

1st Degree Essay
Ross Martin

On the 20th of October 2003 I was doing my first Tae Kwon Do lesson at Eddlewood Sports Barn . I had been watching my big cousin Alannah do it for almost a year now and I decided it was time for me to join in .

After my first few classes I finally settled in and kept going. When I first joined our club was called The Scottish Tae Kwon Do Association (STA) and we were affiliated with A.I.M.A.A but a few years later we moved on to being called A.I.M.A.A Scotland and were no longer called the STA .

I love training and always make the effort to go to as much classes as I can . I enjoy going to training on Tuesday and Wednesday because if I have a bad day at school , I could always look forward to going to Tae Kwon Do and forgetting all about it . I remember that once in primary school we had a Judo instructor coming to teach us some Judo and because I loved Tae Kwon Do that much that I refused to join in , incase I got mixed up at Tae Kwon Do - even though it was only for a few hours !

Three months after joining it was time for my first grading . Sir had taught us all the syllabus we needed for our grading including an exercise called Sajo Jirigu. After the grading I found out the next day that I had passed and I knew for sure that Tae Kwon Do was the right thing for me. Now that I am black tag I have had a lot of experiences through Tae Kwon Do. In this essay I will be writing about my experiences such as tournaments I have been in and other gradings I have went through.

The first tournament I went to was in the Eddlewood Sports Barn and it was about a month before my green belt grading. I can remember that I got 2nd place for sparring and for patterns I drew with a boy called Gary and we had to battle it out for 2nd place and I won. This tournament almost certainly increased my self confidence and definitely made me want to enter more competitions in the future.

One tournament I wont ever forget was one when I was a blue belt. It was held in Larkhall Leisure Centre and I was doing sparring and patterns. I had done my patterns and I got 2nd place and now it was time for me to spar. I was fighting with a boy and I got winded badly and I didn't want to go back in. Just as I was about to give up I remembered that I must follow the Tae Kwon Do aims to achieve and I knew that I had to go back in. When I went back in I can remember that I was determined to win and used a high section turning kick and I got 3 points. The score was now 5 - 4 to my opponent and as I was 2 seconds away from scoring another 3 points the whistle blew and I lost. Despite losing I was really happy because I knew that if the fight had just lasted a few more seconds I would have won .

When I was grading for my red belt I remember I went up to do Toi-Gye and I took a blank. I knew it perfectly before I went but when I went up there the nerves got to me. I got told to sit at the side and watch the others do it one by one then I got another chance. I went up and I remembered it all. Since then I have been a lot less nervous at gradings.

A recent tournament I went to was the A.I.M.A.A Scotland national championships. When I went to fight I dropped my guard and got punched in the face which resulted in me getting knocked out. My instructor told me that I had learned more than ever by getting knocked out than I would have learned if I had won the fight . I agree with this 100% because I will NEVER let my guard down again. The next day I got 2nd place for points sparring. I won my first fight 7-1 and at my second fight I was winning. It was 6-5 to me and we both scored with a side kick so it was now 8-7 and I was about to score with a turning kick to the head and win but he get there faster than me and he won because he got to 10 before me. Although I lost I was still over the moon with the result of second place compared to the result of yesterday. I also got second place for a team pattern with my friends.

Now that I am an older student me and a few other students have had the opportunity to help out with the kids at junior classes. I really enjoy doing this because I like helping them and it brings back memories from the time when I was that level and age . The kids listen to what you say and I have a lot of respect for them . Another reason I like helping out with the kids is because it is giving me more experience for instructing as ~~when I am older~~ my cousin and I are hopefully going to open our own Tae Kwon Do school when we are older and are a higher degree . If we do open our own school we will , of course , continue training with Mr and Mrs Belgacem.

10 months ago I was grading for my high red belt (black tag) I got really tired out and quite sweaty but me and my classmates kept pushing each other to do our best and we all passed. Now we are all grading for our first degree black belt and we will all do the same to help each other if need be . I will be grading , hopefully , with the people I usually grade with - My brother Alastair and my friends Taylor , Jamie , Lauren and Aaron . I am also quite excited at the concept it of grading with my big cousin Alannah and friends Tammy , Josh , Bobby and Samantha as this is my first grading with them . In addition to this I will also be grading with 2 of my instructors Mrs Belgacem and Mr Walker which I am looking forward to .

Now that I look back on my journey of Tae Kwon Do , I have went through many ups and downs but I am glad I have made it to this level. I can't thank Mr and Mrs Belgacem enough for getting me to this point in my Tae Kwon Do experience . Other people who have helped me along the way are ; Master Kirkwood , Mr Shaw , Miss Mallon , Mr Walker and last but not least my fellow students . I couldn't have made it to this point without any of you and I am fully grateful for this. Passing my black belt would mean everything to me and if I get my black belt I am going to maintain my level of training and strive to get 2nd degree. Before I joined Tae Kwon Do I was a shy little boy and it has changed me a lot . Now I am no longer as shy and a lot more confident in myself. Tae Kwon Do has definitely had an impact on my life and I wouldn't change the experience for the world.