# WKF / USA-NKF Kumite Rules Changes

After the WKF World Championships last November, the referee council met in their never ending quest to "tweak" the rules by reducing any bias the refereeing and increasing the safety for the athletes. Two of the more salient changes that were made to the rules are described below. One of the problems that had surfaced was the complaint that when the referee gestured to the judges for reconsideration, the judges would change their decision. This appeared to many of the athletes, coaches, and spectators as either indecision on the part off the judges or as manipulation in the part of the referee. Consequently, the referees can no longer signal the judges to reconsider. The judges will show their flags, and put them down. When the referee stops the action and returns to his line, he will signal what he saw and the judges will show their flags again. The referee will render his/her decision based on all of the observations. Another problem was that the throws had become too dangerous. Karate-do mats are not like judo or wrestling mats. Consequently, throws that are safe for the contestants in judo and wrestling are not safe for the contestants in karate-do. Specifically, picking up the legs of your opponent and throwing him/her backwards onto the mat had resulted in several very severe injuries. Contestants will no longer be able to grab the legs of their opponents and throw them backwards onto the mat. Sweeps which take the opponent to the mat and throws where the fulcrum is not above the hip are still allowed. It is the hope of the WKF referee council that the recent changes will improve the quality of the decisions of the judges and reduce the severity of the injuries to the athletes.