

Seven Reasons You Need to Compete!

"Some give up their designs when they have almost reached the goal; while others, on the contrary, obtain a victory by exerting, at the last moment, more vigorous efforts than ever before". -- Herodotus

A student once asked, "What is the fastest way for me to become a great martial artist?" My answer was simple: "Compete in as many tournaments as you can". Competing in tournaments accelerates your progress and helps you take a quantum leap in your technique. Think of all the greatest martial artists you know and you'll realize they all have one thing in common: they compete regularly in tournaments.

But - Let me dispel one myth right up front: you do NOT have to be a naturally "competitive person" to gain from tournaments. No way. To benefit from competition, all you need is a willingness to grow, have fun and improve your skills. For most students, it's the next logical step in their journey to martial arts greatness.

So in this article, I uncover the secrets of why tournaments offer so many benefits to martial artists and why I urge you to attend as many as you can. And even if you already compete on a regular basis, you might be surprised at some of these reasons. So read on and discover the seven powerful reasons YOU need to compete! Let's kick off my list with...

Reason #1: Tournaments Expose and Refine Your Skills

If you've been sparring for a while, you've gone

up against many of the same people over and over. As a result, you'll find your sparring partners adapting to your style and anticipating your moves. For example, they'll know which kicks you're likely to throw, which attacks you'll try and how you pace yourself. The same is true of you: over time you start to adapt to your partners' rhythm and predict their timing. What's the solution? Compete in tournaments. Tournaments widen your pool of competition dramatically. You face off against new opponents you've never sparred before. This helps sharpen your skill set and gives you a taste of what it's like to defend yourself on the street when you don't know what to expect.

Tournaments also act as benchmarks for accomplishment. How? Because you're judged in every area. You'll come home with measurable results - hard numbers - that tell the tale of your performance. You'll know what worked and what didn't. You'll discover your strong points as well as things you need to improve. Nothing is better at revealing your skills and helping you improve than competing in tournaments. They're a great way to learn and grow as a martial artist. Next up is...

Reason #2: Tournaments Help You Overcome Your Fears

One of the hallmarks of a mature martial artist is the ability to stay calm in a stressful (or even life-threatening) situation. Tournaments help here, too.



Ms. Lesley Casey
3rd Degree Black Belt and
Owner

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Here's how: First, when you perform, you'll likely have dozens of people watching. Performing in front of an audience teaches you to tune out outside factors, stay focused under fire and builds your confidence. All of this adds up to an inner calm. This stress-free, focused mindset pays dividends in school, at work and in real-life self-defense situations.



Second, it takes courage to face down a new opponent in the ring. Your adrenaline spikes, you'll feel the butterflies creep in and you may want to run the other direction. This is all good. Why? Because it teaches you how to master your emotions. Over time, you'll enter the ring confident and ready for the challenge. Overcoming your fears is an important step in becoming a masterful martial artist. And of course, the more tournaments you attend, the more you'll build these skills. Practice makes perfect.

Finally, understand this: One of the most important lessons of life is that you must break OUT of your comfort zone to grow, change and get better at anything you do. This is true in school, work, life and especially martial arts. Competing in tournaments helps you push past your limits, confront your fears, blast through your barriers and take your confidence to a whole new level.

Reason #3: Tournaments Act As "Mini-Goals"

If you've been doing martial arts a long time, you'll find that your motivation level can vary; it rises and falls over time. This is normal - and true of any sport. But when you mark your calendar with the date of a big tournament (like Worlds or Nationals for example), suddenly everything changes.

When you think ahead to that day, it forces you to work harder, serves as a powerful goal and inspires you to do your best in every class. You'll develop a razor-edged focus and find yourself investing more time in preparation for the tournament.

And when you finally arrive at your big day, you'll feel a surge of pride because you accomplished so much, put so much hard work into Taekwondo and can now cross another big goal off your list - no matter how you do. Tournaments provide mini-goals which keep you motivated and focused.

Reason #4: Tournaments Help You Earn Titles

Ever wonder how a student earns the words "State Champ" on the back of his or her uniform? You got it: competing in tournaments. And, no, you don't have to knock out last year's State Champ in a "grudge match" to earn that title. Instead, it's done with points. You rack up points at each tournament you attend in three areas: forms, weapons and sparring. Add up these points and this cumulative total allows you to become ranked. You can then advance through the ranks of competitors, eventually reaching State Champ or World Champ status! It's an excellent system because it rewards students for their dedication, hard work, discipline and focus over the long haul. It rewards commitment.



Of course, you must be a Leadership student to qualify (see me for more info about Leadership), but if you make the solid effort to attend lots of tournaments, you can work your way to the top! If you've ever wanted the respect and prestige that comes with the title of State Champ (or even World Champ!) only tournaments can get you there.

Reason #5: You Can Watch and Learn From The Very Best

Here's another big reason to attend ATA tournaments: you get to watch (and rub shoulders with) the very best! Remember what I said in the intro? That the one thing all the very best martial artists have in common is they all compete? Well, that's why you find so many top players at tournaments. They know that one of the big secrets of taking their skills to the next level is competition!



For example, at Nationals and Worlds, you can watch scores of super-talented higher ranks do their forms, spar and perform with their weapons. You can draw a lot of inspiration from watching these top-level, world-class athletes compete. It also gives you someone to emulate. When you get back to class, the next time you do your form, try to harness some of the energy, attitude and talent you saw at the tournament. Tournaments allow you to watch and learn from the best. Just one more reason to attend tournaments.

Reason #6: You Can Represent Your School

It's always impressive when you attend a tournament and see dozens of people from one school, club or academy competing side-by-side. It's a bond most instructors love to see. Even if you're not competing yourself (for example, if you're a family member or friend), it's always great to attend tournaments because it provides a bonding experience with other members of your academy. You can cheer your teammates on, encourage them to do their best, support them when they win and console them when they come up short. When you do this, it

makes every student at our academy better and makes us a tight, cohesive unit! Attend tournaments and help put our school on the map and let people know we're a force to be reckoned with!



Reason #7: You Might Just Win a Medal or Trophy!

Now here's a big reason lots of students like to compete: All the accolades you receive. Nothing's better than hearing a crowd cheer and clap after you nailed a perfect form or won a tough sparring match. Nothing, that is, except driving home with a medal around your shoulders or a trophy in your lap!

The exhilaration you'll feel on that ride home is worth all the hard work and dedication it took to get to that tournament in the first place! Of course, a medal or trophy isn't the goal. It's the end result of hard work. And much later when you look at that trophy or medal again, it serves as a permanent reminder of your accomplishments. Not only that, but trophies and medals are fun to show off to your friends and a great way to spark a conversation (and maybe get a buddy to class!) Yes, when you look at that medal or trophy displayed proudly in your home, it can motivate you to accomplish even more! It's a big confidence and self-esteem booster. Show off, take pride in what you know, showcase your skills and have fun. Experience this feeling just once and I guarantee you'll be back for more!

Even though many students participate in tournaments for the reasons I just gave above, some attend tournaments for another simpler reason...FUN! At tournaments, you make new friends, bask in the glow of a big event, see others

Seven Powerful Reasons You Need to Compete In Tournaments!

Reason #1: Tournaments Reveal and Refine Your Skills

Reason #2: Tournaments Help You Overcome Your Fears

Reason #3: Tournaments Act As "Mini-Goals"

Reason #4: Tournaments Help You Earn Titles

Reason #5: You Can Watch and Learn From The Very Best

Reason #6: You Can Represent Your School

Reason #7: You Might Go Home with a Medal or Trophy

compete, and break out of your normal routine. It's something to look forward to. As for me, it seems like I always end up meeting somebody new at a tournament. And it's always fun to network with other martial artists I respect. I think you'll agree that your deepest and most long-lasting friendships are ones built on a common interest - and martial arts is the best one in my opinion!



Tournaments can also deepen your bonds with other family members. Some families like to block out an entire weekend for a tournament, stay in a hotel for a day or two, eat in new restaurants, explore a new town and make it a vacation weekend. Try it some time. I think you'll find this brings your whole family closer, allows you to share more time together (something in short supply these days)...and forges new memories you can all share. Everybody needs a break and attending tournaments is a great way to do that.

reasons you need to compete. And I didn't even list all of them! So get involved and make the commitment to attend the next tournament (or even "fight night") with us as an academy. I want us to REPRESENT our school with as many students attending as possible! Doing so will take your martial arts skills to a whole new level. And by the way, don't worry about winning or losing. And don't worry about getting the highest score. Just attend, have fun and grow. Immerse yourself in the experience. Compete and win in more ways than you ever imagined!



Ms. Casey

Your Monthly Call to Action:

As you can see, there are lots of great

October 2009 Calendar of Special Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 10 – Noon Leadership NOON – 1 Tournament Participation Class
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 LaRoche Tournament PA
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 Mgtown CLOSED	24
			<i>Bridgeport closed for Fall Nationals</i>			
			FALL NATIONALS – ORLANDO, FLORIDA			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October 2009 Special Announcements – Please Read!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3RD

10 am – Noon

Chevron Certification/Re-Certification

Noon – 1 pm

Tournament Participants Class

****Get help getting ready for Tournament****

SATURDAY OCTOBER 10TH

LaRoche College, PA Regional Tournament

Open to all ages and rank.

Pick up competition slips at front desk

Fall Nationals, Orlando Florida

BRIDGEPORT ACADEMY CLOSED

October 21 – 24th, 2009

CHEAT LAKE CLOSED

October 19th & 21st, 2009

MORGANTOWN ACADEMY CLOSED

October 23rd, 2009

No LUNCH TIME class 10/21 or 10/26

A Different Type of Goal: Goals in Your Community!

About four times a year we focus on goals as a life-skill of the month. In January, we focus on goals for martial arts. In April we focus on goals for education. And in July we focus on goals for relationships. This month, too, we focus on goal-setting. But this time it's a little different. This month we focus on goals for the community. What does this mean? What is a goal for the community you ask?

The answer is simple. Instead of setting a goal to accomplish something that benefits mainly YOU, this time you set a goal that mainly benefits others. It's something you do that impacts other people in a positive way.

Here's an example: You may have heard of the U.S. Marines' annual "Toys for Tots" drive. Every year during the months of October, November and December, the Marines collect toys. Then at Christmas time, they give those toys to needy and less-fortunate children. As their website says, it's "...a message of hope to less fortunate youngsters that will assist them in becoming responsible, productive, patriotic citizens".

The "Toys for Tots" drive is an excellent example of how an organization of like-minded people can accomplish something really great and change the lives of people around them in a very positive way.

So here's what I want you to do. This month, on a half-sheet of paper, I want you to write down ways that we as an academy can do something similar in our community. I want us to stand out in our local area as a group of positive people that are known for making a difference here!

Start with this mindset: "What needs to be done here in our community? What could benefit lots of people in our community as a whole? What talents do we have? What can we bring to the table?". List as many things as you can. Brainstorm. Get creative. Get with

other students and think it through. Remember: As a martial artist, you have an important leadership role in our community. Whether you realize it or not, people look up to you. You can use this special status to do something positive in the next couple of months.

Now, you might be asking yourself, "Why should I spend my time on this? What's the payoff for ME?". Well, the funny thing about volunteering is that when you set out to do something for others, you often end up gaining something yourself. Not only do you feel good because you're helping others, but you also meet new friends, have fun and learn something along the way.



So, by the end of this month I want a half sheet of paper from you. This half-sheet of paper will contain a list of at least three ideas that we can do as an academy together in December. Feel free to jot down what role you're willing to take on, too. For example, are you going to organize the effort? Are you going to make some phone calls to get things rolling? Be specific. Once I receive all your ideas, I'll post the best ideas on the wall and we can vote for the goal we want to tackle as a school.

It's amazing what volunteers can accomplish! Put pencil to paper and let's all make a difference in our community in the coming months!

New and Upgrading Students!

Anna Robins
Willima MacKay
Dalia Aboraya
Drew Boczek
Pierre Montbleau
Andrew Dequasie
Calvin Matthews
Mason Moore
Shawn Husner
Edgar Hernandez

Eric Solis
Kevin Solis
Aiden Shipley
Diego Solis
D'Anna Lewis – Leadership
Debra Lewis – Leadership
Izaak Lewis – Leadership
Richard Campbell – Leadership
Mustafa Rai – Black Belt Club
Luke Proctor – Black Belt Club
Chris Lambert

Chris Young - Leadership
Thomas Ayoob – Black Belt Club
Dalton Brown
Tre Hawkinberry
Jacob Wentz
Issiah Barajas
Robin Witschi
Trevor Lavne

Oct 2009 Student of the Month!

Chase Leone! An Intense Competitor!



Chase Leone
Oct 2009 Student
of the Month

In line with our main article this month, I'd like to highlight a student who is a fierce competitor. Not only does Mr. Leone attend as many tournaments as he can, he also brings an intensity of spirit to every sparring match, every fight night and every class! His name is Chase Leone and I'm proud to announce him as our October 2009 Student of the Month!



Listen: Mr. Leone proves you don't have to be naturally competitive to climb through the ranks and accomplish some really great things

in a tournament. Instead, it's his drive to succeed, change and grow that really makes him shine. You see, when Chase started, he never imagined he'd compete. He wanted a way to have fun, learn some new skills and do something positive. Fast-forward a couple of years and Mr. Leone is racking up some serious points in Regional Tournaments. Here are some of his major accomplishments:

- Second Degree Black Belt Recommended
- Active member of our Leadership Team/Tiny Tiger Instructor
- West Virginia State Champion 2008 & 2009

Here are some more facts about Mr. Leone you might be surprised to know:

- When Mr. Leone first began Taekowndo he was VERY SHY !!!!!
- He is a Junior at Morgantown HS
- He just got his first car !!!! Look out on the Morgantown roads.....
- He is a Chargers fan !!!!

Let's all congratulate Mr. Leone on being chosen as Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy Student of the Month

October Student Birthdays!

10/1 Sammy Paugh
10/2 Lynn Johnson
10/2 Nathanael Clemmer
10/3 Dalton Moran
10/3 Eric Post
10/6 Pierre Montbleau
10/7 Hunter Snoderly
10/7 Max Johnson
10/8 Mahmoud Summers
10/10 Rossi LaBastida
10/13 Noah Berry
10/16 Patrick Johnston
10/16 Nathan Spencer
10/18 Abby Thurston

10/18 Karen Feder
10/18 Sophia Gorby
10/19 Ari & Orli Feder
10/19 Rob Bennett
10/20 Noah Braham
10/21 Michelle Bowen
10/22 Charles Cunningham
10/23 Zarin Thomas
10/26 Jeremy Harp
10/26 Alexis Berrios
10/26 Ashalia Aggarwal
10/30 Edgar Hernandez
10/30 Darren Andrews

It's time for... **TAEKWONDO TRIVIA**
Test Your Martial Arts Knowledge...and Win!

Student Name _____

According to the main article:

1.) Something many top-level martial artists have in common is they...

- a.) Start their career with sheer talent and dedication
- b.) Compete in as many tournaments as they can
- c.) Work hard on their forms during their lunch breaks
- d.) All coach and mentor lower ranks

2.) Competing in tournaments helps you develop your skills because...

- a.) You go home with knowledge of what to work on next time
- b.) Tournaments widen your pool of competitors
- c.) You get to spar lots of new people
- d.) All of the above

2.) Tournaments act as "mini-goals" which...

- a.) Keep you focused and motivated
- b.) Chain together to make you stronger
- c.) Propel you into the leagues of State Champ
- d.) Are taught in leadership classes and Black Belt Club
- 3.) A trophy or medal you earn at a tournament is...

- a.) Normally made from a bronze alloy, not 24K gold
- b.) A big part of the accolades you win when you compete
- c.) A permanent reminder of your accomplishment
- d.) All of the above

4.) True or False: You need to be a naturally competitive person to attend and do well at tournaments.

- a.) True
- b.) False
- c.) All of the above
- d.) None of the above

5.) Fill in the blank: You normally meet _____ at a tournament.

- a.) Your goals
- b.) The Grand Master
- c.) Long-lost relatives
- d.) Some new friends

Don't forget! Any student who answers all the questions correctly (without help from an adult) wins a \$5 Karate Dollar towards their next testing, something from the pro shop or tuition! (Note: one Karate dollar per purchase, please).

I Need YOUR Help!

I'd like to thank those of you who have participated in the Student Referral Program! Marketing for new students costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any business, we need new students to stay in business. Over the years we have found that looking for new students takes away from the time we would rather be spending with you and for you and teaching other students!

If I've already helped you or your child with martial arts instruction, then you know how well I serve my students. When you refer your friends and relatives to us, everybody benefits. We can serve you and your kids better. You receive a nice gift. And we assure that we'll take the very best care of any friends or family that you refer our way! For more information about our referral reward program, just give us a call at: (304)

282-1664. It's a great program where, as our way of saying "thanks", we send you a token of our appreciation for recommending us!

Also: If you would like any of your friends, coworkers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. to receive a FREE subscription to this newsletter, please call me at the same number: (304) 282-1664. We'll also send them a note with their first issue telling them that you suggested they receive this newsletter, and to contact us if they would like it to stop at any time. If you enjoy this newsletter, share it with people you know, with no hassle for you!

Step Up and Help Us Make a Difference In Our Community!

Help Us Make a Difference in Our Community!

This month, I want you to brainstorm with other students (as well as parents) on what we can do as an academy to improve our community and make a difference. All you have to do is grab a pencil and half-sheet of paper and write down your best ideas on what we can do as either a charitable or volunteer effort in December (this is an example of setting a goal for your community). At the end of October, I'll collect all the entries and post the best ones on our wall. Read the article on page five to find out more about goals in the community and how a group of committed martial artists can make a huge impact!

Step Up and Help Us Make a Difference In Our Community!

Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy

1389 Saratoga Ave, Morgantown, WV
(304) 282-1664

216 East Main Street, Bridgeport, WV
(304) 376- KICK

