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## Martial Arts Is Not Fighting

[Organization removes references to fighting](#)

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A Taekwondo gold medal match during the Athens 2004 Summer Olympic Games. The World Martial Arts Games Committee (WMAGC) will re-write their rule book to conform to the peaceful, self-defensive principles of martial arts. (Jamie Squire/Getty Images)

As much as Jet Li and the late Bruce Lee are respected as martial artists, their movies glorify violence, making people forget that martial arts are peaceful and intended primarily for fitness and self-defense.

While aggression is being glorified in the "Octagon," the same sentiment seems to be largely—but not altogether—absent from the Olympics. The Olympics promote fair play and gamesmanship so it seems only fitting that the World Martial Arts Games Committee (WMAGC) re-write their rule book to conform to those principles.

Effective in April, the words 'fight,' 'fighter,' and 'fighting' will be stricken from the rulebook by WMAGC in order to adhere to their original non-violent spirit. The words will be replaced by less violent terms such as 'spar.'

"According to most English language dictionaries, the word 'fight' refers to using physical force to try and defeat someone," the WMAGC says.

"Sparring on the other hand, insinuates a controlled match without hitting hard."

The move is not merely a cosmetic act either, said WMAGC chair Ken Marchtaler.

"One cannot just promote non-violence in sport," Marchtaler said. "One must also choose words that support it."

With the spirit of the Olympics being one of peace, it is somewhat contradictory that certain martial arts bodies associated with the IOC (International Olympic Committee) still have some "fighting words" as it were.

For example, according to the World Taekwondo Federation's Web site section on competition rules, Article 18: Procedure in the Event of a Knock Down states:

"When a contestant is knocked down as the result of the opponent's legitimate attack, the referee shall take the following measures: C. In case the downed contestant stands up during the referee's count and desires to continue the fight, the referee shall continue the count up to 'Yeodul' [eight] for recovery of the downed contestant . . ."

An aggressive attitude can have some serious consequences and this is what the WMAGC—and hopefully the IOC—will stamp out with the move.

Sometimes it takes the actions of one to lead to a revolution. Clint Benedict and Jacques Plante were the first to wear goalie masks and now every goalie wears them.

Marchtaler is hoping for a similar reaction amongst the martial arts community.

"My feelings are that the IOC and their recognized sports federations will follow our lead in having violent words removed from their rule books," he said.

"This is just another way we can all work together to promote peace in martial arts competition and in all sport."

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