

# Melbourne Push Hands Open



## Format and Rules – September 2021

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## Principles

- **What is competition Push hands?** Push hands is an activity that may be defined as ‘fighting without strikes’, where continued hand contact between two people is fundamental to ‘understanding intention’ and ‘redirecting force’. As such, it has much in common with grappling arts such as wrestling, shuai-jiao, and aspects of Judo and Ju-jitsu. There is however no ground-fighting, and in competition, the set of rules severely constrain the set of allowable techniques. The use of applied force is a given – superior technique is shown in how a competitor is able to manage force. Again, let’s be clear – it is normal to see competitors using strength and force – the test of the competitor is how to manage and respond in this high-pressure situation.
- **Why these rules?** The format, rules and allowable techniques are evolved from the organisers’ experience, notably drawing on Push hands competitions in the following: Tai Chi Federation of Europe (TCFE), Tai Chi Union of Great Britain (TCUGB), Daqinghsan International Push Hands Competition (Chen Practical Method)
- **Our approach** is to provide a competition format that is true to the martial spirit of those who are practicing push hands, across any martial art (or none). It is part of martial arts practice, and allows a wide range of realistic techniques that may lead to injury. However, we have elected to remove or limit the more dangerous techniques, notably throws.
- **Allowable techniques** should be safe, but of course some techniques can be done in more or less dangerous ways. We allow sweeps, trips and takedowns – sometimes a sweeping foot is similar to a low kick, and a leg trip is almost a throw. It is for the referee to call a fault where s/he sees a kick or a throw. Video examples are published and a pre-competition briefing will be held to make these things as clear as possible.
- **Intent to Injure.** The referee may find that a competitor is actively trying to hurt their opponent with repeated fouls and injurious techniques. At their discretion, the referee may decide that there is “Intent to injure” and warn, or (subsequently) disqualify the offending competitor. See the sections on included/excluded techniques and disqualification below.

## Format – general description

The MPHO competition format involves moving step push hands within a competition area, with two distinct phases (a pool phase, then a knockout phase). A competitor may win at different levels:

- In a match (two competitors against each other)
- In a pool (a set of competitors, each competing against the others in the same pool)
- In the knockout competition (pool winners against each other)

*NOTE – the knockout phase may be divided into weight categories, at the discretion of the organisers, depending on the number of competitors*

- **Competition area:** 4\*4 metre space (mats, each mat being 1m<sup>2</sup>)
- **Moving step** – competitors may move freely in the area, using feet (no other body part in contact with the area)
- One **match is 2 rounds of 90 secs** – 30 sec break between rounds
- A match is won on ‘match points’ awarded across the two rounds of a match.
- **Round-robin pools** - competitors are grouped together by weight (3-4 in a group or ‘pool’, depending on turnout) - each person pushes against all others.
- A pool is won on ‘pool points’, which are NOT the total of ‘match points’ but the total of win/loss/draw in pool matches
- The winner of a pool goes to the next round

- Depending on turnout and competitor weight differences, one or more winners may be awarded (ie. one or more finals may be held - eg. one for <90Kg, one for >90Kg)

## Competitors

- Mixed men & women (may change, depending on demand)
- Over 16 – no upper age limit, but participation is discouraged for seniors in the current format. 16-18 year olds will require guardian consent
- Protections are strongly recommended, but not mandatory
  - Tooth guard
  - Groin guard
  - Breast guard for women
- Competitors must produce
  - Medical certificate of aptitude for competition martial arts, signed by a practicing doctor
  - Signed waiver by competitor – part of official entry form

## Rules

Each bout is subject to adjudication by a referee (nominated by the organising committee). The referee's decision is final. An appeal may be made on a decision after the contest – the plaintiff must provide compelling evidence of a fault.

## General

- Competitors must not wear any jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, piercings etc.
- Long hair must be tied back
- Nails must be clipped
- No biting, scratching or gouging

## Points

### Match points

Points are awarded in a match between two competitors following allowed/disallowed techniques that lead to a competitor exiting the area or falling on the ground

**Basic principle** – no special points are awarded for types of techniques which may favour any particular style. Control of execution of techniques is required such that a competitor is not disadvantaged by his/her own technique.

- 1 point for you if your opponent exits the area

Examples.

1. A pushes B out of the area - A is awarded one point.
2. A pushes B to the edge of the area, but B turns so that A falls out of the area – B is awarded one point
3. A executes a technique that causes B to 'fly' out of the area – A is awarded one point

- 1 point for you if your opponent touches the ground with any part of the body except the feet

Examples.

1. A executes a technique that causes B to lose balance and touch the ground with knee, arm or hand – A is awarded one point

2. A succeeds in sweeping B who falls on the back – A is awarded one point

- No points are awarded if both competitors are in breach.

Examples.

1. A pushes B out of the area but falls on one knee in doing so – no points are awarded

2. A sweeps B but both fall (B before A) – no points are awarded

2. A pushes B out of the area but B pulls such that A also exits the area (even with just one foot) – no points are awarded.

NOTE – the point is awarded at the Referee's call, and no points are counted after that moment. For example, if A puts a foot out of the area, and this is called, then even if B exits the area following, the point is allowed for B.

### Pool points

Within a pool, points are awarded according to match results:

- Match winner: 3 points
- Draw: 1 point to each competitor
- Match loser: 0 points

Total points are calculated for the pool to determine who goes through to the next round.

### Excluded Techniques

- No techniques above the torso (ie. neck and head excluded)
- No techniques attacking the groin
- No throws (hip or shoulder)
- No elbow strikes (point of elbow - pushing with forearm is allowed)
- No closed hands (ie. fists) - a 'fist-push' is deemed a punch
- No kicks or punches – a foot technique for sweeping is not a kick
- No finger locks or hand locks – other locks eg. Elbow and shoulder are permitted.

### Included Techniques

- Sweeps, trips and takedowns are allowed – a competitor should not be "lifted" off the ground by the technique
- Open hand pushes and pulls, in all directions, with or without prior contact (but note intent to injure disqualification rule)
- "Clasping" (where both hands are clasped together, for example, around the opponent's torso), is allowed. However, the referee will stop any prolonged clasping and separate the competitors.
- Accidental holding on to clothing is allowable but attempts to execute techniques are not

### Disqualification

- For a breach of the above rules, Competitors are given one initial warning. A second breach leads to a point awarded against the competitor. A subsequent breach will lead to disqualification.
- 'Intent to injure' - where the referee judges that a competitor is not interested in 'fair play' but wishes to hurt their opponent - for example with continuous open hand strikes targeting organs, then one initial warning is given. A subsequent breach will lead to disqualification.

## Competition format: Pools and rounds

Melbourne Push hands open is a round robin to knock out moving step push hands competition. Currently we are limiting the competition field to 32 participants, entry on a first-come, first-served basis..

### Pool stage

Competitors will be grouped into pools of ~4 people. Competitors will be grouped according to weight with the lightest forming one pool, the next lightest forming the next pool and so on.

Organizers will determine how to best set up the pools to take numbers of competitors into account. All competitors will compete against all other competitors in their pool. Following the round robin competition, the winner (and runners up) will progress to the knock out stages of the event.

### Pool stage – matches – round robin scoring

Scoring is based on:

- **Match points:** how many points a competitor scores *during a match*, based on successful/unsuccessful techniques, fouls, etc.. This could in theory be any number.
- **Pool points:** points awarded for a win, loss or draw *for each match in a pool*. This is an absolute number on each match (3 for a win, 1 for a draw, 0 for a loss).

Based on 8 groups of 4 contestants each group will require 6 matches to ensure that all competitors face each other. Each match will run for 2x 90 second rounds with a 30 second break between rounds. At the end of each match, 3 Pool points will be awarded to the winner of the match or, in the case of a draw 1 Pool point each. At the end of the pool stage the competitor with the highest number of Pool points will be deemed the winner of the pool and progress to the knockout stage of the event.

### Tie-break

In the case of a **tie for Match points** on a single match, then a draw is declared with each competitor receiving 1 Pool point.

In the case of a tie for **Pool points at the end of the pool stage**, the pool winner will be determined by the following tie – breaking criteria

1. Outcome of the contested pool bout between tied competitors – who won the actual match when the two competitors competed against each other in the pool competition.
2. If still a tie then: differential between match points conceded vs match points scored (match point difference)
3. If still a tie then: the winner will be determined by highest total number of Pool points scored.
4. if still a tie then lighter player will be deemed winner
5. If still a tie then: lots will be drawn to determine the winner.

### Event timing

Assuming that we have 8 full pools of 4 competitors in each pool, then the round robin stage will take approximately 4 hours complete. (4 hrs 48 mins if 6 min per bout) This allows 5 minutes for each match structured as follows:

Call up and intro of competitors	60 secs
Round 1	90 secs

Break	30 secs
Round 2	90 secs
Awarding win and exit	30 secs

### Pool stage - example

Example of pool match results and table to resolve who proceeds For this example we have come up with 4 random names:

A: Yacine 62 kg  
 B: Suwai 58kg  
 C: Ray 59kg  
 D: Phil 60kg

Each player must play each other member once in round robin.

#### Round 1

Match 1: Yacine (scores 0 points) vs Suwai (scores 6 points) - suwai wins and scores 3 Pool points.

Match 2: Ray (3) vs Phil (3) - match is a draw both ray and Phil score 1 match point

At this stage the pool standing looks as follows:

place	name	wins	draws	losses	Match points for	Match points against	Match points +/-	Pool points
1	Suwai	1	0	0	6	0	+6	3
2	Ray	0	1	0	3	3	0	1
3	Phil	0	1	0	3	3	0	1
4	Yacine	0	0	1	0	-6	-6	0

#### round 2

Match 3: Yacine 4 vs Phil 9

Match 4 Suwai 2 vs Ray 2

place	name	wins	draws	losses	Match points for	Match points against	Match points +/-	Pool points
1	Suwai	1+0 =1	0+1=1	0+0 = 0	6+2 = 8	0+2 =2	8-2 =6	3+1 =4
2	Phil	0+1=1	1+0 = 1	0+0 =0	3+ 9 = 12	3+4 =7	12-7 = 6	1+3 = 4
3	Ray	0+0=0	1+1=2	0+0=0	3+2 =5	3+2 =5	5-5 =0	1+1 =2
4	Yacine	0+0=0	0	1+1 = 2	0+4=4	6 + 9 = 15	4 -15 = - 11	0+0=0

#### round 3

Match 5: Yacine 0 vs Ray 8

Match 6: Suwai 4 vs Phil 4

place	name	wins	draws	losses	Match points for	Match points against	Match points +/-	Pool points
1	Suwai	1+0+0=1	0+1+1=2	0+0+0 = 0	6+2=4 = 12	0+2+4 =6	12-6 = 6	3+1+1 =5
2	Phil	0+1+0=1	1+0+1 = 2	0+0+0 =0	3+9+4 = 16	3+4+4 =11	16-11 = 5	1+3+1 = 5
3	Ray	0+0+1=1	1+1+0=2	0+0+0=0	3+2+8 =13	3+2+0 =5	13-5 =8	1+1+3 =5
4	Yacine	0+0+0=0	0+0+0	1+1+1 =3	0+4+0=4	6+9+8 = 23	4 -23 = - 19	0+0+0=0

#### Pool stage example result

Yacine clearly lost. The other 3 players all were pretty evenly matched with the same total of Pool points, further complicated by all their group matches were a draw with other tied members so we move on to Match point differential column which shows that Ray has the most points scored compared to points conceded.

Suwai is second as he also has a greater points differential than Phil.

#### Knockout stage

*NOTE – with enough participants, the organisers will divide the knockout stage into weight divisions, in which case the weight difference handicap may not apply. This will be decided and communicated close to the event.*

At the conclusion of the round robin stage we will move into knockout comp with the top placed player from each pool moving on to compete in a knock out comp. as follows:

Knockout/QF: Quarter-final 1 pool: winner pool 'a' vs winner pool 'b'

Quarter-final 2 pool: winner pool 'c' vs winner pool 'd'

Quarter-final 3 pool: winner pool 'e' vs winner pool 'f'

Quarter-final 4 pool: winner pool 'g' vs winner pool 'h'

Knockout/Semi-final: winner qf 1 vs winner qf 2

winner qf 3 vs winner qf 4

#### Handicap on weight differences

In the knockout stage, where there is a difference in weight between competitors, then a handicap is awarded to the lighter competitor – 1 match point is awarded per 5 KG difference.

For example, if Yacine is 111 Kg, and Guy is 98Kg, then Guy is awarded 2 match points in the knockout stage (13 Kg difference). If Yacine is against Mike (who weights 92Kg), then Mike is awarded 3 match points for the bout (19Kg difference).

#### Bout winner and tie-break

Winner of each knock out match will be determined in the following order:

1: total number of match points accrued in current bout

2: if a tie 30 seconds of extra time – total on match points in match

3: if still a tie 30 seconds of extra time– total on match points in match

4: if still a tie lighter player is awarded the match