

I first started tae kwon do in May 2002 and had just turned 9. My best friend back then had joined a few weeks before and had asked me to come along. I agreed but I didn't have a clue what tae kwon do was to start with, so I didn't know what to expect. My first ever class I can remember training with Mrs Belgacem (3rd degree) doing all sorts of blocks and stances which felt a little weird to begin with but as I got to know what I was doing it started to feel normal. I usually train twice a week with Mr Belgacem (4th degree), although since April this year I have been attending extra classes for my grading. I go to Larkhall to train with Mr Belgacem and Blantyre to train with Master Kirkwood as well as practising at home.

When I first joined I was part of the Scottish Tae Kwon Do Association (STA) but soon changed to AIMAA Scotland. I feel my instructor Mr Belgacem has taught me well and is a very good instructor. Alongside Mr Belgacem there are Mrs Belgacem (3rd degree), Mr Shaw (2nd degree) and Miss Mallon (2nd degree), who are also very good instructors.

I love entering tournaments and over the past few years have been to two in Ireland and been successful in both of them. Usually in tournaments i get really nervous and have to keep going over my patterns and after a few times my mind goes blank, but I am usually o.k. when it is my turn to go up. Even though I get really nervous I always can't wait to the next tournament. I love cheering on the adults and the kids because I love the look on the kids faces when they win and in general I like when people from my own club win trophies and medals. I also love when I win as well. The best part of any tournament for me is doing one step with Tammy, as it is fun and enjoyable. One step is followed by sparring although I prefer points sparring to continuous.

In class I enjoy doing my patterns because I love to learn new techniques and combinations and patterns are a more fun way of learning them. Since I passed my 1st degree I have been helping out in class, from teaching lower belts their new patterns to just even holding pads for them I still find it enjoyable and love to pass my knowledge to help them to the next level of Tae Kwon Do. Also by helping out in class with the kids will help me in the future as when I

am older i want to be a nursery teacher and this will give me more experience for my career. I also wish to open my own Tae Kwon Do school when I am older with my cousin. So this is also a good way to learn how to teach lower belts correctly. In class I have learned discipline and have been able to do things I know I would just give up on before I started Tae Kwon Do . I have seen a big change in my confidence from when I started because I used to be shy round people and now I am more outgoing and confident this will also help me in school especially in drama.

Two years ago I sat my first degree and didn't think I would be able to do it because I was really nervous and didn't know what to expect. The First hour for me was the worst because I kept feeling ill, but after about an hour I started to calm down and start having fun. Now the time has come for me to sit my black belt 2nd degree and I feel more confident in myself because I know some of what to expect and know not to let my nervous get the better of me because I know if I do I will only be letting myself down as well as my instructor. I know to relax and have fun as well as putting everything I've got into my grading because its nothing I have never done before and I know it fine. So i just hope that I can get everything correct on the day.

Since passing my 1st degree it has given me more confidence and I have been disciplining myself a lot more because I know what it takes to pass a grading and being able to pass my 2nd degree would be the biggest achievement yet in Tae Kwon Do and it also feels good to know you have achieved one of the hardest things in Tae Kwon Do. Also becoming a first degree has opened my eyes to what teaching kids would be like and it has made me want to open a Tae Kwon Do school up of my own even more now than I had done before. I know I am going to find passing my 2nd degree alot harder and especially this year because of exams and I have to study bit I'm going to give it my best and hopefully its good enough to become a 2nd degree.