

Shooto

Shooto (sometimes officially spelled SHOOTO) is a combat sport that is governed by the Shooto Association and the International Shooto Commission. Shooto was originally formed in 1985, as an organization and as a particular fighting system derived from shoot wrestling.

Practitioners are referred to as shooters, similarly to practitioners of shootwrestling. Shooto competitions are often referred to as mixed martial arts competitions, since they share similar rules to several other mixed martial arts competitions.

The word shooto is an English transliteration of 射道 (pronounced shk-to), an ateji derived from the English word "shoot". The word 射道 can be translated as "learn combat".

Techniques and strategies

The aim in a shooto match is to defeat the opponent by a knockout (to which a 10-count is applied) or a submission, but fights can also end in a referee stoppage or by a judge decision. Legal techniques include general grappling, chokeholds, joint locks, kicks, knee strikes, punches, takedowns and throws. Illegal techniques include biting, elbow strikes, eye-gouging, forearm strikes, hair pulling, headbutting, pressure point techniques, kicking or kneeing the head of a downed opponent, small joint manipulation and strikes to the groin, spine or throat.

Shooto classes

Shooto fighters are categorized into four Classes.

- Class-D: Amateur (2x2min, Headgear, Special point system)
- Class-C: Amateur (2x3min, Headgear, Special point system)
- Class-B: Pro (2x5min)
- Class-A: Pro (3x5min)

Fighters start out as Class-D or Class-C fighters and enter amateur competitions that Shooto hosts together with the help of local gyms all over Japan. Class-D Shooto does not allow knee strikes to the face or striking on the ground. Class-C Shooto does not allow striking on the ground, but knee strikes to the head are allowed. There are regional championship and once a year the All-Japan amateur championships. Then a fighter can get a Class-B pro license, these fights are 2x5 minute long and use the same rules as Class-A fights. For new pros Shooto each year hold a rookie tournament in each weightclass.

When a fighter has gathered enough wins and experience in Class-B he will get awarded with a Class-A license, as a sign that he's part of the elite professional fighters.

History

Shooto was established as an organization in 1985 by Satoru Sayama (also known as the "Tiger-mask"), a Japanese professional wrestler trained in shoot wrestling, who wished to create a sport that revolved around a realistic and effective fighting system. Compared to the other professional wrestling organizations of the time, such as the New Japan Pro Wrestling and the Universal Wrestling Federation (Japan), Shooto was aimed at having no predetermined results.

The Shooto organization hosted the Vale Tudo Japan tournament in the summer of 1994. Previously to this tournament, Shooto did not feature punches to the face in a ground position, but after seeing effective usage of punching by foreign participants, Sayama decided to incorporate these striking techniques into shooto. In 1996, World Shooto, the Shooto Association and the International Shooto Commission were formed. This marked the end of Shooto as a single organization, and turned it into a combat sport with governing bodies. Vale Tudo Japan events were held annually from 1994 to 1999.

There has been an ongoing effort to bring Shooto competition to the United States and Canada that has been spearheaded by Rich Santoro. He was officially named the Director of the International Shooto Commission - SHOOTO Americas division (the North American branch of the Shooto Association) in 2001. He has worked with both U.S. event promoters and state officials to spread the Shooto brand of competition throughout North America. As of 2006 Shooto has taken place Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Tennessee, Missouri, Nevada, Hawaii, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Promoters of Shooto events in North America have been HOOKnSHOOT, The Ironheart Crown, Midwest Fighting, Tennessee Shooto, RSF Shooto Challenge, TUFF-N-UFF, World Freestyle Fighting, SHOOTO Hawaii and Mannidog

Productions.

Current Champions

WORLD CHAMPIONS

- Bantamweight (56 kg / 123 lb): Shinichi Kojima (Japan/Abe Ani Combat Club)
- Featherweight (60 kg / 132 lb): Akitoshi Hokazono (Cobra Kai)
- Lightweight (65 kg /143 lb): Takeshi Inoue(Japan/Shooting Gym Yokohama)
- Welterweight (70 kg / 154 lb): Tatsuya Kawajiri (Japan/T-Blood)
- Middleweight (76 kg / 167 lb): Shinya Aoki (Japan/Paraestra Tokyo)
- Light heavyweight (83 kg / 183 lb): Shikou Yamashita (Japan/Paraestra Sapporo)

NOTE: Flyweight (52 kg / 114 lb) Last year's 114-pound Flyweight Rookie Champion Kenichi Takeda has not yet been promoted due to the fact that Shooto's 114-pound class is still in its nascence and has no Class A competitors.

Past Shooto champions of note are: Rumina Sato, Yuki Nakai, Noboru Asahi, Mamoru Yamaguchi, Kazuhiro Sakamoto, Erik Paulson, Naoki Sakurada, Ryota Matsune, Enson Inoue, Hayato Sakurai, Anderson Silva, Takanori Gomi, Caol Uno, Alexandre Franca Nogueira, Jake Shields, Joachim Hansen & Vitor Ribeiro.

SHOOTO AMERICAS CHAMPIONS

- Featherweight (60 kg / 132 lb): Miguel Torres (Torres Martial Arts)
- Lightweight (65 kg /143 lb): Jeff Curran(Miletich Martial Arts)
- Welterweight (70 kg / 154 lb): Gesias "JZ" Calvancante (American Top Team)
- Middleweight (76 kg / 167 lb): Jake Shields (Cesar Gracie Academy)