



DAMDAMA
GATKA CHAMPIONSHIP

OFFICIAL 2024 RULEBOOK

2024 Updates Highlighted

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SECTION 1 - TOURNAMENT FORMAT

The 2024 Damdama Gatka Championship will take place over two days, July 6th & 7th 2024, including a mandatory player orientation day on the evening of Friday, July 5th. The tournament will include one day of qualifying round robin matches in a poule structure on Saturday, July 6th, and one day of elimination round Championship playoffs on Sunday, July 7th.

1.1 DIVISIONS

There will be four competitive divisions for DGC 2024:

- Junior Singhs, ages 15-17
- Senior Singhs, ages 18+
- Junior Kaur, ages 15-17
- Senior Kaur, ages 18+

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, 2024. There is no senior division age limit.

Winners of each division will receive a cash prize and award package from Damdama Gatka Championship.

1.2 QUALIFYING ROUND

Each division will play through a Qualifying Round on Saturday, July 6th. 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

DGC24 will operate in a poule structure 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 July 7th, the players who advance from the Qualifying Rounds will compete in a single-elimination playoff bracket for the championship.² 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.

² If needed due to high registration numbers, knockout matches may begin on Saturday, July 5th.
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1.4 PLAYER & OFFICIAL ORIENTATION

On Friday, July 5th, 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.

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 **28 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 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/Salwar-Kameez are also acceptable. **T-shirts, sweatpants, athletic wear, and western attire are not permitted. Hoodies, vests, etc. are permitted on top of traditional clothing or Khalsa Bana.**

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Kaurs division competitors may wear full-length athletic leggings underneath a chola, kameez, or Punjabi suit top.

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.

All players are required to tie a dastaar to compete in DGC24. Additional facemasks and helmets will not be permitted.

Appropriate footwear must be worn. This is limited to athletic shoes. 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.

Playing barefoot in DGC24 will not be permitted.

2.3 WEAPONS (SHASTARS)

Players will compete with a 40" 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 assigned blue or yellow for scorekeeping purposes. There will be a selection of sotis, both blue and yellow, 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.

SECTION 3 - OFFICIATING

3.1 REFEREES

A match will be officiated by 6 referees. 1 Head Referee, 4 Assistant Referees, and one Advisory Referee. 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.

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The 4 Assistant Referees will primarily assist in monitoring points, out of bounds, and charhayi violations. They will also assist in enforcing all other rules and regulations.

Advisory referees observe the match from the outside with the intent of monitoring clean gameplay and ensuring that rules are being appropriately enforced. They are a second authoritative figure for the Head Referee to call on for support. While the Advisory Referee may occasionally comment on infractions and individual points, their primary purpose is to support the Head Referee to ensure clean gameplay.

While the Assistant Referees and Advisory Referees may offer their strongest opinions, the final call is always given to the Head Referee.

Any of the 6 referees may request a stoppage.

The 6 referees must unanimously agree in order to issue a misconduct disqualification.

Referees will dress in a white chola, white dastaar, white kamarkassa, 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.

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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.

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. 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. **If a marora or nakel vaar becomes a hool vaar while in motion, the attacking player will be given a foul.**

Cheer (slice) vaars are permitted so long as they aren't deemed bharna or as long as they don't strike the groin area.

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

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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. Only the front $\frac{3}{4}$ of the soti may be used to strike the opponent,
- 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 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.

(ii) ILLEGAL VAARS

Vaars which will typically be awarded a foul:

- Recklessly heavy strikes (bharma 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. If, during a palta, any action as described above occurs, any vaar released immediately after that (whether it lands or does not) will be deemed a double vaar.

A palta which comes close to the opposing player without making contact will not be deemed a double vaar so long as the referee does not deem that the player had an intention to strike on the initial direction of the 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.

A pause during a soti movement or charayi before attacking is permitted so long as it takes place very briefly in the natural rhythm of the attackers movement. This is judged according to referee discretion. Players may not pause during their charayi to "fish" or "search" for a vaar, but rather only may do so strategically to gain an opening by disrupting the defender's rhythm. A pause which is too long will be considered a loss of charayi. Fouls may be issues for repeated lengthy pauses during attacks.

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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.

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.

A charayi which comes within approximately one soti-length of the opponent will be considered an over-charayi. Vaars landed during over-charayis will not be awarded points and referees may issue fouls for repeated over-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

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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.

Players must show a true intention to defend in order to respond after being struck (See 6.1).

(iii) RESPONDING AFTER A KHAALI VAAR/CHARAYI

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.

An adha pair will only be considered if there is a visible change in body position. Simply picking up and putting down a foot will not be considered to qualify as a minimum movement. This will be assessed based on referee discretion.

An adha pair movement must be completed before a vaar can be launched in response. If the movement is not completed (ie, the foot has not been placed back on the ground), it will not be considered an appropriate charayi. For jumps straight into the air, the adha pair movement will be

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considered complete once the attacker has reached the peak of their jump. If a player jumps straight in the air as their responding charayi after being struck, it must be a true jump which requires effort and not a hop. This will be judged by referee discretion.

(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.

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

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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 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

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- 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)

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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.

(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.

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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, **with the additional consultation of the First Aid Attendant when necessary.** 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.

If a player needs to tie their shoe, adjust their attire, get a drink of water with the permission of the attending First Aid volunteer, etc., they can do so during a hold in order to avoid being penalized or compromising their own safety. However, if a referee deems that this is being done to avoid using a time-out so the player can rest, then the player will be given a Delay of Game Penalty. Each Delay of Game Penalty will result in the offending player being deducted one point from their total score.

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

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7.6 PLAYER CHALLENGES

All match outcomes will be considered final over the duration of the tournament. There will be no match reviews or challenges once a match has been completed.

In the Poule stage of the tournament, players will not have an opportunity to request a review or challenge any calls made in the match. All referee decisions will be considered final.

In the Championship Playoffs, players will be given 1+1 challenges for the duration of the entire playoffs through the Semi-Finals. Players will be able to challenge any one call of their choice during the hold following the play when the call was made. This can be for a called point, missed point, called foul, or missed foul. The Head Referee, relevant side Referees, Advisory Referee, and one external official will review the official match footage on the spot to decide whether to uphold or overturn the call. If a player's challenge is successful, they will be awarded one more challenge to use from the following match onwards for the rest of the playoffs. The second challenge will be their last to use in the playoffs through the semi-final round.

In the result of a successful challenge, all of the points scored and/or infractions committed after the overturned call will be reverted and the time will reset to the time of the overturned call.

EXAMPLE:

45 seconds into their match (1:15), Player A was hit in the face with a kan-patti vaar which was not called as a foul and Player B was awarded 2 points. Play continued in which Player A scored a 1 point vaar, Player B was awarded another 1 point vaar, and Player A stepped out of bounds and was called for a foul. A hold is called with 1:30 remaining in the match. During the hold Player A requests a review saying that there was a foul where they were struck in the face and a kan-patti was not called. The referees review the call and see that the challenge is correct. The clock will reset to 1:15 and Player B will be awarded a foul. The 3 points scored by Player B and 1 point scored by Player A in the previous play will be called back, and the foul against Player A for stepping out of bounds will also be withdrawn.

Players in the finals will receive one challenge each to use for the final match. Regardless of how many challenges were used or not used by the player before the final match.

Review will be done using only official DGC footage. Side angles recorded from the stands will not be permitted for review.

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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.