



EFFICIENT WARRIOR

The Most Deadly Mistake in the Martial Arts

By Tony Massengill

There are many mistakes made during the training of the martial arts. Some are small, some are big. Some lead to a waste of training time, some lead to injury. But one mistake is catastrophic, and can lead to a very violent and preventable death.

That egregious sin is Mistaking Fighting for Combat.

In real life there is no such thing as a fight. A fight is a sporting concept. Anytime one individual is attacking another with the intent of doing bodily harm, that is Combat. When you see two people in the street bouncing around throwing Jabs at one another, they are suffering from a very deadly side effect to today's "Martial Sport" popularity.

Today the word "martial" has lost its meaning to many training what they are calling Martial Arts. Rules involved in the ever popular "Martial Sports" create several very bad weaknesses in the armor of the modern martial artist. Anytime one trains with the idea of limitations of any kind, they build weaknesses into their ability to respond to "Real World" violence.

I worked as a police officer early in my public safety career. In learning strategy and tactics of the use of my gun, we used training scenarios which had us responding to the unexpected. We were taught close range deployment of our gun, the use of cover during a firefight, methods of weapons retention in the event of someone attempting to take our gun during a hand-to-hand confrontation, and many other very important real life skills needed to survive the mean streets.

Now, compare the skills and tactics taught to police, with the individual who is into the "Combat Sport" of Paintball. In Paintball, if you were behind cover firing at me from 25 yards away, and I am behind cover firing back, we are using the tactic of utilization of cover, just like the police tactic. But if I can't get a good shot at you, I may break cover and run across the open space, hoping that you can't hit a moving target, and hoping to get a better angle for a shot at you. If on the other hand we were shooting bullets instead of paint balls....I think you can see the problem with this tactic.



There are chances, tactics, and techniques that one will attempt in a sporting arena, where there are safeguards against catastrophic injury, that would be just as unwise in a real fight as the breaking of cover would be in a real gun fight. But unfortunately these unwise methods become part of the "Conditioned Reflex" of the sport fighter.

This is the danger of losing sight of the real aim of the MARTIAL arts. This "Sport Leakage" is the side effect of training for sport. We react the way we train. Under the stress of a violent unexpected attack, you react, you don't think.

There is a saying among law enforcement trainers which states "You don't rise to the occasion, you sink to your level of training." 

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