



TAE PARK TIMES

SUMMER 2026



MEIJER STATE GAMES OF MICHIGAN

One Family. One Spirit. Seventeen Years Strong.

For many families, summer begins with vacations, backyard barbecues, or afternoons at the ballpark. For our Tae Kwon Do family, summer begins with the **Meijer State Games**. World Class Tae Kwon Do has developed/directed/managed this amazing event since its inception. This year marked our 17th year organizing and participating in this incredible event, and after all these years, it continues to remind us why we love the martial arts.

As martial artists, we are competitors by nature. We train hard, challenge ourselves, and strive to become better every day. But the Meijer State Games remind us that our greatest victory isn't simply earning a medal—it's being part of something much bigger than ourselves. This event isn't about putting others down or proving who is the toughest. It's about coming together as one martial arts community to celebrate what unites us: our shared passion for Tae Kwon Do.

This year, 32 different Tae Kwon schools from around the state gathered under one roof. While the uniforms may be different and the forms may vary, the smiles are always the same. You'll find competitors encouraging one another, instructors sharing their knowledge, parents cheering for children they've never met, and volunteers working tirelessly behind the scenes. Of course, with an event of this size, things don't always go perfectly. Equipment occasionally has a mind of its own, schedules change, or someone isn't quite where they're supposed to be. Yet what always rises above those small challenges is the patience, understanding kindness, and willingness to help one another.



That is the true spirit of Tae Kwon Do. It's not measured by medals or trophies, but by the character we demonstrate both on and off the mat. Thank you to every competitor, instructor, official, volunteer, and family member who helped make this year's Meijer State Games another unforgettable success.

After seventeen years, one thing remains certain: we may represent different schools, wear different uniforms, and practice different forms, but we are all part of one martial arts family. Here's to another incredible summer and many more years of growing stronger together.

*Seminar was hosted Tae Park Tae Kwon Do, thank you to their support by all of their Masters, Black Belts, Instructors, and Volunteers.



GET INVOLVED

TKD SCHOLARSHIP!



🥋 LOVE TKD? TKD LOVES YOU! 🥋

🎓 Taekwondo School Scholarship Program

We're proud to support our students! This year, we are awarding Five (5) 💰 \$1000 Scholarships

This is your chance to be recognized and supported in your journey—both in school and in Taekwondo.

🇺🇸 Apply today! Applications accepted between:

Feb 1-August 15, 2026

Fill out the application and take the next step toward your future.

🌟 Train hard. Dream big. We've got your back. 🌟

[SIGN UP TODAY!](#)



SAVE THE DATES FOR 2026

- August 8- All Michigan Black Belt Test- Ionia Armory, 1pm (dinner after with Masters).
- October 23- National Black Belt Test- GRCC Ford Field House- Doors Open at 5:00pm. Starts at 6:00pm.
- October 24- Tournament- GRCC Ford Field House
- August- Color Belt Test- see your instructor for details
- Spring Seminar- April 9 & 10, 2027



DID YOU KNOW!

In Asian culture- symmetry is important. The number 9 is the pinnacle. It is the highest of the single digits. There are 9 color belts to reach blackbelt.

At black belt: One is a “true master” at 4th dan. At 9th dan, one has attained the “highest rank”.



A LOOK BACK... Part Two

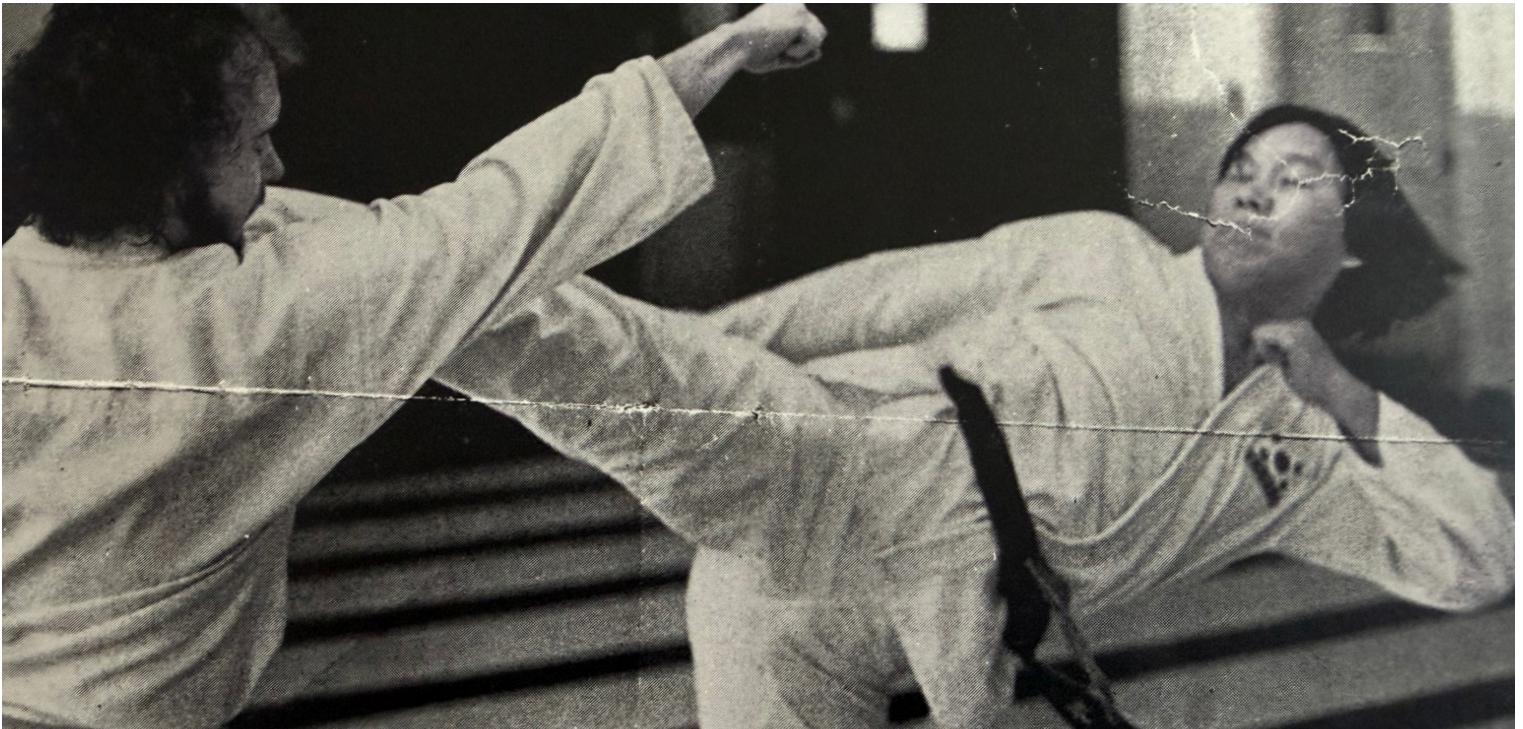
Grand Master Tae Park: Tournament Fighting

Korean martial art tournaments were very dangerous. Participants risked serious accidents- even death- to win because winning meant great honor for the fighter's school and it's reputation. Everyone knew who the tournament winners were, and they were given many special privileges.

Each Tae Kwon Do school sent their top one or two fighters to compete. Each fight consisted of three three-minute rounds. As long as a competitor won, he could progress to the next round. If he lost, he went back home. In addition to being very good, tournament fighters had to be very strong and in excellent shape. Sometimes a competitor would have fought for five days in a row to qualify for the final rounds.

Grand Master Park completed his formal education at Sungkyunkwan University, where he graduated with a major in Government. In addition to his scholastic pursuits, this very special school allowed him to study Tae Kwon Do up to five hours a day. All 350 people in his freshman class were black belts. Grand Master Park was one of the only two or three students picked for special training as part of the university team. He and the other team members worked very hard and received many high honors. From 1963-1966, Grand Master Park was the top tournament fighter in all of Korea. The once shy boy had grown into a strong and brave young man.

Written by Master Valerie Lucas



LOCAL SPOTLIGHTS...



MEET: *Master Roger Willard*

The Meijer State Games is the perfect tournament to get started. The atmosphere is fun, welcoming, and encouraging, making it easy for first-time competitors to feel at home. It's a great place to meet new friends, gain experience, and discover just how much fun competition can be!

Master Willard and Master Len from Aspire Taekwondo have supported World Class Tae Kwon Do and the Meijer State Games Tournament since the beginning.

[CLICK HERE!](#)



MEET: *Alfonso Williams*

Most people think it's too late to start something new at 60. Alfonso Williams proved them wrong. After training in different martial arts, he found his home in the rich traditions of Tae Kwon Do. What first attracted him was the affordable price, but what kept him coming back was something far more valuable. His greatest opponent isn't another martial artist; it's convincing a body that started at 60 to keep up with a mind that still feels 20. His story is an inspiring reminder that the best journeys often begin when others think they're already over. (Instructor: Mr Mark Land)

[CLICK HERE!](#)



BECOME A SPONSOR — MAKE AN IMPACT THAT MATTERS

Behind every **tournament**, every **overseas opportunity** seized, and every **scholarship** awarded, there's a community choosing to invest in something bigger. Your support helps create life-changing experiences for our athletes—opening doors to competition, growth, and education that extend far beyond the classroom.

We're calling on businesses of all sizes to be part of this journey. Whether you're a local shop or a large organization, your contribution directly fuels our annual mid-south seminar, 2 annual tournaments, international travel and events, and empowers the next generation through scholarships.

This is more than a sponsorship—it's a chance to shape futures, strengthen community, and stand behind something meaningful. This is where YOU can make an impact.

[CLICK HERE!](#)



CELEBRATING

50TH
ANNIVERSARY

WITH

TAE PARK
TAE KWON DO

HONORING

JUNIOR GRAND MASTER

ROBERT W. BARSS

7th Dan



For five decades, Junior Grand Master Robert W. Barss
has lived by the principles of Tae Kwon Do—
DISCIPLINE. RESPECT. PERSEVERANCE. EXCELLENCE.

TAE KWON DO EXPERIENCE

1976 Tae Kwon Do - Hillsdale College
1977 1st Dan Test - Jackson, Michigan
1978 2nd Dan Test - Jackson, Michigan
1982 3rd Dan Test - Jackson, Michigan
1987 4th Dan Test - Sauk Valley, Michigan
1989 Tae Kwon Do Friendship Tour,
Seoul, Korea

1992 5th Dan Test - Kukkiwon, Seoul, Korea
1992 Tae Kwon Do Friendship Tour,
Seoul, Korea
1994 International Tae Kwon Do Tournament,
Head Coach, Valladolid, Spain
1996 Youth International Tae Kwon Do
Tournament, Team Ambassador,
Hanoi, Vietnam

1999 6th Dan Test
2005 International Hanmadang at Kukkiwon,
Seoul, Korea
2005 Letter of Commendation from GMt
Woon Kyo Uhm, President, Kukkiwon

2005 International Hanmadang
at Kukkiwon, Seoul, Korea
2006 7th Dan Test -
Jackson, Michigan

“ The journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step. ”



BEYOND THE DOJANG

Lessons in Life, Leadership, and the Spirit of Tae Kwon Do

The Cracked Board

A young student couldn't wait for board-breaking day. For weeks, he practiced his punches and imagined the applause that would come when he finally split the board in two.

When the day arrived, he stepped forward confidently. He struck the board once. Nothing.

He struck it again. Still nothing.

Embarrassed, he lowered his head and quietly walked to the back of the line.

His instructor picked up the unbroken board and called the student back to the front.

"Tell me," the instructor asked, "what were you trying to break?"

"The board," the student replied.

The instructor smiled.

"No," he said. "You were trying to break through your fear of failure. The board was simply there to show you whether you had."

The student looked puzzled.

"The board doesn't know if you're nervous. It doesn't know if you've had a bad day. It simply responds to your focus, your confidence, and your commitment. Every time you strike it, you're really training your mind more than your hand."

The student bowed, took a deep breath, and tried again. This time, he didn't think about the people watching or the possibility of failing. He focused only on one point beyond the board.

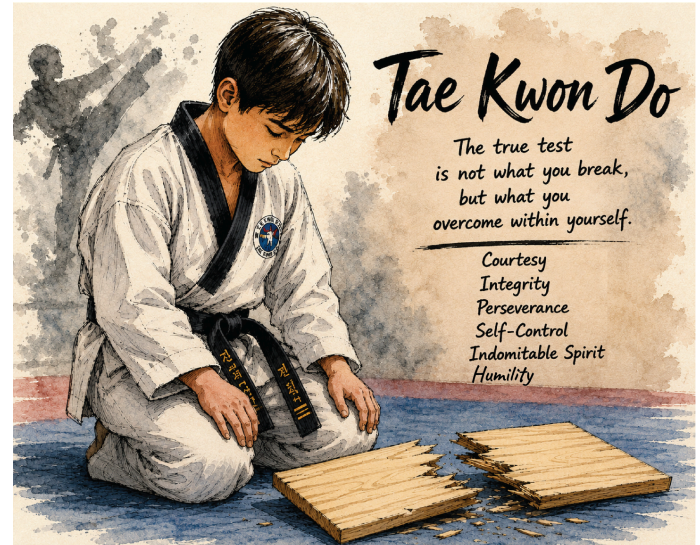
With one clean strike, the board broke.

The instructor handed him both pieces and said, "Remember this moment. In life, the hardest things you'll ever break aren't made of wood. They're doubt, fear, impatience, and the voice that tells you to quit."

The student kept those two pieces of wood for many years. Whenever life became difficult, he remembered that the board was never his greatest obstacle. His own mindset was.

The same lesson applies to all of us. Courtesy reminds us to respect others, even in competition. Integrity challenges us to do what's right when no one is watching. Perseverance gives us the courage to try one more time. Self-Control keeps our emotions from controlling our actions. And Indomitable Spirit reminds us that true strength isn't found in never falling—it's found in getting back up every single time.

Every challenge we face is simply another board waiting to be broken.



TAE PARK WEBSITE



WORLD CLASS WEBSITE



YOUTUBE