

# 剣道

KENDŌ



## ABOUT KENDŌ

Kendo is a martial way and sport where competitors wearing protective armour and compete to score points against each other by striking designated body targets with bamboo swords. The origins of kendo can be traced back to Japan's Warring States period (c. 14th–15th century), when samurai wielded swords in battle.

The predecessor to modern kendo protective armour was developed in the mid-18th century, and sparked a boom in a revolutionary style of fencing with bamboo swords. Prior to this, samurai practised predetermined technical sequences (kata), but the advent of protective equipment enabled full-contact sparring and matches. Modern kendo practitioners wear a head-guard and mask, padded gloves, chest protector, and lower body protection. The bamboo sword is called a *shinai* and is made of four separate bamboo slats. Although made of bamboo, it is symbolic of the *katana*, and is treated as if it were a real sword.

While kendo is competitive, the focus is to discipline the character and develop the body and mind. It maintains a strong sense of cultural tradition and spirituality.

The number of kendo practitioners around the world increases every year and currently there are 55 countries and regions affiliated with the International Kendo Federation. The World Kendo Championships are held every three years, the most recent being in Tokyo in 2015.

