



You Should Go To Master Camp

By *Anthony Pietrantonzi*



Photo Courtesy of ISKF

As June approached, I had heard about Master Camp more and more from Sensei Jeff and Kim Weber. Before and after training, they both would often regale us with their experiences with previous camps, noting in particular, the quality of training and the various international friends they had made. It was very clear that Master Camp was an experience that I should take part in as soon as possible, and I will be forever grateful that they convinced me to attend.

For the uninitiated, a typical day at Master Camp has three to four training sessions (depending on your rank) interspersed with three meals and plenty of free time. This rigid schedule combined with constantly being around other *karateka* is what I imagine being immersed in another culture is like. Instead of only being able to dedicate so much time in and outside of the dojo every week, I was able to spend the vast majority of my waking hours training and reflecting on how to improve my karate.

The benefit of more consistent and rigorous training wouldn't be nearly as rewarding without the vast wealth of knowledge present at camp. All ranks are accepted, so if you can I would encourage you to attend before you obtain a *dan* rank. There are many black belts that attend Master Camp, and those class sizes can result in less individual instruction from one of the several incredible *Senseis*. I attended Master Camp 2023 as a brown belt, and was lucky enough to have a few classes that only had a handful of students. I received much more targeted instruction from both Sensei Miura and Sensei Hirata- whose experience and expertise are immediately apparent. Brown belts are

also integrated into the classes with black belts, so while you may not get as much attention from the Sensei teaching the class you will almost certainly get advice or any questions answered from black belts/ assistant instructors nearby. All in all you will receive excellent training regardless of your skill level, but I believe an environment like this is especially beneficial for every *kyu* rank.

It cannot be understated how enjoyable it is to do the kind of training at Master Camp with like minded individuals who are also striving to be better. The camp is open to the entirety of the ISKF, so attendees fly in from all over the world. The result is an amazing group of people from various walks of life working towards a common goal of improvement. Getting to hear so many different perspectives on both Shotokan Karate and life in general was enlightening, and made the four days I spent there an experience I will not soon forget. I definitely plan on returning to Master Camp in the future whenever I can. I am certain my karate will improve every time I attend.

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Preparing For Dan Exams

By Martin Schrager

Dan exams are important milestones in the study of karate. For *dan* grades *Shodan* (first degree) through *Yondan* (fourth degree) the requirements are primarily physical with each successive level requiring a deeper understanding of movement and the proper application of speed and power. In addition to a physical exam, grades beyond *Yondan* require a thesis where the *karateka* must articulate their knowledge in writing. While the curriculum provided by your instructor is an excellent course of study, formal dojo training alone is not enough to advance to a deep level of understanding.

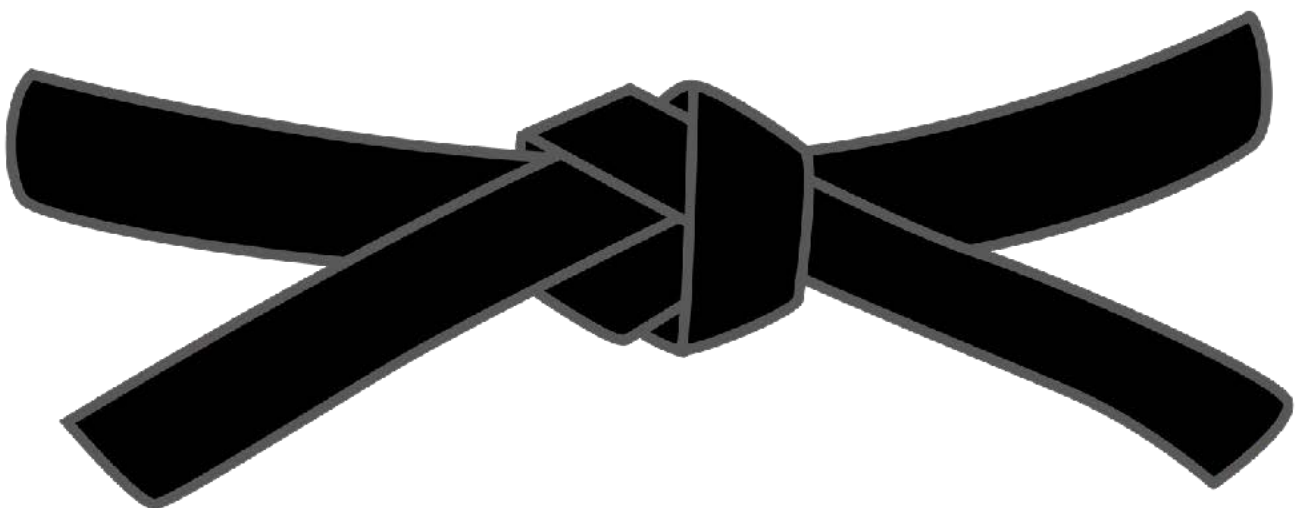
Advancement in rank is recognition that a *karateka* has acquired the skills for the respective rank. However, one does not become a *Shodan* (or *Nidan* or *Sandan* etc.) upon receiving a passing grade. They are already there. The rank promotion is simply codification of one's effort.

The goal of testing is not just to receive a passing grade, but rather it is the process of learning and explosive growth experienced when a proper training regimen is followed. Training two to three times per week in the dojo is the absolute minimum. However, all too often, it is the amount of training students perform prior to an exam. If this is the only time one dedicates, it will lead to a failing or debatable passing grade. There should be no question in the examiner's mind if the *karateka* deserves a rank promotion.

Dan exams should be approached with the utmost seriousness and not be taken for granted. Simply training for the requisite amount of time is not sufficient. In fact, it detracts from the purpose of testing. In the year leading up to the exam, students should establish a regimen of individual training. This individual training will lead to self-discovery, which is the only way to gain a deep level of understanding of karate beyond basic punching and kicking proficiency. While this may sound extreme, it does not require two or three hours of intense training every day. 30-45 minutes on two to three days outside regular formal dojo training should be sufficient.

You must also train with purpose and self-reflection. Repeating a technique 500 times is of no use if you aren't actively critiquing your movement, identifying weaknesses, and applying the principles you learn from your instructor.

As a follow-up to this article, in the next edition of the Mid-America Monitor I will provide details on self-training and how to approach it, with a focus on testing preparation. While students will develop their own training regimen, I have found some very specific elements that can be helpful for anyone.



Learning How to Be a Good Sempai

By *Wendy McVicker*

As we know, a lot of our karate training comes by way of imitation: we imitate the form our Senseis and Sempais model, long before we figure out how to internalize, let alone transmit, that form to others. If we're paying attention, we're also observing and imitating the behavior of our seniors, not only the brown and black belts in our dojo, but also those who are a "mere" step above us, in rank and experience. Here are some of the ways I've learned to be a good Sempais to those around me.

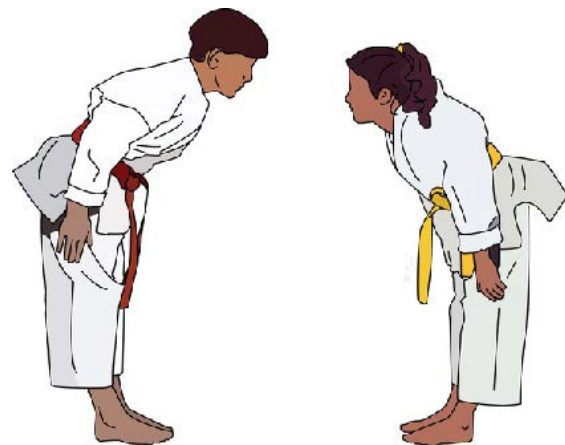
I first started karate training with my sons, in a class that was then mostly children and moms. Occasionally *karateka* from the university club would join us, bringing their sizzling energy. When I was a blue belt, I went over to OU to check things out. It was intimidating to walk into the gym, see all the brown and black belts and late teen and 20somethings warming up. I was extremely nervous! Then someone I didn't know, a woman wearing a purple belt, came over to me, introduced herself, and welcomed me to the dojo. I have never forgotten this and vowed I would do the same for new people I saw entering the dojo with "that look" in their eyes.

Later, as a green belt, I found myself asked to help a blue belt with Heian Sandan. Fortunately, I had in the recent past attended a clinic with Sensei Golden, who had gone over this kata in some detail. One of the revelatory points he made was still in the forefront of my mind, and I was able to share it with the other student (thus, by the way, internalizing it for myself). Later, when I thanked Sensei Golden for this tip, he said, "That's how this works: whatever we learn, we pass on to those coming up behind us." It was a powerful lesson, one I've repeated to students many times and try to live — not only in the dojo.

There are so many other instances of how I've learned from my seniors. Of course, we learn invaluable karate form and wisdom from our Senseis. We also learn from our Sempais, and anyone who has spent even a little time in the dojo is a Sempai to someone. If we want our karate to be more than a sport, to be a true martial art; if we want to be martial artists, and not simply athletes, we need to attend to this aspect of our training: absorbing and passing on, sharing rather than hoarding, all that karate has given us and that we value so much.

The other night, I arrived at the dojo and saw one of our blue belts working with a white belt, sharing the partner drill the latter had missed from the previous class. I thought: this is what I like to see, this is what I like to foster; this is one of the many reasons I am proud and happy to be part of our system of karate, and of our region, which has taught me so much, through wonderful instructors and also through innumerable beloved Sempais.

Remember: somebody's watching you! Be worthy of that attention.



Mid-America Hosts the 43rd Annual ISKF US Nationals

By Martin Schrager



Mid-America Competitors and Volunteers at the 2023 ISKF US National Tournament

Photo Courtesy of Mid-America ISKF

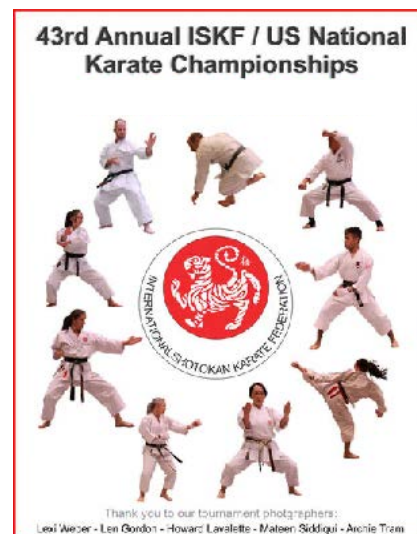
2023 was an exciting year for Mid-America. Each year, the US National tournament is hosted by a different region and November 10-12th marked our turn. This is a great honor and no small task. Competitors from around the country gather to participate in this tournament that promotes camaraderie, karate spirit, and learning.

This year, the tournament was held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Columbus, OH. Over 80 competitors from Mid-America attended and over 180 *karateka* competed in all. Our strong spirit as a region was evident with great attendance and great outcomes. Mid-America *karateka* took home 81 individual and 13 team medals, by far the most ever for our region. By any measure, it was an incredibly successful event and highlights the strength of our region.

A very special thank you is in order for Jeff Weber, our tournament director who ran a flawless event and put in countless hours of work. Other supporters include; our Chief Instructor, Sensei Martin Vaughan; our Assistant Instructor, Sensei James Oberschlake;

our assistant tournament director, Kim Weber, our ring manager, Michelle Randall, our flooring coordinator, Marty Schrager; and especially, our team coach, Carol Glenn. Without the support of these leaders, the tournament could not have happened.

Thank you all and congratulations to all competitors, volunteers and support staff.



A Note From the Coach

By Carol Glenn



Hello Mid-America!

Can you believe it? We're already into 2024; Winter Camp/*Kangeiko* is already in the rear-view mirror, and the month of January is too. We have a busy year planned and some of our events are scheduled earlier than in the past. Mid-America

Spring Camp is in March and our Regional Tournament is in April this year. In addition, the 44th Annual ISKF Tournament is in October in Las Vegas; all of these are about a month earlier than usual.

The reason for this note is to ask for your help and support to encourage all students to compete in the Regional Tournament in April, there are divisions for all ages and all skill levels. I'm especially asking instructors to encourage your students, all ages, to form kata teams to participate in the Team Kata event.

Creating kata teams now will give your students a couple months of practice before the Regional Tournament competition.

This past November our Region hosted the ISKF National Tournament in Columbus. We had 80 students, including 35 youth, participate from 11 different Mid-America clubs. We accumulated over 80 Individual medals and 13 Team medals. It's not too soon for you and your students to start thinking about, and planning to attend and participate in this year's ISKF National Tournament, October 26-27, in Las Vegas.

We plan to have Team Trainings again this year, some coinciding with Regional events and some as stand-alone trainings. Watch your emails for information on Team Trainings for you and your students, starting in the next few months.

Keep up the hard work and thank you all for a great year!



*Coach Carol Glenn Leading Team Training at the 43rd ISKF US Nationals
Photo Courtesy of Mid-America ISKF*

In Memory of Yaguchi Sensei

By Bruce Green

On October 26th, 2023 we lost our dear friend and mentor, Sensei Yutaka Yaguchi. Karateka from all over the world are mourning his passing. Below is a brief biography and his obituary as written by Bruce Green, formerly of Mid-America.



Yutaka Yaguchi was born on November 14, 1932, in Kure, Hiroshima area, Japan, to a farming family. Yaguchi was the youngest of five children, he had a happy childhood, but the clouds of World War II were all around him. Assigned a job at a shipyard, on the morning of August 6, 1945, he witnessed the flash of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima while waiting to enter the factory building at the shipyard.

After the war, Sensei Yaguchi was able to resume his education, and was able to go to university, unlike many of his former school mates. He went to Nihon University in Tokyo, and this is where he first began studying Shotokan karate in 1952 and soon became a noteworthy collegiate competitor. He tested under Master Funakoshi (Shotokan founder) for his first and second-degree black belts. The training at this time was very intense, and conditioning was of prime importance. Sensei Yaguchi graduated with a degree in Marine Biology, but didn't like sailing, so after graduation he found a job with a construction company.

One day in 1957, Master Nakayama asked Sensei Yaguchi to quit his construction job and join the new Japan Karate Association (JKA) Instructor Training (IT) Program full time. Mr. Yaguchi quit his job the next day and enrolled. When he graduated from the program in 1959, he was the fourth graduate behind Hirokazu Kanazawa, Takayuki Mikami, and Eiji

Takaura. Sensei Yaguchi was a participant in the first JKA All-Japan Karate Championships in 1957. Over the next half dozen years, he faced many of the greatest karate competitors, many who have subsequently been recognized as true masters of the art such as Hirokazu Kanazawa, Takayuki Mikami, Tetsuhiko Asai, Hiroshi Shirai, and Keinosuke Enoda. As one of the first graduates of the JKA IT Program in 1959, he played a substantial role in the growth of JKA karate and the internationalization of Shotokan karate.

In June 1965, Master Nakayama sent Mr. Yaguchi to the U.S. to begin teaching at Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama's dojo in Los Angeles where he also assisted in establishing the L.A. dojo and the new JKA IT Program for the U.S. Soon after, in the late 60s, he was invited to teach in Denver, Colorado, by Joe Costello. This invitation and association with Colorado would lead to Sensei Yaguchi relocating to Denver, Colorado, in 1972. Sensei Yaguchi was also the coach for the U.S. team at the 1972 Shotocup World Tournament in France that was controversial, where the U.S. team, led by Frank Smith, withdrew from the tournament, objecting to unqualified refereeing.

In 1977, tension among the Japanese instructors in the All-American Karate Federation/AAKF, the American organization recognized by the JKA, culminated in a heated meeting in Los Angeles. This resulted in an organizational split. Sensei Nishiyama retained control of the AAKF and other Japanese sensei joining him were Senseis M. Mori, K. Kisaka, S. Sugiyama, and R. Fusaro. The other faction was led by Teruyuki Okazaki, and joined by T. Mikami, Y. Yaguchi, S. Koyama, and S. Takashina, R. Dalke, G. Golden, F. Smith, J. Field, R. Reilly, and R. Hassle and others, and formed a new organization called the International Shotokan Karate Federation (ISKF). Their first organizational meeting was held in Denver, Colorado, in 1978.

In Memory of Yaguchi Sensei

By Bruce Green

In 1986, Sensei Yaguchi began providing instruction in Denver for one of the only JKA/ISKF IT Programs in North, Central, and South America. Most recently, Sensei Yaguchi served as Vice Chairman of the ISKF, and Chairman of the ISKF Technical Committee. Sensei Yaguchi, who retired in 2016, was the Chief Instructor Emeritus, ISKF Mountain States Region. He resided in Denver, Colorado, and had occasionally offered clinics throughout North America. As of 2020, sensei Yaguchi became a special technical advisor to the JKA. His training continued in his basement which he had remodeled into a small dojo up until his passing. Sensei Yaguchi was a very popular and engaging senior Japanese instructor in the North, Central, and South American JKA and ISKF circles, and will be greatly missed by his many students. Sensei Yaguchi passed away on October 26, 2023, in Denver, Colorado, USA. He is survived by his wife Mieko, his two children, Hiroshi and Janet, and one grandchild.



Master Yutaka Yaguchi and Mieko Yaguchi, September 29, 2023

“...I want to live on in my students' minds. I hope my students never forget me. If they keep a picture of me in their minds of the way I taught, the way I moved, and the techniques I taught them, I will have succeeded. Students go through many teachers in their lifetimes, but there is always that special teacher. I would like to be that special teacher.”

Mind and Body — Like Bullet, p. 106, Second Edition



Recent Dan Promotions Congratulations to All!

Name	Club Affiliation	Rank Achieved
Anthony Pietrantozzi	Anderson	Shodan (1st)
Dare Aina	Ohio Valley	Shodan (1st)
Geno Cardosi	Ohio Valley	Shodan (1st)
Miranda Jorges	Creekside	Shodan (1st)
Robert Stum	Athens	Shodan (1st)
Lisa Kowalsky	Ohio State University	Nidan (2nd)
Doug Fadely	Columbus	Nidan (2nd)
Adam Clouser	Ohio State University	Yondan (4th)
Laura Graham	Brown County	Godan (5th)
Marty Schrage	Ohio Valley	Rokudan (6th)
Jeffrey Weber	Anderson	Shichidan (7th)
Kim Weber	Anderson	Shichidan (7th)
Carol Glenn	Swartz Creek	Shichidan (7th)
Sensei James Oberschlake	Brown County	Hachidan (8th)
Sensei Martin Vaughan	Michigan ISKF	Hachidan (8th)



Recent Certifications Congratulations to All!

Name	Club Affiliation	Certification
Michael Baker	Brown County	Judge Level D
Kate Brown	Brown County	Judge Level D
Adam Piccirillo	Anderson	Judge Level D
Chip Poirot	Flowing Rivers	Judge Level D
Steve Robbins	Creekside	Judge Level D
Frank Snyder	Creekside	Judge Level D
Tim Cofrancesco	Brown County	Judge Level C
Laura Graham	Brown County	Examiner Level D
Carol Glenn	Swartz Creek	Examiner Level C
Sensei James Oberschlake	Brown County	Examiner Level A
Sensei Martin Vaughan	Michigan ISKF	Examiner Level A
Marty Schrage	Ohio Valley	Instructor Level D
Carol Glenn	Swartz Creek	Instructor Level C

Recent Honors Congratulations to All!

Name	Club Affiliation	Honor
Adam Clouser	Ohio State	Meritorious Service Award
Adam Clouser	Ohio State	US Men's Kata Team Selection
Adam Clouser	Ohio State	US Men's Kumite Team Selection
Zaarah Syed	Ohio State	US Women's Kumite Team Selection
Dax Smith	Brown County	2024 Mid-America Scholarship Winner
Zander Smith	Brown County	2024 Mid-America Scholarship Winner
Coinne Gao	Ohio State	2024 Mid-America Scholarship Winner
Stacie Worrel	Athens	2024 Mid-America Scholarship Winner

Mid-America Gives Back

By Adam Clouser

Mid-America acknowledges its duty to serve the communities that support us through a give-back each year during our annual *kangeiko* training. This year, we donated food and school supplies to the Ohio State University’s ‘Buckeye Food Alliance’, a charity established in 2016 to support college students facing food insecurity. It’s just one way that Mid-America *karateka* seek to uphold our region’s vision by fulfilling our duty to a community that has housed not only a regional club but many of our regional events for over fifty years.

If you’d like to learn more or consider giving back to the Buckeye Food Alliance, you can read about their vision here: <https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/our-vision>



Alec Admonius – Founder of the Buckeye Food Alliance pictured here in the newly created headquarters in 2016.



2023 food donations from Mid-America to the Buckeye Food Alliance

Sensei Vaughan



Chief Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei Martin Vaughan trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki for over 40 years and is our Chief Instructor and Regional Director. He is also President of the ISKF.

Sensei Oberschlake



President and Assistant Instructor, ISKF Mid-America Region

Sensei James Oberschlake trained under Sensei Golden and Master Okazaki starting in 1974. He is also the Chief Instructor of the Brown County Shotokan Karate Club.

Calendar

March 16-17 - Spring Camp with Sensei David Jones

Location: The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH

April 6 - Regional Tournament and Board of Directors Meeting

Location: The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH

June 7-14 - ISKF Master Camp

Location: Camp Green Lane, Green Lane, PA

Contributors

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Mr. Pietrantozzi, 1st *Dan*, is a student at Shotokan Karate of Anderson in Cincinnati, OH

WENDY MCVICKER

Mrs. McVicker, 4th *dan*, is the Chief Instructor at the Athens Karate Club in Athens, OH

CAROL GLENN

Mrs. Glenn, 7th *dan*, is the chief instructor at the Swartz Creek Karate Club in Swartz Creek, MI and Mid-America team coach.

BRUCE GREEN

Mr. Green, 8th *dan*, is the chief instructor of the Boulder Shotokan Karate club at the Arapahoe YMCA in Lafayette, CO and a former Mid-America *karateka* under Sensei Greer Golden.

ADAM CLOUSER

Mr. Clouser, 4th *dan*, is the chief instructor at The Ohio State University Karate Club in Columbus, OH.

Editor

MARTY SCHRAGER

Mr. Schrager, 6th *dan*, is the Chief Instructor of the Ohio Valley Karate Club in Cincinnati, OH.

Associate Editor

MICHELLE RANDALL

Ms. Randall, 2nd *dan*, is a student at Michigan ISKF in Holly, MI.