

SPARRING COMBINATIONS THAT WORK

by Ken Herbert

What I am about to explain to you as far as sparring (fighting) goes, is my own interpretation of how I feel about preparation physically and mentally for sparring.

Probably the biggest thing you should understand is that a very good fighter has a better defense than offense. Someone who can prevent their opponent from striking them in an open area always has a better chance of going on to the later rounds of tournament play. Time and time again I have seen very good offensive opponents lose because their defense is forgotten about. They believe that because they have the ability to kick high and fast or punch with accurate power they will win. This just is not true. A good defense and a good offensive attack is tough to beat. I would like to give you a few pointers on how practicing can make you a better fighter physically and spiritually.

Practice your foot and hand combinations so much that there is no thought involved when you are on the attack. You want to develop combinations that flow with each other. They should consist of punches and kicks together. Don't always use just a series of kicks or punches.

When on the attack try to use different angles and heights with your kicks and punches. Making your opponent block at different levels will create an opening for you to score. Here are a few ideas on different combinations anyone can develop

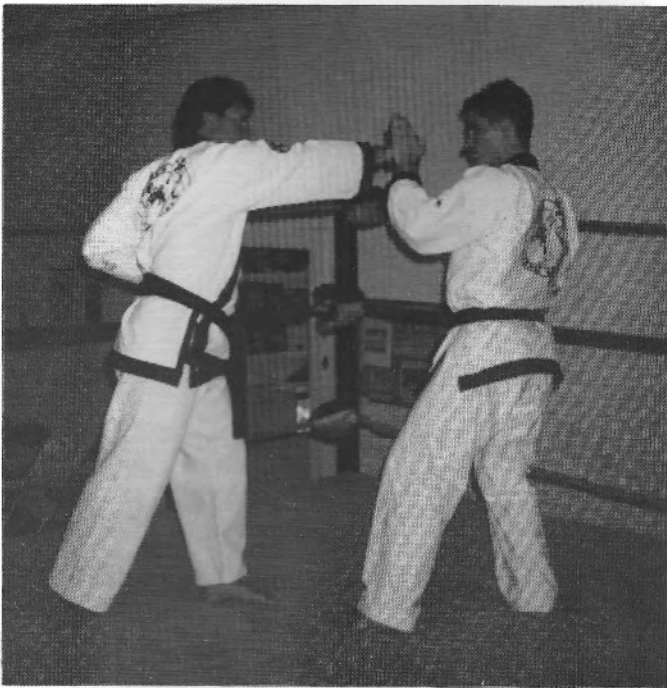
(remember all combinations are done with speed and accuracy):

- ♦ Double alternate punches to front, round, or crescent kick.
- ♦ Double alternate punches to crescent kick to back or spinning hook kick (face level).
- ♦ A series of punches moving forward and ending with a long extended front, round, or crescent kick.

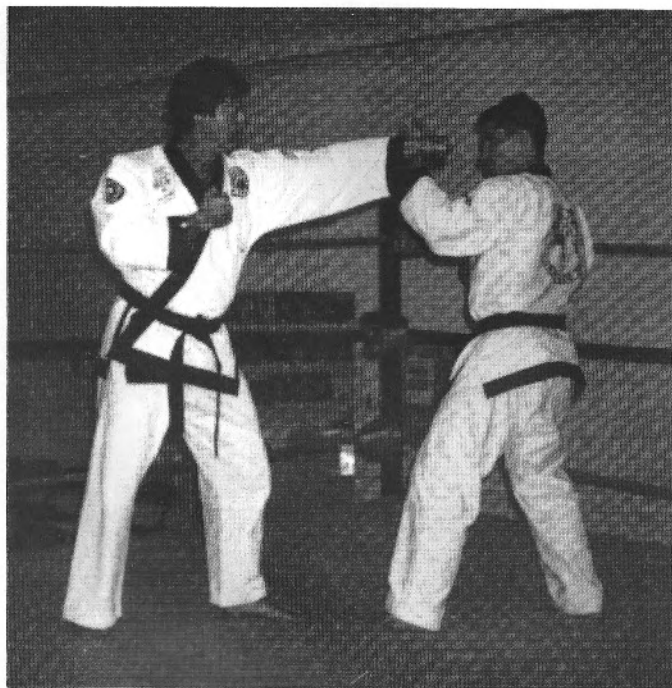
There are many combinations that are good. Whatever combinations you feel comfortable with and can perform without planning or thinking about are the best.

Try to remember in tournament sparring you should be able to understand your opponents ability in thirty seconds or less. Throw a kick and punch to force your opponent to react. Their reaction will allow you to assess whether this person is a counter attack fighter or someone who stands like a rock. The defense you choose at this time will determine the outcome. Sometimes an opponent will attack with his best offense off a little fake. This is when your defense must be ready and a good fast counter combination works well.

When sparring you should be able to fight from both sides. The more you can switch from one side to the other and be able to defend and attack equally, the more your opponent has to worry about. Fighters that limit themselves to fighting from one side are much easier to defend against and



Master Herbert leads with a right punch

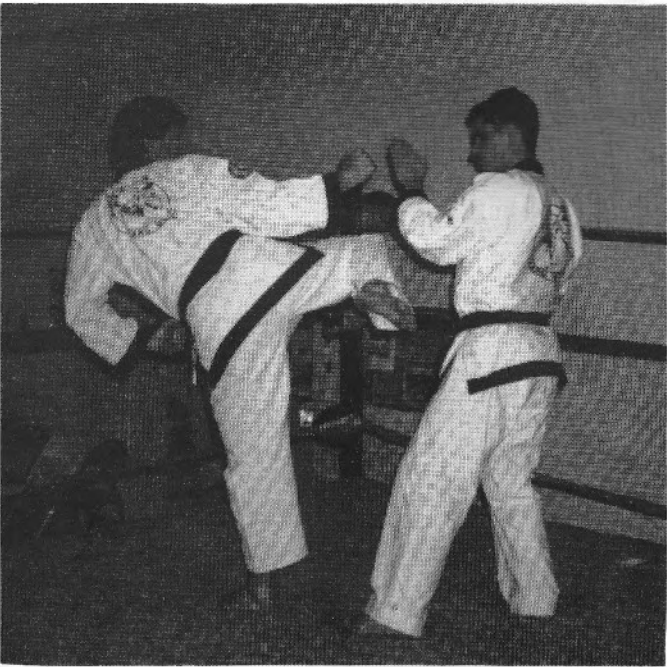


Immediately follows with a left punch

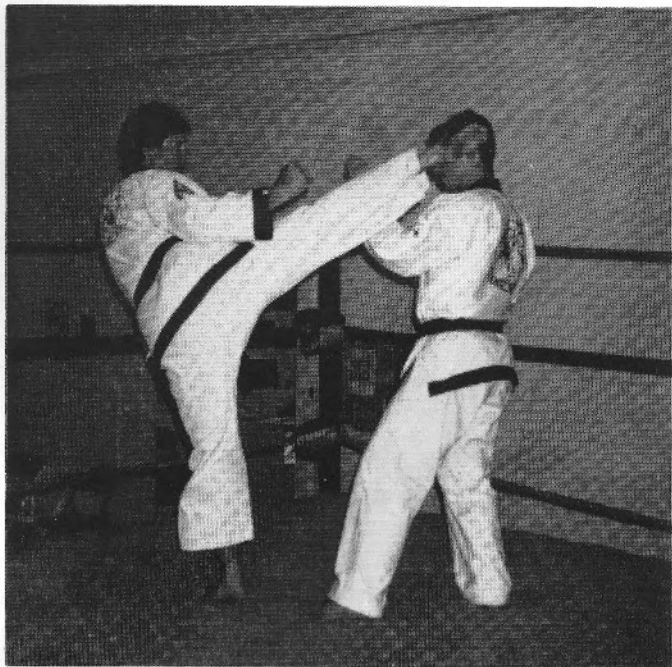
chances are their defense is limited. Remember, always be ready to defend yourself during a fight. The position of your hands must be up and ready to block at any time.

When you are in a fight in a tournament or the street the facial expressions you give off can tell

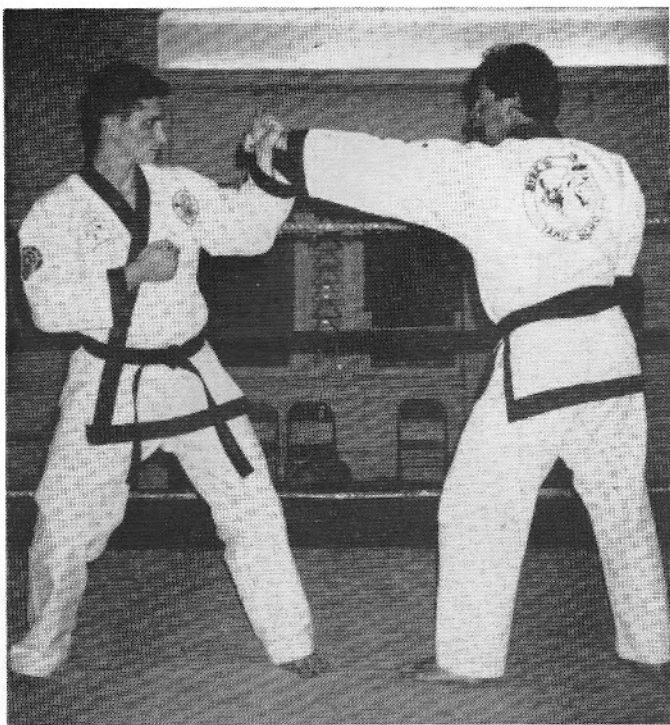
the person your attitude. Your mental and spiritual attitude must come into play. You want to be calm, relaxed and focused on the matter at hand. The muscles in your body react according to your state of mind. If you relax your mind, your muscles and body will then be relaxed. The speed and power in



He continues to turn and loads for a round kick



And delivers round kick , striking to the head



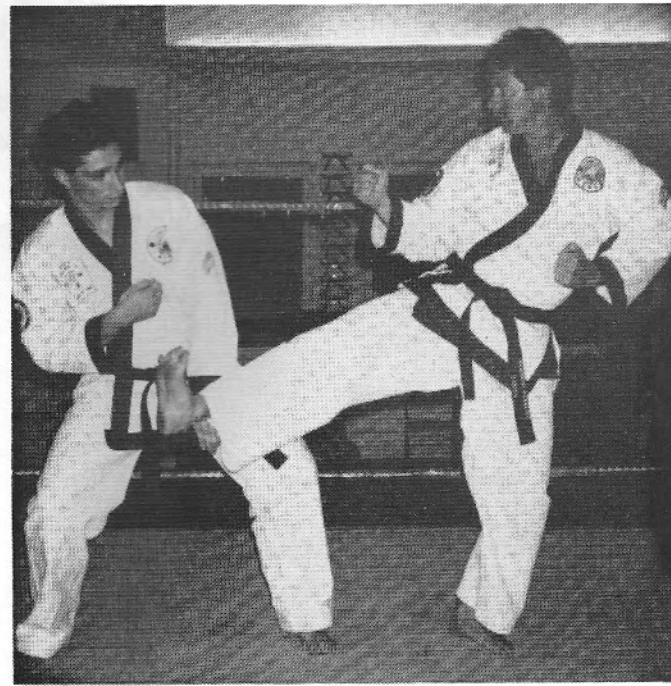
Master Herbert leads with a left punch



Immediately follows with a right punch



He continues motion turning to deliver an inside to outside crescent kick



Following through pulling the opponents arm down; which opens up head area for an attack

your blocks and kicks will be sharper, higher, and stronger. You must totally focus on your opponent, look into their eyes. You will see every muscle movement he has and be able to counter before he knows what has happened.

About the author: Master Ken Herbert is a 4th Dan who teaches in Malden MA.