

# The British Kendo Association.



**Grading requirements: - Showing what is required and what the examination panel will be looking for which is highlighted in Red. (p)**

## **A guide for Dojo Leaders and Examination Panellist.**

Many dojo's use the 6<sup>th</sup> -2nd Kyu grades for their students.

Here are a few suggestions which would help to prepare the student for his/her first national examination. This is not set in stone, how it is delivered to the student is up to the dojo instructor /leader. Panellist should take great note on Ikkyu level to see that understanding of what is required by the beginner which will stand him/her in good stead for their kendo life.

6<sup>th</sup> kyu. They should know how to look after and maintain their Shinai, understand its structure and be able to name the various parts. Understand correct footwork. Know how to perform Men and be able to do kirikaeshi and no.1.of the kendo kata.

5<sup>th</sup> kyu. Able to understand the Japanese terms for all the cuts and foot work, introduced into armour, participate in light Ji-geiko Able to perform Kote, Men, Dou and no.1 &2 kendo kata

4th kyu. Show improvement on kirikaeshi also on kata no.1 & 2 give good indications on serious Ji-geiko using the techniques learned.

3<sup>rd</sup> kyu. Show the ability to participate in shi-ai with visible improvement on their techniques. Understand the referee's commands. Perform kendo kata 1, 2 & 3.

2<sup>nd</sup> kyu. To understand and participate in uchikomi-geiko. Be able to enter and leave the Shiai-Jo correctly. Have a general understanding of what is expected of them at Ikkyu level including the correct way to tie the Dou himo bow and length of the men himo.

## **Ikkyu.**

Act correctly on the shiai-jo. Be tidily dressed, show correct etiquette on and off court.

*(p) Expect to see the initial rei with the left arm extended by side, the rei should be at about 15degrees, after rei assume taito (Sword on hip) with thumb on tsuba. Watch that 3 steps only to reach the sonkyo position. Take note on the clothing, should be clean and pressed and length of men himo around 40cm.*

Show correct Ashi Sabaki and Ki- Ken- Tai Ichi for Ikkyu level.

*(p) Note how the examinee moves forward from sonkyo as if to make an attack , not in a crab like direction, look for a flat left heel at all times this should be raised also right heel should be just touching but without pressure. The left heel must not be splayed out but parallel.*

Show reasonable Kirikaeshi – attacking side only.

*(p) This will enable the examinee to show control and ki-ken-tai. Watch for bad footwork and a swinging of the shinai around the head instead of cutting down to the left and right of the Men. Note that he is within the line of the head and not hitting the opponent's shinai.*

Hold the Shinai correctly, cut with control, cut on target.

*(p) Ensure that the hands are holding the Shinai in the correct position. Cutting from the centre, watch for kote cuts that go down to knee level, note that when cutting Men the right arm pushes the cut rather than clubbed or shinai just bounces off. Also that they do not run around holding the shinai like a flag pole.*

Be eager to initiate attacks.

*(p) Often beginners copy their instructors by inviting attacks. Not good at this level starting this way leads to depending on trickery, Hikiwaza, Nuki waza etc: and an inadequate understanding of these techniques.*

Show the appropriate kata level for Ikkyu. (p) Kendo kata no.1 – 3.

*(p) At this level correct cutting distance is required and an understanding of the correct kamae shapes.*

## Shodan.

Everything as per Ikkyu also in addition the following:

Be tidily dressed and wearing the bogu correctly.

*(p) Look for baggy keikogi at the back also again too long a men himo and there are no knots at the men where it has broken and kote himo that looks unravelled. Bogu may be old or even belong to the club but must be fit for purpose.*

Correct chudan kamae and issoku itto maai

*(p)The shinai tip should be kept in the centre and not allowed to wander around, planned techniques should be made from toi maai and executed from issoku itto maai not from chika maai.*

Correct cutting.

*(p)Look at the position of the left hand (in centre) and the height of the right arm (extended from the shoulder) on men cuts left hand must be at eye level.*

Good Kiai, posture and Ki Ken Tai Ichi.

*(p) Kiai should be heard when making a strike or in the building up of energy. Posture should be upright throughout with the correct footwork.*

Show effective zanshin.

*(p)Two big indications of poor zanshin are. 1. Turning after a men attack with the arms already in chudan kamae. 2. Passing through to the left after kote attack-compounded by holding chudan kamae while doing so. They should make at least one good clear point in each shiai (not a 60/40 or a just about)*

Show the appropriate kata level for Shodan. Kendo kata No 1-5.

*(p) At this level a reason for attack and counter should be seen in the forms with good cutting distance.*

## Nidan

All of the above and in addition:

Show physical agility and balance, fluid footwork.

*(p) To make nidan waza effective the wrists must be powerful and not the arms, in the kote –men combination watch that the kensen is not pulled skywards with the right hand before the men is made, footwork needs to be well coordinated and the body balanced.*

Kirikaeshi is with proper rhythm, cutting and receiving correctly.

*(p) Both sides should be adequate for the grade, watch closely for the ability to control the maai so that the attacker can cut correctly at the right distance, Men cuts that beat the receiver's parry is an embarrassment to the receiver and shows lack of maai control.*

Execute an effective Nidan waza.

*(p) Again, one decent Nidan attack, plus of course whatever else is going on, per shiai would be reasonable level to expect.*

Show the appropriate kata level for Nidan. Kendo kata no 1-7

*(p) In addition, returning back to a central point and not losing eye contact.*

## Sandan.

Must have attended at least one refereeing seminar per year.

As above and in addition:

Attacks made with intention and never random.

*(p) Look for attacks that build from Toi Maai also effective control of the centre should be shown.*

*Multiple attacks should be attempted, including the ability to link an attack forward and backwards in one action.*

There should be two successful strikes in each Keiko. Show some in attacks.

*(p) Look for the use of the kensen in gaining the centre line as an attack is initiated also its use to unsettle the opponent's composure.*

Effective zanshin must be shown and acted upon

*(p) Look for some hikiwaza rather than a desire to go back into issoku itto maai each time, once again watch out for the posers.*

Show appropriate kata for Sandan kendo kata no.1-7 & no 1-3 (Kodachi)

*(p) All the above kata points without mistakes.*

## Yondan.

Must have attended Referees seminar once per year.

As above and in addition:

Show the self confidence and mental attitude applicable to the grade.

*(p) Live kensen to force opponent's centre to deviate.*

Control the opponent's movement, control the shinai.

*(p) Look for men cuts made with no deviation from the centre line. Look for the ability to "refuse" the opponent's attack and respond with an attack in turn, attack and defence should be interchangeable.*

Attacks made when opportune.

*(p) Look for missed or wasted chances, this is a good way to check on concentration and same, attacks should only be made when an opportunity occurs or is created.*

Show the appropriate kata level for yondan. Kendo kata no.1-7 & 1-3(Kodachi).

*(p) Show good posture and an understanding of what kata means in its performance without a break of concentration.*

## Godan

Must have attended referees seminar once a year and refereed at two BKA events.

All the above plus:

Strong mental attitude.

*(p) Determination on controlling the opponent.*

Creating the opening to strike.

Complete confidence, in oneself, showing presence, agility and posture.

*(p) Reaction cuts with no opportunity to score shows a lack of self confidence*

Kendo kata no.1-7 & 1-3 (Kodachi)

*(p) Must be able to demonstrate kata to a high standard.*

## Rokudan

Must have attended one Seminar per year and refereed at 2 Major BKA events.

As above and in addition: Showing presence of a potential teacher through overall knowledge and style, posture and kendo ability.

Demonstrate all forms of the kendo kata

*(p) With sound understanding of its meaning.*

## Nanadan

Here you require demonstrating honesty of intent and self understanding, show great strength of character in your ability to break the opponent's posture and determine the outcome of your thoughts.

Feel and read your opponent's intention and counteract it to your advantage. Holding centre line with the correct te-no-uchi and strong movement is essential.