support coaches and instructors in their professional growth. Through structured training, knowledge sharing and cooperation with experienced professionals from the combat sports world, the federation contributes to the sustainable and qualitative development of the sector, across disciplines.

The training plans developed within the GCSF stem from this ambition. For each discipline, a programme is designed that trains experienced practitioners to become skilled instructors, with attention to technical expertise as well as didactic, pedagogical and coaching skills. The content is always discipline-specific, while the framework and quality standards apply federation-wide.

With this approach, the GCSF contributes to a new generation of coaches who, regardless of discipline, take responsibility for the further professionalisation, safety and positive development of combat sports as a whole.

1.1 Mission and positioning of the Global Combat Sports Federation

The Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF) represents the continuation of authentic combat sports and martial arts traditions worldwide. From Amsterdam, GCSF works to connect gyms, coaches, officials and organisations committed to technically high-quality, safe and professional combat sports provision. In doing so, it does justice both to the historical roots of disciplines such as Muay Thai, Kickboxing, Savate, Jiu Jitsu and MMA, and to modern insights in the fields of sports pedagogy, training theory and sports safety.

GCSF focuses on developing a transparent and future-proof structure for grading, coach education and quality assurance within combat sports. By recording clear technical guidelines, linked to recognised training levels and a central online instructor register, it becomes visible which coaches and instructors have been trained and certified. This supports gyms, federation partners and supervisory organisations



such as the combat sports authority with audits, gym visits and ring inspections, and makes it verifiable that competent and qualified coaches are leading the class.

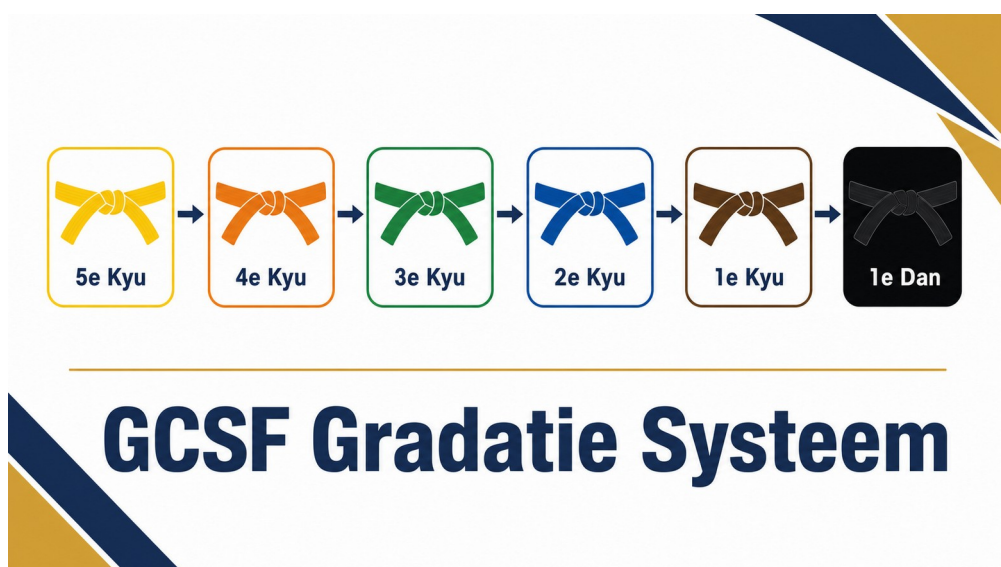
Within this framework, GCSF places strong emphasis on integrity, social safety and good sports governance. The federation aligns with the principles of the Code for Good Sports Governance and the ambitions surrounding a safe sporting climate, among other things through the use of a code of conduct, a certificate of good conduct (VOG) policy, disciplinary and integrity arrangements, and structural training of officials. In this way, GCSF forms a professional and internationally oriented platform for the further development of combat sports worldwide, in close cooperation with national partners and relevant sports authorities.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Netherlands currently lacks a uniform guideline for the grading system within Muay Thai and kickboxing. This lack of structure hinders the development of both athletes and instructors. To bring about change, a concept has been developed that serves as a guide for drawing up training material and examination requirements. The ultimate goal is to guide athletes towards the examination for the 1st Dan, thereby laying a solid foundation for further growth within the sport.

A stronger positioning of Muay Thai and kickboxing in the Netherlands requires targeted activities. The most crucial of these is drawing up a uniform guideline for training material, which serves as the foundation for a nationally recognised grading system. This system gives athletes a clear goal and encourages them to develop further, both recreationally and competitively.

The grading system will contribute to a higher standard within three important domains. During training, a high technical entry level is assumed. Participation in the training programme for Muay Thai and Kickboxing instructors is therefore, in principle, reserved for candidates who have achieved at least the 2nd Dan, or who can demonstrably show an equivalent technical level. Within the framework of the Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF), a structured grading framework is used to make technical development and training levels transparent. The Dan grades serve as a reference level for technical proficiency, experience and suitability for training. This link between the grading system and instructor training creates a clear development path for athletes: from technical development and grading to instructorship and ultimately training responsibility within the sport.



1. Instructor Training



Currently, almost anyone can enrol in a training programme to become a Muay Thai and kickboxing instructor. Unfortunately, it happens that aspiring instructors have insufficient technical skills, causing them to pass on flawed techniques to their students. By linking the grading system to instructor training, for example by only allowing participation from the 2nd Dan or a demonstrably equivalent technical level, it is ensured that instructors have a solid technical foundation. This allows the training programme to focus on didactics and pedagogy, rather than on teaching basic techniques.

2. Development of Recreational Athletes

A structured grading system encourages recreational athletes to develop more broadly within the sport. By paying attention to the versatility of techniques, of which many instructors currently have insufficient knowledge, the standard automatically rises. Muay Thai kickboxing is a rich and versatile sport, and it is a shame that much potential remains untapped. Moreover, the system offers opportunities to motivate recreational athletes for longer, even at a later age, as is already the case in sports such as judo and karate.

3. Raising the Competition Level

In the current situation, anyone may take part in competitions, regardless of level. This can lead to dangerous situations in which inexperienced fighters enter the ring without sufficient technical grounding. A sound grading system can bring about change here, for example by only allowing participation in competitions from the 4th kyu (orange belt) onwards. This creates a safer competitive climate and a higher overall standard.

In short, introducing a uniform grading system for Muay Thai and kickboxing in the Netherlands is a necessary step to increase the quality, safety and appeal of the sport. It provides structure, stimulates development and contributes to a professional future for Muay Thai and kickboxing in the Netherlands.

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADING SYSTEM AND INSTRUCTOR TRAINING

The grading system forms the technical basis for the training programme for Muay Thai and Kickboxing instructors. Within the GCSF training structure, it is assumed that candidates participating in instructor training already have a solid technical foundation. Therefore, within the GCSF, participation in the training programme for Muay Thai & Kickboxing instructors is, in principle, reserved for candidates who have achieved at least the 2nd Dan grade, or who can demonstrably show an equivalent technical level. The grading system thus forms an important link between the technical development of athletes and the further professionalisation of coaches within the sport.

The grading system ensures that athletes progressing towards an instructor role can demonstrably show:

- technical mastery of the sport's core techniques
- insight into tactics, timing and distance
- experience with sparring and competition situations
- understanding of safety and control within training situations

By securing this technical foundation in advance, instructor training can primarily focus on:

- didactic skills
- pedagogical guidance of athletes
- training theory and periodisation
- sports safety and injury prevention
- coaching and competition guidance

The grading system thus forms an essential foundation for the professionalisation of the sport and the development of high-quality coaches. Within the training structure of the Global Combat Sports Federation GCSF, this grading system also serves as the sport-technical foundation for coach education programmes. The 1st and 2nd Dan grades serve as the minimum technical reference level for entry into the Muay Thai Kickboxing instructor training programme, which is positioned at trainer-coach level 3 within the sport qualification framework. This explicit link between grading, technical expertise and training level creates a clear development path from recreational athlete to advanced practitioner, instructor and ultimately trainer of trainers within the sport.

4. EXPLANATION OF THE TRAINING MATERIAL OVERVIEW

1. Purpose of the overview

The overview of the training material is presented in table form. These tables provide a quick insight into which techniques and components are recommended for each kyu grade.

They form a practical guide for students, instructors and examiners.

2. Meaning of the markings

- In the tables, the training material is indicated with a V.
- When a V appears after a component, this means that the component is compulsorily tested during the examination for the relevant kyu grade.
- The tables therefore show both the recommended training material and the actual examination requirements.

3. Combinations and the instructor's freedom

No fixed combinations are prescribed within the training material. The instructor recognised by the federation decides which combinations are taught, suited to the student's level and the structure of the lessons.

For Dan examinations, certain defence techniques and other prescribed components must be performed in combination form. This requires the student to connect techniques fluently and logically.

4. Defence techniques and counters

All defence techniques automatically also refer to counter techniques. A counter technique must always consist of a technique the student already masters for the relevant kyu grade. This ensures that the basic skills are firmly established before more complex applications are required.

5. Sen concepts

The three sen concepts form part of the grading system. For each kyu grade, it is indicated which of these concepts must be mastered and demonstrated during the examination.

6. Guideline for Dan examinations

The training material shown is intended as a guideline for building up towards the examination requirements of the Dan grades. The overview does not constitute a fully fixed examination programme, but offers structure and direction in preparation for higher grades.



4.1 CLOTHING / EQUIPMENT

Component	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Clothing and equipment must be in good order.	V	V	V	V	V	V

4.2 CONDITIONAL SKILLS

Component	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Endurance	V	V	V	V	V	V
Strength	V	V	V	V	V	V
Flexibility	V	V	V	V	V	V

4.3 MOVEMENT

Component	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Forward-backward movement	V	V	V	V	V	V
Sideways movement	V	V	V	V	V	V
Stepping off-line	V	V	V	V	V	V
Circular movement		V	V	V	V	V



From standing to sitting		V	V	V	V	V
From standing to lying		V	V	V	V	V

4.4 STANCE

Component	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Good fighting stance	V	V	V	V	V	V

4.5 KNOWLEDGE

Component	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Knowledge of dojo etiquette	V	V	V	V	V	V
Knowledge of the various styles of Muay Thai and kickboxing		V	V	V	V	V
Competition rules		V	V	V	V	V
The rules					V	V
Knowledge of "sen" principles					V	V



4.6 PUNCH AND STRIKE TECHNIQUES

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Direct punch to the head	V	V	V	V	V	V
Direct punch to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Hook punch to the head	V	V	V	V	V	V
Hook punch to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Straight cross punch (rear hand) to head/body		V	V	V	V	V
Uppercut to the head	V	V	V	V	V	V
Uppercut to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Liver punch to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Spinning backfist to head/body		V	V	V	V	V



4.7 ELBOW TECHNIQUES

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Horizontal elbow to the head				V	V	V
Horizontal elbow to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Horizontal elbow to the leg / low			V	V	V	V
Backward horizontal elbow				V	V	V
Downward elbow to the head			V	V	V	V
Upward elbow to the head		V	V	V	V	V
Downward elbow to the body			V	V	V	V
Upward elbow to the body			V	V	V	V
Downward elbow to the leg / low					V	V
Upward elbow to the leg / low					V	V
Backward vertical elbow					V	V



4.8 KICK TECHNIQUES – FORWARD

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Front kick to the body	V	V	V	V	V	V
Front kick to the head		V	V	V	V	V
Jumping front kick to the body			V	V	V	V
Jumping front kick to the head				V	V	V
Pushing front kick to the body (strong push kick / teep)	V	V	V	V	V	V



4.9 KICK TECHNIQUES – ROUNDHOUSE KICK AND LOW KICK

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Round low kick to the leg	V	V	V	V	V	V
Diagonal round low kick to the leg		V	V	V	V	V
Forward low kick to the leg		V	V	V	V	V
Forward diagonal low kick to the leg			V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick to the body	V	V	V	V	V	V
Forward roundhouse kick to the body	V	V	V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick to the head		V	V	V	V	V
Jumping roundhouse kick to the body			V	V	V	V
Jumping roundhouse kick to the head				V	V	V



4.10 KICK TECHNIQUES – SIDE KICK

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Side kick to the leg		V	V	V	V	V
Side kick to the body	V	V	V	V	V	V
Side kick to the head		V	V	V	V	V
Jumping side kick (general)		V	V	V	V	V
Jumping side kick to the leg			V	V	V	V
Jumping side kick to the body				V	V	V
Jumping side kick to the head					V	V



4.11 KICK TECHNIQUES – BACK KICK

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Back kick to the leg		V	V	V	V	V
Back kick to the body	V	V	V	V	V	V
Back kick to the head		V	V	V	V	
Jumping back kick (general)		V	V	V	V	V
Jumping back kick to the body			V	V	V	
Jumping back kick to the head					V	V



4.12 KICK TECHNIQUES – SPINNING HEEL KICK (SPINNING HOOK)

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Spinning heel kick to the leg (low / gedan)		V	V	V	V	V
Spinning heel kick to the body		V	V	V	V	V
Spinning heel kick short to the liver (body left)			V	V	V	V
Spinning heel kick to the head				V	V	V
Jumping spinning heel kick to the body					V	V
Jumping spinning heel kick to the head						V



4.13 KNEE TECHNIQUES

Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Straight knee to the leg, forward, fixed contact		V	V	V	V	V
Straight knee to the body, forward, fixed contact	V	V	V	V	V	V
Straight knee to the head, forward, fixed contact				V	V	V
Straight knee to the leg, forward, free		V	V	V	V	V
Straight knee to the body, forward, free	V	V	V	V	V	V
Straight knee to the head, forward, free				V	V	V
Round knee to the leg, fixed contact		V	V	V	V	V
Round knee to the body, fixed contact	V	V	V	V	V	V
Round knee to the head, fixed contact				V	V	V
Round knee to the leg, free		V	V	V	V	V
Round knee to the body, free	V	V	V	V	V	V
Round knee to the head, free				V	V	V
Jumping straight knee to the leg, forward					V	V
Jumping straight knee to the body, forward				V	V	V



Jumping straight knee to the head, forward					V	V
Jumping round knee to the leg					V	V
Jumping round knee to the body				V	V	V
Jumping round knee to the head					V	V



4.14 DEFENCE AGAINST PUNCHES AND STRIKES

Attack type	Defence	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Direct punches	Absorbing on the guard (high, closed guard)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Direct punches	Stepping back to create distance	V	V	V	V	V	V
Direct punches	Stepping sideways off the line of the punch		V	V	V	V	V
Direct punches	Stopping the punch in the glove (parry)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Direct punches	Sweeping parry with the hand (sweep parry)		V	V	V	V	V
Direct punches	Counter after sweep parry (parry + direct counter punch)			V	V	V	V
Direct punches					V	V	V
Direct punches	Tai no sen (stepping in and countering simultaneously)				V	V	V
Hook punches	Absorbing on the guard (elbow tucked, hand high)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Hook punches	Stepping back	V	V	V	V	V	V
Hook punches	Block in the crook of the elbow (absorbing the hook on the arm)		V	V	V	V	V
Hook punches	Bobbing and weaving under or outside the hook punch			V	V	V	V
Hook punches	Tai no sen (stepping in				V	V	V



	and countering simultaneously)						
Uppercuts	Absorbing on the guard (elbows close to the body)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Uppercuts	Stepping back	V	V	V	V	V	V
Uppercuts	Stopping the punch in the glove (parry inward/outward)		V	V	V	V	V
Uppercuts	Sweep parry (pushing/sweeping away the uppercut)			V	V	V	V
Uppercuts	Bobbing and weaving				V	V	V
Uppercuts	Tai no sen (countering simultaneously during the uppercut)				V	V	V
Spinning backfist	Absorbing on the guard	V	V	V	V	V	V
Spinning backfist	Stepping back		V	V	V	V	V
Spinning backfist	Blocking on the elbow (absorbing the spinning backfist)			V	V	V	V
Spinning backfist	Bobbing and weaving (under or outside the swing)					V	V



4.15 DEFENCE AGAINST KICKS

Attack type	Defence	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Front kick	Stepping back	V	V	V	V	V	V
Front kick	Stepping sideways		V	V	V	V	V
Front kick	Sweep parry with the lead arm		V	V	V	V	V
Front kick	Sweep parry with the elbow			V	V	V	V
Front kick	Sweep parry with the lead arm and grabbing the leg				V	V	V
Front kick	Sweep parry with the rear arm	V	V	V	V	V	V
Front kick	Sweep parry with the rear arm and grabbing the leg					V	V
Low kick	Stepping back	V	V	V	V	V	V
Low kick	Blocking with the shin (check)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Low kick	Blocking with the shin cross (crossed)	V	V	V	V	V	V
Low kick	Blocking the leg with the foot			V	V	V	V
Low kick	Blocking the leg with the foot cross			V	V	V	V
Low kick	Redirecting the low kick with your own leg				V	V	V
Low kick	Blocking with a punch (tai no sen – stepping in and				V	V	V



	counter punch)						
Low kick	Blocking with a kick (tai no sen – own kick as counter-attack)					V	V
Roundhouse kick	Stepping back	V	V	V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick	Crossed blocking with the hand	V	V	V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick	Crossed blocking with the elbow		V	V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick	Redirecting the kicking leg crosswise			V	V	V	V
Roundhouse kick	Blocking with a punch (tai no sen – stepping in and punching)				V	V	V
Roundhouse kick	Blocking with a kick (tai no sen – own kick as counter)					V	V
Side kick	Stepping back		V	V	V	V	V
Side kick	Stepping sideways						
Side kick	Sweep parry with the lead arm			V	V	V	V
Side kick	Sweep parry with the elbow				V	V	V
Side kick	Sweep parry with the rear arm				V	V	V
Back kick	Stepping back			V	V	V	V
Back kick	Stepping sideways			V	V	V	V
Back kick	Crossed blocking with the hand			V	V	V	V
Back kick	Crossed blocking with the elbow				V	V	V



4.16 SPINNING HEEL KICK DEFENCE

Attack type	Defence	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Spinning heel kick	Stepping back			V	V	V	V
Spinning heel kick	Stepping sideways				V	V	V
Spinning heel kick	Crossed blocking with the hand						
Spinning heel kick	Crossed blocking with the elbow						V
Spinning heel kick	Stepping in (stepping inward to break the kick)					V	V

4.17 KNEE DEFENCE TECHNIQUES

Situation / attack type	Defence	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
General against knees	Preventing the knee with a block (arms, hip, thigh)		V	V	V	V	V
Straight knee – fixed	Redirecting the knee (changing direction, guiding it past you)			V	V	V	V
Straight knee – fixed	Disrupting the opponent's balance (pulling/pushing/turning)				V	V	V
Straight knee – free	Stepping back		V	V	V	V	V



Straight knee – free	Stepping sideways			V	V	V	V
Straight knee – free	Tai no sen (stepping in and countering simultaneously)					V	V
Round knee – fixed	Disrupting the opponent's balance				V	V	V
Round knee – fixed	Blocking at the groin (knee raised as a protective shield)				V	V	V



4.18 THROWS, ROLLS, FALLS AND BREAKFALLS

Component	Technique	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
Breakfalls	Backward breakfall		V	V	V	V	V
Breakfalls	Sideways breakfall			V	V	V	V
Rolls	Forward roll			V	V	V	V
Rolls	Backward roll				V	V	V
Rolls	Sideways roll				V	V	V
Throws	O soto gari (outer leg sweep throw)			V	V	V	V
Throws	O uchi gari (inner leg sweep throw)				V	V	V
Throws	O goshi (hip throw)					V	V
Throws	De ashi barai (advancing foot sweep / front leg sweep)				V	V	V
Throws	Ashi waza (foot and leg techniques)					V	V

4.19 INTERACTIVE PRACTICE FORM

Practice form (sparring / interactive rounds)	5th kyu (yellow)	4th kyu (orange)	3rd kyu (green)	2nd kyu (blue)	1st kyu (brown)	1st Dan (black)
3 × 2 minutes	V					
5 × 2 minutes		V				
7 × 2 minutes			V			



5 × 3 minutes				V		
6 × 3 minutes					V	V

5. FURTHER EXPLANATION

Table: Differences between the three "sen" principles

Principle	What happens?
Go no Sen	You react after the attack
Tai no Sen	You react at the start of the attack
Sen no Sen	You act before the physical attack



Practical example

- Go no Sen → He strikes, you block and counter.
- Tai no Sen → He starts to strike, you intercept.
- Sen no Sen → You see the decision and attack first.

Interactive practice forms

By interactive practice forms we mean sparring. Only the skills required for the relevant kyu grade are tested here

Bobbing and Weaving

Bobbing = bending your knees to duck under a punch.

Weaving = moving sideways while staying low, often in a fluid U-shape.

6. DAN EXAMINATIONS – GUIDELINES AND AWARD CRITERIA

The 1st and 2nd Dan grades also form the technical reference level for participation in the training programme for Muay Thai and Kickboxing instructors within the GCSF.

Role of Dan grades within the training structure

Within the GCSF training structure, Dan grades are also used as a reference for technical experience and training level.

The following guideline is applied:

- 1st Dan grade: advanced practitioner
- 2nd Dan grade: experienced practitioner / candidate instructor
- 3rd Dan grade and higher: senior coach or examiner

This structure supports a clear development path within the sport in which athletes can progress from practitioner to coach and trainer of trainers. The 1st and 2nd Dan are achieved exclusively by successfully passing an official examination. During these examinations, the candidate demonstrates possession of the technical and mental skills associated with the relevant Dan grade level.

A different system applies to all Dan grades above the 2nd Dan. These higher grades can be awarded on the basis of merit. This means a candidate can earn a higher Dan grade through, for example:

- long-standing and demonstrable dedication to the kickboxing and Muay Thai sport
- special contributions to the development of the sport
- organisational, social or promotional merits
- representing the sport at national or international level

These higher Dan grades are regarded as recognition of significance, dedication and impact within the kickboxing and Muay Thai community.

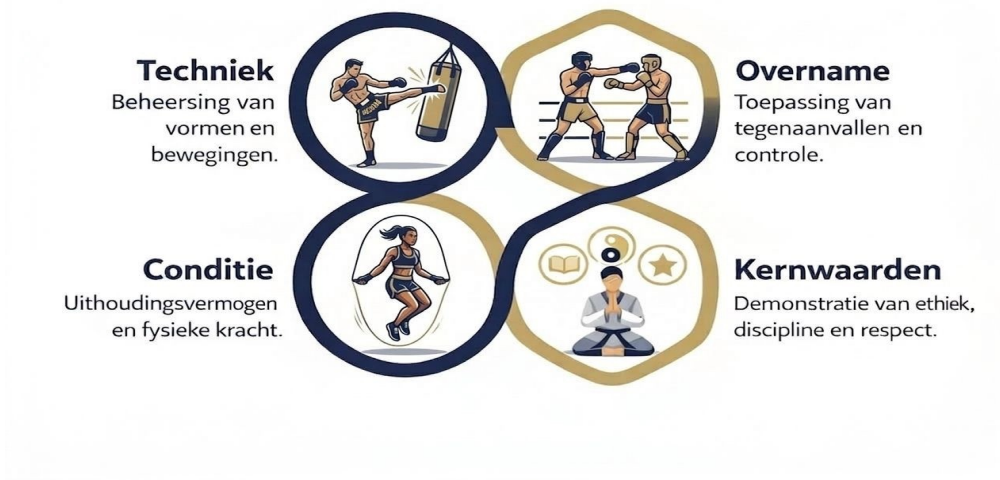
Professional attitude and safety

In addition to the technical skills and the four core values, particular attention is paid during the Dan examinations to the candidate's professional attitude. Candidates for the 1st and 2nd Dan are expected to demonstrably take into account the safety of their training partner during the examination, handle contact and impact responsibly, and be able to create a controlled and respectful training situation.

This professional attitude forms an important part of suitability for a future role as an instructor or coach. By looking not only at technique but also at safety, pedagogical attitude and role-model behaviour during Dan examinations, a direct connection is made with the competencies that are further developed within instructor training.

The following components are examined during the 1st and 2nd Dan examinations:

Martial Arts Dan Exam Structure



1. Technique

During the Dan examination, you demonstrate the techniques assigned by the examination committee.

The examiners pay attention to:

- Control
- Balance
- Timing
- Realism
- Safety

2. Pre-rehearsed counter technique

These counter techniques must consist of the prescribed techniques from 1st kyu onwards.

Attacks

The attacks consist of:

1. Punches
2. Kicks
3. Knees

Counter

The counter technique consists of at least:

- Two punch and/or elbow techniques
- One kick and/or knee technique

Number of pre-rehearsed counter techniques per Dan grade

Dan grade	Number of techniques
-----------	----------------------



1st Dan	6
2nd Dan	10

Counter techniques (2nd Dan)

For the 2nd Dan examination, the candidate must demonstrate that they can absorb, counter, defend against and/or break free from attacks originating from self-defence situations by means of functional kickboxing techniques.

The candidate demonstrates that they:

- respond adequately to various forms of physical attacks
- maintain control over balance, distance and safety
- apply an appropriate kickboxing response (defence, counter, release or counter technique)
- finish in open space, at an appropriate distance, in a functional fighting stance

The attacks are carried out by Uke. The examination candidate responds as Tori.

Attacks that are tested

1. Balance disruption (push)

Uke disrupts Tori's balance with a forceful push. Tori must respond when Uke:

- pushes from the front
- pushes from behind
- pushes from the side

Uke falls to the ground in a controlled manner. The candidate demonstrates an appropriate kickboxing response and finishes in a fighting stance.

2. Body clinch from the front

The candidate defends against a frontal body clinch. Assessed on:

- Go no Sen (responding to the attack)
- Tai no Sen (responding simultaneously with the attack)

3. Body clinch from behind

Uke grips the candidate firmly from behind. The candidate demonstrates an effective release or counter technique. Assessed on:

- Go no Sen

4. Body clinch from the side



Uke attacks the candidate with a body clinch from the side. The candidate responds with an appropriate kickboxing defence. Assessed on:

- Go no Sen

5. Two-handed grip to the neck – from the front

Uke grips the candidate by the neck with both hands (frontal clinch or grip form). The candidate demonstrates:

- breaking free
- a counter
- or defence using kickboxing techniques

Assessed on:

- Go no Sen
- Tai no Sen

6. Two-handed grip to the neck from behind

Uke grips the neck from behind. The candidate demonstrates a safe and effective response. Assessed on:

- Go no Sen

7. Two-handed grip to the neck – from the side

Uke attacks with a neck grip from the side. The candidate defends and creates distance. Assessed on:

- Go no Sen

End goal of every counter

For every attack, the candidate must:

- safely neutralise the attack
- demonstrate control over technique, balance and distance
- finish in open space
- in a functional fighting stance
- be ready for a follow-up action if necessary

Counter techniques – Examination requirement (2nd Dan)

The examination candidate demonstrates eight counter techniques from realistic self-defence situations. For every attack, the candidate must demonstrate that they parry, neutralise or counter the attack by means of kickboxing or Muay Thai techniques.

The emphasis is on:

- correct timing



- functional defence
- control over distance
- safe and effective countering
- finishing in a functional fighting stance in open space

The attacks are carried out by Uke (the attacker who ultimately receives the technique). The examination candidate responds as Tori (the one who defends and counters).

3. Conditioning & attitude

Examiners pay attention to:

- Endurance
- Attitude and respect
- Control over your opponent
- Safe execution

4. The four core values

Examiners pay attention to:

- Mentality
- Discipline
- Respect
- Appreciation

7. UPDATING THESE GUIDELINES

The grading system for Muay Thai & Kickboxing described here has been developed as a dynamic and future-proof framework. The Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF) does not regard these guidelines as static, but as a living document that evolves with developments within combat sports, sports pedagogy, sports science, and national and international regulations.

To ensure the quality and currency of the grading system, GCSF periodically evaluates these guidelines in consultation with coaches, examiners, gyms and other involved experts. These evaluations consider, among other things, practical experiences, new insights in the field of training theory and safety, developments in competition regulations, and alignment with internationally recognised sport qualification frameworks and relevant guidelines from national sports authorities.

8. CONTINUING EDUCATION AND CENTRAL TRAINING SESSIONS

8.1 Purpose and principles

A Dan grade within the Global Combat Sports Federation (GCSF) is not a static endpoint, but a professional competence that is actively maintained. Continuing education (CE) ensures that Dan grade holders keep their technical, didactic and regulatory knowledge up to date and stay aligned with new insights within combat sports, sports pedagogy, sports science and relevant regulations.

The CE obligation applies to all holders of a Dan grade from the 1st Dan onwards, regardless of whether they actively teach, judge or compete. Through participation in CE activities and central training sessions, every Dan holder contributes to the quality, unity and credibility of the GCSF grading system.

8.2 CE obligation per calendar year

Every holder of a Dan grade earns a minimum of 20 CE points per calendar year. The calendar year runs from 1 January up to and including 31 December. Points are only awarded for activities that have been recognised in advance by GCSF, or that are offered within a structure recognised by GCSF.

The Dan holder is personally responsible for tracking and demonstrating the CE points achieved. GCSF maintains a central register for this purpose, in which the status of CE points and participation in central training sessions is recorded for each Dan holder.

8.3 Recognised CE activities and point values

CE points can be earned through, among others, the following activities. The point values below are indicative; final award is determined by GCSF.



- Participation in a refresher course, clinic or seminar recognised by GCSF: 4 CE points per half-day session, with a maximum of 8 points per day.
- Participation in the annual central GCSF training session (see §8.4): 8 CE points per edition.
- Actively teaching or judging at an activity, examination or tournament recognised by GCSF: 2 CE points per half-day session.
- Completing an additional training programme or course within a recognised national or international sport qualification framework: 4 to 8 CE points per module, at GCSF's discretion.
- Publication of a technical article, lesson plan or instructional video, assessed and recognised by GCSF: 2 to 6 CE points per publication.
- Self-study via a learning pathway or e-learning designated by GCSF: a maximum of 4 CE points per calendar year.

8.4 Mandatory annual central training session

GCSF organises one central training session per calendar year. This central training session is mandatory for all holders of a Dan grade and focuses on technical updating, didactic development, regulatory knowledge and uniformity within the federation.

The central training session is announced at least three months prior to its execution via the official GCSF channels. Location, date and programme are announced in good time. Participation is registered by GCSF and automatically earns 8 CE points.

If a Dan holder is unable to participate in the annual central training session for compelling reasons, this must be reported in writing in advance to the GCSF board. In consultation, a substitute programme can be established that is equivalent in content and level. A substitute programme must be completed within the same calendar year.

8.5 Registration and evidence

Every Dan holder receives a personal registration within the GCSF CE system. This register records all CE points earned, participation in the central training session, and any substitute activities.

For activities completed outside of GCSF, the Dan holder must submit proof of participation (certificate, statement from the organising body, or another form of evidence accepted by GCSF). GCSF assesses whether the activity qualifies for CE points and what valuation is appropriate.

8.6 Compliance, warning and remediation period

At the end of each calendar year, GCSF checks for every Dan holder whether the CE obligation of 20 points has been met and whether they have participated in the annual central training session (or an approved substitute programme).



If a Dan holder fails to meet one or both obligations, they receive a formal warning from GCSF. The warning is accompanied by a remediation period of twelve months, calculated from the date of the warning. Within this remediation period, the Dan holder must make up the outstanding CE points and still participate in a central training session (or an approved substitute programme).

If, after the remediation period has ended, the obligations still have not been met, the Dan holder's licence is suspended. During a suspension, it is not permitted to teach, administer examinations or act as an official under the GCSF flag. The suspension is lifted as soon as all outstanding obligations have been fulfilled and GCSF has confirmed this.

8.7 Hardship clause

In special cases, such as prolonged illness, pregnancy, injuries, informal caregiving or other compelling personal circumstances, the GCSF board may, upon written request, determine an individual adjustment to the CE obligation or the obligation to participate in the central training session. Such an adjustment is confirmed in writing and included in the CE register of the Dan holder concerned.

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF THAI TERMINOLOGY

The glossary below contains the Thai terms used in this document, with their transliteration and English translation. The transliteration follows the Royal Thai General System of Transcription (RTGS) with some adaptations to aid pronunciation. Terms are listed alphabetically by their English translation.

English	Transliteration	Thai
Spinning heel kick to the leg (low / gedan)	<i>Spinning hook to the leg</i>	เตะหมุนกลับสันเท้า ไล่ขา
Backward horizontal elbow	<i>Sok lang</i>	ศอกหลัง
Back kick to the leg	<i>Tae klap lang khaa</i>	เตะกลับหลัง ขา
Back kick to the head	<i>Tae klap lang sii-sa</i>	เตะกลับหลัง ศีรษะ
Back kick to the body	<i>Tae klap lang lam-tua</i>	เตะกลับหลัง ลำตัว
Pushing front kick to the body (strong push kick / teep)	<i>Pushing teep lam-tua</i>	ถีบลำตัว ผลักออก
Circular movement	<i>Kaan khluen-thii pen wong-klom</i>	การเคลื่อนที่เป็นวงกลม
The rules	<i>Kot ra-biap</i>	กฎระเบียบ
Competition rules	<i>Kot ka-ti-kaa kaan khaeng-khan</i>	กฎกติกาการแข่งขัน
Direct punch to the head	<i>Mat trong sia-sà</i>	หมัดตรง ศีรษะ
Direct punch to the body	<i>Mat trong lam-tua</i>	หมัดตรง ลำตัว



English	Transliteration	Thai
Jumping spinning heel kick to the head	<i>Kradòot tae mun klap son thao sii-sa</i>	กระโดด เตะหมุนกลับส้นเท้า ไล่ศีรษะ
Jumping spinning heel kick to the body	<i>Kradòot tae mun klap son thao lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เตะหมุนกลับส้นเท้า ไล่ลำตัว
Jumping back kick (general)	<i>Kradòot tae klap lang</i>	กระโดด เตะกลับหลัง
Jumping back kick to the head	<i>Kradòot tae klap lang sii-sa</i>	กระโดด เตะกลับหลัง ศีรษะ
Jumping back kick to the body	<i>Kradòot tae klap lang lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เตะกลับหลัง ลำตัว
Jumping straight knee to the leg, forward	<i>Kradòot khao trong khaa</i>	กระโดด เข่าตรง ขา
Jumping straight knee to the head, forward	<i>Kradòot khao trong sii-sa</i>	กระโดด เข่าตรง ศีรษะ
Jumping straight knee to the body, forward	<i>Kradòot khao trong lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เข่าตรง ลำตัว
Jumping round knee to the leg	<i>Kradòot khao khong khaa</i>	กระโดด เข่าโค้ง ขา
Jumping round knee to the head	<i>Kradòot khao khong sii-sa</i>	กระโดด เข่าโค้ง ศีรษะ
Jumping round knee to the body	<i>Kradòot khao khong lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เข่าโค้ง ลำตัว
Jumping roundhouse kick to the head	<i>Kradot tae tat si-sa</i>	กระโดด เตะตัด ศีรษะ
Jumping roundhouse kick to the body	<i>Kradot tae tat lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เตะตัด ลำตัว
Jumping front kick to the head	<i>Jumping teep naa</i>	ถีบหน้า กระโดด
Jumping front kick to the body	<i>Jumping teep lam-tua</i>	ถีบลำตัว กระโดด
Jumping side kick (general)	<i>Kradòot tae khaang</i>	กระโดด เตะข้าง
Jumping side kick to the leg	<i>Kradòot tae khaang khaa</i>	กระโดด เตะข้าง ขา
Jumping side kick to the head	<i>Kradòot tae khaang sii-sa</i>	กระโดด เตะข้าง ศีรษะ
Jumping side kick to the body	<i>Kradòot tae khaang lam-tua</i>	กระโดด เตะข้าง ลำตัว
Good fighting stance	<i>Thaa-thaang kaan taw-suu thii dii</i>	ท่าทางการต่อสู้ที่ดี
Hook punch to the head	<i>Mat hook sǎa-sà</i>	หมัดฮุก ศีรษะ
Hook punch to the body	<i>Mat hook lam-tua</i>	หมัดฮุก ลำตัว
Horizontal elbow to the leg / low	<i>Sok nae-non khaa</i>	ศอก แนวนอน ขา
Horizontal elbow to the head	<i>Sok nae-non sii-sà</i>	ศอก แนวนอน ศีรษะ
Horizontal elbow to the body	<i>Sok nae-non lam-tua</i>	ศอก แนวนอน ลำตัว
Knowledge of "sen" principles	<i>Lak sen</i>	หลักเซ็น
Knowledge of dojo etiquette	<i>Maa-ra-yaat nai khaai muai</i>	มารยาทในค่ายมวย



English	Transliteration	Thai
Knowledge of the various styles of Muay Thai and kickboxing	<i>Khwaam-ruu kiao-kap ruup-baep taang-taang</i>	ความรู้เกี่ยวกับรูปแบบต่างๆ
Clothing and equipment must be in good order.	<i>Sueaa-phaa lae u-pa-kon</i>	เสื้อผ้าและอุปกรณ์
Strength	<i>Khwaam khaeng-raeng</i>	ความแข็งแรง
Flexibility	<i>Khwaam yuet-yun</i>	ความยืดหยุ่น
Liver punch to the body	<i>Mat lam-tua</i>	หมัดลำตัว
Diagonal round low kick to the leg	<i>Tae tam kha chiang</i>	เตะต่ำ ขา เฉียง
Round low kick to the leg	<i>Tae tam kha</i>	เตะต่ำ ขา
Forward diagonal low kick to the leg	<i>Tae tam trong kha chiang</i>	เตะต่ำ ตรงขา เฉียง
Downward elbow to the leg / low	<i>Sok long khaa</i>	ศอกลง ขา
Downward elbow to the head	<i>Sok long sii-sà</i>	ศอกลง ศีรษะ
Downward elbow to the body	<i>Sok long lam-tua</i>	ศอกลง ลำตัว
Uppercut to the head	<i>Mat soei sia-sà</i>	หมัดเสย ศีรษะ
Uppercut to the body	<i>Mat soei lam-tua</i>	หมัดเสย ลำตัว
Upward elbow to the leg / low	<i>Sok tang khaa</i>	ศอกตั้ง ขา
Upward elbow to the head	<i>Sok tang sii-sà</i>	ศอกตั้ง ศีรษะ
Upward elbow to the body	<i>Sok tang lam-tua</i>	ศอกตั้ง ลำตัว
Straight cross punch (rear hand) to head/body	<i>Mat trong kwaa</i>	หมัดตรงขวา
Straight knee to the leg, forward, free	<i>Khao trong khaa – los</i>	เข่าตรง ขา แบบหลุด
Straight knee to the leg, forward, fixed contact	<i>Khao trong khaa</i>	เข่าตรง ขา
Straight knee to the head, forward, free	<i>Khao trong sii-sa – los</i>	เข่าตรง ศีรษะ แบบหลุด
Straight knee to the head, forward, fixed contact	<i>Khao trong sii-sa</i>	เข่าตรง ศีรษะ
Straight knee to the body, forward, free	<i>Khao trong lam-tua – los</i>	เข่าตรง ลำตัว แบบหลุด
Straight knee to the body, forward, fixed contact	<i>Khao trong lam-tua</i>	เข่าตรง ลำตัว
Round knee to the leg, free	<i>Khao khong khaa – los</i>	เข่าโค้ง ขา แบบหลุด
Round knee to the leg, fixed contact	<i>Khao khong khaa</i>	เข่าโค้ง ขา
Round knee to the head, free	<i>Khao khong sii-sa – los</i>	เข่าโค้ง ศีรษะ แบบหลุด
Round knee to the head, fixed contact	<i>Khao khong sii-sa</i>	เข่าโค้ง ศีรษะ



English	Transliteration	Thai
Round knee to the body, free	<i>Khao khong lam-tua - los</i>	เข่าโค้ง ลำตัว แบบหลุด
Round knee to the body, fixed contact	<i>Khao khong lam-tua</i>	เข่าโค้ง ลำตัว
Roundhouse kick to the head	<i>Tae tat si-sa</i>	เตะตัด ศีรษะ
Roundhouse kick to the body	<i>Tae tat lam-tua</i>	เตะตัด ลำตัว
Spinning backfist to head/body	<i>Mat klap lang</i>	หมัดกลับหลัง
Stepping off-line	<i>Kaan kaao awk naawk naeo</i>	การก้าวออกนอกแนว
Endurance	<i>Khwaam ot-thon</i>	ความอดทน
From standing to lying	<i>Jaak yuen suu naawn</i>	จากยืนสู่นอน
From standing to sitting	<i>Jaak yuen suu nang</i>	จากยืนสู่นั่ง
Forward-backward movement	<i>Kaan khluen-thii naa-lang</i>	การเคลื่อนที่หน้า-หลัง
Forward roundhouse kick to the body	<i>Tae trong lam-tua</i>	เตะตรง ลำตัว
Front kick to the body	<i>Teep lam-tua</i>	ถีบลำตัว
Sideways movement	<i>Kaan khluen-thii daan khaang</i>	การเคลื่อนที่ด้านข้าง
Side kick to the leg	<i>Tae khaang khaa</i>	เตะข้าง ขา
Side kick to the head	<i>Tae khaang sii-sa</i>	เตะข้าง ศีรษะ
Side kick to the body	<i>Tae khaang lam-tua</i>	เตะข้าง ลำตัว

Where necessary, adjustments are made on the basis of these evaluations to the description of techniques, examination requirements, grading criteria and the relationship with instructor training. New versions of these guidelines are adopted by the competent body within GCSF and communicated to all affiliated organisations, coaches and examiners. In this way, the grading system remains a reliable, transparent and professional foundation for the development of athletes and instructors within Muay Thai & Kickboxing.