

The T.K.D. Flash

A Publication of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts

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On May 3 and 4, 2008, **Grand Master Mike Winegar** will teach one of his excellent "C" instructor courses in Cadillac MI. Dr. Steve Osborn will host this inaugural event for our Region. This is simply not to be missed. Contact Dr. **Steve Osborn**, at Cadillac TaeKwon-Do, sosborntkd@hotmail.com. Recommended highly by all "in the know."

Mr. **Kevin McDaniel** will conduct a Referee Training Seminar at Dee Park, DesPlaines, IL on March 15, a Saturday, commencing at 9:30 a.m. Fulfill your requirements for promotion and have fun at the same time! As an added bonus, learn to referee! The seminar is hosted by **Master Earl Weiss** and National TaeKwon-Do. For information, contact Master Earl Weiss, eweisstkd@aol.com.

TaeKwon-Do World Camp will be held in the mountains of Colorado July 13 through 18 in 2008! Contact USTF headquarter at 303-466-4963 or **Master Renee Sereff**, rsereff@rmi.net. Last call!

A Class C USTF Instructors Course will be taught in Denver Feb. 9th & 10th, 2008 by Grand Master Mike Winegar for those who can't wait until May 3 & 4.

A Valentine's Open House will be held at the Academy of Martial Arts, Grafton, on February 13. Specials for couples, an Open House special, door prizes and treats.

At **St. Peter's TaeKwon-Do**, St. Peter, MN, Mr. **Marcus Paar**, Instructor, will host a seminar with Master F.M. Van Hecke on March 8, a Saturday, commencing at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome, and the price is right.

Looking for tournament action? How about a "High Noon" showdown? Set aside April 13, a Sunday, for the Wisconsin Chang-Hon Challenge. The Tournament Promoter, Mr. Kevin McDaniel, can be contacted at (608) 831-5967 or e-mailed at Kevin.McDaniel@ustf-region5.org. Patterns, free-sparring, team patterns, and sparring with foam weapons. Bound to be fun, bound to be well-run, bound to be officiated fairly. The tournament will be at the Keva Sports Center in Middleton WI. Preregistrations received by April 1 get a free tournament t-shirt. Inexpensive, family friendly and family discounts, quality custom medals for individual patterns and sparring, great trophies for team patterns and Sword Sparring. Plan on it!



Meet Master Miller

by F.M. Van Hecke

One would never know from meeting him and talking to him how important a

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figure Master Braxton Miller is in TaeKwon-Do in the Midwest. For one thing, he would probably find an accurate characterization of his significant contributions to be overblown, and at every turn downplay the trails he's blazed and his many achievements.

Some things are obvious. He's 50 years old and a six-footer. But the only way to get into the question of what makes someone tick is to actually talk with him.

Interviewing a truly self-effacing person can be a bit frustrating, because everything he's done he turns into a tribute to the efforts of others. Having tested with Master Miller for four consecutive tests over a period of over a decade and a half, the interviewer, your humble editor, has learned that Master Miller is a true warrior and a formidable gentleman of the highest quality, but a bit of a "mystery wrapped in an enigma."

Why? Because he almost never talks about himself.

So I figured we had climbed enough mountains together that I could get downright rude and started asking questions. Master Miller, polite to a fault, wouldn't squirm his way out of this interview!

Braxton J. Miller was born February 20, 1957, to Dennis and Anita Miller, and was raised in Illinois. However, he claims he can't remember being born. O.K. A typical Miller comment, that wry sense of humor again.

Master Miller probably has more formal college education than I do, and I have three degrees. He just never got around to taking the degrees, subsequent to high school at Niles West turning in eight years of full time college study and years upon years of part-time study in academic and other institutions. The grades were always good--it's just that he'd get interested in another area of study, and off he'd go into a whole new curriculum, again and again. This restless intellect is still at it, taking almost every professional development program offered in the martial arts business.

A member of numerous professional associations, Master Miller is a full time professional martial arts educator of an eclectic bent while simultaneously achieving top ranking in traditional I.T.F.-style TaeKwon-Do. His

school teaches a core curriculum of Chang-Hon TaeKwon-Do. But it's also got cardio-kickboxing, CDT, Self Defense, and Little Dragons programs. Master Miller himself has his First Dan in jiu-jitsu (U.S.J.A.)

A certified International I.T.F. Instructor, Master Miller is a Seventh Degree Black Belt (U.S.T.F.). Other associations refer to their instructors as "Master" at Fourth Degree. Others use the term to apply to any school owner with a Black Belt. U.S.T.F. requires a Seventh Dan to be called "Master," and this rigorous requirement is fine with him. He is appalled at the thought of a 13-year-old Third Degree and the degree inflation of the money-hungry karate shops proliferating around him and holds the line on appropriate standards not only for his students but for himself.

So now can he rest on his laurels? Not quite. Master Miller averages teaching 25 classes per week.

Master Miller is a very important person in the context of the United States TaeKwon-Do Federation. He has been to eight International Instructor Seminars taught by Gen. Choi, Hong Hi, the Founder, and by Grand Master C.E. Sereff, Gen. Choi's most loyal student. An avid videographer, Master Miller has much of TaeKwon-Do history on tape.

Locally Master Miller serves U.S.T.F. and its grateful Regional Director as Illinois State Director. He is a Vice President of the Association of Academies of Martial Arts. And, of course, he is *paterfamilias* to a large student body.

Master Miller's School of Traditional TaeKwon-Do began in the Island Lake Recreation Center in 1991 and today has its own digs in Crystal Lake. He is very proud of all of his students, but particularly happy with people he calls his "contributors," Second Dans Karen Gacke, Don Thomas, William Akin, and Cindy Austeria.

A resident of Island Lake, Master Miller is married to Eileen Miller, herself a Black Belt. His son Joshua is in college, and Peter is still in high school. Your humble editor has spent some good times with the Millers, who are quick-witted and quick to laugh.

Master Miller describes his passions as God, his family and TaeKwon-Do. TaeKwon-Do is "definitely third." Despite his long

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hours, Sundays and his church provide a social life context. On a more mundane level, he describes his favorite cuisine as "Burger King, anything on the menu."

Asked what he likes to read, Master Miller confesses an interest in J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. His favorite color is Kelly green, his favorite TV show "Walker, Texas Ranger," where every show contains a life lesson and the good guys always win. If he were a tree, he thinks he'd be a spruce, "Anything with prickly needles year round."

His best moments in the martial arts were the growth and progression of his own boys through the ranks. His view of martial arts education is that it is a "great character tune-up for the big leagues where the Bible takes over."

He is an admirer of Abraham Lincoln, has traveled to Germany and South America, and is proud to be an American.

And he is a great friend.



Students and faculty of the Grafton Academy of Martial Arts will present a Demonstration at Saukville Elementary School's Special Interest Day March 14.

The Fourth Annual Michigan TaeKwon-Do Tournament was held on January 26 in Cadillac, Michigan.

A gup level testing will be held at Grafton on February 7.

The Technical Corner Again

Question posed by the ever-insightful Master Earl Weiss in recent correspondence:

USTFGup requirement booklet - 6th Gup Sitting Stance characteristics. Available facings - Full or side.

Yoo Sin # 53 Stance to E, with Front Block to ED. "Front" denotes Center line of the body, so body must be half face??? in the sitting stance?

Something is wrong. Which is it?

Response:

The same question could well be asked of movement 52, could it not? Of course, in 52 they use the term "outward". Looking at the pictures for both, however, and granting that the pictures in the Encyclopedia are generally not the most reliable sources, I get a clear impression in 53, at any rate, that the front block is a true front block, centered relative to the centerline and equidistant from the shoulders, but that the shoulders themselves are twisted left from their normal position over the hips. In short, the sitting stance stays facing E but the upper body facing is half-facing to ED.

I suspect the comment in the Gup booklet is derived from the description of sitting stance in Vol. 2 of the Encyclopedia, "It is either full facing or side facing, both in attack and defence(sic)." (Vol 2, 4th Ed., p. 144)

Now, perhaps this means that there is an exception to the rule....

FVH

Reply (Master W.):

Well, that's what makes a stance half facing. The most common example is walking stance where the stance direction remains the same, but depending on the technique the upper body is either full or half facing.

Editor: Any other thoughts?

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The Contributions of a Solid Stance on Overall Success in Tae Kwon Do

By Artem Bordetskiy, First Dan

[Editor's Note: This essay was submitted by Artem Bordetskiy in partial fulfillment of his First Dan requirements. Mr. Bordetskiy, a most treasured and talented student of your editor, is a dual citizen of Uzbekistan and the United States and took the "Regional Best Black Belt Test Award," the Eagle Dagger, on November 3, 2007.]

When you just start Tae Kwon Do, when you show up for the first real class where you actually learn something, what is that first thing that gets taught? Is it how to kick something above your head? Is it how to jump three feet into the air? No, you learn how to stand in a correct and stable way: the stance.

Now, what could be the reason for that? A stance is the position of the body, which brings stability to the individual. If you can't stand up, then it is far more difficult to defend yourself in the art of Tae Kwon Do.

You want a stance to have just the right amount of balance so that you don't fall when you get hit by an opposing force, but not so low that you cannot easily move from your spot. If your knees are too bent, then it will be very hard to move because your center of gravity will be too far away from your points of contact (your feet) on the ground, causing you to fall in one direction when one point is moved. Finding that balance is crucial when you have to make a run for it.

What would happen if you tried to kick as hard as you can with locked legs and you miss? You would either fall flat on your face, or you would have to break your fall with something else: like your legs or arms. Either way, that split second that you squandered will end up losing you the fight out on the street.

The average street fight lasts no more than twenty seconds. That is how long it takes for the two people to find out which of them is better. It is not like chess, in where you think for

a while and then make each move. If you have a chance to think, then use it to run away. If you don't have that chance, what you do will be completely based on instinct. You will do what your body feels as natural in that situation.

If you have practiced making solid stances and recovery, you will stay on your feet. If you stand with your knees locked and feet close together, the first hit can knock you off balance; even if you block the attack you may have lost the fight.

Other positive aspects of a good stance are its contributions to the power, speed, and overall effectiveness of technique. When you stand in a position where you cannot be moved from your spot, you can use reciprocals with more force, which means that you can attack with more power with less effort. When you can endure the torque of your body turning in two different directions at once, your attack will become much stronger because you will use all your muscles to let loose an incredible amount of force while still staying in one place.

That is the purpose of a reciprocal, to allow you to attack without falling in the direction of the force by providing a counterforce going the other way. Once the reciprocal is mastered, techniques will have that distinguishing, "crispness," that looks good in tournaments.

Masters at Tae Kwon Do have gotten to where they are by accomplishing what it takes years of training and conditioning of the body to achieve, getting the basic techniques to such a level of precision that every time they are executed well. What I find very interesting about watching high levels of black belts do patterns is how relaxed they look during them. They are so fluid that it doesn't even look like they are moving their feet.

With a solid stance, sine wave is much easier to accomplish. When you have your feet in a proper placement, you can perform sine wave without having to step. When you look at it carefully, all techniques and all sine wave and power are derived from the stance. I guess that is why it gets taught first.

In short, many if not all of the techniques in Tae Kwon Do would be impossible without a proper foundation, so don't skimp on putting emphasis on your stances.