
AMATEUR SUMO RULES

Amateur sumo is a type of wrestling performed in a belt (mawashi) on a specially designated platform called a **dohyō**. The rules cover equipment requirements, match conditions, ways to win, as well as permitted and prohibited actions.

Equipment and Participant Requirements

- Competitors wear a **mawashi** belt.
 - In amateur sumo, it is allowed to wear **tight-fitting black shorts or swim briefs** under the mawashi.
 - The mawashi width is approximately **40 cm**, and its length should allow it to be **wrapped around the athlete's body 4–5 times**.
 - Competitors are **not allowed** to enter the match with items that could injure their opponent, such as **metal accessories**—rings, bracelets, chains, and similar items.
 - The wrestler's **body must be clean and dry**, and fingernails and toenails must be **trimmed short**.
 - A **white cloth strip** indicating the competitor's country is additionally attached to the mawashi.
-

Competition Area

- Matches take place on a platform called the **dohyō**, usually a **square with 7.27 m sides**.
 - There are two types of dohyō:
 - **Mori-dohyō** — elevated clay or earth platform, 34–60 cm high;
 - **Hira-dohyō** — flat platform used for training or competitions if an elevated dohyō is unavailable.
 - The fighting arena is a **circle with a diameter of 4.55 m**. The boundary of the circle is marked with a rope made of rice straw called **sebu-dawara**.
 - At the center of the circle are two **white starting lines (shikirisen)**, about **70 cm apart**, which indicate the starting point of the match.
-

Wrestling Rules

The **winner** is the wrestler who:

- Forces the opponent to touch the ground **outside the circle**;
 - Forces the opponent to touch the dohyō with **any part of the body except the soles of the feet**.
-

Special Situations

- **Shinitai ("dead body")** — the situation when a wrestler completely loses balance and defeat is inevitable.

In some cases, an attacking wrestler is **not considered defeated** even if they touch the ground or step outside the circle:

- **Kabaite** — the wrestler touches the dohyō with a hand to soften the fall while finishing a technique when the opponent is already in shinitai position.
- **Kabaiashi** — the wrestler steps outside the circle to prevent injury to the falling opponent.
- **Okuriashi** — the wrestler carries the opponent outside the circle and steps outside, but remains the winner if stepping forward, not backward.
- During a throw, touching the dohyō with a lifted foot is allowed.
- It is also **not considered defeat** if the front horizontal part of the mawashi touches the dohyō.

Defeat may be **declared by the judges** if:

- The wrestler cannot continue due to injury;
- Uses prohibited actions (**kinzite**);
- Stops the match voluntarily;
- Intentionally fails to rise from the starting position;
- Does not follow the judge's commands;
- Fails to appear after the second official call;
- The mawashi comes undone during the match;
- The match time expires without a winner (in this case, a **rematch** is held).
- **Judges' decisions are final and cannot be appealed.**

Prohibited Actions

In sumo, it is prohibited to:

- Punch;
- Strike the eyes or genitals;
- Grab hair, ears, or fingers;
- Grab the front of the mawashi covering the genitals;
- Perform choking techniques;
- Jab with fingers;
- Kick the chest or stomach;
- Grab the throat;
- Bend the fingers;
- Bite;
- Deliver direct strikes to the head.

Permitted Actions

Allowed actions include:

- Pushing and shoving;
- Grabbing;
- Throwing;
- Sweeping;
- Slapping with an open hand (**harite**);
- Pushing with the body;
- Grabbing any permitted part of the body or the mawashi;

Match Duration

Match duration depends on the competitors' age:

- 13–15 years — 3 minutes;
- 16–17 years — 5 minutes;
- 18 years and older — 5 minutes.
- If no winner is determined by the end of the time, a **rematch (torinaoshi)** is held.

Additional Rules

- Transition from the preparatory stage (**shikiri**) to the starting charge (**tachi-ai**) must occur **simultaneously** for both wrestlers.
- Rituals are an important part of sumo and should be performed **calmly and respectfully**.
- Participants must behave respectfully on the dohyō and **avoid coarse language**.
- **Weight categories** are used in World Championships and other amateur sumo competitions.

Main Commands Issued by the Gyoji (Judge) in Amateur and Traditional Sumo

Japanese Phrase	Transcription	English Translation
Kamaete!	Kamaete!	"Get ready!" / "Take your positions!"
Ryōte o dōji ni tsuite!	Ryo:te o do:ji ni tsuite!	"Place both hands on the dohyō simultaneously!"
Te o tsuite!	Te o tsuite!	"Hands on the ground!" / "Place your hands!"
Hikimasu yo	Hikimasu yo	"Attention!" / "Be ready!"

Japanese Phrase	Transcription	English Translation
Hakkeyoi!	Hakkeyoi!	"Begin!" / "Fight!" / "Forward!"
Nokotta! Nokotta!	Nokotta! Nokotta!	"Still in the ring!" / "The bout continues!"
Matta!	Matta!	"Stop!" / "False start!"
Shōbu atta!	Shōbu atta!	"Decision made!" / "The bout is over!"
