



MARTIAL ARTS FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS, LLC

October 2025 Newsletter



You Don't Need To Be The Best In Class To Improve

Comparing oneself to others is just part of being human. We can look at what other people have accomplished, what they know, or what they may have and think to ourself, "Why haven't I done that, I should know more about that, or why can't I have that." Rather than us focusing on other people we need to step back and take a look at ourself and what we have done to improve ourself.

Often times in the martial arts there will be a wide variety of skill levels present in one class. These skill levels can be represented by the various skill levels denoted by the various colored belts and stripes a student wears. Other times the skill level is noticeable by watching the students technique. There could be five people all the same rank but each will still have a different level of skill. If we start comparing ourself too much to our peers if we perceive them as more skilled than us it can lead to a cycle of never feeling like we are improving or getting better.

Instead of looking at a person who may have a higher skill level or technical knowledge and thinking we can't achieve that we should try to get closer to that skill level. I have experienced this myself many times over the years. I have been lucky to work with a number of martial artists who were much more skilled than me. One person who I was fortunate enough to work with was Sean Sullivan who represented Ireland in the 1996 Summer Olympics. Although Sean did not place in the top three in the Olympics he was at one time in the top 10 in Europe. In short he was on a completely different level than any of us in the Rochester Judo Club.

The night I met Sean I was running a TaeKwonDo class in the front of my instructor's school and two gentleman stopped in to inquire about the Judo class. I could barely understand Sean even though he was speaking English, after about two weeks the Irish accent wasn't a problem, when he asked about working out with the group. After I finished teaching I went to change into my Judo gi. Before I even started to my Judo coach came in and said to get my butt out on the mat because we had a great opportunity. Well, that night I hit the mat more ways than I could remember and was always thrown with the highest level of skill and control I have experienced.

Sean was able to set his grip, off balance, and throw us without us knowing what was happening until we were on the mat. Not one of us was able to throw him that night. This was a rare opportunity we had to work with a Master of his craft. Sean was visiting the host family he stayed with in High School for about 6 months and freely shared his knowledge with us. In the beginning we were all getting thrown, arm barred, choked out, or pinned without being able to do anything. By the end myself and everyone else that stuck with it were able to avoid being thrown for a while, albeit only a minute or less for most of us, while working with Sean. I even threw him once, it would have been a koka (1/8 point), which means it was a throw but it was not a very good one. I did a deashi-harai (advancing foot sweep) and caught Sean by surprise causing him to go down onto his butt, smile, do a one-legged squat up from the mat and proceed to throw me in the span of about 2 seconds.

If I had looked at the skill level Sean had compared to mine and thought, "I can never be that good," or, "I can't do anything to him so I may as well quit," I never would have improved in Judo like I did. I am by no means great at it, decent at best, but much better than I would have been if I quit. I learned some ways to refine my technique and different ways of doing things that allowed me to improve my overall skill level. I looked at the person who was the best in the class and worked to close the gap between us.



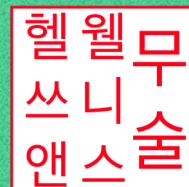
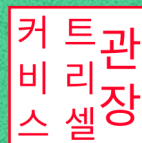


Whatever we do in life at times we will compare ourselves to others and find times where we may be the best at something, the worst, or somewhere in the middle. If you find yourself looking at the people around you and thinking they are better at something than you try to use that as motivation. Wherever we fall we can work to improve that position. Hard work and perseverance are not only going to help people excel in the martial arts but in all areas of their lives. Also, if you are the best at something try to help others around you improve to become a better version of themselves.

Take care,

Kirby Strissel

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



September 2025 Promotion Test Results

9th Gup White

Neaksor Chim

Int. 7th Gup Yellow

Caleb King

Julietta Petrussek

Adv. 5th Gup Green

Arthur Mielke

Int. 3rd Gup Blue

Theodore Li

Int. 9th Gup White

Chance Jones

Adv. 7th Gup Yellow

Ishaan Anavekar

4th Gup Blue

Cyrus Choung

William Kopiiievskyi

2nd Gup Red

Jayden Batson

Sylar Choung

Nov. 8th Gup Yellow

Arlo Petersen

Nov. 6th Gup Green

Thomas Banda

3rd Gup Blue

Dhruv Bathla

Philip Kopiiievskyi

1st Gup Red

Jameon Petersen

8th Gup Yellow

Noah Boswell

6th Gup Green

Lucas Fontana

Karlee Mielke

Shane Petersen

7th Gup Yellow

Anisha Bathla

5th Gup Green

Caleb Banda

Jessica Thach

Next Testing: December 11, 2025

Tuition Rate Increase

Starting January 2026 the monthly tuition for RAC members and non-members will be increasing by \$5/month. There will still be a family discount for families with multiple students enrolled in the program.

This program is a separate business from the Rochester Athletic Club and occasionally tuition increases and changes are needed to cover operating expenses and make this venture with the RAC continue. If you have any questions please let me know.

