SNK World Championship 2026

Official Rulebook

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1.1.1 Introduction

This rulebook is the basic rules in effect for the tournaments, players, and all matches played within the scope of the SNK World Championship 2026 (SWC 2026).

1.1.2 Approval

Compliance with this rulebook is mandatory. By participating in a tournament, players agree to abide by these rules. These Rules constitute a binding agreement between the Player and SNK Inc. ("SNK") and ESL FACEIT Group Ltd ("EFG"). The rulings in this rulebook are part of the agreement with the player and should be read carefully.

SNK and EFG may, in their sole discretion,

(a) may update, amend or supplement these Rules at any time;

(b) These Rules may be interpreted or applied by publishing notices, online postings, emails and other electronic communications that provide instructions or guidance to the Player.

1.1.3 Unified language

All information about SWC 2026 (including but not limited to the official rulebook) will be provided in English as the primary language. By participating in the Tournament, all players acknowledge and agree that they are responsible for carefully reading such information and fully understanding its contents. In addition, the Organizer agrees not to provide any warranty, compensation, or remedy for any disadvantage or problem arising from your failure to read or understand such information. If there is a discrepancy between the English version and the other language version, the English version will prevail.

1.2 Key Terms

"Rulebook": This document sets out and governs all rules and guidelines for the operation of SWC 2026.

"SNK World Championship 2026" (hereinafter referred to as "SWC 2026"): This is a world tournament for SNK fighting game titles. Community tournaments around the world are certified as preliminary tournaments by the "SWC Management Office". The player who performs well in that tournament will earn a spot and advance to SWC 2026.

"Main Tournament": Refers to the finals of each “Competition Title” held at SWC 2026 in which qualified players participate, and the tournaments held as an open entry without a "Qualifying Tournament".

"Qualifying Tournament": Refers to the competition that will be the qualifying event for SWC 2026. Qualifying tournaments can earn points and invitation slots according to the tournament rank designated by the "SWC Management Office".

"Last Chance Qualifier" (hereinafter referred to as "LCQ"): A last Qualifying Tournament organized by SNK, held at the same venue as the Main Tournament. The LCQ does not count toward the point rankings.

"Tournament": Refers to the tournament, including the "Qualifying Tournaments" and "Main Tournaments" that make up SWC 2026.

"Competition Title": Refers to the title to be covered at SWC 2026. SWC 2026 will feature "FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves", "THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV", "SAMURAI SHODOWN", and "ART OF FIGHTING 3". Please note that "ART OF FIGHTING 3" will not be held as a Qualifier Tournament and will be held as an open entry.
The lineup of events is subject to change at the discretion of the SWC Management Office.

"SWC Organizer" means SNK and EFG hosting the main tournament of SWC 2026.

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"SWC Management Office": Means SNK, EFG and any member of the Operating Team, Broadcast Team, Production Team, Tournament Staff appointed by either of them, or any other person employed or contracted for the purpose of administering the Tournament.

"Governing Organization": Means EFG, SNK Corporation, the Tournament Administration Office, the official sponsor of the Tournament, and their respective parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, vendors, agents, representatives, and all officers, directors, and employees mentioned above. Persons belonging to the "Governing Organization" are not eligible to participate in all tournaments of SWC 2026.

"Qualifying Tournament Organizer": Means the representative and governing body hosting the SWC 2026 Qualifying Tournament. The "Qualifying Tournament Organizer" cannot participate in their own Qualifying Tournament.

"Tournament Organizer": Means collectively the SWC Organizer (SNK and EFG), the SWC Management Office, and the Qualifying Tournament Organizer (where applicable). This term encompasses all entities and representatives responsible for the planning, administration, and execution of the SWC 2026 Main Tournament, the SWC 2026 Qualifying Tournaments, and all associated programs and points leaderboards.

"Tournament Platform": Refers to the website, service where all activities related to the tournament take place, such as registration, match reporting, and communication between players.

"Best of X (BO X)": This means that the player who wins the majority of games is the winner in a match played with X number of games. If a player wins the required number of games to reach a majority, that player becomes the winner of the match and no games that have not yet been played at that time will not be played. For example, in a BO3 match, if a player wins two games, they immediately become the winner of that match.

"Player": Means an individual who has fully complied with the stated requirements and restrictions and has duly completed the registration process.

"Game": Means a single competition played between two players.

"Match": Means a tournament play involving multiple games between two players. The outcome of the tournament is determined by the outcome of the match.

"Round": Refers to a single battle in a "game" that lasts until either player character runs out of health or the count ends. After that, they are usually reset for the next round.

"Double Elimination": A double-elimination tournament is a format in which a participant is eliminated only after losing two matches, and players who lose the first match are given the opportunity to try again. Competitors are divided into "Winner's Bracket" and "Losers Bracket", and if they lose in the Winner's Bracket, they will be moved to the Losers Bracket, and if they lose in the Losers Bracket, they will be completely eliminated from the tournament. The winner of both brackets will face each other in the Grand Finals, and if the winner of the Winner's Bracket wins the first match, that player will be the winner of the tournament. On the other hand, if the winner of the Losers Bracket wins the first match, a bracket reset occurs, and the winner of the Winners Bracket moves to the Losers Bracket to play again, and the winner of that match becomes the winner of the competition.

"Bracket Reset": A bracket reset refers to the loss of the winner of the Winner's Final in the first game of the Grand Final, resulting in a loser's bracket sending and a new match against

the winner of the Losers Final. Both players can choose a new character and request a differen
t playside choice.

2 Tournament structure

2.1 Qualification

The right to participate in the SWC 2026 Main Tournament for each Competition Title will be allocated as follows

- The Point Ranking slots shall be allocated to the highest-ranked Players in the SWC 2026 Points Ranking Leaderboard, excluding any Player who has already secured an invitation slot.
- The SWC Management Office reserves the right to add, remove, or modify the list of accredited Qualifying Tournaments, and to amend the overall slot allocation and distribution, at any time and for any reason.
- Note: The spots allocated through the points ranking will go to the highest-ranked players, excluding those who have qualified through one of the other available qualification mechanisms.
- Note: The "ART OF FIGHTING 3" competition at SWC 2026 will be an open tournament. All relevant rules and details for its participation will be governed by the Main Tournament Rules section later. For avoidance of doubt, there will be no Qualifier Tournaments nor invitation slots held for this title.

2.2 Confirmation of Participation

Players who qualify will be excluded from future qualification opportunities, and their qualifications will be moved to the next ranked player. Esports World Cup 2026 and the qualifying tournaments for the “LEGEND” rank (for KOF XV and SAMURAI SPIRITS, “Master 2”), as well as the official online tournaments, will only be eligible for the top 4 players. If the top 4 players are not confirmed to qualify, the SWC Management Office may transfer the qualification to the top point ranking or LCQ.

2.3 Transition of Qualifications

If it is found in advance that a player who has qualified will not be able to participate in the SWC 2026 Main Tournament, such as not being able to prepare the necessary documents for travel or health reasons, the SWC Management Office will determine in advance, and may transfer the right to participate in the top of the point ranking. If the top player is unable to participate, the player will be moved to the next ranked player. Players who do not attend or are disqualified from the main tournament will be disqualified from receiving prizes.

2.4 Point ranking system

In SWC 2026, players can earn points based on their position in the Qualifying Tournaments.

Points are allocated according to the tournament rank set by the SWC Management Office.

2.4.1 Leaderboard

A Player's position in the Point Ranking System Leaderboard shall be determined by their total cumulative points earned throughout the season.

If two or more Players are tied on points, the tie is broken by the cumulative total of points earned exclusively in the highest tier of qualifying tournaments in which at least one of the tied Players participated. The Player with the higher total from these tournaments will be ranked above the others.

2.4.2 Determining the Final Ranking

The rankings will be determined at the end of the last Qualifying Tournament for each Competition Title, excluding the LCQ.

2.4.3 Ranking Point Prizes

Payouts are calculated at a rate of $1 USD per point earned in Qualifier Tournaments.

Payment Schedule:

- Payments are aggregated and processed quarterly under the schedule below:

- **Prize money earned from January to March 31, 2026:** Payment by the end of May 2026
- **Prize money earned from April to June 30, 2026:** Payment by the end of August 2026
- **Prize money earned from July to September 30, 2026:** Payment by the end of November 2026
- **Prize money earned from October to November 30, 2026:** Payment by the end of January 2027

Player Responsibility: The payment window is contingent upon the Player providing all necessary and complete documentation. Incomplete documentation will delay payment until all required materials are successfully submitted.

LCQ Payment Schedule: The payment schedule for the prize money of the SWC 2026 Main Tournament and LCQ will be announced separately.

2.5 Competition Title rules

The following sections detail the basic rules for each Competition Title applicable to both the Qualifying Tournaments and the SWC 2026 Main Tournament. However, the SWC Management Office reserves the right to modify this content at its sole discretion, particularly to accommodate the specific status and operational needs of the Qualifying Tournaments.

The Qualifying Tournament Organizer reserves the right to modify the tournament rules, with the exception of the DLC Character Usage and Controller Regulations. All such changes must be communicated to the participating Players in advance.

The basic rules for ART OF FIGHTING 3 are separately defined in the SWC 2026 Main Tournament Rules.

2.5.1 Main Tournament

The SWC 2026 Main Tournament will utilize the Double Elimination tournament format. Details pertaining to the SWC 2026 Main Tournament(s) will be announced separately.

2.5.1.1 Tournament Seeding & Bracket Placements

The complete details regarding the seeding process, bracket placement procedure, regional distribution adjustments, and the official Bracket Draw event will be announced separately at a later date. Notwithstanding, points awarded through participation in the "Point Ranking System" (Section 2.4) do not determine seeding or bracket placement decisions. Furthermore, SNK reserves the right to modify the seeding and bracket placement procedure in any manner and at any time, and participants will be notified promptly of any changes.

2.5.1.2 Prize money

The prize money for winning the SWC 2026 Main Tournament is as follows:

- FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves: USD $1,500,000
- THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV: USD $500,000
- SAMURAI SHODOWN: USD $250,000
- ART OF FIGHTING 3: USD $50,000

Details of the prize money for the other Competition Titles taking place at the Main Tournament will be announced separately at a later date.

2.5.2 Game Rules: FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves

Platforms: PlayStation 4/5, Xbox Series X|S, Steam, Epic Games Store

Game version:

- The tournament will utilize the latest available version of the game. Should upgrading to the newest version prove unviable, the previous stable version may be used, provided that all participating Players are informed in advance of the version change.

DLC Character Usage:

- DLC characters may not be used for the first 12 days including the DLC characters official release date.
    - For the avoidance of doubt, DLC characters released on the 1st day of the month can be used in the tournament starting on the 12th day of the month.

Tournament Structure:

- Tournament Format: Double Elimination with Bracket Reset.
- Match format: Best of Three Games (Bo3). The first Player to win two Games, wins the Match.
    - The top 8 will use Best of Five (Bo5). The first Player to win Three Games, wins the Match.

Game settings:

- Mode: Classic VS
- Rounds: Three (3)
- Round Timer: 60
- S.P.G. Selector: D-Pad
- Graphics settings: V-Sync "OFF", 120Hz refresh rate "ON"
- Other settings: Default

Character Change:

- The Player who won in the previous game in the Match cannot change their character.
- The Player who lost in the previous game in the Match can choose to change or keep the same character.
- The Player who lost in the previous game in the Match will select the next stage. Both players may change the S.P.G. ratio.

Character customization:

- All default colors may be used.
- Color editing is not allowed.
- Costumes may be used.

Forbidden Stages:

The following stages are prohibited in the tournament:

- Freight Express
- Dream Amusement Park - Morning

2.5.3 THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV

Platforms: PlayStation 4/5, Xbox Series X|S, Steam, Epic Games Store, Windows

Game version:

- The tournament will utilize the latest available version of the game. Should upgrading to the newest version prove unviable, the previous stable version may be used, provided that all participating Players are informed in advance of the version change.

Tournament Structure:

- Tournament Format: Double Elimination with Bracket Reset

- Match format: Best of Three Games (Bo3). The first Player to win Two Games, wins the Match.
    - The Winner Bracket Final, Loser Bracket Final and the Grand Final will use Best of Five (Bo5). The first Player to win Three Games, wins the Match.

Game settings:

- Mode: Team VS
- Round Timer: 60
- Other settings: Default

Character Change:

- The Player who won in the previous Game in the same Match cannot change their character but may change the character order.
- The Player who lost in the previous Game in the same Match may elect to change or keep the same characters and character order.
- The Player who lost in the previous Game in the same Match will select the next stage.

Character customization:

- All default colors may be used.
- Costumes may be used

Forbidden Stages:

The following stages are prohibited in the tournament:

- Training Stage
- Concert Hall

2.5.4 SAMURAI SHODOWN

Platforms: PlayStation 4/5, Xbox Series X|S, Steam, Epic Games Store.

Game version:

- The tournament will utilize the latest available version of the game. Should upgrading to the newest version prove unviable, the previous stable version may be used, provided that all participating Players are informed in advance of the version change.

Tournament Structure:

- Tournament Format: Double Elimination
- Match format: Best of Three Games (Bo3). The first Player to win Two Games, wins the Match.
    - The Winner Bracket Final, Loser Bracket Final and the Grand Final will use Best of Five (Bo5). The first Player to win Three Games, wins the Match.

Game settings:
- Mode: VS
- Round Timer: 60
- Cruel Performance: OFF
- Other settings: Default

Character Change:
- The Player who won in the previous game in the Match cannot change their character.
- The Player who lost the previous game in the Match can choose to change or keep the same character.
- The Player who lost in the previous game in the Match will select the next stage.

Character customization:
- All default colors may be used.
- Costumes may be used.

2.5.5 Common Rules

2.5.5.1 Side Selection

At the start of each match, by default players are assigned to either the left or right side, designated as Player 1 (P1) and Player 2 (P2), respectively. these positions are maintained throughout the whole Match.

If one or both Players wish to change sides before the match, the following side selection process is followed in order:
1. Agreement between both Players as to which side the Players will use.
2. If no mutual agreement can be reached between the two Players in the Match, side selection will be decided by a single (Best of One) rock-paper-scissors. The winner of the rock-paper-scissors will gain the right to choose his/her side.
3. After selection, the sides will remain fixed throughout the match.

If a Bracket Reset occurs in the Grand Finals, the Bracket Reset match will be treated as a new Match, and the side selection process will take place again.

2.5.5.2 Character and Stage Selection

Character Selection:
At the start of the Match both Players choose the character they will use in the first Game.

Stage Selection:
Both Players may mutually agree and select the stage which will be used in the first Game of the Match. If no agreement is reached, the stage will be selected randomly. If a banned stage is randomly selected, a new stage will be randomly selected.

If a Bracket Reset occurs in the Grand Final, it is considered a new Match, and Players will be required to re-select their character and stage.

Blind Pick:
Before the first Game of a Match, one or both Players may elect to use a character selection method named "blind pick". If Blind Pick is enacted, the Player who elected to use it must discretely declare their selected character which they will use in the first Game of the Match. Once the other Player has chosen their starting character, the Player who elected to use Blind Pick must select the declared character(s), after which the referee will verify the Players selected character to ensure it matches the declared character. Should a Player fail to select the declared character(s), the Player will forfeit the Game(s) (for all the Games where the wrong character(s) were chosen).

2.5.5.3 Draw

If the final Round results in a Draw (indicated by the 'Draw' (or "Double K.O.") sign or equivalent in-game display), rendering the overall Game score tied (e.g., 1-1 in Rounds), that Game is deemed null and void and will not be recorded. A mandatory rematch of that specific Game must be played immediately. Both players must use the exact same characters they utilized during the tied Game for the entire duration of the rematch.

2.5.6 Controllers

All standard controllers, including mouse and keyboard, are legal. The use of special or custom controllers as outlined below is not permitted.

Please note that the Qualifier Tournament Organizer or SWC Organizer does not provide any spare controllers or other devices required to play the game.

1. The use of simultaneous push button functions other than those provided within the game is prohibited. Any other macro functions are also prohibited.
2. Directional movement inputs must remain separate from all non-movement functions, including but not limited to attacks and defense actions.

    a. *Example: A button with Down + Light Punch input is prohibited.*
3. The digital four-way movement operations must be independent from each of the individual direction keys and cannot be assigned or duplicated across multiple input channels, except when used in conjunction with an analog input stick.
    a. *Example: It is prohibited to install an arcade type stick (*treated as a digital input) with all four directions enabled alongside an independent Up button, unless the "Up" direction for the stick is disabled.*
    b. *Example: A button with a simultaneous Left + Right input is prohibited.*
4. The non-movement operations cannot be assigned to multiple input channels.
        i. *Example: In FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves, the following actions cannot be assigned to multiple input channels.*
    b. Arcade Style (up to 11 buttons): Light Punch, Light Kick, Heavy Punch, Heavy Kick, REV Guard, Light Punch + Light Kick input, Heavy Punch + Heavy Kick input, Light Punch + Heavy Punch input, Light Kick + Heavy Kick input, Dodge Attack, Feint
    c. Smart Style (up to 11 buttons): Punch, Kick, Special Move, Smart Combo, REV Guard, REV Blow, Throw, REV Arts, Ignition Gear / Redline Gear, Dodge Attack, Feint
5. When the left and right directional keys or buttons are pressed simultaneously, both inputs must be valid or both inputs must be invalid.
6. When the up and down direction keys or buttons are pressed simultaneously;
    a. FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves: Both inputs must be valid or both inputs must be invalid.
    b. Other titles: Both inputs must be valid, both inputs must be invalid, or only the "Up" direction must be valid.
7. Any function other than the above that invalidates input information must not be added.
8. The Tournament Organizer or referees reserve the right to conduct controller inspections at any time without prior notice. At the discretion of the Tournament Organizer, players may be required to use a substitute controller provided by the tournament staff. In certain cases, a rematch using the substitute controller may also be mandated to ensure fair play and compliance with tournament regulations.

3 Punishments

3.1 Definition and Scope of Penalties

Any violation of the rules set forth in this rulebook will result in penalties. Penalties can be either a bye, suspension, or disqualification, depending on the event in question, but are not limited to. In addition, it is not uncommon for a combination of two or more of these. Players will be notified of the penalty by the Qualifier Tournament Organizers official tournament communication channel, along with a deadline to appeal the decision.

3.1.1 Default loss

If the player fails to meet the specific requirements or conditions of the tournament listed in the rulebook, the player will be subject to a default loss. This can happen in a variety of situations, such as absence, non-compliance with certain standards, or rule violations. A default loss results in the Player being considered as having lost a single Game or the Match, with the win awarded to their opponent.

3.1.2 Disqualification

Disqualification occurs when a Player is removed from the competition due to severe rule violations, unethical behavior, or actions deemed detrimental to the integrity of the Tournament. Disqualifications are non-negotiable and enforced by the relevant authority:

- **Qualifying Tournaments:** Disqualifications are enforced by the Qualifying Tournament Organizer.
- **SWC 2026 Program:** Disqualifications for the Main Tournament, Points Leaderboard, and overarching SWC 2026 Program rules are enforced by the SWC Management Office.

3.1.3 Bans/Suspensions

It refers to the temporary or permanent exclusion of players from current and/or future tournaments or events. This action is taken for serious violations, repeated violations of the rules or actions that go against the standards of the tournament. The duration and extent of the ban/suspension will be determined by the SWC Management Office based on the severity of the violation.

3.1.4 Additional Punishment Methods

In special cases, the SWC Management Office may define and determine other punishment methods.

3.2 Combinations of punishment

The penalty methods described are not mutually exclusive and may be applied in combination as deemed appropriate by the SWC Management Office.

3.3 Penalties for repeat offenders

All penalties listed in this rulebook apply to first-time offenders. Repeat offenders may result in heavier penalties than those listed in the applicable section of this rulebook. Penalties are proportional to the penalties listed in the applicable section.

4 General Rules

4.1 Rule Changes

The SWC Management Office reserves the right to amend, remove, or otherwise change the rules, at any time and without further notice. SWC Management Office also reserves the right to make judgments on cases not specifically covered by the Rulebook in order to preserve the spirit of fair competition and sportsmanship.

4.2 Validity of the rules

If a provision of this Rulebook is or becomes illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdi ction, that shall not affect the validity or enforceability in that jurisdiction of any other provision of this Rulebook or the validity or enforceability in other jurisdictions of that or any other provision of this Rulebook.

4.2.1 Local Laws

If any rules or procedures conflict with local laws, they will be adjusted to comply with the law so that they are as close as possible to their original intended effect.

4.3 Privacy and Data Protection

All Player(s) hereby agree that EFG will collect, store, share and otherwise process personal data of Player(s) in the Tournament. Player(s) are informed that EFG generally processes perso nal data, including, but not limited to, image and spoken word, name, nickname, and nationalit y, to organize and conduct the Tournament, to keep in touch with Player(s) regarding the Tourn ament, for prize delivery, etc. EFG will process such personal data in accordance with its pri vacy policy, available at https://ESL.com/privacypolicy/. For more information or any question s, please contact us at privacy@ESLgaming.com.
Any personal data shared with third parties will be processed in line with EFG privacy policie s.

4.4 Confidentiality

Emails, match channels, discussions, and other communications with the SWC Management Office a nd SWC Organizers will be treated as strictly confidential. It is prohibited to publish these materials without the written consent of the SWC Management Office.

4.5 Additional Agreements

The SWC Organizer and the Administrative Office are not responsible for any additional agreeme nts entered into between players and do not agree to enforce such agreements. The SWC Manageme

nt Office strongly discourages the conclusion of such agreements, and agreements that contradict the rulebook will not be accepted under any circumstances.

4.8 Participation Requirements and Restrictions

To participate in the tournament, you must meet the following conditions: If a Player does not meet these conditions, they will lose their eligibility. Players must meet all the conditions to qualify for SWC 2026. If these conditions are not met, the player will be disqualified.

4.8.1 Age Restrictions

Player(s) must meet the official age rating defined for the game title in the specific country and region of participation. For example, in US ESRB-rated tournaments, players must meet the Teen rating for titles like Fatal Fury: City of the Wolves and THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV, and the Mature/Adult rating for SAMURAI SHODOWN. Players invited to the SWC 2026 Finals will not be disqualified if the host region's age limit is higher than their home country's, provided the Player meets the age requirement of their home country's official rating.

Players who are minors (under 18 years old), must obtain consent from their parents or legal guardians to enter the Competition. If minor Players have entered Competition, it shall be deemed that they have obtained the required prior consent from their parents or legal guardians. A player will be disqualified where that Player cannot demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the SWC Organizer, that they have obtained the requisite consent.

4.8.2 Promotional Collaborators

Except for public trials and similar opportunities, if the player is playing the Early Build Software (e.g. early demo builds) for the purpose of cooperating with SNK's promotion, the player will be able to participate in the SWC 2026 Qualifiers, but will not be able to earn ranking points, prizes, or qualifications provided by SNK. Points will be forfeited and no rollovers will occur. Furthermore, even after a Qualifying Tournament has concluded, **if it is found that** a Player has previously played Early Build Software, any Points, qualification slots, or other entitlements obtained up to that point shall be forfeited.

4.8.3 Player Information

Upon request, players are obliged to provide the Tournament Organizer with all required information, including their full name, contact details, nationality, date of birth, address, photo, etc.

4.8.3.1 Nickname Requirements and Compliance

Players must use the exact, official Player Name submitted and approved during initial registration throughout the Match. No supplementary tags, symbols, or elements may be added. All Player Names must adhere to the tournament's Code of Conduct. The SWC Management Office maintains the sole right to mandate changes or prohibit any name deemed to contain political, religious, or offensive content or sentiments.

4.8.3.1.1 Names, symbols, and sponsors

The SWC Management Office reserves the right to prohibit the use of undesirable names and symbols in competitions. Legally protected words and symbols are prohibited in principle without the permission of the rights holder.

Advertising or promotion of pornography, drug use, or other adult or mature themes or products, or widely known sponsors, is not permitted in connection with the tournament.

4.8.3.2 Player Account

All Players must enter their account information accurately on the tournament platform when registering. If you do not have a tournament platform account, please be sure to create one before proceeding with the registration process.

The Player is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information they submit. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in incomplete registration.

4.8.3.2.1 Using the correct player account

- Players must only use one start.gg account and one game account within SWC 2026.
- If two or more Players are registered with the same Player Name (Nickname) within the tournament, both parties must immediately consult with the SWC Management Office to reach a mutually acceptable compromise, such as adding a unique identifier. Should the Players fail to reach a compromise within the designated time frame, the SWC Management Office reserves the right to prohibit the use of the original Player Name by all conflicting parties and will mandate that both Players select a new, unique Player Name that complies with all tournament guidelines.
- The SWC Management Office reserves the right to refuse or revoke the use of your Player name for any reason.

4.8.3.2.2 Playing with the wrong game account

Players cannot play on a different account than the one used during registration. If you use the wrong game account, the penalties listed in Section 3 of this rulebook may apply.

4.8.3.2.3 No Account Changes

After the registration period ends, players **cannot change** their account (user code). Exceptions to this rule are only granted in special cases at the discretion of the SWC Management Office.

4.8.4 Participation in the LCQ for qualified players

Players who have already qualified for FATAL FURY: City of the Wolves, THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV, or SAMURAI SHODOWN will not be eligible to participate in the LCQ for the respective event. Players who qualify will be able to participate in the LCQ in a Competition Title in which they have not qualified.

4.8.5 Travel Information

Participants eligible for SWC 2026 must possess a passport valid for a minimum of six (6) months beyond the scheduled date of travel and must satisfy all entry requirements, including being free from any restrictions that prohibit entry into the tournament host country.

4.9 Taxes

Prize money is subject to taxation in accordance with applicable tax laws. Additionally, the prize money is subject to withholding tax, and players may receive the amount after deduction of the withholding tax. Players are responsible for all costs and expenses related to their prize, including national, state, and local taxes, as well as any applicable VAT taxes. These expenses are solely the responsibility of the Player.

5 Main Tournament Rules

5.1 General Registration Rules

- Each Player is permitted only one (1) entry per tournament bracket. Multiple entries, regardless of the use of different usernames or accounts, are strictly prohibited.
- All Players are required to provide accurate and verifiable identity information during registration. The use of false usernames, aliases, or other individuals' accounts is strictly prohibited. Any action intended to mislead the tournament regarding a Player's identity, username, region, or registration details, including attempts to manipulate seeding or make multiple entries, will result in immediate disqualification from the tournament.

5.2 Detailed tournament rules

5.2.1 In-Game Bugs & Game Glitches

If a player encounters a bug or a glitch, a rematch of the Game will only be granted if all the following conditions are met:

- The bug is severe enough to prevent the Player (or Players) from playing and completing the game in a way which does not impact the competitive integrity of the Game
- The bug must be promptly reported to the SWC Management Office immediately after it occurs.
- Players are strictly prohibited from intentionally triggering or causing a known or unknown game bug (exploit) for competitive advantage. If a game bug is determined by the SWC Management Office to have been caused maliciously by a Player, the Player will be su

bject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to the penalties described in Section 3, depending on the severity of the impact.

5.2.2 Game Replay

The SWC Management Office may mandate the restart of a Game in exceptional circumstances. This includes, but is not limited to, bugs or glitches that have a significant impact on gameplay or the fairness of the competition, situations that directly affect a Player's ability to start or continue the Game, or situations where it is impossible to terminate the Game.

5.2.2.1 Pausing the game

It is forbidden to pause an ongoing Game during an active Round. You are also prohibited from pressing the controller's home button to return to the platforms settings screen or the main screen, or any other feature that interrupts any Player's ongoing game. If these actions are taken, the offending Player forfeits the Round in question. In THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV, such actions will result in the offending Player losing the Game in question.

However, these penalties will not apply if both Players agree to resume play, or if, when play is resumed; it is clear which Player has won.

5.2.2.2 Misconduct

Use of equipment that does not comply with the rules (Rule 2.5.6), or any other equipment that gives you an unfair competitive advantage, or any unintentional use of game mechanics, bugs, or glitches that give such an advantage is considered cheating. These actions are strictly prohibited and will result in immediate disqualification from the competition.

5.3 Detailed Controller Regulations

5.3.1 Controller Inspection

The Tournament Organizer or referee reserves the right to inspect the controller without prior notice. At the discretion of the organizers, players may be asked to use alternative controllers provided by tournament staff. To ensure fairness and adherence to tournament rules, rematches using alternative controllers may be mandatory. Please be advised that, except as expressly provided in the cases outlined above, the SWC Management Office shall not supply spare controllers or any other equipment required for gameplay.

5.3.2 Wireless Connection

All wireless controllers must be used in wired mode during official gameplay. Players must ensure the USB cable is securely connected to both the controller and the console body at all times. All PlayStation 5 (PS5) consoles will have Bluetooth communication disabled, and the controller's communication method must be set to "Use a USB cable" on the main unit.

5.3.3 Controller failure during the game

If a Player's controller experiences a mechanical or software failure or is physically disconnected from the console during a live Round, the Player is strictly prohibited from pausing the game. The Round in progress will be immediately recorded as a loss for the Player whose equipment malfunctioned or disconnected. In THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV, such actions will result in the offending Player losing the Game in question. Players are solely responsible for ensuring the reliability of their equipment and resolving any issues. If the issue cannot be resolved promptly by the Player, the SWC Management Office may, at its sole discretion, grant permission for the Player to exchange the faulty equipment.

5.3.4 Player Equipment

The SWC Management Office is not liable for any problems or failures associated with equipment brought and used by the Player. Players are solely responsible for ensuring the functionality of their equipment and resolving any issues. If a Player's equipment fails during a Round, that Round is recorded as a loss for the Player. In THE KING OF FIGHTERS XV, such actions will result in the offending Player losing the Game in question.

5.4 Ensuring Transparency

During Matches held on the main and secondary stages of SWC 2026, Players are strictly prohibited from using any item or article to obscure their face, hands, or controllers. This prohibition applies to clothing, accessories, and external objects, including but not limited to masks, towels, boxes, or covers.

This rule ensures competitive transparency. The stage design will provide sufficient distance between competitors, eliminating any perceived need for Players to conceal their faces, hands, or equipment.

5.4.1 Exceptions

The only exceptions are eyeglasses for corrective vision, or headwear/eyewear required for a documented health or religious reason. The allowance of any exceptional item is subject to the sole discretion and prior approval of the SWC Management Office.

5.5 Match Procedure

5.5.1 Pre-match Technical Checks

Players are obligated to proactively address all potential technical issues, including audio and hardware settings, to ensure a stable operating environment before the Game begins. Players must conduct a complete technical check of all equipment (controllers, connections, and settings) prior to the start of the Game. Failure to ensure stability may result in penalties set forth in Section 3, at the discretion of the SWC Management Office.

If a Player interrupts a live Game for any reason related to equipment they were responsible for checking beforehand, the interruption will result in the immediate loss of that specific Game for the interrupting Player.

5.5.2 Match Results

- The player who defeats the opponent is the winner of the game.
- Both competing Players are jointly responsible for accurately reporting the final Match results to the designated staff immediately upon completion of the Match. Any objections or issues concerning the recorded results must be reported to the SWC Management Office without delay.

5.5.3 Coaching Policy

5.5.3.1 Main Tournament Coaching Rules:

- Coaching is strictly prohibited during any Match held on the main or secondary stages, or during the Bracket Phase of the tournament.
- Coaching is limited to a maximum duration of 30 seconds and is only permitted between Games (i.e., after one Game has concluded and before the next Game begins). Coaching is strictly forbidden during a live Game or between Rounds.
- Violation of any part of this coaching policy (Section 5.5.3) by either the Player or the Coach may result in joint penalties, including but not limited to, forfeiture of the current Match or disqualification from the tournament.

5.5.3.2 Qualifying Tournament Rules:

- Players participating in Qualifying Tournaments must adhere to the specific coaching and conduct rules set forth by the respective Qualifying Tournament Organizer.

5.6 Reporting Glitches and Rematch Eligibility

If a significant software glitch (as defined in Section 5.2) affects the outcome of a Match, the affected Player must report it immediately to staff before the start of the next Match. Sta

ndard in-game events or user errors (e.g., interruptions or device notifications) are not eligible for rematches. Players are fully responsible for the functionality of any hardware or equipment they have provided, and such issues do not constitute grounds for a rematch in most cases.

5.6.1 Game Interruption by Non-Player

In the main tournament, if the game is interrupted due to factors beyond the player's control, such as a power outage or a malfunction in the equipment provided by the SWC Management Office, the SWC Management Office will endeavor to resume the Game as close as possible to the Game state at the time directly preceding the Games interruption. If the SWC Management Office is unable to recreate a state which maintains the integrity of the Game, the Game will be restarted.

The SWC Management Office has the sole and final authority to determine an appropriate response to game interruptions.

5.6.2 Resumption of Matches

Players must report any technical issues or other emergencies which may impact the integrity of the Match to the SWC Management Office immediately. The resumption of matches is only permitted with the prior approval of the SWC Management Office.

5.7 Match changes

In the Main Tournament, the SWC Management Office reserves the right to change the start time of any and all Matches, adjust Match combinations and the Tournament Schedule at its sole discretion.
In the event of such changes, the SWC Management Office will notify all players involved as soon as possible to allow sufficient time for preparation and coordination.

5.8 Broadcast/Distribution

5.8.1 Rights

All broadcasting rights of EFG are owned by SNK Corporation. This includes, but is not limited to, IRC bots, Discord bots, audio distribution, video distribution (e.g. POV streams), replays, demos, and any other type of broadcast.

5.8.2 Waiver of Rights

EFG reserves the right to grant broadcasting rights to one or more matches to third parties or to the player himself/herself. In this case, the broadcast must be coordinated with the SWC Management Office and the broadcast distribution team before the start of the Match.

5.8.3 Player Responsibilities

Players may not opt out of broadcasting a Match by an EFG-approved broadcaster. Players cannot select or interfere with how the match will be broadcast. The player agrees to take due care to ensure that the match is broadcast.

5.8.4 Approval of Delivery/Mirror Delivery

Players, casters, or community members who wish to stream or restream any portion of a tournament must request approval from EFG, and the request must be reviewed and approved by the SWC Organizer. The Requester will be required to sign the appropriate Broadcasting Code of Conduct. All streamers and content creators will adhere to this Broadcasting Code of Conduct when streaming, mirroring, or hosting SWC or related events. The SWC Management Office reserves the right to revoke this authorization from individuals or entities who violate the Code of Conduct or Terms of Service.

5.9 Communication

5.9.1 Discord:

The main means of communication for the SWC 2026 Main Tournament is Discord. Players are required to check the servers regularly to ensure they do not miss any important tournament announcements. All players are required to join the server in order to be notified of rule changes, announcements, instructions, and to communicate with administrators, the SWC Management Office and their participating opponent Players. Exchanges of materials and information are only carried out within the Discord server.

Lack of awareness of rules or information due to a Player's absence from the official Discord server, or lack of prompt attention to information shared by the SWC Organizer, will not be considered a valid excuse for non-compliance.

5.10 Prize

5.10.1 Prize pool

Details regarding the prize pool for the Main Tournament will be announced separately at a later date.

5.10.2 Acceptance and Exchange of Data

By participating in tournaments with cash prizes, Players agree to meet all eligibility requirements. Players also consent to providing the SWC Management Office with all necessary personal information required for prize delivery and verification. The recipient of the prize money must be the individual who physically participated in the tournament.

6 Player Code of Conduct

6.1 Fairness of the competition

Players are expected to behave at their best at all times. Unfair conduct may include, but is not limited to, hacking, exploiting, ringing, and intentional disconnection. Players are expected to showcase good sportsmanship and fair play. The SWC Management Office maintains the sole judgment for violations of these rules.

6.2 Compliance

Players must always follow the instructions of the SWC Management Office.

6.3 Misconduct

- Players are prohibited from engaging in any behaviors that constitute unfair play, as defined herein.
- Collusion
    - Collusion is defined as any agreement among two (2) or more Players to disadvantage opposing Players. This includes behavior among Players who are part of the same esports organization or otherwise affiliated outside of the competition. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, acts such as:
        - Soft play, which is defined as any agreement among two (2) or more Players to not damage, impede or otherwise play to a reasonable standard of competition in a game.
        - Pre-arranging to split prize money and/or any other form of compensation (except as otherwise permitted under the rules of the competition).
        - Sending and receiving electronic or other signals from a companion to or from a Player.

6.4 Unsportsmanlike conduct

Any other further act, failure to act, or behavior which undermines the competitive integrity of the competition or otherwise violates this Rulebook and/or the standards of integrity established by the SWC Management Office for competitive game play.

6.5 Unprofessional conduct

6.5.1 Hostility

- Profanity and hate speech
    - A Player may not use language that is obscene, foul, vulgar, insulting, threatening, abusive, libelous, slanderous, defamatory or otherwise offensive or objec

tionable; or promote or incite hatred or discriminatory conduct, in or near the Match area, at any time. A Player may not use any facilities, services or equipment provided or made available by ESL or its contractors to post, transmit, disseminate or otherwise make available any such prohibited communications.

- Disruptive Behavior and insults
    - A Player may not take any action or perform any gesture directed at an opposing Player, fan, or official, or incite any other individual(s) to do the same, which is insulting, mocking, disruptive, or antagonistic.
- Abusive behavior
    - Abuse of SWC officials, opposing Players, or audience members will not be tolerated. Repeated etiquette violations, including but not limited to touching another Player's computer, body or property, will result in penalties. Players and their guests (if any) must treat all individuals attending a Match with respect.
- Harassment
    - Harassment is forbidden. Harassment is defined as systematic, hostile, and repeated acts taking place over a considerable period, or a singular egregious instance, which is intended to isolate or ostracize a person and/or affect the dignity of the person.
- Sexual harassment
    - Sexual harassment is forbidden. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances. The assessment is based on whether a reasonable person would regard the conduct as undesirable or offensive. There is zero tolerance for any sexual threats/coercion or the promise of advantages in exchange for sexual favors.
- Discrimination and insults
    - Players may not offend the dignity or integrity of a country, private person or group of people through contemptuous, discriminatory or denigrating words or actions on account of race, skin color, ethnic, national or social origin, gender, language, religion, political opinion or any other opinion, financial status, birth or any other status, sexual orientation or any other reason.
- Defamatory remarks
    - Players may not give, make, issue, authorize or endorse any statement designed to undermine the credibility of a competition or SWC officials, or have any other effect prejudicial or detrimental to the best interest of SWC Organizers or its affiliates, as determined in the sole and absolute discretion of the SWC Management Office.
- Criminal acts
    - A Player may not engage in any activity which is prohibited by common law, statute, or treaty, and which leads to or may be reasonably deemed likely to lead to conviction in any court of competent jurisdiction.
- Immoral behavior

- A Player may not engage in any activity which is deemed by the SWC Management Office to be immoral, disgraceful, or contrary to conventional standards of proper ethical behavior.

6.6 Betting

Any Player, team official, or team affiliate who participates in the SWC 2026 Program (including all Qualifying Tournaments and the Main Tournament) is strictly prohibited from wagering or placing bets, either directly or through an affiliate acting on their behalf, on the outcome of any match for any Competition Title within the SWC 2026 Program. Violators of this betting prohibition will face immediate disqualification from the current competition and may also be banned from competing in future SWC tournaments, at the discretion of the SWC Management Office.

6.7 Misconduct

Any form of cheating will not be tolerated. When cheating is uncovered, the Player in question will immediately be disqualified from the tournament. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

6.7.1 Match-fixing

Attempting to intentionally alter the results of a Match by losing or otherwise trying to affect the results.

6.7.2 Hacking

Hacking is defined as any modification of the game client, Platform or Game Platform by any Player, or person acting on behalf of a Player.

6.7.3 Exploitation of Vulnerabilities

Exploiting includes, but is not limited to, any intentional use of bugs or glitches to gain an in-game advantage, in the sole determination of SWC Management Office, is not functioning as intended. If it is found that a Player has intentionally used an unknown bug, the SWC Organizer may issue penalties. The final decision will be made by the SWC Management Office.

6.7.4 Impersonating

Playing under another Player’s account or soliciting, inducing, encouraging or directing someone else to play under another Player’s account.

6.7.5 Software or hardware abuse

The act of using software or hardware to obtain benefits that are not originally available in the game.

・Third-party software (non-approved apps that manipulate gameplay)

・Playing on a private server

・Script attacks

6.8 Bribery

It is prohibited to receive rewards or compensation for services related to competitive play (such as defeating opponents or manipulating matches). The exception is performance-based rewards from the team's official sponsors or owners.

6.9 Provisions for Gifts and Compensation

No player may receive gifts, rewards, or compensation for any services promised, provided, or planned to be provided in connection with competitive play, including services related to defeating or attempting to defeat a player, or services intended to be match-fixing or match-fixing in a match or game. The only exceptions to this rule are in the case of performance-based rewards paid to players by the team's official sponsor or owner, as well as prize money provided by the Qualifier Tournament Organizers.

6.10 Intentional Disconnection

An intentional disconnection without a proper and explicitly stated reason. Any actions of a Player which leads to a disconnection shall be deemed intentional, regardless of the actual intent of the Player.

7 Live Broadcast

All content, photos, videos, replays, and other resources generated by the player and the tournament belong to SNK. By agreeing to participate in the SWC 2026, the player agrees to these terms.

7.1 Media Response Obligations

If the organizer asks one or more players to participate in an interview (short pre- and post-match interviews or longer interview sessions), press conferences, autograph sessions, photo shoots, or videography, players cannot refuse to do so and must attend. In addition, based on the requirements of the SWC Management Office, players may be required to provide photos and other materials to the tournament. Most events have media days, where players are photographed, videotaped, and interviewed by the organizers. Players will also be given a media schedule in advance, explaining what it is, when and what to expect.

Participation is mandatory for players selected for Media Day, and absences will result in penalties such as forfeiture of prize money and disqualification from the competition.

8 Copyright Notice

All contents of this document are accurate to the best of our knowledge. ESL FACEIT Group Ltd is not responsible for any errors or omissions. We will collect content and files on our website (including, but not limited to, ESLgaming.com, intelextrememasters.com, ESL-one.com and all subdomains) to We reserve the right to make changes at any time without prior notice or notice.