



DAMDAMA

GATKA CHAMPIONSHIP

OFFICIAL RULEBOOK

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NOTE: THESE RULES ARE THE PRE-TOURNAMENT FINAL EDITION FOR THE 2023 DAMDAMA GATKA CHAMPIONSHIP.

ANY CHANGES TO THE RULES WILL BE MINOR FROM HERE ON, AND WILL BE CLARIFIED AND COMMUNICATED AT THE PLAYER ORIENTATION MEETING.

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SECTION 1 - TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The 2023 Damdama Gatka Championship will take place over two days, June 24th & 25th 2023, including a mandatory player orientation day on Friday, June 23rd. The tournament will include one day of qualifying round robin matches in a poule structure on Saturday, June 24th, and one day of elimination round Championship playoffs on Sunday, June 25th.

1.1 DIVISIONS

There will be three competitive divisions for DGC 2023:

- Junior Singhs, ages 15-18
- Senior Singhs, ages 19+
- Kaur, ages 15+

Competitors must apply to participate through the registration form found on gatka.ca. Competitors will participate in the division dictated by their age on December 31st, 2022. There is no senior division age limit.

Winners of each division will receive at least a cash prize, a DGC-issued competition soti, and a championship trophy.

1.2 QUALIFYING ROUND

Each division will play through a Qualifying Round on Saturday, June 24th. In this round, each player is guaranteed at least two matches. In the event that a player wins at least one of their first two matches they are guaranteed a third.¹

(i) POULE SYSTEM

DGC 2023 will operate in a poule structure of tournament. This means that for the Qualifying Round, each Division will be further divided into randomly-assigned Poulés of 4. These 4 players will compete amongst themselves to determine which 2 fighters will advance to the single-elimination Championship Playoffs.

¹ In extenuating circumstances, if a poule does not have 4 competitors in it, this guarantee may not be met.
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The Poule System works as follows:

MATCH 1

FIGHTER A vs. FIGHTER B

MATCH 2

FIGHTER C vs. FIGHTER D

MATCH 3

WINNER MATCH 1 vs. WINNER MATCH 2

MATCH 4

LOSER MATCH 1 vs. LOSER MATCH 2

The winner of MATCH 3 will advance to the Championship Playoffs, and the loser of MATCH 4 will be eliminated from further competition.

The last spot is claimed in:

MATCH 5

LOSER MATCH 3 vs. WINNER MATCH 4

The winner of MATCH 5 will claim the second spot in the Championship Playoffs out of their Poule.

1.3 CHAMPIONSHIP PLAYOFFS

On June 25th, the players who advance from the Qualifying Rounds will compete in a single-elimination playoff bracket for the championship. Brackets will be assigned at random, but the first round will be contested between all first-place seeds vs. all second-place seeds out of the poules.

If during the Qualifying Round or Championship Playoffs, a player is not present at the time of their match, they will be disqualified immediately.

1.4 PLAYER & OFFICIAL ORIENTATION

On Friday, June 23rd, there will be a mandatory orientation for players and officials to update all competitors to give players, teachers, and officials the opportunity to gain clarity on any rules and for organizers to communicate any expectations to participants.

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The schedule for the orientation may include, but is not limited to:

- Rules overview
- Q&A with Officials
- Photo & Video Headshot sessions
- Reviewing safety plan with organizers
- Demonstration and mock matches
- Orientation for television broadcast
- Overview of competitor expectations

SECTION 2 - COMPETITION PREPARATION

2.1 PLAYING CIRCLE (AKHARA)

The Akhara in which players will compete will have a diameter of 30 feet. Players will only be called out of bounds if one foot fully clears and lands outside of the playing circle (ie, a referee can see “daylight” between the Akhara line and the player’s foot. An out of bounds call will result in the player being issued a foul.

The Akhara will have a marking as a designated Starting Line for each player, from where they will begin the match, and if necessary, where they will be placed after a hold.

2.2 ATTIRE

Players must wear one solid colour, (preferably dark coloured), as the base of their attire. If this cannot be acquired, then light coloured clothing is also permissible. Players must not wear white as the base of their attire.

Khalsa Bana of a chola is preferred and encouraged for all competitors, whether Singh or Kaur. However traditional clothing such as a kurta pajama or a Punjabi suit are also acceptable. If neither of these are accessible to the player, modest athletic wear such as a t-shirt and sweatpants are permitted.

Each player will be required to tie a cummerbund (kamarkassa) and turban (dastaar). Players are expected to bring their own dastaar, but can request assistance in having it tied from a DGC Official if they are unable to do so. Players are free to tie their own kamarkassa of their choosing or comfort, but one of either blue or yellow colour matching the assigned soti and fari colour will be provided by the tournament as well for the duration of a match, which must be tied at a height approved by the officials. If desired, the assigned kamarkassa can be tied by a DGC Official.

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If a player does not wish to tie a dastaar, then they will be given a facemask for their protection. Head (sir) vaars will always be permitted whether or not a player is wearing a dastaar.

Appropriate footwear must be worn. This is limited to either athletic shoes or playing barefoot. A competitor must not wear sandals, flip-flops, casual, or dress shoes, as it is a safety hazard. In the event that a player is not wearing appropriate footwear at the time of the match beginning, they will be disqualified.

2.3 WEAPONS (SHASTARS)

Players will compete with a 39" Gatka soti and 12" fari provided by Damdama Gatka Championship.

Sotis and Faris will have either a blue padding or yellow, and players will be randomly assigned blue or yellow for scorekeeping purposes. Sotis will also have either light or dark coloured wrapping. There will be a selection of shastars of every colour combination to choose from provided by the tournament based on the player's comfort, but they will all be built to the same specifications.

Players must use a soti according to their assigned colour and with wrapping opposite the colouring of their opponent's attire.

For example, a player playing assigned colour blue at the beginning of the match playing an opponent wearing dark grey must use a blue-padded soti with a light-coloured wrap.

SECTION 3 - OFFICIATING

3.1 REFEREES

A match will be officiated by 5 referees. 1 Head Referee and 4 Assistant Referees. The Head Referee will be responsible for calling all points and infractions which they observe, as well as using their discretion for when gameplay needs to be stopped for clarity and fair judgment.

2 Assistant Referees will assist in calling and awarding points. If there is an indiscrepancy between the Assistant Referees and the Head Referee, there will be a stoppage and the official points will be agree upon and awarded or retracted clearly before continuing.

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2 Assistant Referees will monitor adherence to the charayi rules, including length and possession of charayi as well as assist in calling points.

Any of the 5 referees may request a stoppage. Any of the 5 referees may call an out of bounds. The 5 referees must unanimously agree in order to issue a misconduct disqualification.

Referees will dress in a white chola, white dastaar, and DGC-issued official referee vest.

3.2 SCOREKEEPERS

There will be 4 scorekeepers per match, 2 will be assigned for each player. One scorekeeper will exclusively watch the match and dictate a single player's point aloud to their partner scorekeeper, who will exclusively document the points.

3.3 TIMEKEEPER

There will be one official timekeeper per match who will start and stop the game clock according to the sound of the Referees' stoppages. The Timekeeper will also manage the *Assigned Charayi Marker*, if necessary (please see section 5.4 Assigned Charayi).

3.4 OVERTIME

In the result of a tie, players will play Overtime periods of 30 seconds. The winner of an overtime period will be awarded the victory. Fouls carry over for both players into overtime without any change. If the score is tied after an overtime period, another overtime period will be played. This will continue for up to 4 total overtime periods. If there is still no winner, the winner will be decided by sudden death, the first to land a vaar without being struck back in the ensuing charayi.

Quarterfinal, Semi-finals, and Finals matches will have a continuous overtime with no sudden death. As many 30 second periods as are necessary will continue to be played until a winner is determined.

SECTION 4 - STRIKES (VAARS)

4.1 LEGAL VAARS AND POINTS

A landed vaar will score 1, 2, or 3 points for the striking player. Points will only be awarded for clear and legal vaars.

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Vaars landed below the waist (peti) are worth 1 point. The peti is counted at the start of the bottom of the assigned kamarkassa.

Vaars at or above the peti are worth 2 points. This includes strikes to the head.

Vaars landed on the back, only if the striking player's body is beyond a parallel position from the defending player's, are worth 3 points (see fig. 4.1.1). Vaars that land on the back but are released by reaching around or above the player will only be worth 2 points. If a 3 point vaar is scored there will be an automatic stoppage called by the referees. There is no opportunity to respond for a player who has a 3 point strike landed upon them.

Backhand vaars (marora) and reverse forehand vaars (nakel) are permitted so long as they land below the peti. A marora or nakel vaar which lands above the peti will not result in a point, and if it is deemed reckless or dangerous by the Referees, the striking player will be given a foul.

4.2 NON-PERMISSIBLE VAARS

Non-Permissible Vaars are divided into two categories, Unawarded Vaars, which carry no penalty or game stoppage but will not be awarded points, and Illegal Vaars, which will not be awarded points and will be awarded fouls.

(i) UNAWARDED VAARS

Vaars which carry no penalty but are not awarded points:

- Vaars which first make significant contact with the opponent's soti or fari before striking the opponent, determined at the discretion of the Officials.
- Vaars in which the player uses the back-side of the soti to strike the opponent (see fig 4.2.1). Only the front $\frac{3}{4}$ of the soti may be used to strike the opponent (see fig 4.2.2),
- Marora or nakel vaars which land above the peti but are not deemed reckless or dangerous by the officials
- Incidental and simultaneous (sanjha) vaars which happen through no fault of any player
- Strikes which hit the face, neck, ear, or groin due the defensive player's movements or re-directions, not based upon the release direction of the strike
- Vaars that are exchanged in rapid succession (sanva), and/or from too close of a distance, according to the discretion of the Referee, especially after a landed strike.

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(ii) ILLEGAL VAARS

Vaars which will typically be awarded a foul:

- Recklessly heavy strikes (bharna vaar) based upon referee discretion
- Strikes targeted at the face, neck, ear, or groin
- Stabbing (hool) vaars
- Consecutive vaars without allowing the opponent space to respond or “double” vaars*

* Fakes and jukes (palta) with the soti are permitted so long as the attacking player’s soti does not strike the defending player, or the defending player’s soti, or come so close to the defender that it could have been a strike. If, during a palta, any action as described above occurs, any vaar released immediately after that will be deemed a double vaar.

A referee may give warnings or fouls for players doing excessive or unnatural paltey according to their discretion. A player should avoid doing more than two paltey per released vaar and play as clean of a game as possible.

5. ATTACK (CHARAYI)

Through a system of exchanging attacks (charayi) game stoppages will be kept minimal. Just because a point is scored, this does not mean that gameplay will stop. Referees will award scored points while the gameplay continues. Gameplay will only be stopped if:

- there is an infraction
- A discrepancy amongst the referees
- or at the discretion of the head referee if vaars, or strikes, can no longer be kept track of.

Players should, to the best of their abilities try to maintain the same angle with the referee from which they began the match, to allow for a clear allowing of points. ie, if you began the match on the right side of the referee, try your best to play on that side of the referee. However, crossing the referee and free movement is permitted, but doing so may result in more stoppages in gameplay for the sake of the referee’s viewing angle to make the best call. Being conscientious of your positioning will allow for a more free flowing match.

Below is a description of how charayis are exchanged in this gameplay format.

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5.1 CLAIMING CHARAYI AND CHARAYI LENGTH

A charayi is claimed by the first player to initiate their approach within an approximately one step striking distance of their opponent. From this moment a player has a maximum of two seconds to release a vaar. During this charayi, the opposing player may not release a vaar of their own.

A charayi must be claimed with a visible intent to strike. Walking up or casual approaches without moving in a pentra will not be considered a claimed charayi. A foul or warning can be issued for repeating these types of charayis.

(i) RE-CLAIMING A MISSED (KHAALI) CHARAYI

If an attacking player exhausts their two second charayi before releasing a vaar, they must retreat (uttar), a half-step (adha-pair), in order to regain their charayi. They may not release a vaar from a standing position or while approaching if their two second charayi has been completely exhausted. Doing so will result in a foul.

5.2 RESPONDING AFTER A CHARAYI

(i) RESPONDING AFTER A BLOCK

If a vaar is successfully blocked, then the opponent who blocked the vaar may respond in any way they wish with no restrictions. The right to release a vaar from a stationary position is afforded strictly and exclusively to after a block.

(ii) RESPONDING AFTER A STRIKE

If an attacking player is successful in landing a vaar, the opposing player may return a vaar of their own, however they cannot release their vaar from the stationary position of where they were attacked. The opposing player must perform a movement of at least an adha pair. After at least an adha pair movement, they are permitted to retaliate.

Even if an adha-pair movement occurs after a strike, if the players are too close or the vaars are released in too rapid of a succession, the referee may not award the points for a vaar landed by a player after having received a landed strike. Often, the Referee may just allow the players to play on after this occurs. If this pattern of play continues, the referee may issue a warning or a foul, if it is determined that a player does not have the intent to defend.

(iii) RESPONDING AFTER A KHAALI VAAR/CHARAYI

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If a vaar is missed, or khaali, or a charayi is exhausted, the opponent must do a charayi in order to attack. In such case, they may not attack from a stationary or standing position. The right to release a vaar from a stationary position is afforded strictly and exclusively to after a block.

5.3 QUALIFYING HALF-STEP (ADHA PAIR) MOVEMENTS

The following movements meet the requirement of the adha-pair minimum movement:

- Jumping straight up into the air.
- Moving one foot into a new position while the other is stationary.
- Swapping the position of both feet in one motion.

(i) REPEATED CHARAYIS

If a player is repeatedly being struck and doing the same charayi consecutively, the referee may hold the match and give them a warning without assigning them a foul to give more attention to their blocking and footwork. If the player continues to receive strikes and repeat the same charayis consecutively, they may be issued a foul at the referee's discretion if the referee deems the behaviour outside of the spirit of fair play for the combat sport of Gatka.

5.4 ASSIGNED CHARAYI

In the most rare and necessary of circumstances, the referee may start to giving assigned charayi to players after the stoppage. This will likely only happen in the case of two players who are immediately trying to claim charayi simultaneously when gameplay begins after a stoppage resulting in repeated sanjha vaars. In such an instance, the referee will first award a foul to each player for neglecting to play a defensive game, which will be considered outside of the spirit of fair play of the combat sport of Gatka. After this, if the players continue to aggressively claim charayi resulting in sanjha vaars, the referee may call upon the use of Assigned Charayi.

In this case there will be a Charayi Possession Arrow indicating which player has the right to claim the first charayi after a stoppage, and the players will be notified of the use of assigned charayi by the referee and informed which player has the charayi once gameplay commences again. Each time forward from there, the Charayi Possession Arrow will switch direction so the possession will swap between the two players after each stoppage.

The player who will have the first assigned charayi possession will be the player who did not claim the first charayi at the beginning of the match.

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A NOTE ON CHARAYI RULES FOR PLAYERS:

These charayi rules may seem daunting at first. However, competitors who play with a clean, intuitive, and defensively-oriented strategy should find these rules to be a close fit to how they would play Gatka while practicing with peers or playing in an open Akhara.

6. DEFENSE

6.1 VISIBLE DEFENSIVE EFFORT

If a player claims a charayi and their opponent does not attempt a block before retaliating, they will be issued a foul, and if they had landed a vaar in the ensuing strike, those points will not be awarded. A block must be attempted before retaliating according to the discretion of the officials.

6.2 REASONABLE RESPONSE SPACE

After striking on a charayi, a player must leave a reasonable distance for the opposing player to respond. Advancing your defense into your opponent, or falling into or planting yourself immediately in front of your opponent may result in a foul.

7. FOULS

7.1 ASSOCIATED PENALTIES

Players will be allowed up to three fouls per game. The first foul serves as a warning, which carries no additional consequence. The second and third foul each will result in the deduction of a point from the player's total at the end of the match. The fourth foul will result in a player disqualification.

7.2 OTHER FOULS

Several fouls have been detailed over the course of this rulebook. In addition to those fouls, please see the details below for a full description of the different types of additional fouls.

A foul will be awarded if:

- A player leaves the Akhara during a stoppage
- A player turns their back to their opponent during a stoppage

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- A player slips, trips, or falls, without interference by the opponent, during the course of gameplay
- A player drops their fari or soti at any point during the match
- Any part of the player's attire at any point during the match falls without opponent interference such as:
 - Kammarkassa unties
 - Dastaar unravels
 - Any worn shastar falls out onto the ground
- A player presents themselves in the Akhara at the time of their match with any kind of incorrect attire
- A player does anything deemed outside the spirit of fair play for the combat sport of Gatka by the Officials (see below for more details)

7.3 AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATION & SERIOUS INFRACTIONS

(i) SPIRIT OF FAIR PLAY

Players behaving outside of the spirit of fair play will be issued a non-foul warning, and then a foul for each following occurrence at the discretion of the head referee. Examples of such behaviour may include but are not limited to:

- Complaining or contesting a referee decision
- Repeatedly making a technical mistake after being warned by the referee
- Inappropriate language or taunting
- Skipping standard decorum for Gatka (ex. Not partaking in Fatehnama)
- Intentionally or repeatedly disrespecting Khalsa Bana, Shastars, or Khalsa principles

An automatic disqualification will be issued to any player at any time for any egregious infraction, so long as it is a unanimous decision by all 5 referees.

(ii) MATCH NO-SHOW

Players will be notified at least 3 matches before their next upcoming match. This is the time that a competitor has to prepare themselves, secure their attire, and present themselves before the appropriate DGC representative at the assigned location near the playing Akhara. If by the time a player's match is to begin they are not present, they will be immediately disqualified without question.

In the event that an emergency situation arises and that is what kept the player from participating, then if the player is able to compete they must report to the appropriate DGC organizers to state their case and seek to be reinstated into the tournament.

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(iii) ANTI-BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Each participant will be beholden to an Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy and will have access to a corresponding DGC Event Safety Plan and contacts made available to them for their safety and well being over the course of the tournament. This will all be presented to players at the orientation meeting, and will be accessible in the medical room for any attendees of the event.

If any player has a complaint of bullying or harassment lodged against them by any event attendee through the assigned channels, they will be not only disqualified from contention but also removed from the premises by security until the complaint is resolved. If the resolution, with the participation of the complainant, finds that the disqualified player may be reinstated and allowed back on the premises, only then will the player have the opportunity to compete again.

If the complainant is found to have made a frivolous or false complaint, then they will be removed from the premises and the disqualified player will be immediately reinstated.

If the resolution of the complaint finds that further action needs to be taken, then the outlined steps of further actions in the DGC Event Safety Plan should be followed.

There is zero tolerance for bullying and harassment at the Damdama Gatka Championship.

7.4 REFEREE DISCRETION & WARNINGS

A distinct quality of DGC is the emphasis on natural, intuitive, and clean Gatka gameplay. To enforce this, the Referee team has the power to give warnings and fouls for behaviour they deem to be outside of the character of Gatka, even if it is not outlined in the above rules. This is to ensure that the players and audience both get an experience of Gatka which honours its roots and traditions, despite being held in a competitive format.

If the Referee determines that a mistake was not made with intention, and is not so clear that they feel the need to penalize the player with a foul, they may issue a warning to the player according to their discretion. However, if assistant referees disagree with the awarding of a warning to a player, they may contest and discuss with the head referee to upgrade any warning into a foul.

7.5 PLAYER TIME-OUTS

A player may take one time-out in a match to discuss with the referee. Any time-outs after that requested by the player will only be given according to referee discretion. Time-outs may not be

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used to discuss what is believed to be a missed awarding of a point. Time-outs may be used to adjust attire, for medical reasons, or to discuss a pattern of missed calls or behaviour which the player wants to draw the referee's attention to.

A timeout is called for by disengaging from combat, coming out of pentra stance and tapping your soti on your fari atop your head.

7.6 PLAYER CHALLENGES

A player may not request any challenge to an individual call during a match. If a player wants to challenge the outcome of a match, the incorrect documentation of made calls, or the decision of a result-altering call, they may do so at the player check-in table. Challenges must be made before the start of the next round of their division of play. For example, if a Junior Singh wants to challenge a match outcome of their Quarterfinal, they must do so before the start of the Junior Singhs Semi-Final. If the challenge is successful in proving a match result to have been compromised, a full re-match will be awarded. Serious challenges should be made as quickly as possible. A frivolous challenge or one made in bad spirit may result in a ban in participation in future DGC events.

The best way to succeed at DGC is to play with honesty, integrity and technique. With these qualities and disciplined training, the gameplay will be engaging, competitive, and enjoyable for all of those involved.