



FREESTYLE TAEKWONDO



New Belt Ranking System & Curriculum

The Freestyle TKD System that was founded by Master Marshall in 2012 has proven to be the most popular style available within Phoenix SMA. In the almost 10 years of it running members have achieved new ranks and thus new belts. This has been something however, that has caused confusion and Instructors have had questions like; what belt or rather what colour comes next? what does this stripe mean? etc.

The initial idea behind the rank/belt system was to have each new Grade have something new to learn and not just a new belt as was seen in previous systems Master Marshall has been under. In previous years, the colours of belts were limited compared to the number of Colour Ranks (10) or what is known as GUP Grades. When the Freestyle TKD system was first put together, there were only 8 colours available. With the addition of the Junior Ranks to help younger students still set and achieve short term goals, without having to wait months if not years to see progression in rank, more types of belts were needed. This caused much confusion to what belt or what colour signified what grade/rank. More specifically from what is currently Brown/Senior Brown, what belt is for what rank. Up to Brown Belt, each Grade saw a change in colour. However, there are 4 Grades left between Brown and Black Belt and only 2 colours available at the time. Therefore, "senior" belts (two tone/split belts) were used to fill the other 2 grade colours. This on its own created many questions from members but once the Junior Ranks were included, this created so much more confusion. The "brown" (and red) colour was already designated to 2 Grades but as the Junior Ranks split each grade in two again, this required more variations of the belts. This meant having 6 variations of brown belt which was just creating further confusion to which belt was for what grade etc. Although the Junior and Adult Grades were separated by the way of solid colour and stripped belts, this still left many scratching their head. Well finally there are now enough different belt colours available to remove this confusion...

NEW COLOUR BELTS

In almost every TKD ranking system as well as other martial arts, there are 10 Colour Belts or what is also referred to as GUP Grades (*loosely translated from Korean as colour/number grade*). Each rank has a specific colour and number allocated to it to show the members progression within the system. A few years ago, the GUP Grades where no longer referred to within Phoenix SMA (*although they were still applicable*). However, with this change in colour belts, reintroducing these "numbered grades" will help members understand changes and see how they are progressing. Below is a chart to how the old colours translate into the new colour and how they relate to the GUP Grade:

CURRENT COLOUR BELTS GUP GRADES NEW COLOUR BELTS

White	<<<	10th GUP	>>>	White
Yellow	<<<	9th GUP	>>>	Grey
Orange	<<<	8th GUP	>>>	Yellow
Green	<<<	7th GUP	>>>	Orange
Blue	<<<	6th GUP	>>>	Green
Purple	<<<	5th GUP	>>>	Blue
Brown	<<<	4th GUP	>>>	Purple
Senior Brown	<<<	3rd GUP	>>>	Brown
Red	<<<	2nd GUP	>>>	Red
Senior Red	<<<	1st GUP	>>>	Senior Red

The Transition of Belts

These change in colours will of course add more questions but in time, will simplify everything. In a nut shell, the belt/colour that was being used at 3rd GUP (Senior Brown/half brown, half black belt) has been removed as this was the main cause of confusion. This will cause the colours Yellow through Brown to effectively move up a GUP Grade. The Senior Brown will not be replaced however, the "new" colour of Grey will be introduced after White.

The Senior Red Belt will remain at 1st GUP as it is the most senior colour belt and the half red/half black belt that is designated to this rank, depicts the final step between Colour Belt and Black Belt.

These changes were temporarily posted on Facebook and Instructors as well as Senior Black Belts have been told about it towards the end of last year. This was to gauge what questions may be asked and below are some of the main ones asked:

Will students then be "promoted" as their current Colour Belt is now higher in the Grades?

Unless you Grade, you cannot promote. All those that for the first time in 2021, will see a promotion in GUP Grade, but their "colour" will stay the same. This is the reason for reintroducing the GUP Grades so that members will see how they will transition into the new system.

Those that Grade and pass but have the same colour belt, will they not physically get a "new belt"?

Although the colour designated to the next rank/Grade will be the same if passing a Grading, a new belt will be awarded. There will be a "transition belt" that will be awarded between Yellow and Brown Belt (8th to 3rd GUP) to have a physical award (along with a certificate) for successfully passing. This belt will be whichever colour being promoted to but with a gold stripe running through it.

What if someone doesn't Grade or pass in February, won't my current belt further confuse things?

To solve this, all active members between Yellow & Brown Belt (8th to 3rd GUP) that will not Grade (or pass) in February will receive an equivalent belt with gold stripe one week after February Awards are presented. This will mean all members will be wearing the same colour belts from this point on which will coincide with the new system.

How will the Junior Ranks now work, do they all change too?

Yes, the Junior Ranks will now follow the new system. Once again, the change will simplify things as all ranks between Grey and Red, will be split as before into 2 levels. The third level that was used at Yellow & Orange Belt will not remain as very few members needed 3 levels at these ranks. As before, Level 1 will have a white stripe through the belt and Level 2 will have a black stripe. This can now be achieved at ALL colours between Grey & Red Belts (*Senior Red will still remain as 1 rank for all*).

For those that are currently at 3rd GUP (Senior Brown) or above will not be individually affected by the colour changes as the Red & Senior Red Belt will not change. However, everyone will need to be aware of these changes and Instructors have now attended a Workshop to get them up to date.

CURRICULUM CHANGES

Although there will not be any new material, there will be changes to when they things are learned:

Technique Drills were reintroduced for the recent Grading for all ranks. Drills are practiced in classes all the time but were removed from the Grading assessment some time ago. However, after discussing this with Senior Instructors and looking at notes from previous Gradings, it has been reintroduced.

Board Breaking will now become a requirement from Green Belt - 6th GUP (*2 ranks sooner*). As Breaking is practiced in classes at all ages and ranks, it has been decided (*after discussion with members and Instructors*), that it be required earlier in rank.

The newly designed **Sparring** concept "5x5" will be a Grading Requirement at Yellow Belt - 8th GUP. This has proven to be a great learning tool over this past year whilst under Covid Restrictions and a massive improvement has been seen across all ranks because of it.

Finally, as it has been over a year since we've been able to specifically train the **Self Defence Techniques**, these have been reviewed and reordered as to when/what rank they will be taught at. Also, all ages will learn the same sequence of techniques at each rank to help simplify how Instructors will teach them in classes.