



Soon
Pretorius

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Kumite perfection depends on a process

The culture of instant achievements, instant successes and instant food influenced even our ancient art of unarmed combat created over thousands of years. Our generation expects immediate lines of communication, peace is stolen when food is not available now and instant social fame is expected. In our beloved fighting art, true mastery is unfortunately only achieved in time with meticulous training starting with the basic and slowly progressing to eventual free fighting after years of practice. Schools even in our capital city often succumb to instant success starting with free kumite at a very young age.

The burning ambitious of a new beginner must not be dampened but directed through basic kumite. Basic or Sanbon Kumite is a safe first step to reaching a world standard. The attacker will start by stepping back into a ready position. Sanbon is announced followed by a single punch attack to the face of the opponent who steps back, defending with a rising block. An attack to the stomach area is defended with a side block and lastly a kick is done blocked with a downward defences.

Sanbon kumite is concluded with a counter attack by the defender. The winner is determined by two important factors. The criteria of good form as found in kata is expected plus the mastery of distance. Contestants are not to make contact but control attack displaying effective distance. In short, distance and good form is evaluated.

Next in the four steps is called Kihon Kumite where the attacker steps back into a basic ready position. Jodan (facial area) is announced followed by a basic, locked attack to the announced area. Defences is a rising block followed immediately with a counter-attack. Attacks to the stomach area is followed by a basic forward kick done by both contestants. Each defences is followed with an immediate counter attack. Mastery of the principle of Tai-Sabaki (breaking the line of attack) must also be displayed. Attacks and defences must lock to display good distance and target.

The last basic kumite system is called Jiyu Ippon Kumite or free one step basic attack. Both fighters step forward into a fighting position. The area or method of attack precedes every attack defended by a non-prescriptive defences followed by an immediate counter-attack. Attacks must display effectiveness and not be locked as the first two fighting systems. Defences will be more realistic ended by an effective counter attack.

The last step before free kumite focuses on display of effective attacks and defences but prescribed. The process is now very close to free fighting and students will take the last step into free kumite with self-confidence. Kumite in traditional Karate-do requires the display of attacking techniques with absolute control. Contact is weak and must never receive credit. Senior class training will have injuries but limited and due to enthusiasm and speed of both fighters.