COMPETITION

Whereas baseball and football are the national sports of the United States, Tae Kwon Do is now the national sport of Korea. Tae Kwon Do was recently recognized as a competitive sport on the international scene by the International Military Sports Council, which has sixty-five member nations, and the General Assembly of International Sports Federations, a member group of the Olympic Committee. This should pave the way for increased international competition in Tae Kwon Do and, hopefully, in the near future, acceptance as an official Olympic sport. Tae Kwon Do is presently represented by the American Athletic Union (AAU) as an official sport in the United States.

SELF DEFENSE

The importance of being able to defend oneself cannot be overemphasized. Every person has the power and potential ability to fight in self-defense, but few truly understand how to use their talents. Often people think of themselves as being weak only because they do not know how to use their true strength.

One of the goals of Tae Kwon Do is to make the individual aware of his natural strength and teach him to apply them to his greatest advantage. Mere powerful kicks and punches as well as the graceful movement of Tae Kwon Do will enable a person to defend himself by using any part of his body, but mostly his leg. The individual proficient in Tae Kwon Do will develop self-confidence because of the power and ability that has been mastered. This self-confidence will spread over all other aspects of life.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

For almost 2,000 years Tae Kwon Do has been used to teach respect towards oneself and others. This respect is the key to the development of a person's discipline and character. The mind controls the body, and before a child or adult can perform Tae Kwon Do effectively, he or she must learn control of the mind. Self-respect and parental respect are natural outgrowths of Tae Kwon Do training.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Every part of the body is used in Tae Kwon Do. A person learns multiple techniques of kicking, punching, blocking, bending, and moving. All muscles are, therefore, utilized during such practices. Proper breathing techniques are stressed throughout all aspects of Tae Kwon Do and in particular, during the "forms" (tummo sets). The "forms" involve the smooth transition from one position to another, alternating from defense to offense and back. All this leads to a healthier, trimmer body and greater discipline of the mind.