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DEFENSIVE MOVEMENTS IN PARATAEKWONDO ATHLETES

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Abstract
Parataekwondo has emerged as a rapidly developing Paralympic sport that requires adaptation of traditional taekwondo techniques to meet the functional capabilities of athletes with disabilities. Among the essential components of performance, defensive movements play a crucial role in ensuring both competitive success and athlete safety. This study explores the biomechanical, tactical, and methodological aspects of defensive actions in parataekwondo. The paper analyzes different types of defensive movements, including blocking, evasion, distancing, and counterattacking, and examines their application in training and competition settings. Special attention is given to the individualization of defensive strategies based on athletes' physical conditions. The findings suggest that effective defensive training improves reaction time, balance, and decision-making, thereby enhancing overall performance. The study contributes to the development of evidence-based training programs for parataekwondo athletes.

Keywords: Parataekwondo, defensive movements, biomechanics, tactics, adaptive sports, blocking, evasion, counterattack, training methodology, performance

Introduction

Parataekwondo, recognized as an official Paralympic sport, has significantly expanded in recent years, offering athletes with physical impairments opportunities to compete at elite levels. As an adapted form of taekwondo, it integrates traditional

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martial arts principles with modifications tailored to athletes' functional abilities. These adaptations influence not only offensive techniques but also defensive strategies, which are fundamental for maintaining safety and achieving success in competition.

Defensive movements in parataekwondo are particularly important due to the variability in athletes' physical capabilities. Unlike conventional taekwondo, where athletes often rely on both upper and lower limb techniques, parataekwondo athletes may have limitations that require alternative approaches to defense. Therefore, understanding the mechanics, tactics, and training methods associated with defensive actions is essential for coaches and athletes.

This study aims to analyze the role of defensive movements in parataekwondo from biomechanical, tactical, and pedagogical perspectives. It also seeks to provide recommendations for improving defensive training programs.

Research on combat sports highlights the importance of defensive skills in achieving competitive success. Studies in taekwondo emphasize that effective defense not only prevents scoring by opponents but also facilitates counterattacking opportunities. In adaptive sports, including parataekwondo, the need for individualized training approaches has been widely acknowledged.

Existing literature suggests that reaction time, coordination, and balance are key determinants of defensive performance. Additionally, psychological factors such as anticipation and decision-making play a critical role. However, limited research has specifically addressed defensive movements in parataekwondo, indicating a need for further investigation in this area.

This study employs a qualitative analytical approach based on the review of scientific literature, coaching practices, and observational analysis of parataekwondo competitions. The research focuses on identifying key defensive techniques and evaluating their effectiveness in relation to athletes' functional abilities.

The methodological framework includes:

- Analysis of biomechanical principles
- Examination of tactical applications
- Evaluation of training methods
- Consideration of individual athlete characteristicsDefensive movements in parataekwondo can be categorized into four main types:Blocking involves intercepting or deflecting an opponent's attack using the arms or upper body. It

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requires precise timing, proper positioning, and sufficient strength. In parataekwondo, blocking techniques are often adapted to compensate for limited mobility in other parts of the body.Maintaining an optimal distance from the opponent is a fundamental defensive strategy. Athletes use backward and lateral movements to avoid attacks. Effective distancing reduces the likelihood of being hit and creates opportunities for counterattacks.Evasion techniques involve avoiding attacks through body movement rather than direct contact. These include leaning, ducking, and torso rotation. Evasion requires high levels of coordination and reaction speed.Counterattacking combines defensive and offensive actions. After successfully defending against an attack, the athlete immediately responds with a strike. This approach is highly effective in competitive settings.Defensive strategies in parataekwondo are closely linked to tactical planning. Athletes must analyze their opponents and adapt their defensive approach accordingly. Key tactical elements include:

- Anticipation of attacks
- Timing of defensive actions
- Transition between defense and offense
- Exploitation of opponent weaknesses

For example, against aggressive opponents, a strategy based on evasion and counterattacking may be most effective.The development of defensive skills requires a structured training approach:Basic techniques such as blocking and movement patterns are practiced repeatedly to build muscle memoryExercises designed to improve reaction time and decision-making are essential for effective defense.Training with partners allows athletes to simulate real combat situations and refine their techniques.Controlled sparring sessions provide opportunities to apply defensive skills in realistic scenariosTraining programs must be tailored to the specific needs and abilities of each athlete.

The analysis demonstrates that defensive movements are a multidimensional component of parataekwondo performance. They involve the integration of biomechanical efficiency, tactical awareness, and psychological readiness. The diversity of athletes' physical conditions necessitates individualized approaches to training.

Moreover, the incorporation of modern technologies, such as motion analysis and virtual training systems, can further enhance the development of defensive skills.

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Defensive movements are essential for success in parataekwondo, contributing to both performance and safety. Effective defense requires a combination of technical proficiency, tactical intelligence, physical conditioning, and psychological resilience. Future research should focus on quantitative analysis of defensive performance and the development of specialized training programs for different categories of athletes.

Conclusion

Defensive movements are a fundamental component of performance in parataekwondo, directly influencing both competitive success and athlete safety. Due to the diverse physical conditions of athletes, defensive techniques must be adapted and individualized to maximize effectiveness. Key defensive actions—such as blocking, evasion, distancing, and counterattacking—require a combination of biomechanical efficiency, tactical awareness, and psychological readiness.

The study highlights that well-structured defensive training improves essential performance factors, including reaction time, balance, coordination, and decision-making. Moreover, integrating tactical planning with defensive skills allows athletes to better anticipate opponents' actions and respond effectively during competition.

Importantly, the findings emphasize the need for personalized training programs that consider each athlete's functional abilities. The use of modern technologies and evidence-based methods can further enhance the development of defensive skills in parataekwondo.

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