

Kumite Levels for Kyu Ranks

What are Kumite Levels (Sparring Level 1-3)

This is a modified type of sparring event for color belts. It is designed to allow participants to gradually improve their experience in a free sparring-like environment, while still being able to pay attention to karate fundamentals. At the same time, this event provides an opportunity for the development of judging experience, as the criteria are the same as for Jiyu Kumite (free sparring)

Main points of consideration

- Budo spirit (fighting spirit, etiquette, appearance)
- Form and transition – posture, eye vector, balance
- Todome-waza – proper technique, kime, and zanshin
- Timing – proper rhythm of attack or counter
- Ma-ai – technique applied at the appropriate distance

Format of Competition

There is an attacker and defender designation for each exchange. Red (Aka) side attacks first, then when all attacks are finished, White (Shiro) side becomes the attacker.

Level 1

Level 1 Exchanges

There are four exchanges (two for each side attacking). The attacking techniques are upper level step punch (oi-tsuki jodan) for the first attack, and reverse punch shifting in to the body (gyaku tsuki chudan). The competitors are in fighting stance (jiyu dachi) and are moving with the purpose to establish proper distance and timing for their actions. Note: switching of the leading leg in the stance is not allowed.

Procedure

1. Both competitors stand in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions.
2. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka oi-tsuki jodan - hajime" or "Red side upper level step punch - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
3. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
4. The exchange is judged based on kumite rules, with the possible award of Waza-ari (half point) to either side
5. Both competitors go back in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions.
6. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka gyaku tsuki chudan - hajime" or "Red side reverse punch to the body - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
7. The exchange is judged based on kumite rules, with the possible award of Waza-ari (half point) to either side
8. The procedure is repeated with Shiro (White) side as attacker

Constraints

- The defender must defend using go-no-sen timing, i.e. the defender must allow the attacker to initiate their attack. The goal of the defender is to evade and/or block the attack, and counter-attack before the attacker may have a chance for a second attack.
- The attacker must hold their position after executing the attack, providing a stationary target to the defender (similar to Kihon Ippon kumite, and Jiyu Ippon kumite).
 - Due to this constraint on the attacker, there is no Ippon (full point) awarded at that level
 - Any contact (except minor) perpetrated by the defender may result in disqualification

Scoring Considerations

- The attacker can score in two ways, either by performing the attack with the proper form, power, distance and timing (waza-ari), or if their attack disturbs the opponent's ability to counterattack (ni-ten), including the case where the defender escapes too far to be able to execute a proper counter attack.
- The defender can score with the properly executed counter attack, with the proper timing, and distance.

Level 2

Level 2 Exchanges

There are six exchanges (three for each side attacking). The attacking techniques are upper level punching attack, either jab or reverse punch (kizami-tsuki jodan or gyaku tsuki jodan) for the first attack, reverse punch shifting in to the body (gyaku tsuki chudan), and front kick (using back leg) to the body (mae geri chudan). The competitors are in fighting stance (jiyu dachi) and are moving with the purpose to establish proper distance and timing for their actions. Note: switching of the leading leg in the stance is not allowed.

Procedure

1. Both competitors stand in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions.
2. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka jodan tsuki - hajime" or "Red side upper level punch - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
3. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
4. The exchange is judged based on kumite rules, with the possible award of Waza-ari (half point) or Ippon (full point) to either side
5. After the exchange both competitors go back in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions
6. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka gyaku tsuki chudan - hajime" or "Red side reverse punch to the body - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
7. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
8. After the exchange both competitors go back in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions
9. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka mae geri chudan - hajime" or "Red side front kick to the body - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
10. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
11. The procedure is repeated with Shiro (White) side as attacker

Constraints

- The defender can use only a single technique for the counter, either a punch, or a front kick.
- The defender is free to defend using any timing, including preemptive counter-attack.
- The attacker must defend against (or evade) the counter attack
- If the defender launches a preemptive counter-attack, the attacker is still able to execute a single attack, if they block or evade the preemptive strike.

Scoring considerations

- Superior timing and distance, together with a decisive technique (Todome Waza) can potentially lead to the award of Ippon (full point) for either side
- A penalty (Keikoku) is awarded to the attacker if the defender escapes too far to be able to execute a proper counter attack.

Level 3

Level 3 Exchanges

There are six exchanges (three for each side attacking). The three types of attacks are as follows:

1. Punching combination - two punching attacks, any sequence, any legal target. Defender can counter with one or two techniques.
2. Kicking combination - one punch, one kick, in any sequence, any legal target. Defender can counter with one or two techniques.
3. Combination exchange - attacker attacks with any combination of two techniques, defender responds with one or two techniques, attacker has a final chance for counter-counter-attack.

Procedure

1. Both competitors stand in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions.
2. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka tsuki renzoku waza - hajime" or "Red side punching combination - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
3. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
4. The exchange is judged based on kumite rules, with the possible award of Waza-ari (half point) or Ippon (full point) to either side
5. After the exchange both competitors go back in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions
6. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka keru renzoku waza - hajime" or "Red side kicking combination - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
7. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
8. After the exchange both competitors go back in ready position (Shizen-Tai) at their designated starting positions
9. Chief referee (Shushin) announces "Aka renzoku waza - hajime" or "Red combination exchange - begin" and both competitors step forward in fighting stance (jiyu dachi).
10. The attacker must get into proper distance for the attack and execute the announced attack within 5 seconds. The defender moves with the attacker to maintain proper distance and to be able to respond with the proper timing.
11. The procedure is repeated with Shiro (White) side as attacker

Constraints

- The kicks that can be used in this event are front kick (mae-geri), side kick (yoko geri), or roundhouse kick (mawashi geri)
- The defender is free to defend using any timing, including preemptive counter-attack.
- The attacker must defend against (or evade) the counter attack

- If the defender launches a preemptive counter-attack, the attacker is still able to execute a single attack, if they block or evade the preemptive strike.
- The attacker cannot use a sweep (ashi barai). The defender is allowed to use a sweep, which is counted as one of their two allowed techniques.

Scoring considerations

- Superior timing and distance, together with a decisive technique (Todome Waza) can potentially lead to the award of Ippon (full point) for either side
- A penalty (Keikoku) is awarded to the attacker if the defender escapes too far to be able to execute a proper counter attack.