

July 18, 2008

To: MAS Parents

In an effort to ensure all MAS students have a strong foundation on which to build, the MAS instructional team and the black belt testing board have begun making a few changes to the beginning belt rank requirements (specifically those ranks below Green belt) and the progression towards learning a complete kata (combining stances, walks, turns, kicks, and hand techniques). New testing requirements in the kata category include:

- Yellow Stripe (Youth) - 27 movements
- Yellow Belt (Youth) - Basic # 1, # 2, # 3
- Yellow Belt (Adult) - 27 movements plus Basic #1, 2, 3 (Basics have been added as a requirement since no yellow stripe for adults)
- Blue Belt (Youth/Adult) - Zen Shin Ko Tai and H-Form Walk (H-Form walk focuses them on stances and turns only)
- 1st Green (Youth/Adult) - H-Form # 1 and # 2 (in its entirety)

Additionally, we have begun restructuring the way classes are taught to focus each individual on perfecting the techniques for only his or her next belt rank prior to allowing the student to work on more difficult techniques. It is important that each student masters and maintains a foundation while striving for new goals. As a student progresses from one level to the next, it's important that he or she accumulates skills and techniques without simply "trading" prior level skills for new level skills. Therefore, at any given test, each student will be expected to be ready to perform what is required for that rank as well as all previous ranks. Current color belts will be required to learn these new requirements prior to their next test as well.

During class, we have instituted a new system of "pods" wherein students will learn and master certain techniques appropriate to a level while getting to watch and endeavor to move to more advanced pods. For example, in these pods they have certain techniques to learn such as kicks (white belts work on roundhouse and side), punches (white belts jab and cross), kata (white belts 27 movements) and Tai Ho Jitsus. When they change pods they learn some new kicks, punches, katas and Tai Ho Jitsus.

We'd like to recommend students training in the advance pods (green belts and up) purchase bag gloves. These students will be working on heavy bag to strengthen and better enhance the techniques they have been taught as a beginner. **My front office staff will assist you in purchasing the bag gloves I would like the students to use.**

As we watch our students develop into strong martial artists, we will continue to restructure the classes as appropriate to ensure an environment in which each student's individual goals can be met. It is then up to each individual student to grow to his or her full potential through dedication, hard work, and determination.

These changes, along with the importance of a cumulative experience, have been explained to all active MAS students and have been our main focus for several weeks now.

We are committed to helping our students to achieve their strong foundation to build upon!

Thank you,

Michael A. Smith