

Kickboxing

Kickboxing is a generic term for a sporting martial art that, while similar to boxing, uses the feet as well as the hands for striking. Kickboxing can be practiced for general fitness, or as a full-contact combat sport. The male boxers are bare chested, bare foot and wear a boxershort.

The female boxers sometimes wear a tank top and shorts. Kickboxing is sometimes practiced as an independent style however in many cases kickboxing is just an event and set of rules of by which martial artists of other styles may compete openly. Typically kickboxing in many competitions is a standing fight sport and does not allow continuation of the fight once the fight has reached the ground, however some styles may still train in this component for example; sanshou especially in the military and police and so must be adapted for kickboxing tournaments as well as many japanese martial arts. Kickboxing can be attributed to K series of fighting styles. There are different rules for different kinds of kick-boxing.

Forms of kickboxing that have been labelled under this term include:

- Adithada (Indian kickboxing) — A form of kickboxing that uses knee, elbow and forehead strikes
- Pradal Serey (Khmer kickboxing) — A possible predecessor of Muay Thai
- Muay Thai (Thai boxing) — Traditional Thai martial art of which has now grown into a popular kickboxing event with strong emphasis on knee and elbow strikes
- Savate (French kickboxing) — Allows the use of shoes
- Sanshou/Sanda (Chinese kickboxing) — The applicable component of wushu/kung fu of which Takedowns and throws are legal in competition as well as all other sorts of striking (use of arms and legs).
- Lethwei (Burmese Kickboxing) — Any part of the body may be used to strike and be struck
- Japanese kickboxing — Similar to Muay Thai, but different point system is taken
- Full Contact Karate — Most of the time padding and in some cases body armor is used and is the applicable component of karate like many other styles which also include routines training. (also in some cases of traditional Thai boxing)
- Shoot boxing — A Japanese form of kickboxing which allows throwing and submission while standing similar to San Shou
- Yaw-Yan (Filipino Kickboxing) — Sayaw ng Kamatayan (Dance of Death) is the proper name for Yaw-Yan, a Filipino martial art developed by Napoleon Fernandez. The art resembles Muay Thai in a sense, but differs in the hip torquing motion as well as downward-cutting of its kicks.

There are many additional derivatives of these forms, as well as combined styles which have been used in specific competitions (e.g. K-1). The rules of 'kickboxing' also vary between these different styles.

The term kickboxing is disputed and has come to become more associated with the Japanese and American variants. It must be noted that many of the above styles do not consider themselves to be 'kickboxing' as such, although the public uses the term generically to refer to all these martial arts. The term itself was created by the Japanese boxing promoter Osamu Noguchi for a variant of Muay Thai and Karate that he created in the 1950s; this term was later used by the American variant. When used by the practitioners of these two styles, it tends to refer to them specifically rather than the martial arts they were derived from.

History

Freestyle Kickboxing as an independent style, is a derivative of Muay Thai with Boxing, Karate, as well as other styles, and was created to compete effectively against these martial arts. The initial development of the styles (as well as the name) was in Japan. However, there were also similar influences taking hold in the United States in 1974 (Wako), and martial artists from many disciplines toured both areas allowing the development of a common kickboxing standard.

Initial Japanese development

Kickboxing (as a specific martial art) has its roots in Muay Thai. It was developed as a competitive sport to oppose Muay Thai by Japanese boxing promoter Osamu Noguchi. He wanted to introduce Japan the Muay Thai style of fighting that he had seen in Thailand.

On December 20th, 1959, a Muay Thai match among Thai fighters was held at Tokyo Asakusa town hall in Japan. Tatsuo Yamada who had established "Nihon Kempo Karate-do" was interested in Muay Thai because he wanted to perform Karate matches in Full-contact rules since practicers are not allowed to hit each other directly in Karate matches. At this time, it was unimaginable to hit each other in Karate matches in Japan. He had already announced his planning

which was named "The draft principles of project of establishment of a new sport and its industrialization" in November, 1959, and he put forward a new sport "Karate-boxing" which was a tentative name then. It is still unknown that Thai fighters were invited by Yamada, but it is clear that Yamada was the only karateka who was really interested in Muay Thai. Yamada invited a Thai fighter who was the champion of Muay Thai formerly as his son Kan Yamada's sparring partner, and started studying Muay Thai. At this time, the Thai fighter was taken by Osamu Noguchi who was a promoter of boxing and was also interested in Muay Thai. For example, the Thai fighter's photo was on the magazine "The Primer of Nihon Kempo Karate-do, the first number" which was published by Yamada.

There were "Karate vs. Muay Thai fights" February 12, 1963. The 3 karate fighters from Oyama dojo (Kyokushin later) went to the Lumpinee Boxing Stadium in Thailand, and fought against 3 Muay Thai fighters. The 3 karate fighters' names are Tadashi Nakamura, Kenji Kurosaki and Akio Fujihira (as known as Noboru Osawa). Japan won by 2-1 then. Noguchi and Kenji Kurosaki (Kyokushin karate instructor) studied Muay Thai and developed a combined martial art which Noguchi named kick boxing. However, throwing and butting were allowed in the beginning to distinguish from Muay Thai style. This was repealed later. The Kickboxing Association the first kickboxing sanctioning body was founded by Osamu Noguchi in 1966 soon after that. Then the first kickboxing event was held in Osaka, April 11, 1966. Tatsu Yamada died in 1967, but his dojo changed its name to Suginami Gym, and kept sending kickboxers off to support kickboxing.

Kickboxing boomed and became popular in Japan as it began to be broadcasted on TV. Tadashi Sawamura was an especially popular early kickboxer. However, the boom was suddenly finished and became unpopular after Sawamura was retired. Kickboxing had not been on TV until K-1 was founded in 1993.

In 1993, as Kazuyoshi Ishii (founder of Seidokan karate) produced K-1 under special kickboxing rules (No elbow and neck wrestling) in 1993, kickboxing became famous again.

Rules

Japanese style kickboxing

This is almost same as Muay Thai but there are differences between them.

- Similarities
- time: three minutes x five rounds
- allowed to attack with elbow
- allowed to attack with knee
- allowed to kick the lower half of the body except crotch
- allowed to do neck-wrestling (folding opponent's head with arms and elbows to attack the opponent's body or head with knee-strikes)
- head butts and throws were banned in 1966 for boxer safety
- Differences
- No ram muay before match
- No Thai music at the match
- Interval takes one minute only
- Point system:

In muay thai, kicking to mid-body and head are judged highly. Moreover, kicking is still judged highly even if kicking was blocked. And punching is judged low. But they aren't in kickboxing.

- See also K-1

American and Australian style kickboxing

These are rules used in American and Australian Full Contact Karate. Opponents are allowed to hit each other with fists and feet, striking above the hip. Using elbows or knees is forbidden and the use of the shins is seldom allowed. This is in contrast to Muay Thai where the use of elbows and knees are allowed; in fact some Muay Thai practitioners consider kickboxing a "watered down" version of Muay Thai. Fighters and promoters can agree to various rules including kicks only above the waist, kicks anywhere, no knee strikes, knees only to the body, and so on.

Bouts are usually 3 to 12 rounds (lasting 2 - 3 minutes each) for amateur and professional contests with a 1-minute rest in between rounds. The round durations and the number of rounds can vary depending on the stipulations agreed to before hand by each fighter or manager. A winner is declared during the bout if there is a submission (fighter quits or fighter's corner throws in the towel), knockout (KO), or referee stoppage (Technical Knock Out, or TKO). If all of the rounds expire with no knockout then the fight is scored by a team of 3 judges. The judges determine a winner based on their scoring of each round. A split decision indicates a disagreement between the judges, while a unanimous decision indicates that all judges saw the fight the same way and all have declared the same winner.

European style kickboxing

Originally, American style kickboxing was formed with Muay thai and Japanese kickboxing.

- time: 3 minutes × 5 rounds
- not allowed to attack with elbow
- allowed to attack with knee
- allowed to kick the lower half of the body except crotch
- allowed to do neck-wrestling but frequency is limited.
- headbutts and throws are not allowed