



DECEMBER 13 GMA NEWSLETTER

Upcoming events:

- Dec 6th TTCA testing 5:30 (no regular TKD class)
- Dec 7th BJJ World Champion Andre Galvao seminar and black belt promotions 10:00-1:00
- Dec 7th Leadership Team outing 2:30.
- Dec 14th Deadline to be confident about receiving Xmas orders in time.
- Dec 14th Lil Dragons Testing (beg 9:00-10:30, int/adv 10:30-12:00)
- Dec 14th Black belt Prep class 11:00-1:00
- Dec 16th GMA Xmas Party, Awards Banquet, and Dance: 5:30-9:00. Morgan Co Fairgrounds. No class
- Dec 23rd-26th NO CLASS—Merry Christmas! (see below)
- Dec 27-28th Winter Daycamp: Martial Arts for Movies/Stage 9:00-3:00
- Dec 30th Winter Weapons camp Dec 30th 9:00-3:00
- Dec 31st-Jan 1st NO CLASS—Happy New Year
- Jan 2nd Catch up camp for rank

Xmas Party, Dance and Awards Banquet

This years Christmas party/awards banquet and dance has been scheduled for Dec 16th at the Morgan County Fairgrounds. Arrival and set up will be from 5:30-6:00. The dinner and awards banquet will begin at 6:00. Following the awards, Santa will make an appearance and there will be a DJ for a dance that will continue till 8:30 or 9:00 pm. This is a chance to join in some fellowship, recognize some key students and parents, and give Santa any last minute list revisions. Signs up for the pitch in dinner will be posted soon. We also need a very close idea of people attending for seating arrangements. No classes will meet that Mon. We hope everyone will be able to share in our annual event.

Winter Camps Coming Up Fast

Rather than having the kids sitting around stuffing themselves with candy, we take the vacation time to offer something special. Don't forget you can also make it a X-mas present. Camp price includes lunch and all the weapons or gear needed for the seminar and you can put the gear under the tree! Deadline to register to ensure the gear is here for the camp is Dec 14th. As a camp, there will still be time for lunch and dodgepad.

Catch up Camp, Jan 2nd This is an inexpensive chance for students who have missed/fallen behind the testing track or gotten a little rusty to be able to catch up in a specific rank requirement intensive. Also a great way to jumpstart a new belt color. Things can get hectic during the holidays. This is a chance to start the new year off strong.

Winter Weapons camp, Dec 30th. This year's camp is based on Mr. Sieg's favorite weapon, the cane. Great for both HKD and stickfighting students, as well as anyone who wants to learn a variety of techniques that are also very versatile to other "weapons." We haven't covered cane in this depth in years!

Movie/Stage combat camp Dec 27-28th. Things that look good on the big screen aren't always what they appear. Come see how they do the stunts without getting the stars hurt. Mr. Yoshida, who has worked on martial arts films and done fight choreography, will show some secrets. Participants will make their own movie fight scene, and we will unveil our action stars at a red carpet event. The release date of this debut has not been set. Great for anybody in demo or anyone with interest in movies/theater, etc. Both the camp and red carpet event was a huge success last year. By request, we have made the camp a two day event—for more practice and more filming time. However, as before, spaces are limited. Only a few can become action stars!

And the NOMINEES are:

This year we are announcing those students who are nominated for our yearly awards:

Student of the year: *Sabrina Chouinard, Cathy Petraits, Luke Wilson, Nate Wilson, Kyler Chylaszek, Luke Gamble*

Black Belt of the year: *Collyn Dodge, Richie Long, Dominick Spires, Aleah Spires, Ryan Spires, Keegan Spires*

Most Improved Student: *Nate Wilson, Josh Roberson, Dakota Gist, Finnegan Vandewalle, Karissa Cozee*

Competitor of the year (TKD): *Noah Wilson, Nate Wilson, Cathy Petraits, Luke Gamble, Bekah Wiley,*

Honorable mention—comp of year-- Kyler Chylaszek, Katherine Satter, Obed Soto



Training Anniversaries

Collyn Dodge (BJJ 5 yrs)

Dominc Tejera (BJJ 3 yrs)

Amy Hansen (HKD or TCC, 1yr)

Quotes of the Week: This month, with goal setting around the corner in Jan, we will be talking about the differences between the habits and behaviors of successful people and unsuccessful people.

GMA Wishes a Happy Birthday to:

Elijah Roberson 12/02

Austin Brummett 12/03

Bill Wells 12/05

Richie Long 12/07

Joshua Roberson 12/8

Torrey Hansen 12/08

Mike Miller 12/10

Collyn Dodge 12/12

Kyler Chylaszek 12/12

Frankie Williams 12/14

Christian Marion 12/18

Mrs. Yoshida 12/26

Baron Wendling 12/31

Please Plan ahead for Xmas Items

If you have any last minute Christmas shopping to do (don't we all) or need that stocking stuffer or whatever, just a reminder to please plan ahead. Many of our suppliers go out of stock of seasonal items and we want to make sure we minimize the delays in getting any special orders to you! *The last day to order Xmas items to ensure shipping (assuming availability) is Dec. 14th. Keep in mind, some things are already backed ordered past the holidays.*

Give another person the chance to “be more” this Christmas

Don't forget that you can get a gift certificate for a uniform and month of classes –100.00 value, for only a 25.00 cost to you (BJJ uniforms more). If you know anyone who has ever “thought about” doing martial arts, or if there is someone you know who “this would be good for”, this is your chance to get them off the fence and really reaping the benefits of training.

Parent Committee news:

- Please sign up for the Xmas party—also please consider helping set up at the fairgrounds during the day, starting at 10:30 am.

Class Cancellations for Holidays, class adjustments, and general policies

- No class on Thurs Dec 16th on account of the Christmas party...see you there.
- Holiday class cancellations: No class on Mon Dec 23 through Dec 26th on account of Christmas. Classes will resume Friday Dec 27th (evening classes and camps). Additionally, we will be closed Dec 31st and Jan 1st. Classes will resume with catch up camp and evening classes on Jan 2nd)
- Also a reminder of our general policy regarding bad weather. *We try* to follow the lead of local schools—if they cancel school that day, cancel evening events or let out early, so do we. If on morning delay, we will meet as normal (tai chi in the morning will follow the 2 hr delay). This applies to universal problems such as snow and ice, not things like flooding or other issues that may be more regionalized. The only exception to this may occur when the school cancels in advance of a huge storm and the forecast is *clearly* incorrect, or when crews have all day to work on the roads. When in doubt, simply call, check the website, check your email for announcements, listen to WCBK, etc.



The Knockout Game—Then and Now (How You Really Play It)

If you are little confused by the name of the game, I congratulate you on being insulated enough from mindless media to be out of the loop. You are better for it. “The Knockout Game” was reported a while back as an isolated yet deplorable story. Yet as media and social media sensationalized it, it only encouraged more people to do emulate it, and thus we have been bombarded with reports and security footage of “the game” spreading like influenza across various cities. The gist of the game of that you walk up to an unsuspecting individual and simply try to sucker-punch them out cold in the name of some twisted sport and show of bravado. If there are nuances to the game beyond that, I am not aware, because while I have seen and taken notice of the headlines, I have never once gotten to the meat of the story. I am not going to contribute to the buzz it craves or the sensationalism that is fueling it. And yet, I am writing about it here. First, I trust my audience is pretty safe to have a discussion with, yet I will encourage you to also try to avoid adding to the craze. And second, I will try to not talk specifically about the current trend but instead, opine about related things.

Believe it or not, this is not my first time of hearing about this game. Just going to prove there isn’t much new under the sun, I remember hearing about it approximately 20-25 years ago. That version went something like this: an unnamed but obviously “evil” martial arts school in the area would go to the mall on a weekend night. An instructor or upper rank would direct the lower rank student, as part of “a test” to knockout an individual of the senior’s choosing. This supposedly happened in the shopping mall in our area. Though I never recall a news account of any such incident, someone always knew a cop who knew the cop who investigated or some similar connection. And I heard that story retold a few times elsewhere in other parts. While I wouldn’t say I didn’t believe it, because I had no doubt there were people stupid and misguided enough somewhere to do it, I quickly filed it away under urban myths that have been way overblown—like people slashing you ankles from under your car, or being told to never flash your lights at oncoming cars, or they will turn around and shoot you as part of a gang initiation. (Remember those?) Honestly, I hadn’t thought about that story for a LONG time until this recent facebook scourge started popping up. But it was a great story—rumor mill and competitor bashing and cautionary tale with righteous indignation all rolled up into one. But it was a story about other guys—nameless, faceless, knuckleheads...because no one we knew or respected would do such a thing.

Except Grandmaster Choi. He played the “knockout game” as a teenager in Korea. Only his game had slightly different rules and stakes. He has shared this story several times to me and my students. As I retell it, I will ask you to withhold judgment until you hear my explanation afterwards.

GM Choi’s teacher and mentor was GM Hae Man Park, who was also in charge of TKD instruction to the presidential bodyguards at the Bluehouse (the Korean version of the Whitehouse). While still in high school, GM Choi showed enough promise for GM Park to take him under special guidance and be invited to training sessions with the guards. It is this special mentoring that paved the way for GM to become a presidential bodyguard himself. To this day, GM Park still calls GM Choi “kid.” One day as teacher and protégé were walking, GM Park pointed to a soldier on duty at a post, with machine gun in hand (whether a bodyguard or not I do not know) and instructed GM Choi to walk up and knock him out with one strike. After confirming that he had heard his instructor correctly, GM Choi proceeded to do so.

It is important to note some pretty important distinctions in this version of the “knockout game.” First, keep in mind this is not a challenge or dare among bored delinquents, but was a direct order from his teacher—in a country that puts a whole lot more emphasis on obeying seniors. The target was not an unsuspected citizen, but was an on duty, supposedly alert and armed soldier. That made the stakes of the game a lot higher. If GM Choi had failed, it likely would have resulted in him getting shot. That type of pressure would change the feel of the game, and provides a much more valuable lesson from it. Now, I am not sure on this point, but I am willing to guess that the soldier was also likely answerable to GM Park, and the “game” was really a “test” both ways. I would also like to think that GM Park would have been able to intervene before GM Choi was shot, had the soldier gotten higher marks on said test, but again, I don’t know that for sure, nor do I know what happened to the soldier after the fact. What I do know is this was a much higher stakes game among two combatants, orchestrated by a teacher who had a higher purpose for playing the game.

I am sure the people playing the current game have deluded themselves into thinking it is some way to show how tough and bad they are. In reality, picking on an unsuspecting victim is cowardly and dishonorable. Even worse, they often have the security of the group to fall back on, should things go wrong. I doubt I will ever see a facebook post where the game was played against an on-duty and armed police officer that also had backup.

And therein lies the one good lesson to be learned from this--to help people understand the sudden and “unfair” nature of predatory violence. Most people think of “fights” as being very symmetrical, where both people are in each



other's faces, roll up their sleeves and agree to go outside. That stuff is quite easy—easier to deal with and easier to think about—than the predator who looks for an unsuspecting victim and attacks without warning. I had a student in a FAST class once, who after having failed to establish a boundary and letting me get way to close, still took issue with the fact that I gently slapped him in the face, “You didn’t teach me what to do, how to block, you’re supposed to show me some moves to fight back or something.” I tried to explain (to no avail) that the first way to keep from getting hit is not letting people get close enough to hit you. Admittedly easier said than done sometimes. But he also failed to understand another key point. He was delusional about how the scenario would have played out. After having gotten the drop on him as I could have, he would have been either laid out completely or so far behind in the game (sorry to use that term) that there would have been no defense mustered. He had some type of Hollywood fight script in his mind, not predatory violence.

I trust that our students who are trying to BE GENTRY are equally appalled at the newest rendition of the knockout game, yet more importantly, can still learn from it. Not surprisingly, I have an opinion on it. But I must admit that having been around to see two other versions of the game makes me feel a bit old. Certainly GM Choi’s version is a little more honorable. It is the difference between bush league tactics and a game among pros. There is a part of me that would like to time warp the punks of today to meet a young Choi, Young Sik, because they deserve to be shown how the game is really played. --BLS