



KUDOS FOR KUDO

While everyone looks to military methods for ultimate close-combat training, those who are actually on the front line consider combat sports to be a key part of training, reveals Paul Cale.

By Paul Cale

I write this article from the beaches of Goa, India after being part of the best showing an Australian team has achieved at international level in the combat sport of Kudo Daido Juku. The 2nd Kudo World Cup was hosted by India in Mumbai, and countries from every part of the world made their way to the subcontinent to compete in this fast, exciting and complete combat sport. There are only seven categories

in Kudo and all are open-rank. Australia competed in three categories and two Aussie fighters took the current champions from Japan and Russia all the way to a draw. Both Australians then went into extension rounds and both finished still in a tight deadlock. With no points to separate the winner from the loser, the fights would now come down to the judge's decision.

If you follow my integrated Combat work with the Australian Defence Force, you will know that I don't really advocate one combat art over the other, however, I do have a bias for the combat sports. A combat sport develops the fitness of the athlete within a realm that is most closely related to actual combat. Combat sports also develop skills within a free-play environment - something that we in tactical training are always striving to achieve - and they allow you to test your skills against an opponent who is also skilled. This is key, because it forces the competitors to have a strategy for how best to apply their tactics to overcome each other. Fighters are also forced to deal with stress, which if ignored, will cause their heart rate to rise and in turn stifle their ability to effectively use their techniques.

There are limitations with the combat sports, of course, but these are far outweighed by the benefits. Also, sporting limitations can be overcome with an understanding of what they are. In the end, if you can't effectively fight one unarmed opponent, how are you going to fight an armed opponent, or worse still, multiple opponents that may also be armed?

Talking and theorising about fighting is in no way the same as actual fighting. Actual fighting in combat situations must be trained for. No modern army will send soldiers into a combat zone without giving them the best training possible, so why do people think that they can fight to defend themselves with a similar kind of preparation? My company, Kinetic Fighting, is contracted by the Department of Defence to train units in preparation for deploying on operations. The instructors must therefore be of the highest calibre, meaning they meet two vital expectations; firstly, they all have combat experience and, secondly, they are either subject-matter experts in their field or they have the latest operational experience in the environment for which we are preparing.

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From a civilian point of view, this might translate to engaging the most experienced street fighters as coaches, but since they are likely to be found in prison, this is neither ethical nor desirable. The next best thing to learning from thugs, then, is learning from people who deal with thugs - those who have been in a 'front-line' role with close enemy contact, whether in a civilian or combat zone. And I can tell you that many of the best from these fields engage in combat sports of some kind to keep their skills honed.

So, which combat sport would I recommend? I recommend that you stick with the one that you are doing. If you like it then it probably suits you physically and mentally, and if you have been doing it diligently for some time, you will probably be good at it as well. However, if your combat sport is limited in the skills that are allowed in competition, then supplement it by cross-training in those skills in which you are most lacking. If you don't do a combat sport, then I recommend Kudo, for the same reason I took it up some years ago: it has the greatest array of skills allowed in competition (more than MMA) with the greatest amount of protection to the fighter, which allows for limited rules. If you don't have a Kudo school available to you, then find a combat sport that best suits you - BJJ, full-contact karate, boxing, judo, kickboxing, MMA etc. are all applicable to Kudo. Learn how to mix your combat sports, as in MMA, and try a Kudo competition in your state. You won't regret it and it won't

leave you busted up as a result of how hard you can go either.

Finally, as far as the Australian team goes in India, Anton Zafir became the

first Australian to finish in their place in international Kudo competition, having lost to the current world champion from Russia by only a judge's decision.



About the author

Paul Cale has been involved with the Australian Army for thirty years either as a soldier or currently as a preferred contractor with the majority of that time being a member of Australian Special Forces (SF). Paul's company draws its specialist contractors from the two pinnacle SF regiments being the 2nd Commando (2 CDO) and Special Air Service (SAS). Paul himself is a founding member of 2 CDO and drove new capability forward by rewriting the SF Close Quarter Fighting (CQF) course and co-founding the 2 CDO Integrated Combat Centre (ICC). Paul deployed five times as a Commando to Afghanistan and Iraq with his personal hand to hand combat experience and that of his Commando Regiment guiding the core development of Kinetic

Fighting. Paul also created the Infantry Integrated Combat (IIC) Course now being used by the entire Australian Infantry Corps.

Recently, Paul was appointed Head Coach of the Australian Defence Force Martial Arts Association (ADFMAA) and is continuing his work enabling soldiers to develop their unarmed combat skills

Paul is also a Specialist Consultant to the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and co-founder of the AIS Combat Centre. Paul currently maintains a position on the Combat Centre's leadership team.

Paul has been involved in combat sports and martial arts since the beginning of the eighties and holds a total of eight black belts being Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Kudo Daido Juku, Kyokushin Karate, Yoshinkan, Tomiki and Gyokushin Ryu Aikido as well as the Olympic combat sports of Judo and Tae Kwon do. Paul was the first Australian to earn a Kudo black belt and heads the International Kudo Federation Australia (IKFA) as Branch Chief.