

SHOTO - Fast Play Variant Rules 1.

This set of variant rules provide a fast play alternative.

Rules variant and presentation by Nicolas Gonzalez



Mains points of variance with the standard rules:

1. The Jikan Desu cards are not used in this variant.
2. A discard pile is used.
3. The tokens are NOT FULLY redistributed after an Ippon and neither can you regain tokens through a "perfect counter-attack": after an Ippon or a Hansoku you can get back 1 Focus token and 1 Referee's token, if you have less than 2 of them.
4. The tokens work differently:
 - Focus tokens: neutralize a Brown card but now also enable you at the same time to play a counter-attack on that Brown card. Cannot be used to swap an extra card.
 - Referee tokens: these tokens can be used during you Play Phase to draw 2 cards.
 - Favourite Technique tokens: no difference with main rules, these are used to play 1 extra attack card.
5. Maximum hand size is 8.
6. After a Round is finished, each player keeps their current cards and draws cards up to a hand size of 8. This is true after both an Ippon and Hansoku.
7. The effects of a Crazy Kiai reducing the hand size remain in effect for the entire game.
8. Cards are not "Swapped" as per the standard game: when a card is "Swapped", it is simply discarded in a discard pile and a new replacement card taken from the top of the deck.

1. Setting up the game

The game setup is similar to the standard game with the exception of **8 cards** being distributed to each player.

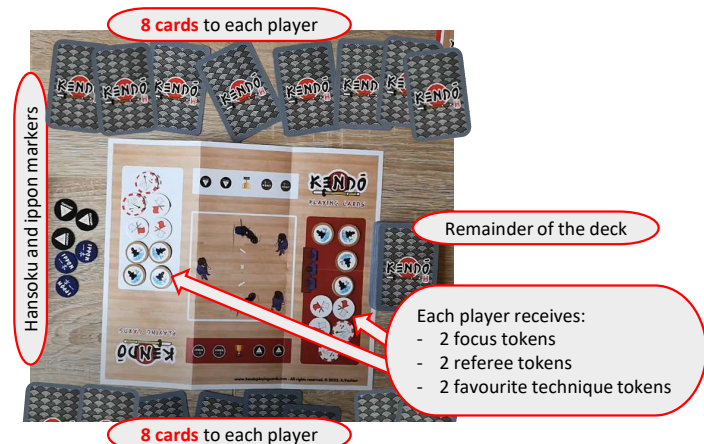
Give each player: 2 brown Focus tokens, 2 Referee tokens, 2 Favourite technique tokens.

Each player places their respective tokens on the designated spots on the play area (Shiai-do).

Lay down the 3 hansoku and 3 ippon markers next to the play area.

Shuffle the entire deck and deal **8 cards** face down to each player.

Lay the remainder of the deck in between the two players next to the shiai-do.



2. Card effects and winning conditions

Winning conditions: no change to the winning conditions, it requires 2 ippons to win the game.

The fast play variant can also end when both players simply run out of cards and no further attacks can be made, this represents the kendo match reaching Jikan Desu (end of match time). In this situation, the game ends and the player with the most Ippons wins, if both players are tied then the game ends in a tie.

The only small change is to the Crazy Kiai card:

- **Crazy Kiai:** the card effects is the same as in the standard game, except that the effect lasts the ENTIRE game, the maximum hand size is **permanently** reduced by 1! To represent this, the player takes the Crazy Kiai card and put it in his/her play area next to the tokens as a reminder that his/her hand size is permanently reduced. That Crazy Kiai card is then out of the game permanently and will not be shuffled back into the deck.

3. Game Play

Gameplay varies little with the standard game, however, some mechanics from the tokens are quite different, and there is no **Draw Phase** and no **Token Bonus Phase** from a "perfect counter-attack". Also, only 1 card can be swapped in the "Swap Phase", Focus tokens cannot be used to swap more cards.

The game alternates between each player's turn. The turn sequence is as follows:

1. Swap phase
2. Play phase (Response phase & Attack phase)
- ~~3. Draw phase~~
- ~~4. Token bonus phase~~

During the **Swap phase**, the active player can swap 1 card from his/her hand: to do so the player **discards** a card into a discard pile, face up, then takes a replacement card from the top of the deck.

During the Play phase, the gameplay is the same as the standard game with the exception of tokens:

- **Focus Token:** the focus token can be used to **neutralize** a Brown card as per the standard rules, but also enables the active player to counter-attack on that Brown card with any other allowed attack card, including another Brown card whose Blocking strike does NOT need to match the attack strike. The Focus Token cannot be used to swap more cards in the Swap Phase.
- **Referee Token:** the Referee token is very different than the standard game: during his/her play phase, the active player can discard a Referee token and immediately **draw 2 extra cards from the deck**. Note that this occurs during the Play phase, so none of those cards can be swapped. A player can decide to discard multiple Referee tokens and draw 2 or 4 cards. This use of the token is to represent the match being stopped for a short time (referee shouts "Yame!"), this can be due to e.g. a kendoka falls to the ground, a strap becoming undone, etc... The kendokas go back to the starting positions and that can help resettle the situation of a kendoka who was under pressure.
- **Favourite Technique Token:** this works the same way as in the standard rules, the player can add an extra attack card. Similarly, the opposing player can only respond to two of these cards unless he/she plays themselves a Favourite Technique token.
- After a Hansoku or an Ippon, each player gets back 1 Focus and 1 Referee token, if they have less than 2 Focus and 2 Referee tokens. Favourite technique token cannot be replaced during the game, once discarded, they are permanently gone.

There is no Draw phase! You cannot replenish your hand during a Round. Only after a Round (after a Hansoku or Ippon) can you draw cards up to your maximum hand size, otherwise you would have to use a Referee token to draw extra cards. If you run out of cards to play you suffer the penalties and consequences of the attacks against you.

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4. Ippon and Hansoku

In the Fast Play variant, there is no difference in what happens after a Hansoku or an Ippon.

When an **Ippon** or **Hansoku** is scored:

- The Round ends.
- Cards in play are all discarded in the discard pile.
- Each player **KEEPS** their current cards.
- Each player, starting with the losing player, draws extra cards up to their maximum hand size, which is 8 unless you were penalized from one or more Crazy Kiai, in which case your maximum hand size is reduced accordingly. Remember, a Crazy Kiai affects hand size permanently.
- 1 Focus token and 1 Referee Token is given back to each player, if they have less than 2 focus and 2 Referee tokens.
- Play continues with the losing player starting the first turn.

5. Discard pile

In the Fast Play variant, a discard pile is used.

When a player Swaps a card, they do not place it under the deck, they discard it face up next to the deck in a Discard Pile.

When a round ends, all cards used in the play area are put in the discard pile.

After a card is neutralized by a Kamae, that stack of cards is put in the discard pile to clear up the game board.

After a card's effects are implemented (e.g. a Seme makes the player lose tokens), that pile of used cards is discarded to clear up the game board. Remember, if the player suffers the penalty from a Crazy Kiai, that player takes the card and leaves it face up next to his/her tokens as a reminder of the reduced hand size. The cards in the pile under the Crazy Kiai are discarded to clear up the game board.

After a Fudoshin is played, all cards from the game board can be discarded as Fudoshin neutralizes all attack cards in play. Again, this just clears up the board.

At any time, if the game board is too cluttered, the cards can be discarded into the discard pile to clear up the game and make it easier for players to continue the game, as long as cards currently attacking a player are not discarded in this way.

IMPORTANT: at any time, if a player needs to draw a card from the deck and the deck has no cards left, the discard pile is turned face down, shuffled and used as a new deck.

6. Notes on the Fast Play variant

If the active player neutralizes attack cards but cannot respond with an attack, then play simply passes to the opposing player who can add attack cards. You might even want to discard the cards on the game board before play passes to the opposing player to clear the board since no attack cards are in play.

Once an active player neutralizes the cards on the board, for example with Kamae and Tsubazeriai, the active player might choose to not play attack cards (the active player might simply not have any attack cards to play!). There is no penalty for not playing attack cards, you can simply clear the board and play passes to the opposing player. For example, the active player would not be forced to use a Referee token to draw extra cards to try to find an attack card.

The use of the Referee tokens to draw extra cards is very powerful, but must be used with care. For example, if you still have a few cards in hand (4 or 5), using a Referee token might get you a card to counter a Hansoku or Seme, but if the round ends quickly after that you will draw less cards back into your hand up to your maximum hand size. It might be better to take the Hansoku and keep the powerful Referee token for later in the game.

Sometimes it is advantageous to use tokens rather than lose them to a Seme against you. Especially if you have very few tokens left, using the Favourite Technique or Referee token might be a good idea since you might otherwise have to discard them.

Example Game Play with variations versus the standard rules:

Red Player has 3 cards to defend against.

Red Player is only allowed to respond to 2 of those cards unless he/she also uses a Favourite Technique token to add a third card.

Red Player cannot respond to the Do strike and uses a Focus token to neutralize it, he/she also plays a Kamae to neutralize the Crazy Kiai.

Unlike the standard rules, Red Player is allowed to play a counter-attack card on the Brown card.

Also, Red Player will suffer the loss of 2 tokens due to the Seme.

Furthermore, the pile of cards under Kamae and Seme can be discarded as there are no attack cards in play on top of those cards.



Red Player can play an attack card on this Brown card, the Fast Play rules allow the player to play an attack card after using a Focus Token to neutralize a Brown card. This new attack card can be Brown, Yellow, Blue, or Red.

Red Player has to discard 2 tokens because he/she did not neutralize the Red Seme card.



Both stacks of cards can be discarded as there are no in play attack cards anymore.