

Cambridge Kendo Club



Kendo Handbook

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1. The Cambridge Kendo Club Rules and Guidelines for safe Kendo

- a. The Cambridge Kendo Club must comply with the Martial Arts Centre's safe practices rules.
- b. Every Kendo player (Kendoka) is responsible for cleaning up the Dojo floor before and after practice
- c. All swords (Shinai and Bokken) must be in good condition at all times. No broken bamboo slats will ever be allowed. It is your responsibility to ensure that your equipment is in condition and will not cause potential harm to another Kendoka.
- d. The wearing of the Hakama (lower garment) and Keikogi (jacket) will be mandatory before a player can move into the Armour (Bogu)
- e. Bogu should be neat at all times and in the best possible shape and condition. If you are borrowing club Bogu treat it like your own. Look after it, keep it clean and fix or report any problems encountered with it.
- f. Personal Hygiene: wash Hakama and Keikogi regularly, keep toe nails trimmed and feet clean. Remember other classes follow us.
- g. Report any medical alerts or disabilities to the Front Office, Sensei or club captain.
- h. Remember: Kendo is practiced in the buddy System. Everyone looks out for and encourages each other. In the Dojo, at tournaments, seminars or visiting other Dojo's for practice.

2. An Insight to Kendo and its Origins

Modern Kendo bears but faint resemblance to its feudal origins of sword wielding Samurai warriors, which are depicted today in movies and television. Kendo literally translated as “The Way of the Sword” cannot be traced to a single founder or given an exact founding date. The story of the rise of modern Kendo begins with the Samurai and extends over the culture of several centuries.

By the end of the 12th Century, the authority of the Japanese central government had declined. Bands of warriors grouped together for protection, forming local aristocracies. Feudalism had come of age, and was to dominate Japan for several centuries. With the establishment of the Shogun in Kamakura and military rule controlling Japan, a new military class and their lifestyle called Bushido, “The Way of the Warrior”, gained prominence. Bushido stressed the virtues of bravery, loyalty, honour, self-discipline and stoical acceptance of death. Certainly, the influence of Bushido extended to modern Japanese society and Kendo was also to be greatly influenced by this thinking,

Unlike the European Knight and the dark ages of Europe, the Japanese warrior had no contempt for learning or arts. Although Kenjutsu, “The Art of Swordsmanship”, had been recorded since the 8th century, it gained new prominence and took on religious and cultural aspects as well. Sword making became a revered art. Zen and other sects of Buddhism developed and the Samurai often devoted time to fine calligraphy or poetry.

The next great advance in the Martial Arts occurred during the late Muromachi period (1336-1568), often called the age of the Warring provinces because of the many internal conflicts. This period brought an increased demand and respect of men trained in martial arts. Consequently, many schools of Kenjutsu arose, eventually numbering about 200. Each was taught by a famous swordsman whose techniques earned him honour in battle. Real blades or hardwood swords without protective equipment were used in training, which resulted in many injuries. These schools continued to flourish through the Tokugawa period (1600-1868), with the **Itto Ryu** or “One Sword School”, having the greatest influence on modern Kendo.

Kendo began to take on its modern appearance during the late 18th century with the introduction of protective equipment: the men, kote and do and the use of the bamboo shinai. The use of the shinai and bogu made possible the full delivery of blows without injury. This forced the establishment of new regulations and practice formats, which set the foundation for modern Kendo. With the Meiji restoration (1868) and Japan’s entry into the modern world, Kendo suffered a great decline. The Samurai class was abolished and the wearing of sword in public outlawed. The decline was only temporary, however. Interest in Kendo was revived in 1877 when uprisings against the government showed the need for training of police officers. Later the Sino-Japanese War (1894 – 1895) and the Russo- Japanese War (1904 – 1905) again encouraged and awareness of the martial spirit.

Consequently in 1895, the Butokukai, an organization devoted to the martial arts was established. In 1911, Kendo was officially introduced into the curriculum of the schools and in 1912, a set of regulations for Kendo, the Nihon Kendo Kata, were published. In 1939, as Japan prepared for war, Kendo became a required course for all boys.

After the war, because of its nationalistic and militaristic associations, Kendo was outlawed and the Butokukai was disbanded. However, by 1952, supporters of Kendo successfully introduced into the public curriculum a “pure Sport” form of Kendo called **Shinai Kyogi**, which excluded the militaristic attitudes and some of the rougher aspects of practice characteristics of prewar Kendo. Today Kendo continues to flourish under the auspices of the All Kendo Federation, the International Kendo Federation and federations all over the world such as the Canadian Kendo Federation.

3. Kendo Training

Beginner Basics (1st Stage of Training)

1. Entering the Dojo Basic protocol
 - A. Where to Stand
 - B. How to hold the Shinai at rest, Basic Bows.
 - C. The reasons for Mukso (meditation)
 - D. Basic safety etiquette (see club rules and guidelines)
2. Basic Stance (Chudan Kamae)
3. Basic moves (Suri Ashi) Moving forwards, backwards, sides ways and diagonal
4. Standing Attack – Swinging the Shinai from Chudan to Jodan to Men attack
5. Men Attack adding footwork, stress essence of a good hit, accuracy, spirit, Follow Through (Zanshin)
6. Control of the Shinai during an attack (Shiburi) – Why is this important
7. Kote or attack to the Wrist – Stress the same points as in point # 5
8. Exercise using partner alternately attack left and right big Men
9. Introduce the first three Kendo Kata

Note: It takes time and patience to master the basics, the more time you put in the faster you will master the above basics and therefore be able to move on to more advanced training.

3. KENDO TRAINING (Continued)

Beginner Basics (2nd Stage of Training)

1. Continue to develop the basics learned in the first month of practice
2. Begin focusing on hitting a live target (Motodachi)
3. Introduce the differences between Big and small attacks
4. Refine the co-ordination of the foot stomp and the hit
5. Practice Kirikaeshi understand the finer points of this drill
6. Focus more on Big Do attacks
7. Care and maintenance of the Shinai
8. Refine the warm up exercises i.e Syu Men, Hi-shiburi, and moving in the 8 points of direction
9. Continue to develop the Kendo Kata
10. Introduce Shiburi drills – Attack opponents Shinai with force but using shiburi to ensure only a light hit occurs

Beginner Advanced

1. Men Utsu = Small Men
2. Kote Utsu = Small Kote
3. Do Utsu #2 = Hit right side of opponent (your left) with big Do and continue past on his left side (your right)
4. Kirikaeshi – Refine the individual requirements for excellent execution
5. Introduce wearing the Tare, Do and Kote (Not Men at this point) however introduce the Hachimaki or Tenugui (cotton head towel)
6. Introduce first three of the Bokuto Kata
7. Continue to develop Kendo Kata as time permits.

Bogu Skills Development

1. Re-Emphasis small attacks i.e. Begin attack focusing on initial Tski movement
2. Re-emphasis importance of Shiburi
3. Development of Waza skills through use of the nine Bokuto Kata
4. Develop Speed through various drills
 - a. Men Debana Men Be very conscious of who is getting the hit in first
 - b. Kote Debana Kote “ “ “ “ “
 - c. One Person continuous attacks 2 x Men, 2 x Kote, 2 x Do, 2x Kote / Men
 - d. One person in Centre (motodachi) each player attacks as many times as possible in 1 minute focus on speed but also quality of the hits
 - e. One person attack, motodachi tries to touch the back of the attacker as they pass through.
 - f. One person attack, motodachi follows the attacker through and tries to attack

- g. One person attacks, Motodachi blocks the path of the attacker and pushes them back encouraging another attack

Advanced Bogu Skills Development

1. Uchikomi – Men / Kote –Men, as fast as possible and in one breath
 - 1st Pass - Men
 - 2nd Pass - Kote/men
 - 3rd Pass – Men
 - 4th Pass – Kote/men
 - 5th Pass – Big Men
2. Kakarigeiko - Attack as quickly as possible, hitting whatever receiver offers. This drill should be completed in one breath, receiver should offer 5-10 openings.

4. Bokuto Kata

Participants : Moto Dachi – receives the attacks and initiates attacks that are inevitably unsuccessful
Kakari-Te - Recognizes an opportunity or a threat and initiates a successful maneuver

Opening : Participants face each other across the Dojo at a distance that will take Three large steps or five small steps to come to Yokote (Bokken Tip to Tip)

Important Points: 1. At the end of each Kata each participant lowers the Bokken (opens the blade) and takes five steps back to prepare for the next Kata

Note : When time is important it is acceptable for Kakari-Te to take one step back, after completing a kata, lowering the bokken at the same time, instead of five steps backwards, finally returning to Chudan no Kamae. MotoDachi does not move but lowers the bokken to match Kakari the returns to Chudan no Kamae in preparation for the next Kata.

REMEMBER: Now Harry's Horse Never Stops Doing Kata Uncontrolably

Bokuto Kata (Basic Descriptions)

1. Ippon-me - Ippon uchi no waza (one-strike waza) - Men, Kote, Do, Tsuki
2. Nihon-me - Ni San Dan no waza (two strike waza) - Kote-Men

3. Sanbon-me - Harai Waza - Harai-Men
4. Yonhon-me - Hiki Waza - Men-Tsubazeriai-Hiki-do
5. Gohon-me - Nuki Waza - Men-Nuki-Do (Kakarite steps to the right)
6. Roppon-me - Suriage Waza - Kote-Suriage-Men
7. Nanahon-me - Debana Waza - Debana Kote
8. Happon-me - Kaeshi Waza - Men-Kaeshi-Do (Kakarite steps to the right, just like in Gohon-me)
9. Kyuhon-me - Uchiotoshi Waza - Do-Uchiotoshi-Men (Kakarite steps to the left - footwork like Nihon-me in the Kendo Kata)

Bokuto Kata (Execution)

1. Ippon-me - Men, Kote, Do, Tsuki -
 - a. Men - Blades crossed approx 8",
 - b. Kote - Blades at Yokote, (Tips of Blades just touching)
 - c. Do - Blades a little deeper than Men,
 - d. Tsuki - Blades as in Men. **Note: MotoDachi takes one step backwards when receiving Tsuki attack**
2. Nihon-me - Nidan Waza – Two strike attack, first Kote followed by Men
3. Sanbon-me - Harai Waza – Deflect Opponents Bokken to the left, Strike Men
4. Yonhon-me - Hike Waza (Stepping Backwards) – Kakari attempts a front Men, gets Blocked and steps back striking Do
5. Gohon-me - Nuke Waza (Evade and Attack) – Moto Dachi attempts a Men, Kakari steps right and attacks with Do
6. Roppon-me - Suriage Waza (Deflect Falling Strike) – MotoDachi attacks Kote, Suriage Men response

7. Nanahon-me - Debana Waza (Hit before being Hit) – Motodachi begins a kote attack, Kakari responds with Kote. Note: this is the only kata with small movements
8. Hapon-me - Kaeshi Waza – Moto dachi attacks Men, Kakari deflects, stepping to the right, and strikes Do
9. Kyuhon-me - Uchi-oto-Shi - Moto dachi attacks Do, Kakari steps left hitting opponents sword toward the ground with the sharp edge of sword then attacks Men.

5. Kendo Kata (Classic Kata)

There are ten Kata in this group of very traditional Kata. Each Kata is performed with two people, one playing the part of the initial attacker, (Uchi dachi), and one person defending and eventually winning the confrontation, (Shi Dachi).

The first seven Kata are performed with both participants using the long sword (Tachi), the last three Kata the Shi dachi uses the short sword (Kodachi).

Number	Kata Name	Opening position (Uchidachi)	Opening Position (Shidachi)
1	Ippon Me	Left Jordan	Jodan
2	Nihon Me	Chudan	Chudan
3	Sanbon Me	Gedan	Gedan
4	Yohon Me	Hasso no Kamae	Wakigamae
5	Gohon Me	Left Jodan	Kobishi
6	Roppon Me	Chudan	Chudan
7	Nanahon Me	Chudan	Chudan
8	Kodachi Ippon Me	Left Jodan	Point at opponents eyes
9	Kodachi Nihon Me	Gedan	Point at opponents chest
10	Kodachi Sanbon Me	Chudan	Point at Gedan

6. Glossary of commonly used Japanese terms

Terminology

Arigato = Thank you

Bogu – Kendo protective equipment, Armour

Bokken = Wooden sword

Chudan no kamae = Holding Shinai with point aimed towards opponents throat

Counting = 1 to 10

Ichi – One

Ni – Two

San – Three

Shi – Four

Go – Five

Roku – Six

Shichi – Seven

Hachi – Eight

Kyuu – Nine

Jyuu – Ten

Do = Strike to the side, below rib cage

Dojo = Place of practice

Domo Arigato Gozaimashita = Thank you very much

Fumikomi = Drill of lunging at opponent – Right foot leaving the floor

Gedan no kamae = holding Shinai with tip at knee level

Hachimaki (Tenogui) Head covering under the Men

Hai = Yes or acknowledgment

Hakama = Gown – Lower garment of Kendo dress

Hajime = Begin

Hasso no Kamae = Shinai held vertically, at right side of head at shoulder height

Himo = Strings that tie on protective equipment

Jodan no kamae = Holding Shinai above the head, with end of the handle (Tsuka) level with forehead

Kamiza = Place of honour within the Dojo, sometimes also called the “Shomen”

Keikogi = Kendo Jacket (Gi)

Kendoka = One who practices Kendo

Kissaki = Tip of shinai

Kote = Strike to the Wrist

Men = Strike to the Head

Mokuso = Deep breathing and meditation

Mudancha = Kendoka who is graded in the Kyu category
Okuri Ashi = Walking alternate left foot, right foot but always maintain firm contact with the floor
Rei = Bow
Renshi = Kendoka graded between 4th Dan and sixth Dan
Sonkyo = Crouching position
Sei retsu = Line up
Seiza = Be seated
Semeto= Put away Sword
Sensei ni rei = Bow to teachers
Shinai = Bamboo sword
Shinzen ni Rei = bow to head of dojo
Suri Ashi = Walking with a shuffle motion, left toe never passes right heel
Tsuba = Sword guard
Tsuka = Sword handle
Tsuki – Strike to the Throat
Wakigamae = Holding Shinai behind the body, cutting edge facing down
Waza = Technique
Yame = Stop/Halt
Yasume = Rest Position with Shinai

7. Recommended Reading List

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Content</u>
Ki and the way of the Martial Arts	Kenji Tokitsu	An explanation of the spiritual side of the Martial Arts using Kendo as the example
This is Kendo (The Art of Japanese Fencing)	Junzo Sasamori & Gordon Warner	Good Introduction to Kendo, its history and techniques
Looking at a Far Mountain	Paul Budden	Good reference book on Kendo Kata
A Book of Five Rings	Miyamoto Musashi	A Guide to developing battle strategy
Kendo, The Definitive Guide	Hiroshi Ozawa	Recommended by Hogi Sensei