

Annual Chi Sau Competition 2026

Adult Open Chi Sau Division

Competitor Rules and Information Pack

Date: Saturday 5 December 2026

Sign-in: 9.30 am

Competition starts: 10.00 am

Venue: Rob Ley Academy, Unit 9A, Long Rock Industrial Estate, Long Rock, Penzance, Cornwall TR20 8HX

Entry: £10 per competitor

Registration closes: Sunday 15 November 2026

No politics. No ego. No lineage rivalry.

All schools. All lineages. One respectful floor.

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1 Purpose of the event

The Rob Ley Academy Annual Chi Sau Competition is a controlled Ving Tsun / Wing Chun event for adult practitioners who want to test their skill in a respectful environment. It is not a challenge match, a public fight or a school-versus-school contest.

The purpose is to display good-quality Chi Sau: structured attacks, sensitive defence, clean timing, correct distance, centreline control, balance, composure and respect. Competitors may express the technical language of their own lineage, but they must work within this published rule set.

Entry to the competition means acceptance of these rules, the authority of the officials and the event's conduct standards. The organisers may refuse entry or remove any person whose behaviour, attitude or safety risk is inconsistent with the purpose of the event.

Plain principle: The event rewards Ving Tsun / Wing Chun quality. It does not reward poor sportsmanship, intimidation, brawling or conduct contrary to the stated purpose. An omission from a list does not make an unsafe action permissible.

2 Event summary

Item	Rule
Division	One Adult Open Chi Sau Division, ages 18+
Categories	No separate weight, grade, sex, experience or lineage categories
Match length	Three-round format; Round 3 is contested only if required
Decision	The competitor who wins two rounds wins the match
Contact level	Controlled semi-contact arm techniques only
Head/face scoring	Controlled open-palm strikes to the permitted forehead and cheek areas only
Body scoring	Controlled open-palm strikes or straight punches to the permitted torso area
Equipment	Headguard and mouthguard are optional; groin/pelvic protection is compulsory
Officials	Centre referee, scorekeeper and two side judges

Table 1: Competition summary

3 Eligibility and registration

The division is open to adult practitioners aged 18 or over from any Ving Tsun or Wing Chun school or lineage. Independent adult practitioners may also enter.

All competitors must register in advance, pay the entry fee, complete the required participation declaration and confirm that they are fit to take part. A competitor must disclose any injury, medical issue or condition that may affect safe participation.

There are no separate weight or experience divisions. The open format does not give a larger, stronger or more experienced competitor permission to dominate through strength, excessive contact or intimidation. Control is part of the skill being assessed.

4 What the judges reward

Judges will look for effective Ving Tsun / Wing Chun rather than one school's preferred appearance. A competitor may score through clean attack, clear defence, control, permitted off-balancing, or ring position, but the action must still show genuine Chi Sau skill.

Quality	What the officials are looking for
Bridge and sensitivity	Maintaining useful bridge contact, reading pressure and responding without stiffness or guesswork
Structure and balance	Stable posture, coordinated movement and the ability to receive or apply pressure without collapse
Centreline control	Protecting, recovering and using the centreline to create or close an opening
Timing and position	Acting at the correct moment from a useful angle, distance and body position
Clean technique	A recognisable Ving Tsun / Wing Chun action rather than a wild, accidental or strength-only movement
Control and composure	Safe semi-contact, calmness under pressure and immediate obedience to the referee

Table 2: Judging priorities

5 Match format

Each match is decided over a maximum of three rounds. The first competitor to win two rounds wins the match. If one competitor wins both Round 1 and Round 2, the match ends and Round 3 is not contested. If the competitors have won one round each after Round 2, Round 3 decides the match.

Round	Duration	Red competitor	White competitor
Round 1	1 minute	Attacks only	Defends and controls only
Round 2	1 minute	Defends and controls only	Attacks only
Round 3	1 minute 30 seconds	Attacks and defends	Attacks and defends

Table 3: Round structure

The winner of the coin toss decides who attacks first. The competitor chosen to attack first is designated Red, and the other competitor is designated White. White attacks in Round 2 so that each competitor performs both prescribed roles before a possible deciding round.

There is a 30-second rest between rounds. Timing is running time unless the centre referee stops the clock for injury, equipment adjustment, official consultation or another material delay.

6 Starting and restarting

Each round starts in the centre of the competition area from a neutral, matched, double-arm Chi Sau bridge, with one arm inside and one arm outside for each competitor. The referee will ensure that neither competitor begins with an obvious positional advantage.

On the referee's command, the competitors complete at least three controlled rolling cycles before scoring actions may begin. Scoring begins on the referee's signal.

The referee will call **Stop** after a foul, fall, ring-out, prolonged loss of contact, unsafe position or official intervention. Competitors must stop immediately, return to the centre and re-establish the starting bridge.

A momentary release or change of contact is allowed when it is part of a continuous Ving Tsun / Wing Chun action. If meaningful bridge contact is lost for more than approximately two seconds, or if either competitor disengages to create long-range sparring distance, the referee will stop and restart the action.

7 Roles in Rounds 1 and 2

7.1 Attacking role

The attacking competitor must use purposeful, recognisable Ving Tsun / Wing Chun actions to create an opening and deliver a clean controlled hit to a permitted target.

The attacker may use forward pressure, changes, hand replacement, clearing, trapping and control to create the hit. The attacker must not rush blindly, throw disconnected punches, shove, wrestle or use strength without technical control. Activity alone does not score.

The attacker may protect their own position and clear the defender's controls, but must continue to fulfil the attacking role. Persistent passivity or refusal to initiate may be penalised.

7.2 Defending and controlling role

The defending competitor must use recognisable Ving Tsun / Wing Chun technique and principle to receive, neutralise and control the attacker. Appropriate actions include maintaining or recovering the bridge, covering, redirecting, turning, jamming, pinning, trapping, controlling the centreline and disrupting the attacker's balance or position.

The defender must remain engaged. Simply retreating, running away, covering up without bridge use or waiting for the clock to expire does not demonstrate successful defence.

The defender may use forward intent and controlled pressure to take the attacker's space or structure. The defender must not counterstrike or deliberately make striking contact with a target area during a defence-only round.

8 Round 3: open Chi Sau

In Round 3, both competitors may attack, defend, counter and control. The same requirements for bridge skill, structure, centreline, timing and controlled contact apply.

Round 3 remains Chi Sau. It must not become boxing, kickboxing, wrestling, charging, trading hits or an uncontrolled exchange. Wild flurries, disconnected punching, repeated crashes, strength-based shoving and brawling will not score and may be penalised.

9 Scoring

The centre referee stops the exchange when a competitor steps outside the boundary, commits a foul, or has clearly lost the exchange through a permitted scoring action. The two side judges indicate Red, White or No Score. When they agree, that decision stands. When they differ, the centre referee makes the deciding call.

Only one point may be awarded from a single continuous exchange. A strike, control, fall and ring-out are not added together when they arise from the same action. The referee awards the clearest completed result and restarts the competitors.

Scoring action	Points	Requirement
Clean controlled hit	1	A permitted palm reaches a permitted head or face target, or a permitted palm or straight punch reaches a permitted torso target, clearly, first and under control. The action must arise through the bridge or immediately from an opening created through bridge contact.
Clear defensive control	1	In a defence-only round, the defender neutralises a genuine attack and establishes a settled, observable controlling position through recognisable Ving Tsun / Wing Chun technique.
Clear control in open Chi Sau	1	In Round 3, either competitor establishes a dominant bridge, trapping, jamming, centreline or off-balancing position that prevents the opponent from safely continuing the exchange.
Fall	1 to the opponent	Any part of a competitor's body other than the feet touches the floor because of the opponent's permitted, controlled action.
Ring-out	1 to the opponent	Any part of one foot touches the floor beyond the outside edge of the marked boundary line because of the opponent's permitted, controlled action, or because the competitor deliberately exits to avoid engagement.

Table 4: Permitted scoring actions

A clean controlled hit is not merely the first touch. It must show a valid line, recognisable Ving Tsun / Wing Chun mechanics, correct distance, balance and control. A loose slap, arm punch, wild swing, accidental touch or heavy uncontrolled impact does not score.

A clear defensive control is more than blocking one technique. The defender must neutralise the attack and gain an observable advantage. This may include controlling the bridge or centreline, safely turning or jamming the attacker, breaking the attacker's structure, forcing a reset, or placing the attacker where a clean follow-up would clearly be available. The defender does not deliver that follow-up strike during a defence-only round.

If both competitors land at substantially the same time, neither receives a point. If both competitors fall or leave the area without one competitor clearly causing the result through a permitted action while remaining in control, neither receives a point.

10 Permitted contact and target areas

The competition uses controlled semi-contact hand techniques only. Semi-contact means that a technique may make clear contact, but it must be deliberately checked on or immediately after contact. It must not be driven through the target. It must not snap the head, fold the body, cause visible distress, or rely on impact to knock the competitor down.

Permitted strikes are limited to the following:

Area	Permitted strike
Head / face	Controlled open-palm strike to the forehead or fleshy cheek area. If a headguard is worn, the same anatomical target applies over the corresponding padded area. The palm must be open, the fingers held together and safely away from the eyes, and the thumb tucked.
Torso	Controlled open-palm strike or straight punch to the front or side of the torso between the line of the collarbones and the top of the pelvis.

Table 5: Permitted targets and strikes

The eyes, nose, ears, throat, neck and back of the head are not targets. The palm to the head or face must be a structured Ving Tsun / Wing Chun palm.

Judges reward the opening, line, structure, timing and control. They do not reward sloppy volume, noise or force.

Permitted non-striking actions include receiving, deflecting, covering, turning, hand replacement, trapping, pinning, jamming and controlled off-balancing through the bridge.

Brief hand or forearm control is allowed. A trap must support an immediate technical action or clear control; prolonged holding is not allowed.

Normal Ving Tsun elbow positions may be used as structure and defence.

11 Prohibited actions

The following are prohibited. The examples are not exhaustive. An unnamed action may still be stopped or penalised when it is unsafe, contrary to the assigned role, or inconsistent with controlled Chi Sau.

Prohibited area	Examples
Prohibited head and face contact	Any fist, knuckle, fingertip or elbow contact to the head or face. Any hand contact to the eyes, nose, ears, back of the head or throat.
Prohibited body targets	Any strike to the spine, groin or below the waist.
Unsafe striking actions	Finger thrusts towards the face, eyes or throat; elbow strikes to the head, face or collarbone; chops to the throat; head-butts; knees; kicks.

Grappling and takedowns	Sweeps, leg hooks, throws, sacrifice techniques, lifts, tackles, submissions or pressure applied beyond a joint's safe natural range.
Non-Chi Sau conduct	Wrestling, prolonged clinching, wild flurries, sloppy punches, running away, stalling or repeated deliberate stepping out.
Misconduct	Attacking before Go, after Stop or after the bell; ignoring officials; abusive language; threatening conduct; lineage insults; retaliation; or disrespect towards any competitor, coach, official or guest.

Table 6: Prohibited targets, techniques and behaviour

A foul can never produce a score. If an uncontrolled or sloppy strike, shove, charge or other prohibited action causes a fall or ring-out, no point is awarded for that result and the offending competitor may be penalised.

12 Warnings, penalties and disqualification

Officials distinguish between a minor technical infringement, a safety infringement and serious misconduct. The referee may move directly to a deduction or disqualification when the seriousness of the action requires it. There is no requirement to issue a caution before penalising dangerous conduct.

Minor technical infringements include deliberate stalling, avoidable repeated loss of the bridge, prolonged holding, refusal to fulfil the assigned role and repeated use of actions that cannot score. Formal cautions and safety warnings accumulate across the whole match; they do not reset at the end of a round.

Infringement	Normal consequence
First minor technical infringement	Formal caution, no point deduction
Repeated minor technical infringement	1 point deducted from the current round
Uncontrolled or excessive contact, including an overpowered permitted strike	2 points deducted from the current round and a formal safety warning. Serious cases bring immediate disqualification.
Accidental light contact to a prohibited head, face, neck or throat target	2 points deducted from the current round and a formal safety warning
Second safety infringement in the match	Disqualification
Deliberate strike to a prohibited head or face target, or any forceful strike to the head, face, neck, throat, spine or groin	Immediate disqualification
Technique delivered with apparent intent to injure	Immediate disqualification
Serious misconduct, retaliation or attacking after Stop	Immediate disqualification

Table 7: Penalty scale

A strike to the front of the throat is not an ordinary scoring error. An accidental light touch brings a 2-point deduction. A deliberate, reckless or forceful throat strike brings immediate disqualification.

A permitted palm delivered with enough force to snap the head, cause visible distress or produce a knockdown through impact is excessive contact. It does not score and may bring immediate disqualification.

Round scores may fall below zero after deductions.

13 Deciding a round and match

The competitor with the higher score at the end of a round wins that round.

If the points are level, the two side judges vote for the competitor who better fulfilled the purpose of that round. If they differ, the centre referee makes the deciding call. The officials consider the following criteria in order:

1. Clean technical effectiveness in the assigned role.
2. Structure and balance.
3. Bridge control, sensitivity and centreline control.
4. Timing and positional control.
5. Composure, discipline and control of force.

There is no drawn round. Majority vote decides the round. The first competitor to win two rounds wins the match. A disqualified competitor loses the match and cannot continue in the competition.

14 Competition area and boundary

The competition area is marked clearly on suitable, level, non-slip martial arts matting. There must be a clear safety area around the marked boundary.

A foot touching the boundary line does not score. A ring-out occurs when any part of one foot touches the floor beyond the outside edge of the boundary line. The referee may stop the action earlier if competitors are moving unsafely towards the edge.

No match will take place on a raised platform.

15 Clothing and protective equipment

Competitors must wear a clean T-shirt or academy top, suitable martial arts trousers and the footwear specified by the organiser for the competition surface. Clothing must not contain hard fittings, exposed zips or anything likely to injure or catch another competitor.

Equipment	Rule
Mouthguard	Permitted but optional
Groin or pelvic protector	Compulsory and worn beneath clothing
Headguard	Permitted but optional. If worn, it must be approved before competition.

Chest or breast protector	Optional if soft, close-fitting and worn beneath clothing
Gloves or hand pads	Not worn
Jewellery, watches and piercings	Must be removed. Any item that cannot be safely removed must be securely covered and approved by the referee.

Table 8: Equipment requirements

Competitors may wear an approved, close-fitting, soft, open-face martial arts headguard with forehead, temple and cheek protection. It must have no rigid face cage, exposed hard surface or loose section that could catch a hand.

Each competitor is responsible for presenting any optional protective equipment at sign-in for inspection. Equipment that cannot be approved may not be used.

The permitted head and face targets remain the forehead and fleshy cheek areas whether or not a headguard is worn. Wearing a headguard does not make any additional area a permitted target and does not permit a competitor to use more force. Control of contact and immediate referee intervention remain the primary safeguards.

Fingernails and toenails must be short and smooth. Long hair must be secured with soft fastenings. Officials may inspect competitors before their first match.

16 Injury, blood and concussion

The referee will immediately stop the match if a competitor appears injured, dazed, confused, unsteady or unable to defend safely. The designated first aider or medical professional decides whether the competitor may continue.

Where concussion is suspected, the competitor will be removed from the competition and must not return to Chi Sau, sparring or any other contact activity that day. The working principle is simple: if in doubt, sit them out.

If bleeding occurs, the match is stopped. The competitor may continue only when bleeding is controlled, the wound is safely covered and any contaminated surface or clothing has been dealt with.

If a prohibited technique causes an opponent to be unable to continue, the offending competitor will normally be disqualified. The referee and Chief Judge may disqualify the offender regardless of whether the injured competitor later feels able to continue.

17 Conduct, coaching and spectators

Competitors must offer a respectful acknowledgement before and after the match. They must obey the referee immediately and maintain appropriate conduct throughout the event.

Coaches may give calm instructions only during the 30-second breaks. No one may shout technical instructions during active rounds, challenge officials, provoke competitors or disparage another school or lineage.

This is a closed-door martial arts event, not a public spectator event. Attendance is limited to registered competitors, instructors and members of participating academies, and others admitted by the organiser.

Anyone whose conduct is unsafe, aggressive, disruptive or contrary to the purpose of the event may be removed from the competition or venue.

18 Draw, bracket and withdrawal

The competition will normally use a single-elimination bracket. Byes will be assigned fairly where required.

A competitor may withdraw at any time. A withdrawal after the match has begun is recorded as a loss. No competitor may be pressured to continue after withdrawing.

19 Protests and rule interpretation

Only the competitor or their nominated instructor may make a protest. It must be made calmly to the Chief Judge immediately after the match and before the next match in that bracket begins. A protest may concern a misapplication of a published rule. It may not be used merely to dispute an official's honest judgement of a score, control, contact level or technical quality.

The Chief Judge has final authority on rule interpretation, protests and matters not expressly covered by this document. The competition will not pause for extended debate. Rules used by another association, event, school or lineage do not apply unless they are expressly included here. The version number on the cover identifies the official published rules. Any pre-event amendment or formal clarification will be issued by the organiser in writing to all registered competitors. A private message, informal conversation or social-media comment does not amend the rules unless the organiser confirms it as an official written clarification.

20 Awards

The event will include the following awards.

Award	Basis
Open Chi Sau Champion	Winner of the elimination bracket
Best Technical Performance	The competitor who most consistently demonstrates clean Ving Tsun / Wing Chun structure, sensitivity, centreline control, timing, balance and technical control across the event
Spirit of Chi Sau	The competitor who best demonstrates respect, composure, humility, safe conduct and fellowship regardless of match result

Table 9: Awards

The technical and spirit awards are decided by the officiating panel. They are not necessarily awarded to the bracket winner.

21 Clarifications for competitors

21.1 This is not full-contact fighting

The competition allows controlled semi-contact palms to the permitted forehead and cheek areas and controlled palms or straight punches to the body. It does not allow hard impact, brawling, knockdowns by force, wild striking or attempts to injure.

21.2 This is not point-touch tag

A score must show quality. A light touch without line, structure, distance, bridge relationship and control is not automatically a point. Officials are looking for Ving Tsun / Wing Chun, not gaming the contact level.

21.3 This is not a debate about lineage

Different Ving Tsun and Wing Chun schools express the art differently. The officials will judge what happens under these rules on the day. Competitors should bring their best skill, not politics.

21.4 How unlisted situations are decided

No rule set can name every possible action or incident in advance. Where an action is not expressly described, officials will decide according to the stated purpose and principles of the event: safety, respect, controlled Chi Sau, and the display of good Ving Tsun / Wing Chun skill. Silence in the rules is not permission for an unsafe or non-Chi Sau action.

22 Acceptance of entry

By entering, each competitor confirms that they understand the following conditions:

1. The event is a controlled adult Chi Sau competition.
2. The published rules define what scores, what is prohibited and how disputes are handled.
3. The officials' decisions on scores, contact level, control, conduct and safety are final on the day.
4. The competitor will act respectfully towards all schools, lineages, competitors, instructors, officials and guests.
5. The competitor will stop immediately when the referee calls Stop.
6. The competitor accepts that unsafe conduct may lead to deduction, disqualification or removal from the venue.

23 Glossary

bridge: The contact relationship between the competitors' arms through which pressure, direction, openings and control are read.

centreline: The central line being protected, controlled or used to create a clean attacking route.

Chi Sau: A Ving Tsun / Wing Chun training method based on close-range contact, bridge control, sensitivity and immediate technical response.

Chief Judge: The official with final authority on rule interpretation, protests and matters not expressly covered by the published rules.

clean controlled hit: A permitted strike that lands clearly, first and under control from a valid Ving Tsun / Wing Chun action.

clear control: A settled, observable technical advantage that prevents the opponent from safely continuing the exchange.

ring-out: A boundary score where any part of one foot touches the floor beyond the outside edge of the boundary line because of the opponent's permitted controlled action, or because a competitor deliberately exits to avoid engagement.

semi-contact: Controlled contact that is clear enough to score but checked so it is not driven through the opponent.