

The below is translated from the [Kakyo Karuta website](#) Tournament information.

I - Tournament types

There are three main types of tournaments, official tournaments, sponsored tournaments and "other".

I-a Official tournaments

In official tournaments, players are grouped and separated by their rank. To advance in rank you need to satisfy the requirements of promotion. A-D class are players who hold a Dan ranking while E is for players who have the goal of obtaining a Dan ranking. Office tournaments with classes F and lower exist but they have various definitions depending on the tournament. Most people start from E class. Almost all official tournaments are national competitions and you can participate in any of them. The list of tournaments can be searched on the Karuta Organizations website. (From the 2020 Fiscal Year, you can no longer start from D class)

I-b Sponsored Tournaments

You are not able to be promoted in these tournaments. Many of the Tournaments have classifications that are different from official tournaments, such as group tournaments and tournaments limited to local participants. You should check the information for each Tournament.

I-c Other Tournaments

There are various other types of tournaments, not limited to the form of Competitive Karuta, such as Genpei-sen and Chirashi Dori. The Hyakunin Isshu has been popular for a long time and various events are carried out all over the country.

II - Participating in Tournaments

Many people reading this page either want to, or have plans to participate in a tournament. The information written here is about official tournaments, but sponsored tournaments are generally the same.

II-a What abilities do I need to be able to participate in a tournament?

Many people wonder if it is okay to join a tournament even if they aren't good. I would like to write down my thoughts as to what abilities you should have before you participate. If you are still not sure, going and watching a tournament once is also good.

Below are the necessary conditions before joining a tournament:

- Satisfying the conditions of your Karuta club.
- Being able to not impede the progression of the tournament

So, what level do you need to not impede the progression of the tournament?

- Being able to smoothly say all 100 Kimari-ji when you see the Torifuda. (100 seconds as a goal for Fuda-Nagashi)
- Being able to completely rebuild the cards on your own side even if you entirely destroy it without taking excess time or difficulty. Also being able to memorize well enough that there are no lost cards when you have restored your side.
- There is never a time when the previously read card is remaining on the field once the second half of the poem begins to be read
- Understanding the fundamental rules of the game.
- Understanding tournament manners.

The above are merely the abilities for participating in tournaments. Higher level abilities are needed for winning tournaments.

II-b Deciding which Tournament to participate in

The schedule of tournaments is listed in the Karuta Federation's website, Almost every week there are Tournaments taking place all over the country. For your first tournament a local one is recommended. It is not rare for the tournament finals to go beyond 8pm. So make sure you choose a tournament you are able to return home from.

Also, it is strongly recommended that you either go with or receive guidance from someone who has already participated in a tournament. There are things that no one knows at first, so by relying on people who already know, the tournament can advance smoothly for both administrators and participants. Discuss with the people in your Karuta club and don't just arbitrarily apply for tournaments.

II-c Before applying for a tournament

Before participating you should fully understand the tournament rules and manners. You can see participants and spectators who unknowingly impede progress of the tournament. I don't think anyone makes trouble on purpose, but it isn't that doing it on purpose is good. Knowing what you don't know is the first step. So put effort into being aware.

Don't just ask people the rules, but also try and put effort into reading and understanding the official rules and detailed rules, and ask if there is something you don't understand. It is advisable to pursue the tournament rules as well. These can all be found on the Karuta organization website.

II-d Applying to Tournaments

People belonging to a Karuta club or organization should apply via their club. These days, Tournaments with over a thousand participants are not rare. If everyone applied by themselves, needing to deal with each one individually is troublesome. Each Karuta club or organization should apply together. So please don't apply by yourself.

If you have questions or need guidance, you should receive it from your club or organization. If everyone enquired with the club sponsoring the Tournament, it would overwhelm the person or people responsible. So please don't do it.

For people who are unable, or have no means to get information, (such as those who don't belong to clubs) you can ask questions from the tournament info page on the Karuta Association website.

Regarding participation in the tournament, when the participation fee is paid up front, the fee is transferred per group.

II-e Before the day of the Tournament

Within E Class, people are split up into different groups / brackets, E1, E2, E3 etc. There are cases where this is done prior to the tournament and you are notified, but there are also many tournaments where this is done the day of. If you confirm this beforehand reception will go smoothly.

Prepare what you want to bring the night before and go to bed early. There can be a lot of tension before your first tournament and you may not be able to sleep easily. So take care to not oversleep.

Below are what you need to bring with you on the day of the tournament:

- Participation fee (if paying the day of)
- Clothing to wear during the competition (Jersey, T-Shirt etc)
- Lunch (Something you can eat quickly, there is no lunch break)
- Drink (There are times when even if there is a vending machine you may not be able to use it because it makes noise. Or it may be sold out)
- Wallet

- Phone / Contact Method

If you have it, it is good:

- Jacket (Depending on the season it may be hot or cold inside)
- Band-Aid
- Bag for important stuff

Also, in the unlikely event that you do need to be absent, as soon as possible, contact the person in charge. Being absent without saying anything is rude and causes trouble for everyone.

III - The flow of the beginning of the tournament, until the first match

Try to leave for the tournament a bit early, there is a "registration deadline", so you don't want to get there just before it ends. Also, there is no lunch time, so make sure you get something you can eat quickly the day before, or the morning of the tournament. There are times when the finals can go beyond 8pm.

III-a When you arrive at the tournament location

When you first arrive, go to reception.

The reception area is separated by class, and if there is a separation in that class, it is separated by that as well. Do not just randomly line up, confirm your class and group first, then line up in the proper reception area. At reception you may be asked to confirm if your name is correct on the match card. In that case follow the instructions that are given to you. If there is a participation award, you will be given it at reception.

If you are paying the participation fee the day of the Tournament, you will pay at reception. But almost all Tournaments have become pay-in-advance.

If you haven't registered by the deadline you will be considered absent and not allowed to participate.

After registration is over, head to the waiting room. Be sure to use the waiting room respectfully and remember that you are in charge of your own stuff. Make sure to get changed before the beginning of the opening ceremony.

III-b Clothing and what to wear during the tournament

Please keep in mind the following points when deciding what to wear, or keep on your person during the tournament. The first half is in accordance with the detailed tournament rules.

- Both men and women should avoid wearing clothing which exposes their chest. (Article 6 Paragraph 1)
- Avoid wearing shorts. (Article 6 Paragraph 1)
- If you have long hair it should be tied behind you and not sway in front of your opponent. (Article 6 Paragraph 3)
- Remove rings from the hand you use and cut your fingernails short. (Article 6 Paragraph 2)
- Things like earrings and hoodie strings should be fixed so as to not sway. (Article 6 Paragraph 3)
- Alarms on your wristwatch should be silenced. (You should avoid wearing any objects on your arms as it is dangerous)
- Smartphone and similar objects should be turned off.

III-c Participating in the opening ceremony

Before the start of the opening ceremony, file into the room and have a seat. Everyone in the tournament needs to enter so be aware of your space. At the opening ceremony, there will be things like, greetings from the organizers, congratulatory greetings from guests, return of the championship cup, oath of the players, as well as notes from the head referee and the competition chairman regarding the progression of the tournament and use of the venue. There are times when the location differs based on class or group, as well as designated food and drink places based on the venue so please try and listen.

After the opening ceremony is over, the match selection lottery will immediately take place. (There are also times when this takes place during the ceremony).

III-d Confirming your match

First, no one will come to the waiting room and call you. So you don't keep anyone waiting, you should immediately go and confirm your match.

At the match lottery, match cards as shown below, will be lined up, so you can confirm your match. The vertically lined up cards, 1 and 2, 3 and 4, etc, are matched up. Once you have confirmed your match, without going back to the waiting room, immediately go find your spot and sit down. If your match card isn't there you win by default and are automatically through to the next round.

While confirming your match, the main points are as follows:

- You have to manage your own time. No one will come call for you, do don't keep everyone waiting.
- The area in front of the pairings is crowded so be considerate.

- After confirming your pairing, immediately go to your seat.
- Confirming other people's pairings is a nuisance.
- If your match card isn't there you win by default.

[Match card pairings example.](#)

IV - Flow of the Tournament, from the first match

The first match.

After confirming your number at the match pairing lottery, search for your number and go sit down. When you arrive at your spot, bow and greet your opponent. Do not open the cards until you are given a signal to do so. When you are given the signal, bow and say "Onegaishimasu" to your opponent, then open the cards. Confirm you've taken 25 cards each and start to line them up. Roughly when everyone is about finished laying out their cards, the signal will be given for Memorizing Time to start. If you don't have enough cards, call a referee over as soon as you can.

During the match, remember [proper manners \(link in Japanese\)](#).

IV-a Match Guidelines

Regarding match rules, please peruse the rules and detailed rules. Especially, ways of taking cards, fouls and mutual fouls as they can easily become the cause of arguing during the match so please pay special attention to them.

Important points for during the match

- You can not communicate to nearby friends during a match. Of course you are not allowed to inform them of the Kimari-ji but you are also prohibited from any form of support. (Article 27 (5) and (7))
- Hitting the Tatami too much is strictly forbidden. If it's loud, the next card can not begin to be read. (Article 27 (3))
- It has been decided that practice swings beyond your own area are forbidden. Because of things like accidentally hitting cards it is linked with delaying the procession of the tournament. (Article 27 (3) Supplement)
- Raising your hand is the sign to the reader for "Wait Please." It is meaningless if your hand can't be seen, so please raise your hand straight up. Also, endeavor to keep everyone waiting as little as possible.
- While your opponent is lining up or fixing their cards, raise your hand so they are able to use both hands. (Article 16 Paragraph 2 Supplement)

- As a general rule, you should go and pick up the cards that you swiped. However, if it will take a lot of for one person to do it, both players should cooperate and do it together (Article 12)
- When going to pick up cards, do not step inside the area of someone else's match. (Article 12 Supplement)
- When you can not find a card, clearly say the following, "Does anyone have ___ (the number on the back of the card), *Kimari-ji*." In Romaji: "### no ___ nai desu ka?"
- When nearby cards come flying towards you, look at the back of the card and clearly say the number on it to search for the owner.
- Confirm the number on the back of the cards in advance.
- It doesn't matter if the person cleaning up the card that was read is the person who took the card.
- Swiftly send Okuri-Fuda and avoid taking an excessively long time. (Article 26 Paragraph 2)
- When sending a card you do not, and should not need to wait for your opponent to fix their cards. (Article 16 Paragraph 1 Supplement)
- When the second half of the poem has started to be read, it can't be stopped. This shall not apply to times when it is stopped by raising of a hand. However, even if it was stopped, reading may be started as if a hand wasn't raised. This is due to thinking about making sure people aren't made to wait too long. Let's try and improve it. (Article 16 Paragraph 3)
- Do not take practice swings while the second half of a poem is being read. (Article 27 (1))
- It is okay to raise your hand to stop the reading if you are dealing with a cut or injury. It is a good idea to bring Band-Aids. (Article 16 Paragraph 1 Supplement)
- It is okay to make claims about taking cards but you need to clearly listen to your opponents claims as well. (Article 2 Supplement • Article 3)
- If a referee makes a judgement, you should follow it. (Article 2 Supplement • Article 27 (8))

IV-b From the end of the match

If you take a card from your opponent's side, or they commits foul, first send them a card to reduce your side to zero. Then bow to your opponent, (if a referee has come for your match, the referee), and then the reader. It is good to remember the order. When bowing, do that before going to pick up any swiped cards.

After the match is over, confirm the difference in remaining cards and then confirm that all 50 cards are there. In almost all cases, the card which should be on top is already determined, and you should search for it and place it on top. Which card should be on top is usually announced during the match. If it is not please confirm with a referee. When you are done cleaning up the cards bow once more to your opponent.

After cleaning up the cards, the winner should go take the cards to the match lottery area and inform who is there of the match results, who won, and by how many cards. (Basic Rules Article 10)

Important points for after the match:

- Except for the very last match, even though your match is finished other people are still playing. Do not make a lot of noise or cause other hindrances.
- When moving around, only move after the card has been read during the time people are reorganizing their cards.
- When a dead card is read, the next card is immediately read. Do not stop the advancement by moving.
- When staying inside the tournament area, don't position yourself as an obstacle. (Sitting with one knee up is forbidden)
- Crossing directly front of the readers field of vision prevents reading, so avoid doing it.

IV-c From advancing to the second round

If you won the first round, or won by default, you should prepare for the second round. After the end of the first round there is no announcement for the beginning of the second. When it is roughly time head to the lottery area. The selection is carried out immediately after the end of the first round so try and not keep people waiting. It is easy to not notice when the matches end, especially if you won by default or your specific group had a break, so please pay attention. If you are not at your spot five minutes after memorization time has started you will be considered to have forfeited. (Article 5 Paragraph 2)

V - Important Points When Watching

Most of the time you are able to spectate. But please don't cause any trouble for the players or staff. But, there are also times where you may be unable to watch due to the size or space inside the venue.

Important Points:

- Cheering or yelling is prohibited, you should watch quietly.
- Make sure your phone does not make sound. There is still sound they comes from a vibrating phone and camera shutter sounds are not allowed either.
- Watch quietly. Especially when the second half of the poem has started to be read, don't make any sounds. Movement is the main cause of sounds, so try and not move.
- Plastic bag noises are very obvious.
- Even though gymnasiums and bleachers can be over a wide area, whispering and other noises can still be heard so be careful.
- Do not sit in a position behind the reader where you can see the card being read.

- Do not sit with your legs stretched out or one knee up.
- Even if you are in the room in front of the tournament area there are times when it can echo in the main room so be careful.

VI - Closing Ceremony

If you are able to advance and win an award, you should receive it. There are cases where the best 8 (fourth place) or higher is awarded and cases where the best 4 (third place) or higher is awarded. If you didn't make it to the finals, you can receive the award before the closing ceremony. If there is no award, it is not a problem to just leave.

When you receive an award, please bow when receiving it. Bow to the person giving the award before taking it, then take a step forward and receiving the award. Bow again when given the award, take a step back and bow once more. This is done at least three times.

Conclusion

The general flow of one day of a tournament is written down here. Even if you read this you may still not understand. If so then trying to go and watch one Tournament is good. But, be aware that in a small venue you may not be able to enter and watch until the third round.

Finally, thank you and thank you to everyone who gave us feedback on twitter. If you have any questions, please contact us.

Thank you for reading until the end.