Tae-Kwon-Do

Introduction

Tae-Kwon-Do is a Korean martial art that is most famous for its dazzling array of fluid and powerful kicks, complemented by other techniques like punches and blocks. Tae-Kwon-Do is “the way of hand and foot”. It is a way of life.

Admitted into the Olympics as a full medal sport in the year 2000, Tae-Kwon-Do displays to the world the beauty of its attacks as well as the importance of its footwork.

History of Tae-Kwon-Do

The earliest records of Martial Arts practice in Korea date back to about 50 B.C. These earliest forms of Korean martial arts are known as ‘Taek Kyon’.

In the beginning of 1957, the name ‘Tae-Kwon-Do’ was adopted by several Korean martial arts masters, for its similarity to the name Tae Kyon.

In 1962 the Korean Amateur Sports Association acknowledged the Korean Tae-Kwon-Do Union and in 1965 the name was changed to Korean Tae-Kwon-Do Association (K.T.A.).

In 1963, ITF, the International Tae-Kwon-Do Federation, was established.

Demonstrations were given all over the world. It took a while before real progress was made, but eventually, in 1973, the World Tae-Kwon-Do Federation (W.T.F.) was founded. In 1980, W.T.F. Tae-Kwon-Do was recognized by the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) and became a demonstration sport at the Olympics in 1988. In the year 2000 Tae-Kwon-Do made its debut as an official Olympic sport. There were several attempts to unify I.T.F. and W.T.F. Tae-Kwon-Do, but unfortunately, these failed.

Objectives

- to develop an appreciation for Tae-Kwon-Do as a sport and as an art
- to achieve physical fitness through positive participation
- to improve mental discipline and emotional equanimity
- to learn self-defense skills
- to develop a sense of responsibility for oneself and others
- to learn to respect others and learn to know their abilities and disabilities
Components and Techniques

Overview

Tae-Kwon-Do has mainly four components:
- Sparring - to fight by striking with the feet and spurs
- Style forms - predefined sequences of stances against imaginary opponents to form strict patterns
- Self-defense - survival of self
- Break tests - breaking objects with body parts

Tae-Kwon-Do is much broader than sparring, something which people often tend to forget. The most important aspect of a training is that you feel good about the training and that you make progress on both physical and mental level. Elaborations on components of interest follow.

Style forms - Poomsaes

Forms, or Poomsaes, in Korean language, are a series of defending and attacking movements performed against imaginary opponents in a set pattern. Through the practice of forms, students come to learn the applications of various techniques of Tae-Kwon-Do.

Forms serve a multi-dimensional role, aiding the development and refinement of coordination, balance, timing, breath control and rhythm, all of which are essential skills to the Tae-Kwon-Do student. Depending on the student's skill (the color of the belt is an indication) the student practices a Poomsae, and every new Poomsae is a more difficult one.

Break test

Break test is an obligatory part of the black-belt exam and is a popular element of Tae-Kwon-Do demonstrations.

Breaking an object is a good way to practice concentration, power, focus, speed and precision on non-living objects, without injuring oneself or another. It is very important to realize that a proper technique is needed, and by attempting to break an object within limits, one can judge the correctness of the technique.

Practicing breaking objects helps you to realize that your body itself is a very strong weapon. It also helps you to understand that during practice with a partner, you have to be very careful.

The material that is most often used for breaking techniques is wood, since it can be easily broken with either hand or foot. Other materials include bricks, tiles and sometimes even cricket stumps!

Breaking objects can be performed with any rigid part of the body. In Tae-Kwon-Do, the most common are the hand, the foot, the elbow, the knee, the head and sometimes even the chin, straight fingers in a spear formation and the thumb!
Hierarchy of Tae-Kwon-Do Institutions

World Tae-Kwon-Do Federation (WTF) and International Tae-Kwon-Do Federation (ITF) are the two main international Tae-Kwon-Do bodies. WTF, formed in 1973, is made up of member Tae-Kwon-Do National Governing Bodies (NGBs). Individuals are affiliated to WTF through their NGBs. ITF was established by Gen. Choi in 1966. Since the break-up, there have been many attempts to reunite WTF and ITF, so far without success.

ITF practices a more traditional form of Tae-Kwon-Do while WTF, having a strong emphasis on sparring, became an Olympic sport in 2000.

The Tae-Kwon-Do Federation of India (TFI) is affiliated to WTF, Asian Tae-Kwon-Do Union (ATU), South Asian Tae-Kwon-Do Federation (SATF) and Indian Olympic Association (IOA). It follows and enforces the rules of the sport as formulated by WTF/IOA and strives to maintain the standards of training in consonance with the efforts of the latter.

TFI has different state Tae-Kwon-Do associations as its members, and some Central Government bodies as provisional members, which in turn have district Tae-Kwon-Do associations as members, which further have Tae-Kwon-Do clubs as members, composed of individuals.

http://www.wtf.org – World Tae-Kwon-Do Federation
http://www.tkd-itf.org/ - International Tae-Kwon-Do Federation
http://www.tfiindia.com – Tae-Kwon-Do Federation of India

Official Tae-Kwon-Do Events

Included as a demonstration event in 1988 and 1992 Olympic Games, Tae-Kwon-Do made its first appearance as an Olympic event in 2000, becoming the first martial art to be included in Olympics.

Sparring and Poomsae competitions are the official Tae-Kwon-Do competitions held at all levels – district, state, national and international. These are also held as invitational and provisional events with recognition from affiliating bodies. Belt promotion tests are conducted by authorities at regular intervals. A belt promotion marks the progress of training. Dan holder practitioners can also attend National Referee-ship Seminar and Refresher Courses to qualify as National Referees and upgrade their status respectively. Demonstrations at all levels are recognized and encouraged as Tae-Kwon-Do promotional activities.

http://www.wtf.org/r&rr/wtf_rule.htm - Official Competition Rules by WTF
IIT Kanpur Tae-Kwon-Do Club

Tae-Kwon-Do was first introduced at IIT Kanpur by Master Jimmy R. Jatyani, the founder of Tae-Kwon-Do in India, in the year 1981. Master Balaram Yadav, black belt Dan 4, took over as the instructor from the year 1986, January. Under his training, a number of students have won gold, silver and bronze medals in Tae-Kwon-Do sparring championships at national and state level competitions, students have achieved black belt Dan grades, several students have become National Referees and the club has performed numerous demonstrations.

Tae-Kwon-Do was included in the sports curriculum of IIT Kanpur in the year 1998, with the formation of IIT Kanpur Tae-Kwon-Do Club. It has since then been a favorite activity for the Compulsory Physical Activity (CPA) for first-year students, as well as for the student body in general, as indicated by the increase in strength of the club over the years.

A typical class begins with some warm-up exercises and stretching. Next the class practices basic kicks and footwork, complemented by punches and blocks. Poomsae, memorized forms consisting of sequences of basic moves, and self-defense techniques are included. In the later half of the class, kicking of paddles and partner drills with combination kicks are practiced.

During the classes, emphasis is given on Poomsae and sparring to prepare members for tournaments and to foster all-round development through technically complete Poomsae.

The IIT Kanpur Tae-Kwon-Do Club is a student group under the guidance of the Dean of Students’ Affairs (DOSA) and the Student's Gymkhana. This club is affiliated to the Kanpur Tae-Kwon-Do Association (KTA), which is affiliated to the Uttar Pradesh Tae-Kwon-Do Association (UPTA), which is affiliated to TFI.

Opportunities to Compete

Kanpur Tae-Kwon-Do Association (KTA) holds district-level competitions every year, which include Poomsae and sparring championships. These are selection stages for state-level competitions. Those who get through the state-level competitions are selected for national-level competitions.

Belt-promotion tests for lower belts (white, yellow, green) are conducted every two months. With increasing seniority, the periods for tests increase to four months up to an year. Depending on practice, a black-belt Dan can be achieved in three years. Referee-ship Seminars are also conducted. There are regular opportunities for demonstrations.