



MARTIAL ARTS FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS, LLC

September 2026 Newsletter



Where Are The Children Black Belts?

There has been a change in the martial arts landscape taking place that has changed the number of black belts one finds now days. When the martial arts first started to be taught in America, typically from military service men who were exposed to the martial arts overseas or instructors that these same service men helped bring to America to teach, classes were almost predominately made up of adults. As time went on some teenagers could be found in the classes but the martial arts was still for the most part an activity for adults. In the early to mid 1980s children started to make up more and more of the student base in martial art schools. Today some school's student populations are almost entirely made up of children.

Having such a large number of children in the martial arts is a good thing. Those students that decide to stick with the martial arts are the future instructors and leaders in the martial arts community. Unfortunately, having such a large number of children in the martial arts has lead in some instances to a decrease in the expectations and requirements to earn a black belt. School to school and organization to organization the requirements will vary as to what makes a person ready to be a black belt. In the old days one could expect to train hard and consistently at least 4-5 years before being eligible to test for black belt rank.

Today is a little different. I know of schools that test as often as every 6-8 weeks and in about 2 years attending class once or twice a week a child can get a black belt. I know of other schools where it is going to be a long challenging journey of at least 5-7 years for an adult before someone earns their black belt. In our school we try to stick to the older expectations of what it is to truly become a black belt. Being a black belt means one needs to have a minimum competency of the physical skills, emotional maturity, an understanding of what type of behavior is expected in the martial arts, and a minimum age of 16, for those under 16 there are Poom Dan or junior black belt levels. This will take about 4 years or so for an adult who is attending class regularly and progressing at an average rate.

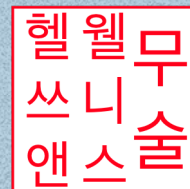
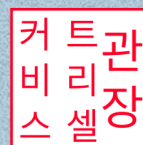
When I started in the martial arts in 1990 in TaeKwonDo there were no ranks for youth and ranks for adults like we use today. The children were expected to know the same amount of material that an adult of the same rank was expected to know. Testing every 3 months most adults were ready but young children may have waited 6-9 months or more before being ready to test. Now days we use more stripes and belts with the youth to break up the material into smaller more manageable amounts of material the children are expected to learn before being allowed to test. By doing this the children are seeing a visual indicator of their progress in the stripes and belts they earn while we give them more time truly learn and understand the material they are learning. When a child has an advanced rank, a long black stripe down the middle of their belt, they should know and understand the same amount of material that an adult was expected to know to earn a stripe on their belt.

At times it looks like black belt are given out to children like participation ribbons. Sometimes it seems people are only concerned with getting the black belt and not wanting to truly earn it. Earning a black belt is a journey but one needs to stay in the moment and work hard to eventually get to that goal of black belt. Once a person achieves black belt there is still more to learn and another journey can begin. By giving children more time to develop the skills they are learning and being at least 16 years old before earning their black belt we are trying to put out people who truly know and understand what they are learning in the martial arts. So, as you work toward your goal or destination always keep an eye on the path so you truly see everything on the journey.

Take care,

Kirby Strissel

Kwan Jang - Martial Arts For Health & Wellness, LLC
Administrator - Korea/USA Simmudo Association





Bamboo

Continuing on with some of the symbolism in the logo we use is the bamboo. Bamboo was chosen because of two of its traits.

Strength and flexibility. Bamboo is a very durable plant that is still used today in some countries for scaffolding while building modern day steel and glass sky scrapers, hence the strength. Bamboo is also a supple and yielding plant if you have every seen a bamboo forest gently swaying in the wind, hence the flexibility.

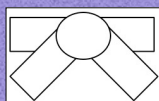
In the martial arts it is important to have a balance of both strength and flexibility in your techniques. There are times where strength is



of importance and other times where one needs to be flexible. If one relies too much on strength without being able to yield you can be over powered by someone stronger like the unmoving tree that is broken in a strong wind.

At the same time if you are always yielding and giving way you can never redirect or overcome your partner's offense like the grass that gets trampled underfoot and cannot stand up again. There is a balance of strength and flexibility that we want to achieve to be both strong and yielding in our martial arts, not one or the other.

Thursday September 10, 2026 Promotion Test



White Belts

5:00 PM

Yellow Belts

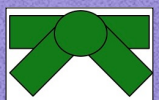
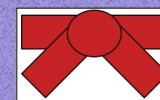
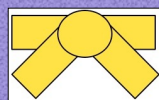
6:00 PM

Green & Blue

7:00PM

Red Belts

8:00 PM



There will be no regular class on test night for white, yellow, green and blue belts. Red and black belts can and should attend the red belt testing to assist with any red belts testing and prepare for future testing this evening.

If you have any questions contact Kirby Strissel.

October 2026 Schedule Changes

	Monday	Wednesday	Thursday
5 PM	White & Yellow Belts	Green & Blue Belts	White & Yellow Belts
6 PM	Green & Blue Belts	White & Yellow Belts	Green & Blue Belts
7 PM	Red & Black Belts	Red & Black Belts	Red & Black Belts
8 PM	TBA Later	TBA Later	TBA Later

Starting in October 2026 we will be doing a schedule change to add a new class later in the evening. More information will come about the 8 PM class.

