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TAEKWONDO



HISTORY

“Taekwondo is an empty-hand combat form that entails the use of the whole body. Tae means ‘to Kick’ or ‘Smash with the feet’, Kwon implies ‘punching’ or ‘destroying with the hand or fist’, and Do means ‘way’ or ‘method’. Taekwondo, thus, is the technique of unarmed combat for self-defense that involves the skillful application of techniques that include punching, jumping, kicks, blocks, dodges, parrying actions with hands and feet. It is more than a mere physical fighting skill, representing as it does a way of thinking and a pattern of life requiring strict discipline. It is a system of training both the mind and the body in which great emphasis is placed on the development of the trainee’s moral character.”

The above is a quote from Donn F Draeger and Robert W Smith’s Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts. It succinctly summarises what taekwondo is – a martial art form that calls for utmost discipline. It is not just any game; the word ‘martial’ is after all related to fighting and wars, and taekwondo rose as a military tactic. It is inspired from martial art forms originally practised by warriors of ancient South Korea, especially the Hwarang warriors of the Silla kingdom. The earliest records date back to 50 BCE.

Though taekwondo is recognised as an individual martial art, it is influenced by an array of other forms, such as judo, karate, and kung fu – styles that belong to Japan and China. Earlier forms of taekwondo include Tang Soo (Subak) and Taekkyeon (Gwonbeop).

Figure 10.1 Taekwondo improves concentration, confidence and self-control.



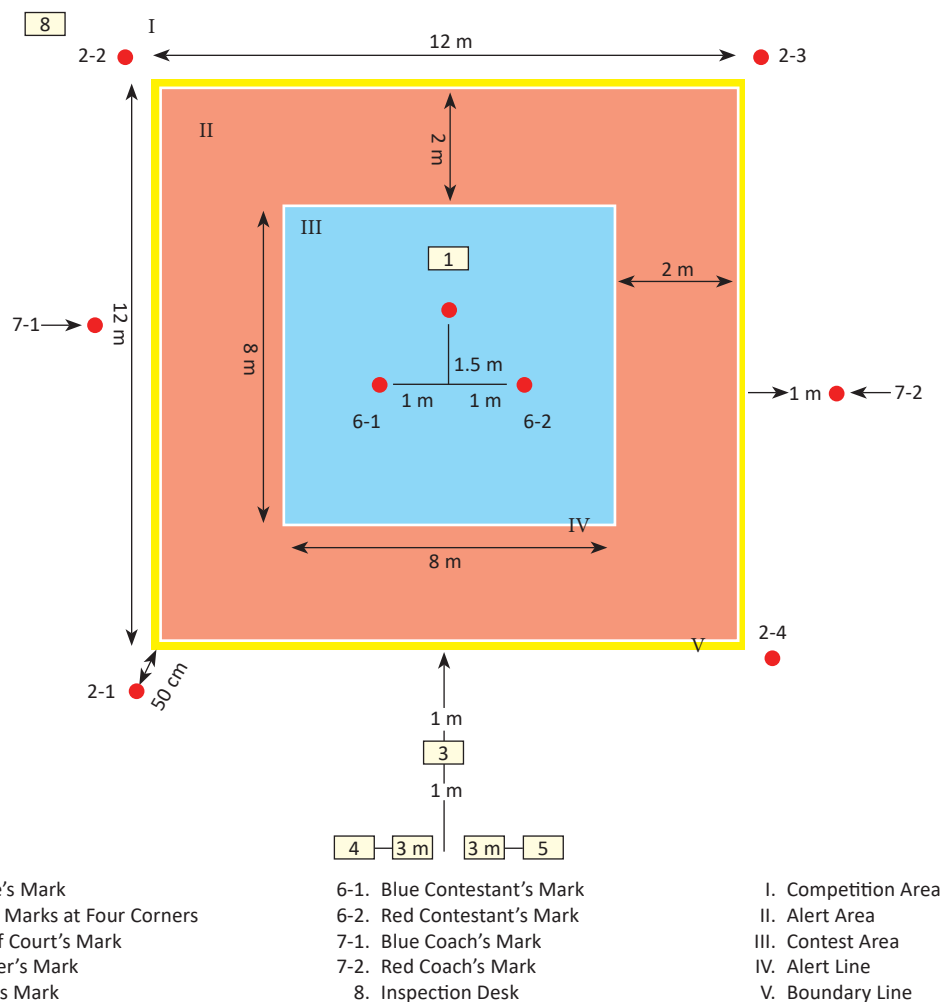


Figure 10.2 Taekwondo playing area and competition platform

The first governing body established for taekwondo was the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA). It was formed in 1959 by representatives from the nine original kwans (martial arts schools) in Korea. Choi Hong Hi, a South Korean Army General, founded the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) in 1966. ITF and World Taekwondo (WT), formed in 1973, are the two main international organizational bodies for the sport today. WT is currently the governing body for the martial art in the Olympics and Paralympics. In India, taekwondo is governed by the Taekwondo Federation of India, which was established in 1976.

Taekwondo was used for demonstration purposes only in the 1988 Seoul Olympics and became a full medal sport at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Though previously popular in countries such as China, Japan and South Korea, it is now taken up seriously in the US, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Spain, etc. It has been included in the Asian Games since the 1986 Seoul edition.

PLAYING FIELD, EQUIPMENT AND OFFICIALS

- ❖ Competition area = Maximum of 12 m × 12 m and minimum of 10 m × 10 m flat surface with elastic mat, and a contest area at the centre.
- ❖ Height of the platform = 50 cm
- ❖ Contest area diameter = 8 m × 8 m
- ❖ Contest area side length = 3.3 m
- ❖ Width of line between competition area and alert area = 5 cm
- ❖ Colour of the line = white
- ❖ Distance of the four judges from the corners = 50 cm
- ❖ Referee's mark from the centre = 1.50 m
- ❖ Duration of the contest = 3 rounds of 2 minutes each with one minute's rest after each round.
- ❖ Officials = 1 mat referee, 4 corner judges, 1 timekeeper, 1 recorder.
- ❖ Players' guards = Head guard, abdominal guard, trunk protector, forearm guard, shin guard.

RULES OF THE GAME

The rules of taekwondo are given below.

Players at International Events

1. The player must belong to the nation of her/his team. For example, a player of Indian nationality cannot compete for the Japanese team.
2. The player must be recommended by her/his respective National Taekwondo Association.
3. The player must wear the official uniform 'Dobuk' and protectors that are recommended/recognised by World Taekwondo Federation. These include the trunk protector, head protector, groin guard, forearm and shin guards, and they are required to be worn before the player enters the arena. The groin guard, forearm and shin guards are to be worn inside the uniform.
4. The players have to wear their numbers on the back of the uniform. The size of the number should be 25 cm × 25 cm.

Drawing of Lots

Lots are drawn one day before the commencement of the competition. The drawing of lots is attended by the WTF officials and representatives/officials of the competing teams.

Weighing in

This is done

- ❖ on the day of the competition itself, one hour before it starts
- ❖ without clothes
- ❖ only once but one more may be conducted within the permitted time limit for players who did not qualify the first time
- ❖ by female officials only for female players.

Procedure of the Contest

- ❖ The competition begins with the announcement of the contestants' names, which is done three times. This is carried out three minutes before the scheduled commencement of the contest. The player who fails to enter the arena within one minute of the start time is withdrawn from the competition.
- ❖ The players undergo physical and costume inspection to check if they are carrying any item that might harm or undermine their opponent. After this check, they enter the arena with one coach.
- ❖ The contest in each round begins with the declaration of 'shi-jak'/start by the referee, and it ends with the declaration of 'gomahn'/stop.

Table 10.1 An example of distribution of weights at a taekwondo competition.

Division	MALE	Division	FEMALE
Belt	Red	Belt	Red
	Black		Black
SUPER FIN	Over 45 kg – 50 kg	SUPER FIN	Over 38 kg – 43 kg
FIN	Over 50 kg – 54 kg	FIN	Over 43 kg – 46 kg
FLY	Over 54 kg – 58 kg	FLY	Over 46 kg – 49 kg
BANTAM	Over 58 kg – 63 kg	BANTAM	Over 49 kg – 53 kg
FEATHER	Over 63 kg – 68 kg	FEATHER	Over 53 kg – 57 kg
LIGHT	Over 68 kg – 73 kg	LIGHT	Over 57 kg – 62 kg
WELTER	Over 73 kg – 78 kg	WELTER	Over 62 kg – 67 kg
MIDDLE	Over 78 kg – 83 kg	MIDDLE	Over 67 kg – 72 kg
HEAVY	Over 83 kg – 88 kg	HEAVY	Over 72 kg – 77 kg
SUPER HEAVY	Over 88 kg – 93 kg	SUPER HEAVY	Over 77 kg – 82 kg

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS OF TAEKWONDO

Front Kick: To perform the front kick, first raise the knee of the kicking leg so that it is aimed at the target. Hold the ankle straight in-line with the rest of the leg. Straighten the leg to kick. After striking the target, perform the same actions in reverse. Point the knee towards the target and lower the foot, then bring down the knee.



Figure 10.3 Front kick

Jumping Front Kick: Jumping front kick is a variation of front kick in which the latter is performed mid-air. First thrust the non-kicking leg high into the air before jumping with the kicking leg to give more upward momentum to the body and increase the height of the jump. Then perform the front kick, landing on the foot of the non-kicking leg.



Figure 10.4 Jumping front kick

Double Front Kick: In double front kick, both legs are used simultaneously. To give the body momentum to jump high, start with a little run. Bring your chest close to your legs for balance as you jump, and then kick with both legs. Land with both feet on the ground at the same time.



Figure 10.5 Double front kick

Roundhouse Kick: Start by raising the knee of the kicking leg in front of the body above waist level. Fold the knee tightly and point the kicking foot and toes downward. Turn on the balls of the non-kicking foot and rotate your hips slightly towards the target. Straighten the leg, unfolding at the knee, and kick. The shin of



Figure 10.6 Roundhouse kick

the kicking leg should move in an arc parallel to the ground. In jumping roundhouse kick, the non-kicking leg is first thrust into the air. Then a jump is performed with the kicking leg, which delivers the roundhouse kick while in the air. The body lands on the non-kicking foot. In reverse roundhouse kick, the performer starts with the same move as a back kick (explained below) and ends with a regular roundhouse kick.

Side Kick: To perform a side kick, turn the body sideways with the hip turned slightly over. Move the kicking leg diagonally across the body. Extend the leg in a straight line toward the target. The toes should be pointing slightly downward during the kick so that the powerful back muscles of the legs are the one driving the kick.



Figure 10.7 Side kick

Back Kick: The back kick is performed by kicking backwards, much like a horse's kick. For this reason, it is also known as the Horse's Kick. The kick is performed with the bottom of the foot, especially using the heel. In back kicks, although the performer first faces the target, her/his body turns from it and as she/he faces away from the target, the kick is delivered in a straight line backward.



Figure 10.8 Back kick

TERMINOLOGY

Bah Ro: To return. Used when the player has to turn around and face the instructor at the end of a form or pattern.

Charyuht: Call for attention. Usually used at the beginning of class, before bowing to a partner, before performing a form, etc.

Chagi: Scoring kick by an opponent.

Chirugi: Scoring punch by an opponent.

Dobuk: Jacket and pants used during a taekwondo game are known as Dobuk. Apart from this, belt and guards are also worn. Red belt is known as 'chong' while blue belt is known as 'hong'.

Dojang: Taekwondo studios, where one trains are called dojang.

Gomahn: End of a match, fight or round.

Joagi: Scoring punch by an opponent.

Joon-bee/Junbi: Ready position of players at the playing area.

Kae Sok: Continuation of the fight after an interval.

Kalyeo: To stop a form or an action.

Kyorugi: A taekwondo stance is called kyorugi.

Kyung Nae: To bow. During this bow, the hands should be at the sides and the feet together. The player must look the other person in the eye and bow at the waist only.

Makgi: Block

Poomsae: The various forms of taekwondo are called poomsae.

Sabom: The name given to the instructor.

Shi-jak: Indication to begin the fight by the referee.

Shi-uh: To relax. Used after bowing to an opponent, after performing a form, etc.

IMPORTANT TOURNAMENTS AND PERSONALITIES

Important Tournaments

Olympic Games, Asian Games, World Taekwondo Championships, World Taekwondo Grand Prix, World Taekwondo Poomsae Championship, National Taekwondo Championship.

Sports Personalities

Surendra Bhandari (India), Hadi Saei (Iran), Steven Lopez (USA), Dae-sung (South Korea), Jang Ji-won (South Korea), Shih hsin Chen (Chinese Taipei), Luo Wei (China), Chen Zhong (China).



SUMMARY

1. Taekwondo is a martial art form from South Korea in which the contestants engage in empty handed combat. The whole body is used. Much of the actions and forms consist of punching, kicking, jumping kicks, blocks, etc.
2. There are several rules to follow in taekwondo matches and competitions, such as drawing of lots, weighing in, physical inspection of the players, etc.
3. The match begins with the announcement of the contestants' names. The referee declares the *shi-jak*. Each match has a duration of 3 rounds of 2 minutes each with a minute's rest between the rounds. The match ends with the formal call of gomahn.
4. The most well known fundamental skills of taekwondo include front kicks, jumping front kicks, roundhouse kicks, double front kick, etc.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR VIVA

1. **How would you define taekwondo?**
Ans. Taekwondo is a martial art form from South Korea in which the contestants engage in empty handed combat. Much of the actions and forms consist of punching, kicking, jumping kicks, blocks, etc.
2. **What is the meaning of the name 'taekwondo'?**
Ans. 'Tae' means 'to kick' or 'to smash with the feet', 'kwon' means 'to punch' or 'to destroy with the hand or fist', and 'do' means 'way' or 'method'. The name taekwondo thus means a way of kicking or punching, i.e. using the hands and the feet, to destroy an opponent.
3. **What is the international governing body of taekwondo for most major international tournaments?**
Ans. The international governing body of Taekwondo is World Taekwondo, founded in 1973.

4. **What is the name of the uniform that a taekwondo student wears?**
 Ans. The name of the uniform worn by taekwondo students is 'dobuk'.
5. **Lots for taekwondo matches are drawn an hour prior to the commencement of the match. Is this statement true?**
 Ans. This statement is false. The lots for taekwondo matches are drawn a day prior to the commencement of the match.
6. **Why are taekwondo contestants inspected before the matches?**
 Ans. Costume and physical inspection of the contestants are done before taekwondo matches to ensure that they are not carrying any item that might harm or undermine their opponent.
7. **What are the names given to the declarations of the beginning and end of a taekwondo match?**
 Ans. *Shi-jak* is the name of the declaration given to start a taekwondo match, while *gomahn* is the name given to the declaration of the end of the match.
8. **What are the dimensions of the taekwondo competition area?**
 Ans. A standard taekwondo competition area measures between 10 m × 10 m and 12 m × 12 m.
9. **What is the duration of a taekwondo match?**
 Ans. The duration of a taekwondo match is 3 rounds of 2 minutes each with a minute's rest between the rounds.
10. **How does one perform a taekwondo front kick?**
 Ans. To perform the taekwondo front kick, first raise the knee of the kicking leg so that it is aimed at the target. Hold the ankle straight in-line with the rest of the leg. Straighten the leg to kick. After striking the target, perform the same actions in reverse. Point the knee towards the target and lower the foot, then bring down the knee.
11. **How is taekwondo jumping front kick performed?**
 Ans. To perform jumping front kick in taekwondo, first thrust the non-kicking leg high into the air before jumping with the kicking leg to give more upward momentum to the body and increase the height of the jump. Then perform the front kick, landing on the foot of the non-kicking leg.
12. **Explain how one performs double front kick in taekwondo.**
 Ans. In double front kick, both legs are used simultaneously. To give the body momentum to jump high, start with a little run. Bring your chest close to your legs for balance as you jump, and then kick with both legs. Land with both feet on the ground at the same time.
13. **How is roundhouse kick done in taekwondo?**
 Ans. Start by raising the knee of the kicking leg in front of the body above waist level. Fold the knee tightly and point the kicking foot and toes downward. Turn on the balls of the non-kicking foot and rotate your hips slightly toward the target. Straighten the leg, unfolding at the knee, and kick. The shin of the kicking leg should move in an arc parallel to the ground.
14. **How do you perform side kick in taekwondo?**
 Ans. To perform a side kick in taekwondo, turn the body sideways with the hip turned slightly over. Move the kicking leg diagonally across the body. Extend the leg in a straight line toward the target. The toes should be pointing slightly downward during the kick so that the powerful back muscles of the legs are the ones driving the kick.
15. **Describe how back kick is performed in taekwondo.**
 Ans. The back kick in taekwondo is performed by kicking backwards. The kick is performed with the bottom of the foot, especially using the heel. In back kicks, although the performer first faces the target, her/his body turns from it and as she/he faces away from the target, the kick is delivered in a straight line backward.
16. **What do you call ready position in taekwondo?**
 Ans. Ready position in taekwondo is called *joon-bee*.
17. **What is the name given to the call for attention in taekwondo?**
 Ans. The name given to the call for attention in taekwondo is *charyut*.
18. **What is the call given by the taekwondo referee indicating to the contestants to bring their fight?**
 Ans. When the taekwondo referee indicates the contestants to fight, it is called *shi-jak*.