



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Jiu-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER July 2021

Sparring Levels Revisited

In July of 2018 we talked about essential concepts in sparring that every ZenQuest student should know. Now, after months of no sparring during the pandemic and so many new students on the mats, we believe its important to revisit the topic. Please read and Enjoy!

Along with technical drills and forms, most martial arts will include 'free-sparring' as part of their training regimen. Sparring is an important way to learn to apply the principles and strategies of a martial art in real time. It's one of the best ways to gain a real understanding of how to make things work. It's also great for developing the timing, distancing, and flow if the need for serious self-defense arises. Smart gyms will have different modes of sparring to maximize students' learning experience. These can include 'technical' or flow sparring, 'regular' or medium level sparring, and 'competition' or team sparring. Let's look at what each of these levels are at ZenQuest:

Technical/Flow Sparring – Technical or 'flow' sparring is a mode in which partners focus on using little strength, and simply focus on developing technique and strategy at medium speed. In striking, participants use 'light contact' where only about 10% to 20% of power is applied. They concentrate on the fundamentals of footwork, body positioning, guard, and form in striking and blocking. This is a great time to experiment with combinations of movements, distancing, rhythm and timing in a less pressured mode. Super important, too, is that this provides an opportunity to practice staying relaxed in sparring.

In grappling, technical or flow 'rolling' also involves slowing things down and practicing being and staying relaxed in sparring. Partners focus on positioning and setting up submissions, usually allowing their partner to work on escapes. This is also a perfect time to work on chaining or combining movements, where one position or submission flows into another. As with striking, this is an opportunity to develop timing, rhythm, and details in technique.

Sparring - In regular or medium sparring, students use all of the same principles of Technical Sparring, but add more realism and intensity. In striking, partners still focus on technique and strategy, but with emphasis on speed in their movements and a 'medium' level of contact. This means that a maximum of 50% of power is used to the body, and 20% to the head (where allowed.) Guidelines for head contact vary from one art to another, and for different age groups. For Muay Thai, light contact to the head is allowed and headgear is encouraged. In Uechi-Ryu Karate, head contact is reserved for the levels of Brown Belt (Nikyu) and above and headgear is required. Students must be careful and be mindful of minimizing injuries.

Sparring or 'Rolling' in grappling should also still include everything from 'Flow Rolling' but with more intensity and strength. Students should develop a sense of how to manage their strength and intensity intelligently, because simply going 100% all of the time will quickly leave them exhausted and unable to move

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Masks Optional For Kids

During the pandemic we've had to train with social distancing, modified class formats, extreme safety measures, and face coverings. Based on the progress being made with vaccinations and the resulting improvements in the COVID metrics in Massachusetts we've been gradually relaxing these requirements and returning to normal.

Now, after additional progress and speaking with local health officials we are happy to announce that face coverings will be optional for all youth students at ZenQuest. This includes all children under the age of 12 and is effective Monday, July 12th.

All students are still expected to be respectful of each other's space and follow class etiquette and protocols including sanitizing hands and feet before each class. Students and parents with remaining concerns about COVID19 may continue wearing face coverings, and may opt out of partner drills or other parts of classes that they are uncomfortable with. Of course, any student experiencing 'flu like' symptoms (or any other illness) should not attend classes until the issue has passed.

We appreciate everyone's patience in this unprecedented situation and, as always, thanks for your support!



Custom Uniforms

The ZenQuest's Karate Gis are almost here! These are a brand NEW custom uniform made from a high quality material with patches for both ZenQuest and our parent organization, the Okinawa Karatedo Association. At the time of this newsletter the Gis are in the last stages of shipping and are expected to arrive any day. An image of the new design is shown right. These are available in a variety of sizes and priced at \$70 each.

We also recently stocked up on our custom Jiu-jitsu Gis, too. These are the high quality blue "Team ZenQuest" uniforms with a variety of patches on them. They are extremely popular and tend to be sold out quickly. They're available in a variety of sizes at \$140 each.

Other custom gear like ZenQuest t-shirts, sweatshirts, training shirts, shorts and even beanie caps are available, too. Students and parents can also order a wide variety of gear and equipment including punching bags and targets for home...all at 20% off. Stop by the front desk, call or message us to purchase or pre-order any of these items. We also have gift certificates available which can be purchased at our front desk or through our website.



Back in Black

After some confusion and delays with shipping the replacement mats for ZenQuest's Training Room 2 have finally been delivered and installed. Students who train in the black matted room may have noticed that some of the mats there were 'hitting the wall' and reaching the end of their useful lives. These mats have seen over 10 years of continuous training at ZenQuest, and a few years before that at another gym in northern Virginia.

Three of the six 'Dollamur Flexi-Roll' mats in that room have now been replaced. The remaining three are still in good shape and can continue to be used at this time. A new layer of padding was also added under the black mats to provide additional cushioning and to extend the life of the Flexi-Roll mats.



IMPORTANT DATES

Seminars currently being explored for future scheduling @ ZenQuest

Stay Tuned!!

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Troy Laureyns, Bryanna Grezelak, Ann Marie McCormack, Connie Gordon, Lana Darby

RECENT PROMOTIONS**TIGERS:**

9kyu - Johnson Green

DRAGONS:

6kyu - Ava Coe

COBRAS:**UECHI:**

7kyu - Michael Cahalan, Michael Siktberg

PYTHONS:

Black/grey - Levi Giumarra

1 stripe gry/wht - Enzo Dort, Nico Dort, Jordyn Simmons

3 stripe white - Josh Sondrini, Gustavo Perez

1 stripe white - Leo Cardillo, Landon Chuck, Kira Hamilton

JIU-JITSU:

Brown - Matt Gerlitz

3 stripe blue - Matt Moreau

Blue - Sadie Giumarra, Shawn Maschino, Todd Dort

2 stripe white - Marcus Drake

1 stripe white - Miles Hamann, Borey Booker

MUAY THAI:

3 stripe purple - Chris Bradley, Chris Kupernik

1 stripe purple - Tilo Jackson

4 stripe blue - Matt Moreau

Blue - Glen Giumarra

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Daivon Mantey 7/5

Wyatt Smegal 7/9

Kyle Wellman 7/10

Isabella Bruns 7/10

Chase Kane 7/12

Jeff Scrimo 7/13

Matthew Gerlitz 7/13

Liam Carty 7/13

Shaun Sottile 7/14

Leonardo Cardillo 7/15

Michael Siktberg 7/19

Jared Bruns 7/19

Kashish Panwala 7/19

Joseph 'JT' Szmanski 7/20

Michael Cahalan 7/22

Anthony Ozuni 7/23

Troy Middleton 7/24

Rodrigo Pizarro 7/25

Tyler Mountz 7/25

Giovanni Jones 7/26

Krish Shah 7/30

Terminology**Self-Control**

Japanese: Jiseishin

Brazilian: Autocontrole

Thai: Kan Kuakum Dunden

**“Best Martial Arts Academy”
ZenQuest Martial Arts**

*Berkshire Eagle's
Readers Choice Awards
2017, 2018, 2019
& 2020!*



Advanced Training Resumes

Our 'Advanced Concepts' clinics recently restarted after over 15 months off. The pandemic made it nearly impossible to do these special training sessions for intermediate and advanced students. After months of improvement in the COVID situation we can periodically focus on high level techniques, strategies and tips in Muay Thai, Jiu-jitsu and Karate at ZenQuest.

Our first advanced session back was for Uechi-Ryu Karate on June 12th. After some discussion on leadership the group focused on 'Yakusoku Kumite' or sparring drills with an emphasis on realism and speed. Advanced promotions are done separately in this art and are not included in the advanced trainings.

Next, on June 19th we held 'AC' Muay Thai. There we worked on advanced footwork and combinations. At the end of the clinic several students were promoted including: Glen Giumarra to Blue Prajiet, Matt Moreau to 4-stripe Blue Prajiet, Tilo Jackson to 1-stripe Purple Prajiet, and Chris Bradley and Chris Kupernik to 3-stripe Purple Prajiet.

Lastly, on June 26th we conducted advanced Jiu-jitsu training. For this we covered some No-Gi 'De La Riva' guard strategies. This involves entangling an opponent's legs to improve positioning and set up submissions. At the conclusion of the training promotions were given as follows: Todd Dort, Shawn Maschino and Sadie Giumarra to Blue Belt; Matt Moreau to 3-Stripe Blue Belt; and Matt Gerlitz to Brown Belt.

Thanks to the affected students for your patience with this and congratulations to all of those who leveled up!

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or even think clearly. The trick is to be fast with technique versus relying on power and athleticism. The term 'Jiu-jitsu' translates to the 'gentle art', meaning that the goal is to get to a place where proponents can control others using as little effort as possible.

As with all sparring, this mode of sparring must be a balance between realism with safety. The goal is to provide an opportunity for the participants to LEARN, and walk away with no injuries. Sparring is not fighting. Ultimately, sparring is a game where students can gain experience applying the skills and strategies of an art, while minimizing risks. For kids, the intensity of sparring should be scaled down to an age-appropriate level.

Competition Sparring - Students who compete or want to train on a more intense level will participate in competition or team sparring. For striking, this can mean different things depending on the type of competition or students' goals. For cage-fighting or MMA the intensity can be somewhat extreme. Rules are different for amateur competitors and professional, or even from one promotion to another, and this will affect the training. For Muay Thai or Kickboxing the focus is on striking, clinching, and strategizing in the ring within the rules of a particular promotion. Karate competitions can range from 'point sparring' where there is light to medium contact, to full contact fighting with bare knuckles. Since most Karate styles are based on a 'one-strike-kill' strategy, the emphasis is on individual techniques performed as fast as possible. So, sparring for this becomes about speed and technique, while being mindful of safety.

In Jiu-jitsu or grappling, competition training is typically done at a faster pace and more aggressive nature than in regular rolling. When competitions involve a time-limit, there is an urgency to get position or submissions within the given time, so this affects training. Some competitions are 'submission only' with no time limit, and this results in a more calculated pace to make an opponent become tired first. Although training for grappling competitions is more intense, students must still try to balance intensity with safety.

Students should always remember that sparring is NOT fighting, and that everyone should be able to walk away without injury at the end of the day. The purpose of any sparring is to learn and grow as a martial artist. Advanced and talented students should help their partners improve and learn. In situations where a student is totally dominating a partner, they should back off and play defense or focus on executing more challenging strategies. All sparring is an opportunity to develop the skills that one would need should the need for actual self-defense arise. When everyone works for the purpose of helping each other learn, sparring will always be an invaluable and enjoyable exercise for all.