

Preferred Formats of Arnis Sparring and Anyo Competition: Basis for an Enhanced Arnis Competition Framework

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Publication history: Received: April 19, 2025; Revised: March 25, 2026; Accepted: April 01, 2026

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Abstract

Sport Arnis is a distinct form of Filipino Martial Arts that sprang from a contemporary form of stick fighting, which was integrated into physical education and eventually evolved into a competitive form. This study examined the demographic profile of Arnis stakeholders and their preferences regarding sparring formats, weapons, scoring systems, judging systems, and Anyo competition structures across different age groups. An embedded mixed-method research design was employed, involving 362 respondents composed of players, coaches, and technical officials. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions, while qualitative responses were subjected to thematic analysis. Results showed a consistent preference for padded stick sparring, simple scoring systems, and the “first hit to score” concept across all age categories, particularly for young and grade school players. The judging system of one referee and three judges was overwhelmingly favored. In Anyo competitions, adults valued both traditional and non-traditional formats, while younger players showed a greater preference for non-traditional Anyo. Qualitative findings revealed key themes including effective judging, improvement of protective gear, challenges related to camera or video support, the need for clearer scoring systems, and the preservation of authenticity in Traditional Anyo through standard appearance and reduced emphasis on acrobatics. The study concludes that Arnis stakeholders prioritize safety, fairness, simplicity, and cultural authenticity in competition. These findings provide empirical support for the development of standardized, age-appropriate competition guidelines that balance modernization with the preservation of Arnis as a traditional Filipino martial art.

Keywords: Arnis 1; Sports Arnis 2; Combative Sport 3, Filipino Martial Arts 4; Stick Fighting 5

1. Introduction

Arnis, the national martial art and sport of the Philippines, has continued to spread and develop since it was enjoyed by the public. Changes are happening in the realm of sports Arnis in the country, the dynamic leadership of the new national sports association of Arnis, there are numerous successes in national and international sports meets, such as the Southeast Asian Games and others; there are many improvements in the equipment used in training and in the tournaments in the field of competitive sports Arnis. Competitive Arnis, or better known as Sports Arnis, has been practiced for a long time in the decade of the 80s, it was initiated by groups of arnisadores in Manila and Cebu. Under the leadership of the then Marcos government, it was formally introduced in the training of Barangay Tanods (community police aides) and the Philippine Constabulary, and it was introduced to be part of physical education in public schools (Presas, 1974). As part of physical education, Arnis began to become a sport, from the inspiration of some combative sports such as Kendo, Karate, and boxing which became examples to be the basis of how the concept of competition, scoring system, officiating, and what are the gears and equipment that will be used to make Arnis as a combative sport (Tongson, 2007). The rapid mass striking format of the tournament that uses “live stick” and full protective gear was initiated by the Arnis practitioners of Cebu, but earlier, the proponents of Modern Arnis also initiated a format of sports Arnis where the equipment is the “padded sticks.” The former has a mass striking point system, where the player will win with his superiority in hitting power, the combination of strikes, aggressiveness, and maneuverability in the fight. While the last one is the concept of winning a clear strike or counter-attack, and this is in the point fighting category, the game will be temporarily stopped by the official to declare the score to the player who scored against the opponent, and this is resumed again until the end of the set time (Godhania, 2007). Other associations of arnisadores have their own format of competition, but the most popular are the “live-stick sparring” and the “padded-stick sparring” tournaments.

Another contemporary event that is part of the sports arnis tournament is the so-called Anyo competition, which is a pre-arranged sequence of offensive and defensive maneuvers of the Arnis that is carried out even if it is “traditional,” or “free-style non-traditional.” The 'Anyo competition' can be said to have become part of the tournament, next to the combat competition. In the earlier tournaments of padded sticks, this type of competition was added in the “regulated” format, meaning that there were designated forms that the players had to follow; this was called the “traditional form. This can be in the form of individual competition or synchronized team form. The Anyo Competition is divided into two categories, male and female. It can be an individual or team competition; there are three (3) major classifications: the solo baston, double baston, and espada y daga (sword and dagger), which is divided into Traditional Form Competition and Non-Traditional Form Competition. (PEKAF, 2018) While those who organized “live-stick arnis tournaments” added a form competition event similar to the American free-style form competition, it was called “forma,” or “sayaw.” It is performed by players accompanied by background music (Anajao, 2023). These formats of sports Arnis, became even stronger when Arnis was declared the national sport and martial art of the Philippines in 2009 through the RA 9850. Each combative sports format had game rules, categories, definitive protective gears, and equipment; the form had a traditional and non-traditional form of competition. When the Philippine Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation (PEKAF) was established as the national sports association in Arnis in 2017, the two formats of sports Arnis were accepted as the type or format of the combative Arnis tournament, and the Anyo competition became a non-combative event. The padded stick competition has male and female events and weight categories. Its very concept is based on the idea of “first hit to score”, the one who can score is whoever hits the opponent first, whether it is a direct attack or counter-attack. The padded stick competition is considered the association's sword concept of fighting (PEKAF 2023). The live-stick competition also has male and female events and weight categories; the format is based on who has more strikes to the head, hands, and other legitimate targets, along with aggressiveness in combat. The scoring is the “10-point must system” where the score is 10-9 when there is a slight edge, 10-8 quarter-wide edge, and 10-7 when the match is one-sided. And deciding who wins the three (3) rounds of the fight is win by points, win by technical knockout, and win by disqualification (PEKAF 2018).

There are good and not-so-good characteristics of the existing rule sets and forms of Arnis competition, but knowing its strengths and weaknesses based on the experiences and observations of people actively involved in the past tournaments held by the national sports association is crucial for the crafting of the national standard in rules and regulations that will be implemented and guide the future sports Arnis events. And this empirical gap motivated the conduct of a study regarding this. This study is an attempt to help the current national sports association of Arnis, the Philippine Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation (PEKAF), through a national survey regarding the areas for further development of the current Arnis in its competitive forms. This study generally aims to determine the most favorable forms of arnis competition. Specifically, it seeks to determine the demographic profile of the respondents and to identify the preferred forms of competitive sparring (laban) in terms of age of players, sex, nature of weapon, concept of sparring, and scoring system. It also aims to determine the favorable form of Anyo competition with respect to the age of players, sex, nature of the competition, and concept of form competition. Furthermore, the study intends to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the existing sparring competition format as well as those of the current Anyo competition. Based on the findings of the study, a favorable form of arnis competition will be proposed.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

An embedded mixed-method research design was employed, with the quantitative for analysing data to get frequency and percentage distribution, while qualitative for deriving themes that will complement the quantitative information.

2.2 Research Settings

This study was conducted in two locations where major Arnis tournaments under the auspices of the national sport association in Arnis were held. The first was in the city of Manila where the 2024 PEKAF National Tournament took place, and in the Municipality of Indang in Cavite where the 2024 Arnis Championship of the Philippine ROTC Games was held.

2.3 Respondents of the Study This study was conducted in 2024, during the first PEKAF National Arnis Championship held in Manila, and the 2024 Arnis Championship of the Philippine ROTC Games at Cavite State University in Indang, Cavite. The participants included Arnis players from various towns across the country, coaches, and National Technical Officials of the Philippine Eskrima-Kali-Arnis Federation (PEKAF), who managed the tournaments. The players in these two tournaments differ: those in the PEKAF National Tournament are from municipalities or towns, while those in the ROTC Games are college students. Slovin's formula was used with a margin of error of 0.03 and a confidence level of ninety-five percent (95%), considered sufficient accuracy for the stratified samples. This formula calculated the expected total number of participants, which was then matched to the number of teams, as well as coaches and technical officials.

2.4 Research Instrument

A constructed questionnaire consisting of twenty-five (25) questions was prepared to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents. Of these, twenty-one (21) were closed-ended questions and four (4) were open-ended questions. Qualified specialists validated the questionnaire and subjected it to a reliability test prior to its administration to the target participants. The distribution of respondents in terms of place of origin, association, and categories of sports events among players and coaches was considered, as well as the inclusion of technical officials.

2.5 Data Collection

After validation of the research instrument, approval was sought from the Tournament Manager through a formal letter of approval. The data gathering was administered through face-to-face means during the scheduled national tournaments. Based on the interpreted data, a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations was formulated.

2.6 Data Analysis

The data obtained was subjected to statistical data management, and the results were discussed in a focus group discussion to have a broad and deep interpretation. The quantitative data were interpreted statistically. The qualitative data will be evaluated through simple thematic analysis to identify common themes, such as topics and ideas concerning the weaknesses and strengths of the present competition rule set.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and data privacy. No identifying personal information was collected, and participation posed no physical or psychological risk to respondents.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of place of origin, sex, and age. The majority of respondents came from Luzon (51.38%), followed by the National Capital Region (31.77%), while fewer participants came from the Visayas (9.94%) and Mindanao (6.91%). This indicates that most respondents were from areas where organized Arnis activities and competitions are more prevalent. In terms of sex, male respondents comprised the majority (78.83%), while female respondents accounted for 21.17%, reflecting the higher participation of men in Arnis-related activities. With regard to age, the largest group of respondents was 25–34 years old (70.99%), followed by 35–44 years old (15.75%) and 18–24 years old (9.39%). These findings suggest that the study primarily captured the perspectives of young adults who are actively involved in the sport. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are significant to the study because they indicate that the data were obtained from active Arnis practitioners in key regions and age groups, making their responses relevant in identifying favorable forms of Arnis competition.

Table 1: *Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Place of Origin	Luzon	186	51.38%
	NCR	115	31.77%
	Visayas	36	9.94%
	Mindanao	25	6.91%
Sex	Male	285	78.83%
	Female	77	21.17%
Age	18–24	34	9.39%
	25–34	257	70.99%
	35–44	57	15.75%
	45–54	14	3.87%
	55–64	0	0%
	65 and over	0	0%
Total Respondents		362	100%

3.2. Participants' Designations and Years of Experience

In Table 2, respondents were composed mostly of players (75.97%), followed by coaches (17.40%) and National Technical Officials (6.63%). This indicates that the majority of the data came from individuals who are directly involved in Arnis competitions. In terms of experience, most players had 3–4 years (38.91%) and 5–7 years (36.00%) of playing experience, showing that they have sufficient exposure to the sport. Similarly, most coaches had 3–4 years (44.44%) and 5–7 years (33.33%) of coaching experience, while the majority of technical officials had 3–4 years of officiating experience (50%). These findings are significant to the study because they show that the respondents possess practical experience in playing, coaching, and officiating Arnis, which strengthens the reliability of their responses in determining the favorable forms of Arnis competition.

Table 2: *Respondents' Designations and Years of Experience*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Designation (N=362)	Player	275	75.97%
	Coach	63	17.40%
	National Technical Official	24	6.63%
Players' Years of Playing (n=275)	Less than 1 year	16	5.82%
	1–2 years	53	19.27%
	3–4 years	107	38.91%
	5–7 years	99	36.00%
	8 years and above	0	0%
Coaches' Years of Coaching (n=63)	Less than 1 year	3	4.76%
	1–2 years	10	15.87%
	3–4 years	28	44.44%
	5–7 years	21	33.33%
	8 years and above	1	1.60%
Officials' Years of Officiating (n=24)	Less than 1 year	3	12.50%
	1–2 years	4	16.67%
	3–4 years	12	50.00%
	5–7 years	3	12.50%
	8 years and above	2	8.33%

3.3. Preferred Arnis Sparring Type

Table 3 shows that padded stick sparring is the most preferred type of sparring across all age groups and among female players. Among adult players (18 years and above), most respondents preferred padded stick sparring (55.80%), followed by live stick sparring (27.07%) and both types (17.13%). For young players aged 13–16, padded stick sparring was strongly favored by 88.95% of respondents, while only a small number preferred live stick sparring or both. Similarly, for grade school players aged 11–12, almost all respondents (98.34%) preferred padded stick sparring. Among female players, 81.22% favored padded stick sparring compared to smaller percentages for live stick sparring or both types. These findings are significant to the study because they highlight the strong preference for padded stick sparring as a safer and more appropriate format, particularly for younger players and female participants. This supports the idea that safety considerations play an important role in determining favorable forms of Arnis competition.

Table 3: *Respondents' Preferences for the Type of Arnis Sparring*

Player Category	Type of Sparring	Frequency	Percent
Adult Players (18 years and above)	Padded Stick	202	55.80%
	Live Stick	98	27.07%
	Both	62	17.13%
Young Players (13–16 years old)	Padded Stick	322	88.95%
	Live Stick	33	9.12%
	Both	7	1.93%
Grade School Players (11–12 years old)	Padded Stick	356	98.34%
	Live Stick	3	0.83%
	Both	3	0.83%
Female Players	Padded Stick	294	81.22%
	Live Stick	18	4.97%
	Both	50	13.81%
Total Respondents		362	100%

3.4. Preferred Sparring Weapon

Table 4 indicates that padded sticks are the most preferred weapon for sparring across all age groups. Among adult players (18 years and above), the majority preferred padded sticks (64.92%), followed by live sticks (32.04%), while only a few preferred synthetic swords (3.04%). Similarly, young players aged 13–16 (86.19%) and grade school players aged 11–12 (96.14%) strongly favored padded sticks over other weapons. These findings are significant to the study because they highlight the importance of safety and the suitability of equipment in Arnis competitions, particularly for younger players. The strong preference for padded sticks suggests that respondents favor safer training and competition equipment, which can help reduce the risk of injury while maintaining effective skill development in Arnis.

Table 4: Respondents' Preferences for Arnis Sparring Weapon

Player Category	Weapon for Sparring	Frequency	Percent
Adult Players (18 years and above)	Padded Stick	235	64.92%
	Live Stick	116	32.04%
	Synthetic Sword	11	3.04%
Young Players (13–16 years old)	Padded Stick	312	86.19%
	Live Stick	40	11.05%
	Synthetic Sword	10	2.76%
Grade School Players (11–12 years old)	Padded Stick	348	96.14%
	Live Stick	7	1.93%
	Synthetic Sword	7	1.93%
Total Respondents		362	100%

3.5 Preferred Sparring Concept

Table 5 shows that the “first hit to score” concept is the most preferred sparring format across all age groups. Among adult players (18 years and above), 80.94% favored this concept, while smaller percentages preferred mass striking (12.15%) and “to hit and not to be hit” (6.91%). Similarly, most respondents recommended “first hit to score” for young players aged 13–16 (83.98%) and grade school players aged 11–12 (83.98%), with fewer choosing the other sparring concepts. These findings are significant to the study because they indicate that the “first hit to score” rule is widely accepted as the most suitable sparring concept. It is considered simple, easier to judge, and appropriate for skill development and safety, making it a practical format for organizing Arnis competitions across different age groups.

Table 5: Respondents' Preferences for the Concept of Arnis Sparring

Player Category	Concept of Sparring	Frequency	Percent
Adult Players (18 years and above)	First hit to score	293	80.94%
	To hit and not to be hit	25	6.91%
	Mass striking	44	12.15%
Young Players (13–16 years old)	First hit to score	304	83.98%
	To hit and not to be hit	44	12.15%
	Mass striking	14	3.87%
Grade School Players (11–12 years old)	First hit to score	304	83.98%
	To hit and not to be hit	40	11.05%
	Mass striking	18	4.97%
Total Respondents		362	100%

3.6 Preferred Scoring System

Table 6 shows the preferred scoring system for padded stick sparring across age groups. The results indicate that the majority of respondents preferred the 1-point on any part of the body scoring system for adults (80.94%), young players aged 13–16 (86.74%), and elementary school players aged 11–12 (85.91%). This preference indicates that participants preferred a simple and easy-to-understand scoring method that could be applied consistently in competitions. The scoring system of 1 point on the feet, 2 points on the body, and 3 points on the head was the second most preferred option across all age groups, while mass striking received the least support from respondents. These findings are important to the study as they highlight the importance of adopting a simple and standardized scoring system for padded stick sparring. A direct scoring method can improve judging accuracy, ensure fairness, and make the competition more manageable, especially for younger participants. This supports the development of a practical and widely accepted scoring framework for padded stick sparring competitions.

Table 6: Favorable Scoring System for Padded Stick Sparring by Age Group (n=362)

Scoring System	Adults (18+) f (%)	Young Players (13–16) f (%)	Grade School (11–12) f (%)
1 point to any part of the body	293 (80.94%)	314 (86.74%)	311 (85.91%)
1 point to limb, 2 points to body, 3 points to head	55 (15.19%)	43 (11.88%)	44 (12.16%)
Mass striking	14 (3.87%)	5 (1.38%)	7 (1.93%)
Total	362 (100%)	362 (100%)	362 (100%)

3.7. Preferred Judging System

Table 7 shows the preferred judging system for both padded and live stick sparring. The majority of respondents preferred the 1 referee and 3 judges' system for padded stick sparring (93.09%) and live stick sparring (88.95%). Only a small number preferred 1 referee and 2 judges, while 1 referee and 1 judge was the least preferred option. These findings are important to the study because they highlight the need for a multi-official judging system to ensure fairness, accuracy, and reduced bias in scoring decisions. Having three judges allows for multiple perspectives during matches, which enhances the reliability and credibility of officiating in stick sparring competitions.

Table 7: Favorable Judging System for Padded Stick and Live Stick Sparring

Judging System	Padded Stick Sparring f (%)	Live Stick Sparring f (%)
1 referee & 3 judges	337 (93.09%)	322 (88.95%)
1 referee & 2 judges	18 (4.98%)	26 (7.18%)
1 referee & 1 judge	7 (1.93%)	14 (3.87%)
Total	362 (100%)	362 (100%)

3.8. Preferred Anyo Competition

Table 8 shows the preferred format of the Anyo competition across different age groups. For adults (18+), Traditional and Non-Traditional (Freestyle) Anyo were equally preferred (38.95% each), with some respondents favoring both formats (22.10%). Among young players (13–17), the Non-Traditional or Freestyle format was the most preferred (45.86%), followed by Traditional Anyo (38.95%). For elementary school players (11–12), Traditional Anyo had the highest preference (35.08%), although many respondents also supported both formats (32.87%). These findings are important to the study because they suggest that both Traditional and Non-Traditional Anyo formats should be included in competitions. Maintaining the Traditional Form helps preserve the cultural and technical foundations of Arnis, while the Non-Traditional or Freestyle Form encourages creativity and modern expression, especially among younger practitioners.

Table 8: Favorable Type of Anyo Competition by Age Group (n=362)

Type of Anyo Competition	Adults (18+) f (%)	Young Players (13–17) f (%)	Grade School (11–12) f (%)
Traditional Anyo	141 (38.95%)	141 (38.95%)	127 (35.08%)
Non-Traditional (Freestyle)	141 (38.95%)	166 (45.86%)	116 (32.05%)
Both	80 (22.10%)	55 (15.19%)	119 (32.87%)
Total	362 (100%)	362 (100%)	362 (100%)

3.9. Qualitative Evaluation of Sports Arnis

3.9.1. Padded Stick Sparring

From the qualitative data obtained from the respondents' answers to the open-ended questions, the following themes emerged. In further improving the padded stick sparring format, the following are:

3.9.1.1. Effective Judging

Most of the qualitative responses regarding how to improve the padded stick competition suggested that judges be more effective, especially in determining who hit the players first and whether they hit. These are some of the comments: "the judges' eyes should be sharp," "be consistent," and "be attentive."

3.9.1.2. Improvement of the Gear

The suggestions to “design and use lightweight armor” and “design a padded stick that is durable” are some of the suggestions that identified a need to further improve the gear used in competition.

3.9.1.3. Camera/Video Challenge

Because “the players were too fast” and “some of the judges didn't see it,” the suggestion was made to have a Video Challenge in the Judges' decision-making on who hit the players first.

3.9.1.4. Better Scoring System

Some of the participants in this study commented that “do not limit first hit only” and “hopefully not just first” which shows that the participants in this study are looking for other formats of padded stick competition. “it would be better if the points were different for each body” also shows that there are those who want other scoring/pointing systems in the game. Also, the “Consider also the power” comment indicates that the attack should be considered with power or the right strength to deliver the attack or counter-attack in the game, because there is also a comment that “it seems like it just touched and scored.”

3.9.2. Live Stick Sparring

Need for Efficiency and Effectiveness in Judging

To give credit to players' action, the Judges assigned to live stick sparring must value clean, clear strokes that have power rather than just speed. The views and suggestions of the respondents emerged, such as “pay more attention to the clear hit than speed,” “give points for clear hit and power.” It was also mentioned to pay attention to the basis of how to score, “give clear reference to score, “need clear basis of scoring, “have a clear scoring system.”

3.9.3. Anyo Competition

In the aforementioned question on the improvement of Anyo competition, the main themes that emerged from the participants' responses were (1) having a standard traditional Anyo, (2) turning Arnis traditional Anyo competition into a martial art, and (3) reducing acrobatics in traditional Anyo competition.

3.9.3.1. Having a Standard Traditional Appearance

“There should be standard anyo to follow” and “make a standard anyo for all players from different arnis systems” expresses the need for having standard anyo that comes directly from the organization (PEKAF) to be taught to members so that this will be used in competition so that there is some uniformity in the performances of the players and in judging the performances of the players, “use standard video of anyo” is a way to disseminate this to the members.

3.9.3.2. Make it a martial art

The comments “I wish the traditional concept was more visible than just acrobatics”, “I wish the art of Arnis was seen properly, not just shouting and acrobatics,” “check the proper stance and basic”, “Traditional movement of Arnis should be demonstrated” show that the martial art nature of the performance in traditional Anyo competition needs to be seen more and “Consider the striking, form and application of the true Arnis.” Make the performance of the traditional Anyo competition a martial art.

3.9.3.3. Reduce Acrobatics

Related to the aforementioned theme, the comments “limit the deadly stunts”, “Don't just scream and tricks”, “Limit the kicks, this is Arnis” show that the traditional Anyo competition should be identical to the true nature of Arnis as a Filipino martial art.

3.10 Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Combining quantitative and qualitative findings provides a clearer understanding of the preferred forms of Arnis competition and the underlying reasons behind these preferences. Results from the quantitative data show that most respondents had 3-7 years of experience playing, coaching, and officiating, indicating that the insights gathered in the study came from individuals with moderate but significant exposure to Arnis competitions. This was reinforced by the qualitative responses, where participants demonstrated practical knowledge of competition rules, officiating concerns, and athlete safety. Their insights reflected real-world experiences in competitions, training, and officiating situations. Across all age groups, the padded stick sparring format emerged as the most preferred type of sparring. The preference was particularly strong among younger players. Qualitative responses support this finding, as many participants emphasized safety, injury prevention, and inclusivity as major considerations in organizing competitions. Respondents frequently highlighted the importance of protective equipment and padded sticks to encourage participation while minimizing the risk of injury, especially among children. Additionally, the padded stick was identified as the most preferred sparring weapon across all

groups. While some adults still expressed acceptance of live stick sparring, the overall trend was in favor of padded equipment. Respondents explained in their qualitative responses that padded sticks allow athletes to demonstrate speed, timing, and technique without exposing themselves to unnecessary injury. This suggests that safety-oriented equipment is becoming the norm for developmental and inclusive Arnis competitions.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The findings of the study show that respondents who actively participate in Arnis tournaments highly value safety, fairness, and the preservation of the traditional principles of the martial art. The results indicate strong support for the use of protective equipment and the implementation of clear and simplified competition rules to reduce injury risks and promote equitable competition. Respondents also emphasized that well-defined rules help organizers and officials manage events more effectively and maintain consistency, especially for young practitioners entering competitive Arnis. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of preserving the cultural and philosophical foundations of Arnis, particularly in Anyo competitions, where technical skill, discipline, and traditional movement should be prioritized over excessive dramatization. Overall, the results suggest that standardized competition frameworks are necessary to balance modernization with the protection of Arnis as a traditional Filipino martial art.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the standardization of judging and scoring systems to ensure clarity, fairness, and accessibility, especially for youth and developmental categories. Structured training, certification, and regular evaluation of judges and officials should also be implemented to improve officiating quality and consistency. In terms of safety, padded sticks and protective equipment should be improved and standardized, particularly for younger participants. The use of video replay or camera support systems is also recommended to enhance the accuracy of officiating and assist in training judges. To preserve the authenticity of Arnis, clear guidelines should be established for attire, weapons, and performance standards in traditional events. In Anyo competitions, rules should emphasize realistic application and proper technique rather than excessive acrobatics. The inclusion of additional sparring events that reflect the principle of “to hit and not to be hit” may also broaden participation, particularly among traditional Arnis practitioners. Finally, future studies may examine how these changes affect athlete safety, fairness, and satisfaction across different competition settings.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study relied on the responses and perspectives of participants involved in Arnis tournaments, which may not fully represent the views of all Arnis practitioners, coaches, officials, or governing bodies. Second, the findings are based on self-reported data, which may be influenced by personal bias, subjective judgment, or individual competitive experiences. Third, the study appears to focus primarily on perceptions of safety, fairness, and traditional preservation rather than on direct measurement of injury rates, officiating accuracy, or competitive outcomes. Because of these limitations, the results should be interpreted as reflecting participant perspectives rather than definitive evidence of the overall effectiveness of current competition systems.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This study is self-funded and received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

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Author's short biography

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