



WUKO Tournament Katas

The choice of which kata to perform at a tournament is easy: your *best* one. But the question of which kata to learn, practice and train to perform during the months before is more difficult. What are the judges accustomed to seeing? Will they discount katas they are not familiar with? Do they like some katas better than others, and will this affect the scores they give? Which *version* of a kata would be best? These are difficult considerations, and the answers may vary from one tournament to the next, and even from one ring to the next. It is possible, however, to at least get an idea of what the judges are accustomed to seeing. To do this I reviewed the videotapes of the 17-year-old and 18 to 34-year-old male advanced divisions at the 1995 and 1996 USAKF National Championships. Here are the results:

The winner of the frequency sweepstakes was **Bassai Dai**, but generally not the Shuri-ryu Bassai Dai. These were mostly the (WUKO) Shotokan version, which is quite different from ours. It was performed a total of 14 times in those divisions. A close second (at 12 times) was **Gojushiho-Sho**, followed by **Seiyunchin** (8), **Unsu** (7), **Nijushiho** (6), **Empi** (not our Empi Sho) (5), **Kankudai** (5), **Superimpei** (4), **Seipai** (4), **Jion** (4), **Nipaipo** (3), **Kusanku-Sho** (3), **Rohai** (3), **Chintei** (2), and **Sochin** (2). Katas

performed only once in those divisions include Gojushiho, Gojushiho-Dai, Wanduan, Gopaisho, Niseishi, Kururunfa, Chinto, Seisan, and a couple I couldn't recognize.

The above selection includes all of the WUKO (World Union of Karat-do Organizations) compulsory katas (called "Shitei" katas) except for Saifa, Seishan, Shisochin and Shiho Kosokun. The WUKO katas are designated for the special adults-only division wherein the judges are expected to be familiar with every move of each kata. This is not required of judges in "open" division; it would be almost impossible without a tightly limited list like this. The WUKO kata list in 1996 was made up *only* of katas from the Shotokan, Shito-ryu, Wado-ryu and Goju-ryu styles, it contains *none* of the Shuri-ryu katas. (Since then, katas from the Shorin-ryu, Uechi-ryu, Kyokushinkai and Budokan styles have been added, but still none from Shuri-ryu.) Consequently, Shuri-ryu students planning on an extended tournament career would probably be wise to select a WUKO kata to learn someday.

Learning a kata from outside our system is a good idea anyway. It adds some variety to our training, and some exposure to the way other systems fight and perform. For adults, at least, if you learn some of the WUKO katas it also gives you another division to compete in and possibly win a medal. If you think you might be interested in pursuing such a course (as several members of our dojo and the other KoSho dojos already have), talk to Sensei. Study videotapes of the WUKO katas, and perhaps one will look particularly appealing to you. Bear in mind that training in any kata outside our system will probably have to be done exclusively through private lessons. But the experience will be worth the extra cost.

The current list of approved WUKO katas may be seen at this link:

http://www.wukokarate.org/doc/ska_2009/kata_list.pdf

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from Essays on the Martial Arts

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