

BY BRIAN MILLER

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ENHANCING LIVES

First Ever Tae Kwon Do Team Competitions

After six months of preparation, planning and dedication, we have finally arrived! On January 14th, Cutting Edge Martial Arts and three other schools from the Capital Region Martial Arts Alliance (CaRMAA) came together to be the first schools ever to host a series of team based competitions in Tae Kwon Do!

I took the road less traveled to become a martial arts school owner. Most started as kids and worked their way through the ranks, eventually teaching full time as a Head Instructor at their Master's or Sensei's school. This apprenticeship role helps the school owner and teaches the head instructor the process of running a successful martial arts school. This was not, however the way I came into owning my school. When I was fifteen, I had a huge falling out with my instructor. I didn't agree with the way he treated his students, so I took a long break from martial arts, quickly moving into the next phase of my life—team sports. I was one of the Captains of the Shen football team in 1998 and went on to play football for two years at the University at Albany. Having traveled along this path, I learned so much about the greatness of teamwork, helping others, and inspiring people. When I eventually did go back to martial arts, I had gained a new perspective. I decided to open my own school with the goal of one day offering the wonderful aspects of Tae Kwon Do competition with the added benefits that come from team based sports.

Almost five years after opening Cutting Edge, we hosted our first of five events known as the CaRMAA Team Circuit. Our first event was Traditional Tae Kwon Do Forms, our second was Board Breaking, the third event is Olympic Style Sparring, fourth is the TKD Decathlon (ten fun, challenging events



similar to a traditional decathlon, but with a martial arts flare), and our final event is our Championship. What has proven so great about our first two events came from the fact that we created six teams (The Cranes, Monkeys, Praying Mantis, Dragons, Snakes, and White Tigers) all of which are extraordinarily diverse. Each team is made up of students of all ages, ranks, and from different schools. Instead of a traditional tournament where a student will receive a gold, silver, or bronze medal for their individual achievement, the team circuit has a point system for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Points are awarded to the team each time a teammate places in their division. The points are tallied and continue through the season (points are doubled in the Championship). The promotion of camaraderie within teams and throughout the martial arts field has been fantastic for our students so far—we can't wait for the next event. All events are open to the public and the schedule of tournaments can be found at www.CaRMAA.org.

Brian Miller
President/Head Instructor
Cutting Edge Martial Arts

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