

# Kumite techniques in sports karate






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**Received:** 10 October 2021; **Accepted:** 28 October 2021; **Published online:** 23 November 2021

**AoBID:** 15991

**Authors' Contribution:**

-  **A** Study Design
-  **B** Data Collection
-  **C** Statistical Analysis
-  **D** Manuscript Preparation
-  **E** Funds Collection

## Abstract

**Background & Study Aim:**

In different varieties of sports karate, the rules of competition in kumite are constantly being modified. This underscores the importance of technical preparation in karate training. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to present the allowed kumite techniques in sports karate.

**Material & Methods:**

The method of analyzing the source materials was used. The current rules of kumite competition were analyzed: the World Karate Federation, World Karate Confederation, World Union of Karate-Do Federations, World Karate Martial Arts Organization. The results were presented in the form of overview photos.

**Results:**

The following are allowed: four techniques from the tsuki waza group; three techniques from the uchi waza group; six techniques from the keri waza group; eight techniques from the nage waza group; nine techniques from the uke waza group; four techniques from the kawashi waza group.

**Conclusions:**

It was concluded that the criterion for allowing 34 karate techniques to be used in kumite sports competition is the safety of the competing athletes.

**Keywords:**

combat sports • World Karate Confederation • World Karate Federation • World Karate Martial Arts Organization • World Union of Karate-Do Federations

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**Conflict of interest:**

Authors have declared that no competing interest exists

**Ethical approval:**

The study has been accepted by the local ethics committee

**Provenance & peer review:**

Not commissioned; externally peer reviewed

**Source of support:**

Departmental sources

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## INTRODUCTION

**Kawashi waza** – dodging techniques.

**Keri waza** – kicking techniques.

**Kumite** – fighting in karate.

**Nage waza** – uppercut and throwing techniques.

**Tatami** – floor matting.

**Tsuki waza** – thrusting techniques.

**Uchi waza** – chopping techniques.

**Uke waza** – blocking techniques.

**Waza** – a technique or movement which is based on a standard form and is used to challenge and defeat the opponent [16].

**Tactics** – *plural noun* the art of finding and implementing means to achieve immediate or short-term aims [17].

**Technique**– *noun* a way of performing an action [17].

In preparing athletes for sports competition in karate, motor, technical, tactical and mental preparation are distinguished [1]. Motor preparation allows for developing motor skills to a high level. This provides the basis for perfecting techniques at the championship level. A high degree of mastery of these gives the opportunity to achieve many tactical solutions. The whole is topped off by mental preparation, which allows the achieved training effects to be fully presented at sports competitions [2].

With the dynamically changing rules of competition in kumite in different varieties of sports karate, karate practitioners are forced to select possible techniques to prepare for sports competitions [3]. That is why technical preparation is such an important part of karate training. In this sense, karate technique consists of the performance of a movement task adapted to a given fighting situation, in an economical way, defined by the rules, which uses the physical potential, mental potential and movement skills of the karateka necessary for sports fighting.

In general, there are dozens of karate techniques [4]. To minimize the risk of injury and trauma in sports competition, most karate techniques have been banned due to their destructive nature to the opponent [5]. Consequently, sports karate techniques can be divided into attack and defense techniques. Attack techniques include *tsuki waza*, *uchi waza*, *keri waza* and *nage waza*; while the defense techniques include *uke waza* and *kawashi waza* [6].

The purpose of this article is to present the allowed kumite techniques in sports karate.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The method of analysis of source materials [7] was used. The current rules of the kumite competition of four sports karate organizations were analyzed: World Karate Federation [8], World Karate Confederation [9], World Union of Karate-Do Federations [10], World Karate Martial Arts Organization [11]. The results are presented in the form of overview photos. For this purpose, a photo session was conducted in the sports hall of the Primary School in Mysłakowice (Lower Silesia, Poland). The techniques were presented by Pawel Piepiora and Maciej Baranski while the photos were taken by Zbigniew Piepiora. It should be mentioned that the authors of this article are master class coaches.

## RESULTS

### Tsuki waza

Four techniques are allowed in the group of fist thrusting techniques: *kizami zuki* – straight punch (Photo 1); *gyaku zuki* – reverse straight punch (Photo 2); *oi zuki* – straight punch with transition (Photo 3); *choku zuki* – straight punch in place used as a finishing technique after an uppercut (Photo 4).

### Uchi waza

In the group of curved cutting techniques, three techniques are allowed: *uraken uchi* – a strike with an upturned fist (Photo 5); *haito uchi* – a strike with the inner edge of the palm (Photo 6); *shuto uchi* – a strike with the outer edge of the palm (Photo 7).



Photo 1. *Kizami zuki*.



Photo 2. *Gyaku zuki*.



**Photo 3.** *Oi zuki.*



**Photo 4.** *Choku zuki.*



**Photo 5.** *Uraken uchi.*



**Photo 6.** *Haito uchi.*



**Photo 7.** *Shuto uchi.*



### Keri waza

Six techniques are allowed in the group of kicking techniques: *mae geri* – front kick (Photo 8); *yoko geri* – side kick (Photo 9); *mawashi geri*

– circle kick (Photo 10); *ura mawashi geri* – hooking kick (Photo 11); *ushiro geri* – back kick (Photo 12); *ushiro ura mawashi geri* – spinning kick (Photo 13).



**Photo 8.** *Mae geri.*



**Photo 9.** *Yoko geri.*



**Photo 10.** *Mawashi geri.*



**Photo 11.** *Ura mawashi geri.*



**Photo 12.** *Ushiro geri.*



**Photo 13.** *Ushiro ura mawashi geri.*

## Nage waza

In the group of undercut and throwing techniques, eight techniques are allowed: *de ashi barai* – an undercut from the side behind the foot (Photo 14); *kuzushi* – an undercut from the side of both legs (Photo 15); *o soto gari* – large external

undercut (Photo 16); *o uchi gari* – large internal undercut (Photo 17); *ko soto gari* – small external undercut (Photo 18); *ko uchi gari* – small internal undercut (Photo 19); *okuri ashi harai* – undercut by leaning (Photo 20); *tai-otoshi* – throw by lowering (Photo 21).



Photo 14. *De ashi barai*.



Photo 15. *Kuzushi*.



Photo 16. *O soto gari*.



Photo 17. *O uchi gari*.



Photo 18. *Ko soto gari*.



Photo 19. *Ko uchi gari*.





**Photo 20.** *Okuri ashi harai.*



**Photo 21.** *Tai-otoshi.*

### **Uke waza**

In the group of blocking techniques, nine techniques are preferred: *age uke* – upper block (Photo 22); *soto uke* – outer block (photo 23); *uchi uke* – inner block (Photo 24); *gedan barai* – lower

sweeping block (Photo 25); *gedan uke* – lower block (Photo 26); *te nagashi uke* – nailing block (Photo 27); *te osae uke* – pressing block (Photo 28); *hiza-uke* – knee block (Photo 29); *sune uke* – shank block (photo 30).



**Photo 22.** *Age uke.*



**Photo 23.** *Soto uke.*



**Photo 24.** *Uchi uke.*



**Photo 25.** *Gedan barai.*



**Photo 26.** *Gedan uke.*



**Photo 27.** *Te nagashi uke.*



**Photo 28.** *Te osae uke.*



**Photo 29.** *Hiza uke.*



**Photo 30.** *Sune uke.*

### **Kawashi waza**

Within the group of dodging techniques, there are four techniques: dodging in place – by swinging the body in different directions (Photo 31); dodging out of the line of attack – by moving in

different directions (Photo 32); rotational dodging – performed around one axis or two axes of rotation (Photo 33); and combination dodging – by combining the previously mentioned dodging with blocks (Photo 34).





**Photo 31.** Dodge in place.



**Photo 32.** Dodging with stepping off the attack line.



**Photo 33.** Rotary dodge around a single axis.



**Photo 34.** Combination dodge.

## DISCUSSION

Technical correctness is only one of the factors that affect the end result of a fight. It can be improved by motor accents in technical training, because motor preparation during a fight significantly determines the result of the technique performed. Therefore, the appropriate relationship between motor skills and the motor potential of a karateka is formed during a long-term training process. The stage of learning karate techniques is always the shortest and easiest. The pace of mastering them depends on the karateka's motor susceptibility. Then the skills of combining and using the functions of given techniques in a specific situation depending on the opponent are perfected. It should be emphasized here that due to the limitations of the rules of sports combat, there is a big difference between the techniques in the combat version and the sports version of karate. In sport fighting, karateka is always focused on scoring points by attacking the allowed areas of the opponent's body while constantly controlling his techniques.

Therefore, the problem of perfecting karate sports techniques boils down to accentuating and combining all those elements on which the effectiveness of the movements performed in a sports fight depends. It should be mentioned here that a thorough knowledge of the rules translates into the conduct of the athletes' pursuits realized through combat. Nothing can replace the experience gained in sporting competition as it has an impact on the development by the competitors of their own unique fighting styles.

An analysis of the sports karate rules showed that only 34 karate techniques are used in kumite sports competition. Therefore, when reworking the technical material, it is not advisable to rush in search of novelty, but one should focus on perfect mastery of the fundamental techniques. Outstanding champions are examples of what can be reached by working systematically. The issue of *nage waza* in sports karate is also important. Today, this group of techniques differs significantly from the classic nine throws of Gichin



Funakoshi [12]. Although modern sports *nage waza* is more practical, tatami used for karate is not designed for falls [13]. Significant differences are observed between karate tatami and judo tatami. In addition, karate practice does not take into account the kind of emphasis on falls present in judo [14]. This shows that the problems with the use of *nage waza* in karate are still present and should be solved as soon as possible, since the personal safety of karatekas depends on them. However, this is only one (albeit basic)

element of personal safety (security), which is discussed in a multifaceted sense by, among others, Gąsienica-Walczak et al. [15].

## CONCLUSIONS

Thirty four karate techniques are allowed to be used in kumite sports competition. This is justified by the concern for the safety of competing athletes.

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Cite this article as: Piepiora P, Witkowski K. Kumite techniques in sports karate. *Arch Budo Sci Martial Art Extreme Sport* 2021; 17: 113-121