



WORLD ALPAGUT FEDERATION

Alpagut

EDITION 2026

The sport, its rules and its grades



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1 What Alpagut is

Alpagut is a modern martial art and combat sport built on the warrior heritage of the Turkic peoples. It was founded in Baku in 2014 and is now practised in more than 50 countries under the World Alpagut Federation.

Alpagut is not an ancient system that survived unchanged. It is a modern reconstruction. The fighting methods, military customs and moral codes of the Turkic world were studied from historical sources and brought together into one system, with its own techniques, terminology, grades and competition rules.

Selecting, adapting and combining fighting techniques into a single system is nothing new in history. Ancient Pankration was a complex combat system that combined striking and wrestling techniques; its modern form has been re-systematised on the basis of new sporting rules and safety standards. In the same way, modern combat systems such as Judo, SAMBO, Taekwondo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu took their present form through the selection, adaptation and standardisation of earlier schools, techniques and practices. Alpagut says so openly. It does not claim an unbroken line from antiquity; its standing rests on how carefully it was built and on how it is practised today.

Sources: J. Arvanitis, *Pankration: The Traditional Greek Combat Sport and Modern Mixed Martial Art* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 2003) · S. Inoue, “The Invention of the Martial Arts: Kanō Jigorō and Kōdōkan Judo”, in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. S. Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 163–173 · International SAMBO Federation (FIAS), “History of SAMBO”, sambo.sport · U. Moenig, Cho Sungkyun and Kwak Taek-Yong, “Evidence of Taekwondo’s Roots in Karate: An Analysis of the Technical Content of Early Taekwondo Literature”, *Korea Journal* 54, no. 2 (2014), pp. 150–178 · J. Cairus, “Modernization, Nationalism and the Elite: The Genesis of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, 1905–1920”, *Revista Tempo e Argumento* 3, no. 2 (2011), pp. 100–121.

Men and women compete in age groups and weight categories under one international rulebook, from national events to the World Championships. Anyone can train in Alpagut, whatever their origin, language or belief. The art is not directed against any people, culture or faith.

2014

Founded in Baku

5

Competition systems

9

Technical bases

50+

Countries



Opening ceremony, 3rd World Alpagut Championship · Bursa, 1–4 December 2022

2 Where the name comes from

The word is far older than the sport.

alpağut er — a brave warrior who attacks the enemy alone and cannot be caught.

Mahmud al-Kashgari, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, 1072–1074, vol. I, 144; vol. III, 422

Al-Kashgari compiled his dictionary of the Turkic languages in the eleventh century after travelling among the Turkic tribes and recording their speech. For him an *alpağut* was a warrior of personal courage and resolve: a man who could act on his own and would not retreat.

The word is older than the dictionary. It already appears in the stone inscriptions of the eighth century: the Kül Tegin inscription of 732 names *alpagu on er*, the ten elite warriors of the Tongra tribe. The same word, in its own forms, runs through the Yenisei inscriptions and the Old Uyghur texts before reaching the dictionary — and, in 2014, a sport.



Figure 1 · The word from 732 to 2014

Sources: Kül Tegin inscription, north face, line 7, and Bilge Kagan inscription, east face, line 31 (ed. T. Tekin, *Orhon Yazıtları*, Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1988) · Kara-Yüs I (Yenisei), line 6 (E. Aydın, “Yenisey Yazıtlarında Geçen Unvanlar ve Unvan Niteleyicileri”, *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yıllığı — Belleten*, 2011/2, pp. 10–11) · K. Röhrborn, *Uigurisches Wörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1977–1998), p. 107 · Mahmud al-Kashgari, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, Turkish translation by B. Atalay (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1988), vol. I, p. 144; vol. III, p. 422.

3 What makes Alpagut different

Four things set Alpagut apart from other combat sports. Each is written into the official rules, not into publicity.

Five competition systems inside one art

Alpagut is not a single format. Five systems are governed within one framework; each has its own purpose, its own permitted and prohibited techniques and its own scoring criteria. An athlete enters one combat system, and may add KAÇUT to it.

The arena changes size during the bout

The bout is held in a round arena that is not a passive backdrop. BÖRÜ is the circle of close, decisive struggle; BERKUT the circle of wide manoeuvre. One minute in BÖRÜ, one minute in BERKUT, then back to BÖRÜ.

Nine technical bases ordered from range to close quarters

The sequence follows the student's path: long-range striking (KOL, TEPIK), the bridge (AYÇA), throws and sweeps (YAKALAŞMA, BADALAĞ), close and ground work (BAĞDAMAK, BOĞUÇAN). The eighth, KORUY, works at every range; the ninth is the weapons base.

A four-card evaluation system

The referee uses four cards. Three award points and combine step by step into higher values; the fourth is a penalty. A bout is won on accumulated points, or ended outright.

Alpagut also does not treat combat as purely physical. Technique and conduct are taught together: to throw without humiliating an opponent, to apply a choke and know when to release, to handle a weapon responsibly.

4 The five competition systems

CODE	SYSTEM	STYLE	WHAT IS CONTESTED
A	AYÇA Aycha	Limited contact	Crescent-style hand and foot strikes, foot sweeps and throwing techniques.
B	BATUR	Mixed combat	Full hand and foot strikes, clinching and throwing, chokes and joint locks.
C	CAYMAZ	Full contact	A standing system based on decisive hand and foot strikes.
G	GURŞAK Gurshak	Belt and ground wrestling	Clinching, throwing, chokes, pushing, foot sweeps and joint locks, together with traditional belt wrestling. No strikes.
K	KAÇUT Kachut	Exhibition performance	Official forms and self-defence sequences, armed and unarmed, judged on technique.

Each system has a System Coordinator within the Technical Directorate of the Federation. A KAÇUT performance may be individual (60–90 seconds), in pairs (90–120 seconds) or in a team of three or more (120–180 seconds), and is performed inside the Berkut circle.

A	B	C	G	K
AYÇA limited contact	BATUR mixed combat	CAYMAZ full contact, standing	GURŞAK belt and ground wrestling	KAÇUT exhibition performance

An athlete enters one combat system; KAÇUT may be added to it.

Figure 2 · One art — five competition systems

5 The arena

The competition area is built from four zones. Two of them are circles that become active at different minutes of the bout, so the fighting distance is set by the rules rather than by the athletes' preference.

ZONE	DIMENSIONS	FUNCTION
Safety Zone	10 × 10 m, outer blue square	General safety boundary; prevents exit from the area
Defence Zone	8 × 8 m, white square	Positioning, defence and assessment of the situation
Berkut circle	6.0 m diameter	Active during the second minute of the bout — wide manoeuvre
Börü circle	3.0 m diameter	Active during the first and third minutes — close, decisive struggle

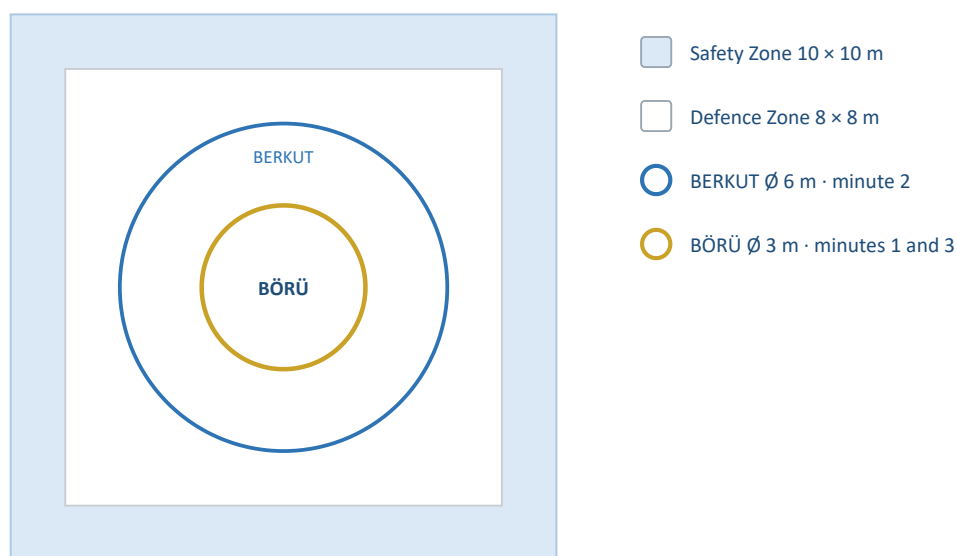


Figure 3 · The competition area

6 How a bout is decided

Duration

Every bout is a single round. In the age groups from 8 to 17 a preliminary bout lasts two minutes and a final three minutes. Seniors (18–35) and veterans (36–40 and 41+) fight three minutes in both.

The four cards

TERM	POINTS	AWARDED FOR	CARD
SARGUT	1	Technical superiority — a permitted strike, sweep or throw correctly applied	Yellow
ACAR	3	Knockdown, or the accumulation of 3 SARGUT	Blue
UTKU	6	Full victory — knockout, submission, or the accumulation of 2 ACAR	Red
KINAK	—	Penalty for a rule violation. It carries no points; three KINAK lose the bout	Black

The chain is fixed: three SARGUT become one ACAR, two ACAR become UTKU. The system rewards technical superiority rather than the number of strikes landed.

Ways to win

- **UTKU** — six points accumulated, or the opponent submits. The bout ends at once.
- **Knockout** — the athlete cannot rise within ten seconds. Medical intervention is mandatory.
- **Technical superiority** — more points when time expires; where points are equal, fewer KINAK prevails.
- **Referees' decision** — equal points and equal KINAK: a majority decision of three referees.
- **Opponent's disqualification** — for a serious violation.

The referee may also declare UTKU independently of the score where an athlete shows signs of losing consciousness, receives consecutive blows while defenceless, or where the competition doctor recommends intervention.

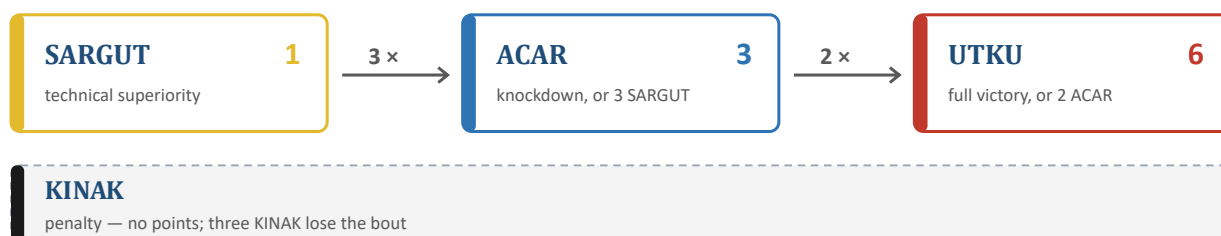


Figure 4 · The scoring chain

7 Team competition — BÖLÜK

Competition in Alpagut is not solely individual. An individual bout tests the athlete's own balance; the BÖLÜK tests the community the athlete represents, and the result is decided by the joint effort of three athletes.

Composition	Three athletes and one reserve
Weight	One athlete from each of the three weight bands — light, middle and heavy
Combat systems	Three consecutive bouts; the BÖLÜK with more victories wins
Draw	Aggregate points decide; if these are equal, one athlete from each side fights a decisive bout
KAÇUT	The three athletes perform the Yörtem simultaneously; unity of execution is assessed separately

All rules of individual competition — scoring, KINAK, the medical protocol and the safety requirements — apply unchanged.

8 Uniform and equipment

The official competition dress of Alpagut is the **Çapan**: a black jacket with cream-coloured trousers. The belt and the protective equipment carry the corner colour — red for YORO, the left corner, and blue for ÇORO, the right corner — so that the referees and the table can identify each athlete instantly.

Protective equipment is worn under the trousers; a vest or T-shirt beneath the Çapan is not permitted. Jewellery and additional clothing are prohibited.

ITEM	RULE
Helmet with cheek guards	Mandatory
Gloves or half-gloves	Mandatory
Mouthguard and groin protector	Mandatory
Chest protector	Mandatory for all participants up to the age of 15; not used by male participants aged 16 and above; mandatory for female participants in all age groups
Foot protectors	Mandatory

Spectacles are prohibited; soft contact lenses are permitted at the athlete's own responsibility. Metal dental apparatus requires the joint approval of the Chief Referee and the official doctor. Where an equipment fault is found at the entrance to the competition area, the athlete is given one minute to correct it.



The Çapan and the corner colours — a contest in the AYÇA system

9 The path of the Alp — grades

Progress in Alpagut runs through four ÜSTÜNGÜ stages, each tied to a direction and a belt colour, and then through ten master grades. A grade is not awarded for showing a technique: the examination measures technique, fighting, theory, culture, conduct, physical condition and time served, together.

ÜSTÜNGÜ	DIRECTION	BELT	TITLE	DEGREES
1st	BATI — West	AK · white	YENGİALP	beginner
2nd	GÜNEY — South	AL · red	ALPATAÇ	I–III QUR
3rd	DOĞU — East	GÖK · blue	BİLGİNALP	I–III YET
4th	KÜZEY — North	KARA · black	YARĞAN	BUYRUKALP, then I–X SAN

BUYRUKALP is the cadet master grade for ages 14 to 17. Above it stand the ten SAN grades, whose titles are drawn from ancient Turkic state offices recorded in the Orkhon–Yenisei inscriptions, in the Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk and in the Kutadgu Bilig.

GRADE	TITLE	INTERNATIONAL	GRADE	TITLE	INTERNATIONAL
I-SAN	YARĞAN	Instructor	VI-SAN	ŞAD	Chief Master
II-SAN	KÜR YARĞAN	Senior Instructor	VII-SAN	KÜRŞAD	Senior Chief Master
III-SAN	TUN YARĞAN	Chief Instructor	VIII-SAN	YABGU	Grand Master
IV-SAN	TEĞİN	Master	IX-SAN	KÜR YABGU	Senior Grand Master

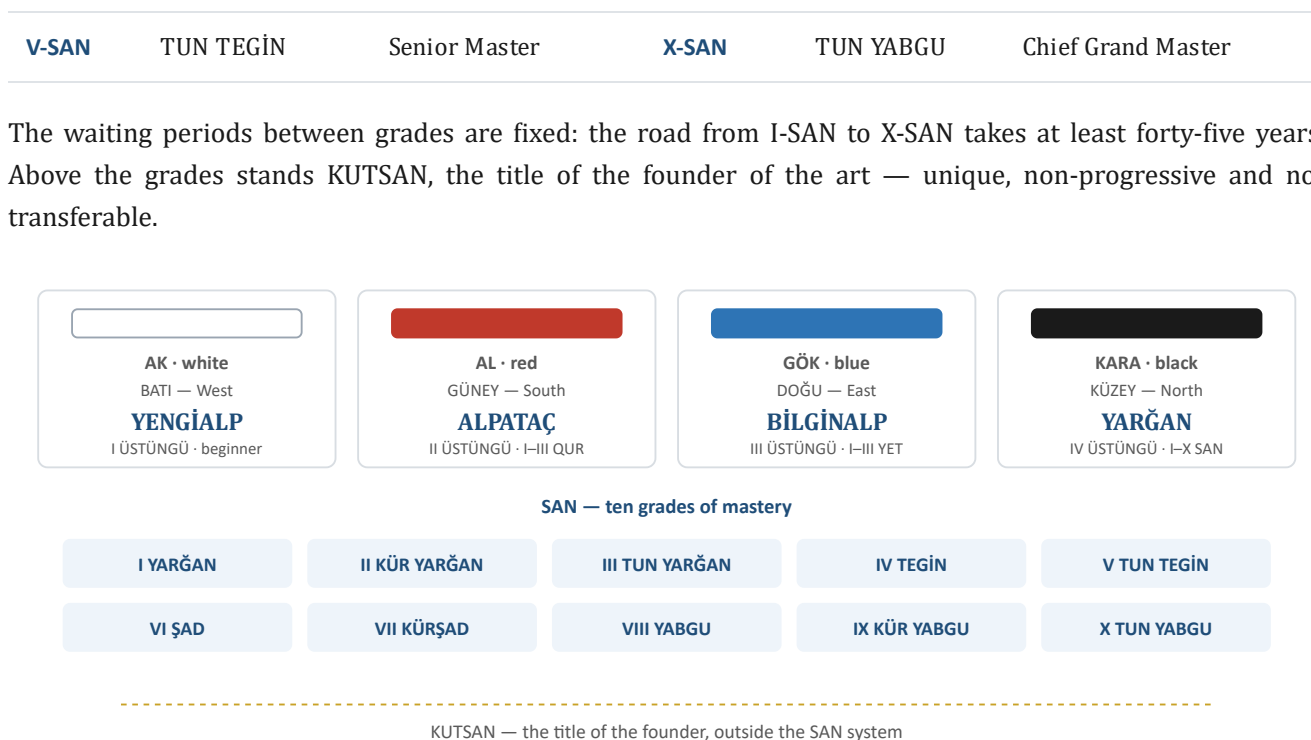


Figure 5 · From belt to mastery

10 Referees

Refereeing is a separate ladder from the athlete grades. A high athlete grade does not by itself confer the right to officiate: every licence is examined and registered by the Examination Commission, and every licence has an expiry date.

STARS	LICENCE	LEVEL	VALIDITY	MINIMUM GRADE
★	ELKİN	Referee Candidate	2 years	YARĞAN (I-SAN)
★★	TOLU	National Referee	3 years	YARĞAN (I-SAN)
★★★	BİLGE	Senior Referee	4 years	KÜR YARĞAN (II-SAN)
★★★★	ATAMAN	International Referee	5 years	TUN YARĞAN (III-SAN)
★★★★★	ULUCA	Elite Referee	6 years	see the Licensing System

Each step raises the written pass mark — 70, 75, 80 and 85 per cent — and adds a practical assessment and a minimum record of competitions officiated. From BİLGE upwards a referee must be proficient in at least three of the five systems, and an ATAMAN in all five. The ULUCA licence, the highest, requires a three-stage approval.

At a competition the panel consists of a Chief Referee, a Chief Secretary, one Coordinator for each active system, and, at each tatami, a Centre Referee, an Assistant Referee, a Secretary and a Timekeeper, with a medical team present.

11 Safety, and the protection of young athletes

Alpagut treats the safety of children as a rule of competition, not as advice. The following provisions are binding on every organiser and every referee.

Age rules that limit contact

AGE GROUP	STRIKES TO THE HEAD, STANDING	CHOKES
8–11	Controlled contact only. A controlled touch scores one point; force is not required, and a strike delivered with knockout intent is penalised	Prohibited
12–15	Hand strikes under the general rule; a foot strike scores on contact	One hand only
16 and above	Full contact	All chokes, standard submission rule

The rulebook states the reason plainly: a head guard protects the face, not the brain — on impact the brain moves inside the skull and no protector can prevent this. That is why, in the youngest group, the score does not depend on the force of the strike.

In ground combat, for ages 8 to 15, as soon as a joint lock is fully applied and pressure on the elbow, knee or ankle begins, the referee declares victory immediately: no submission signal is awaited.

During the bout

- **The ten-second rule.** Even if the athlete rises early, the count continues to eight and the athlete may not resume before it. Where consciousness is lost there is no count: the referee calls the doctor at once and the bout ends.
- **Concussion protocol.** Seven steps, from stopping the bout to a written medical decision and a prescribed rest period.
- **Mandatory rest.** After a knockout with loss of consciousness exceeding 30 seconds, 90 days and imaging; after brief loss of consciousness, 60 days; after a technical knockout with concussion signs, 30 days; without them, 14 days. A repeat within twelve months doubles the period. An athlete who has been knocked out may not fight again in that competition without the doctor's written approval.

Before the bout

The weigh-in takes place on the day of the bout, in light clothing, conducted by an official of the same sex as the athlete; in female categories the whole weigh-in team is female. **In the categories under the age of 18, weight cutting — artificial slimming and dehydration — is prohibited**, and an athlete is admitted to the weigh-in only with the written approval of the competition doctor. At the weigh-in the athlete presents an identity document, a health certificate and proof of sports accident insurance.



Junior athletes at the World Championship

12 Alpagut in the world

Since 2014 the Federation has held 17 international competitions, among them five World Championships, and 9 international seminars. The sixth World Alpagut Championship will take place in Ankara on 3–6 December 2026.

2018 1st World Championship — Baku, Azerbaijan

2019 2nd World Championship — Baku, Azerbaijan

2022 3rd World Championship — Bursa, Türkiye · athletes from 23 countries

2023 4th World Championship — Bursa, Türkiye

2025 1st Asian Championship — Shymkent, Kazakhstan · 5th World Championship — Bursa, Türkiye: 450 athletes from 19 countries

2026 6th World Championship — Ankara, Türkiye, 3–6 December

How to begin

Alpagut is open to national sports organisations, clubs, coaches, referees and individual athletes. Where a country has no member organisation yet, the Federation works through a National Representative until one is formed. Licensed referees, certified grades and issued credentials can all be checked in the public registers of the Federation.

Website alpagutfederation.org

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Headquarters

AZ1010 Mikayil Rafili str. 32, Nasimi dist., Baku, Azerbaijan

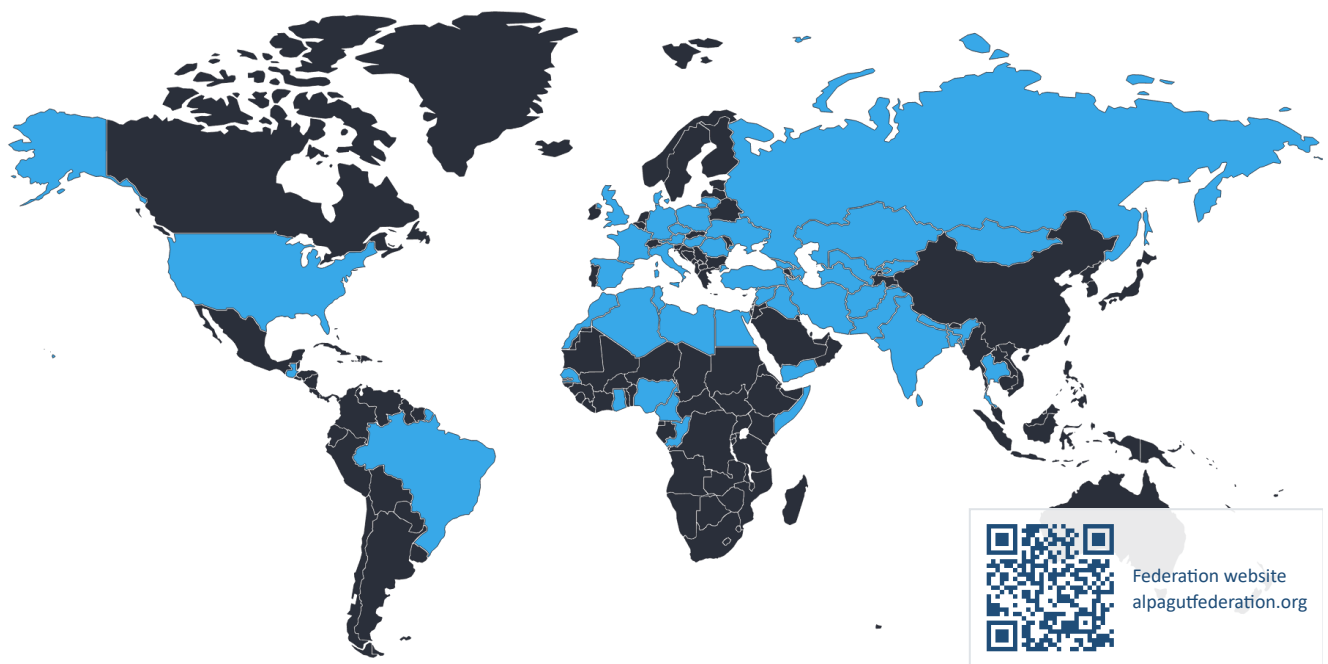


Figure 6 · Represented in more than 50 countries: in some by a national organisation, in others by an individual representative. Status by country: alpagutfederation.org/representation