

# Silat Tempur: The Combat Sports for Children



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**Abstract** The aim of the current study is to provide the review of Silat Tempur since it was introduced 2 years ago in Malaysia. Silat Tempur is a mini silat olahraga sports that focused to the children aged between 7 and 13 years old. The purpose of this combat sports is to improve the martial arts techniques for young exponents particularly to those who is still new in competition. The scoring points and rounds of a match is similiar as Silat Olahraga. The techniques used are punch, kick, catch, block and topple down which less than those reported by Shapie et al. (Journal of Combat Sports and Martial Arts 4:81–86, 2013 [1]) in Silat Olahraga. The high intensity and intermittent nature in Silat Olahraga (Shapie et al. in Performance analysis of sport VIII. Magdeburg, Germany, pp. 667–672, 2008 [2]) suggested that the competition is not appropriate to children. The arena of Silat Olahraga is big (9 × 9 m) compared to one straight line (4 × 9 m) for Silat Tempur. The arena of Silat Tempur is similar with fencing platform which aimed to ease the exponents to perform the simple silat techniques such as punching and kicking in competition. Moreover, the movements of both silat exponents can be controlled to four consecutive strikes for each exponent to avoid injury. This competition is in line with the national Seni Silat Malaysia curriculum (Shapie and Elias in Proceedings of the 1st World Congress on Health and Martial Arts in Interdisciplinary Approach, HMA 2015, p. 213, 2015 [3]) which emphasized on blocks, punches and kicks for the first two levels (lower phase; white to blue belt and blue to brown belt).

**Keywords** Seni silat malaysia · Silat olahraga · Combat sports · Gayung fatani

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## 1 Introduction

Silat is a martial arts from the Malay ethnic group which is populated in mainland and islands Southeast Asia. Far from being merely a form of self-defense, martial arts are a pedagogical method that aims to create a certain culture and social ideals in the body of practitioner [4]. The word silat means a kind of sport or game, which consists of quick movements in attacking and defending [5]. Silat olahraga is a sport that existed in the midst of development of thousands of silat schools in Archipelago [5]. Olahraga means the ability for a silat exponent to perform his silat techniques in combat with striking and defensive actions such as punching, kicking, throwing, catching, parrying and blocking and any skill related to silat techniques [1].

The available literature on adult silat competition suggests that the sport is characterized by brief, high-intensity bouts of activity, short recovery periods and the need for competitors to repeatedly punch, kick and grapple with their opponent [1, 6, 7]. The overall intensity of a silat match indicated an exertion intensity close to the individual's maximal cardiovascular responses that were sustained throughout most of the match. This suggests that silat exponents are accustomed to numerous bouts of high force intensity actions alternating with lower intensity movements throughout a match [7]. Thus, it was suggested that the competition was not appropriate to children particularly to those who are still new in silat competition. It was reported that even in noncontact martial arts training, enthusiastic blocking technique may lead to bruising of the forearms in children [8]. The young silat exponents should be exposed step by step to silat competition based on their skills and level in silat [3].

The introduction of Silat Tempur competition since 2014 in Malaysia is to prepare the children in sparring format. It is a platform to establish and develop young athletes who have the courage, skilled in martial arts techniques and tactical in sports [9]. As young athletes (and their coaches) aspire to senior success it is important for them to have an appreciation of and be conditioned towards the demands of elite senior sport (silat olahraga) using Silat Tempur format. This paper will provide the review of Silat Tempur as a mini silat olahraga that focus to children.

## 2 The Sparring Competition in Silat

There are two sparring competition in silat; Silat Olahraga and Silat Tempur. The silat olahraga competition consists of three divisions according to age and weight either in male or female participants; youths (aged 12- to 14-year-old), teenager (aged 14- to 17-year-old) and adults (17-year-old and above) [10]. By the time silat exponents reach adolescence, it is likely they will be involved in combative competition. Here the adolescence may be in the period when many silat exponents make the transition from junior/teenager competition to compete in senior competition.

The Silat Tempur competition focus on children aged 7–13 years old. The objectives of this competition is to improve the techniques of punching, kicking, avoiding and blocking based on the Seni Silat Malaysia curriculum [3, 11]. The syllabus emphasized on blocks, punches and kicks for the first two levels of the curriculum (lower phase; white to blue belt and blue to brown belt). This competition provides early preparation for the children to master the basic techniques of silat before they switch to Silat Olahraga competition once they reach adolescence.

### 3 Silat Tempur

The purpose of this sport is to improve the silat techniques to children that still new to sparring format. The competition is based on platform that allowed the silat exponent to only move forward and backward during the match (Fig. 1). According to Anuar [12], movement is essentially a straight line either forward or reverse. Thus, the silat exponents need to master the basic attack and defense techniques in a straight line which can contribute to points during the match.

Silat Tempur used basic attack and defense methods on a straight line 2 × 9 m plantar. The platform equipped with flexible rubber mat (5 cm thick) to protect against injury. The competition derived from practical martial arts exponents that trained in pairs. Thus the movement of young silat exponents is controlled and limited to avoid injury during Silat Tempur match. The arena of Silat Tempur is smaller than Silat Olahraga (9 × 9 m) to ease the children to perform simple silat techniques such as kick and punch [5]. Silat Tempur has special rules that established to determine the game is safe in order to improve the quality of martial arts skills and inspiration [9] to young athletes. Silat instructor must provide training and understanding of the rules contending.

According to Shapie and Anuar [13] Silat Tempur has two categories for children and teenager to participate in this competition. The first category is **children aged from 7- to 13-year-old**. The male and female exponents start from class A (20–22 kg)

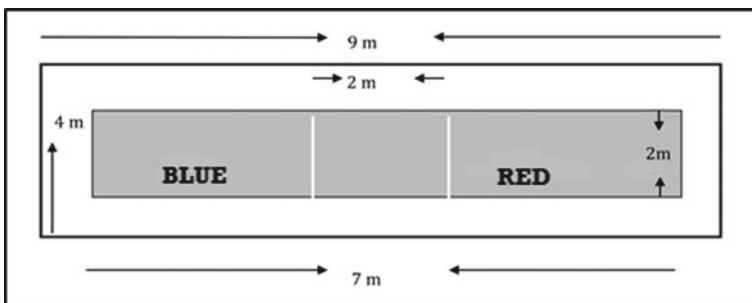


Fig. 1 The arena of Silat Tempur



**Fig. 2** The Silat Tempur Competition

to free class (50 kg above). Overall, there are 11 classes for both male and females from age 7- to 13-year-old category, differentiated by 2 kg for each class. The second category is **teenager aged from 14- to 15-year-old**. The category starts from class A (26–30 kg) to free class (61 kg above). This category is differentiated by 5 kg for each class with eight classes for males and females.

In a Silat Tempur contest, two silat exponents square-off in a 7 m plantar area. The match consists of three rounds of 2 minutes each with 1-minute interval between rounds. This is a standard time to all age groups in silat competition. Time stoppages by the referee are not included in the actual bout time, so the actual duration of each round and thus total match time is usually longer than the  $3 \times 2$  min scheduled, respectively.

Silat Tempur is simple silat competition [9] compared to silat olahraga [5, 14] which contains three main actions of kick, punch and topple down to score points. Points are awarded by the three judges for toppling an opponent, successful defensive blocks and offensive punches and kicks to the chest, abdomen and flanks, leg sweeps and throws [9]. Only strikes with either the arms or legs are considered legal. Unlike other competitive martial arts, the launch of any attack and defense movement must be initiated with specific coordinated silat “step patterns”, otherwise points scored will not be valid. The silat step patterns are something that makes silat different to other martial arts. Every movement in a silat contest must be in silat posture (Fig. 2). It should not be similar like jumping in karate and taekwondo or the silat exponents will be panelised points. The exponent scoring the highest number of points or who knocks his opponent out wins [15].

The instruction is given by the wasit or referee (Fig. 2). There were two main instructions such as “Sedia, Pasang” and “Henti. Sedia” or “Pasang” define participants should be prepared while “Henti” is define as participants need to stop and prepared in each corner. The assumption is based on the rules of silat olahraga competition, which required the exponent to develop a competing pattern which consists of “sikap pasang” (silat posture), “pola langkah” (step pattern), measuring the distance against the opponent, coordination in performing an attack/defense, and finally return to “sikap pasang” [5]. “Rest” would typically be all the actions that happen in the round when the referee gives the command “henti” or “stop”.

## 4 Techniques in Silat Tempur

Silat is a system that consists of positions and movements. When the athlete is moving in silat pola langkah, the positions and movements change continuously. As soon as one finds an opening target in their opponent's defense, he or she will try to finish the opponent with a fast attack. However in Silat Tempur competition there were five commans silat techniques used during the sparring such as punch, kick, block, catch and topple. All five silat exponent techniques can be defined as follows:

- i. **Punch:** The punch “tumbuk” attack is done by a hand with a closed fist hitting the target. In silat, punching is often used to fight the opponent. It can be a straight punch “tumbuk lurus” or uppercut “sauk” to the exponent body's [5].
- ii. **Kick:** The kick “tendang/terajang” is an attacking movement which is performed with one leg or two legs simultaneously. A kick can be aimed at any target. It can be front kick “tendang depan”, sidekick “depak” or semi-circular sidekick “tendang lengkar” [5].
- iii. **Block:** The blocking movements begin with the posture position “sikap pasang”: the exponent stands straight with his hands around his body or close to his chest. Blocking or parrying “tangkisan” can be done using arms, elbows and legs with the purpose to block off or striking back at any attack [5].
- iv. **Catch:** The catch “tangkapan” is done by using the hand to obstruct the opponent from carrying out an attack. The silat exponent is able to prevent himself from being attacked by pointing the attack which he has caught to another direction. A catch which twists or drags the opponent is forbidden. Also, a catch which could break the part which is being held such as the leg and waist is also forbidden. These regulations exist to protect the silat exponent's [5].
- v. **Topple:** There are various ways of toppling down one's opponent. For example, a silat exponent “pesilat” can either push, shove the opponent's back leg from the bag or from the side, shove, hit, kick, strike or punch to make the opponent lose his balance. Every fall is considered valid as long as the silat exponent topples his opponent down without wrestling or he is able to overpower the opponent whom he has brought down [5].

Just like silat olahraga, there are several other skills that contribute to success in Silat Tempur performance where every aspect of these skills will contribute to success of the fighter. There are swipe, block, dodge/evade, topple down such as (i.e., scissors skills “*guntingan*”), jump, fake punch, fake kick and fake swipe. All of these skills will contribute on the attacking and defensive movements made by each fighter during the competition. However, not all of these techniques are necessary to the beginners in silat. As this is a subjective sport, it is important for each exponent to make a clear strike that can be observed by the judges. Thus, several factors will also influence the game such as injury and error of marking.

Silat competition rules stated that an exponent is allowed up to four consecutive punches and/or kicks to the opponent during a single attack, upon which the referee immediately breaks off the confrontation [2].

**Table 1** Number of participations in Silat Tempur Competition 2014–2015

Tournament	Male Athletes (pax)	Female Athletes (pax)	Total (pax)
National Silat Tempur Competition 2014 (Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur)	43	13	56
National Silat Tempur Competition 2014 (Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban 3, Negeri Sembilan)	63	27	100
National Silat Tempur Competition —Piala Aminuddin Anuar 2015 (Bandar Baru Bangi)	63	39	102
Total	169	79	248

## 5 Silat Tempur Competition

The first national Silat Tempur competition was held at Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on April 11–13, 2014. The tournament was participated by 56 silat exponents from Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Putrajaya, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan. The best male and female silat exponents in children category were Syamil Azim bin Nasahrudin (Kuala Lumpur) and Puteri Elissa Sarah Mohamad Nizam (Kuala Lumpur). While the best male and female silat exponents in teenager category were Mohamad Shazwan Arief (Selangor) and Nurul Nadia Fatin (Selangor).

The second national Silat Tempur competition was held at Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia on August 22–24, 2014. The tournament was participated by 100 silat exponents from Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Putrajaya, Melaka, Johor and Negeri Sembilan. The number of participations increased compared to the previous competition due to the strong support from the Ministry (Table 1). The best male and female silat exponents in children category were Syamil Azim bin Nasahrudin (Kuala Lumpur) and Putri Nor Arisa (Negeri Sembilan). While the best male and female silat exponents in teenager category were Mohamad Shazwan Arief (Selangor) and Nurul Nadia Fatin (Selangor).

The third national Silat Tempur competition also known as Piala Aminuddin Anuar was held at Main Hall, Seksyen 7, Bandar Baru Bangi on 9–10 Mei 2015. The tournament was participated by 102 silat exponents from Kuala Lumpur, Perak, Selangor, Putrajaya, Melaka, Johor and Negeri Sembilan. The best silat exponents in children category was Puteri Elissa Sarah Mohamad Nizam (Kuala Lumpur). While, the silat exponents in teenager category was Mohamad Shazwan Arief (Selangor) and Nurul Nadia Fatin (Selangor). The overall champion for third consecutive times of national Silat Tempur competition was Selangor.

All three tournaments attracted many silat exponents either in the primary (7–12 years old) or secondary levels (13 years and above). The average fighter who competed was the new faces and senior who has competed since the first series of the game at the University of Malaya in April 2014.

## 6 Conclusion

Silat Tempur is a mini silat olahraga sport that specific to the children aged 7–13 years old. The purpose of this competition is to improve the silat techniques for young athletes that still new to competition. Moreover, it is a platform to prepare the young athletes before competing in silat olahraga. This is particularly true as the arena for Silat Tempur is smaller compare to silat olahraga. Thus, most athletes used five basic techniques for actions which were block, punch, kick, catch and topple down in spar. Not every technique that was reported by Shapie and co. [1] is necessarily implemented in the Silat Tempur competition.

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