



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Jiu-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER July 2023

Rank Rack Revised

In traditional Japanese and Okinawan martial arts it is common that each student receives a name plaque or *'nafuda'* to be hung in the dojo. The plaque is hung in a display called the *'nafuda-kake'* which has all of the names of the students and teachers organized in the order of lowest rank levels to highest. As each student progresses through the rank system of the art, they watch their name plaque move further and further up in levels. This is a great way for students to see their progress in their training, and know everyone's place in the dojo hierarchy.

As part of ZenQuest's 'Spring Cleaning' the name plaque display for it's Uechi-Ryu students was reorganized and updated. Since moving to the school's current location all of the ranks were placed on the same horizontal line on the upper part of the west wall. However, due to the need to accommodate more names another line was added above that one. Now, all *Dan* or black-belt ranks will reside on the upper line and all *Kyu* or colored-belt ranks will be placed on the lower line.

One new rank was added to the display to accommodate Sensei Mark's promotion to 8th degree black belt or *Hachidan*. This is the first time in the history of the school that someone has achieved that rank (going back to 1972!)

Another new rank was added to the display for 7th level or *Nanakyu* (Blue Stripe.) Until now, students received the *nafuda* at 6th level or *Rokkyu* (Blue Belt.) The change comes due to Senseis Connie and Mark feeling that younger students should be rewarded with their name plaques sooner than they generally had been. So, ZenQuest's Uechi-Ryu students currently with the rank of blue-stripe are now being awarded a *nafuda* name-plaque to hang on the wall. Newer students can also look forward to getting their *'nafuda'* a little sooner, and students with them already can feel good about the growth of the school.

We recently had several students receive plaques for achieving Blue Belt, too. When a student receives the name-plaque and places it on the dojo wall, its kind of a big deal. They are considered to be not only representing their own progress, but also their family name. So, students and families should feel a great sense of pride as they watch the name-plaque progress up through the ranks.

So, congratulations to all of the students receiving name-plaques! Please continue and keep up the good work.



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Spring Cleaning

Our long time annual 'Spring Cleaning' was held on Sunday, June 25, this year. Technically, this one happened in early summer, but that didn't stop people from making it a big success. No less than twenty adults and five children showed up to participate, which may be a record turnout.

The group worked for over two hours giving the gym a thorough dusting, washing, and reorganizing. This ritual goes a long way to keeping the facility fresh and clean beyond the weekly cleanings that normally happen. So, virtually everything in the place was washed and renewed. This originally started out as something that Senseis Connie and Mark would do, but others joined in at some point and it became a 'thing.'

ZenQuest provided some breakfast treats and drinks for the cleaning crew. After the event several of the participants went for a lunch at the new restaurant 'Antimony.' There the group enjoyed some good food, a live band, and some laughs of course.

Huge thanks to everyone that joined in on this year's Spring Cleaning! The gym is a better place to train now thanks to you all!



Playground Repairs

The playground in the picnic area next to ZenQuest has provided a place for students and family members to enjoy since the gym opened in late 2010. However, after almost 13 years of use it is beginning to show some wear and tear that requires some attention. So, over the next several weeks, portions of the playground will be replaced. At the time of this newsletter a new ladder has already been installed. In addition, a new climbing wall will be added, and the bridge between the slides will also be replaced.

We ask that students and parents be patient while these improvements are made, and understand that the playground may need to be closed for a short time in the process. As always, we appreciate your understanding and cooperation. Lastly, please report any problems encountered with the area as soon as it's convenient.



Miami Jits

By Prof. Mark

I recently traveled to Miami, Florida for the 2023 Demian Maia Affiliate training camp. The camp went from July 6th to 10th with several hours of intense training each day. The training consisted mostly of advanced Jiu-jitsu strategies, but also focused on business and marketing principles for success in running a martial arts gym. Now that Demian has retired from fighting in the UFC, he is more focused on growing his own academy, and helping his affiliates do the same.

This camp was amazing in many ways. I was able to reconnect with some guys that I haven't seen since before COVID. I was also able to meet some new friends, and that's always great.

The training was incredible. It included takedowns, positioning and submissions of course. In many cases Demian drew upon his extensive experience in Mixed Martial Arts to refine and improve strategies in Jiu-jitsu for self-defense and competition.

This was my first dive back into the intensity that Jiu-Jitsu requires on this level and I am happy to say that my body held up well. Over the last three years I've been struggling with a nasty injury and surgery, and I am very happy to be really getting back to it. By the way, the injury was from doing roadwork to stay fit during the pandemic quarantines...not the

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IMPORTANT DATES

Mon, 7/3 & Tues, 7/4 - NO CLASSES
 Sun, 7/23, 1:30p - Kyu Test
 Sat, 7/29, 1:15p - AC Jiu-Jitsu
 Sat, 9/23, 1:15p - AC Uechi
 Sat, 9/30, 1:15p - AC Muay Thai

NEW STUDENTS!**Welcome:**

Jared DeLuca, Mary Hannah Parkman, Leandro Menzes, Walison Rosa, Miles Carvalho, Robert Pereira, Nick Zaricki

Welcome Back:

Simon Weeks, Miles Stanton, Alex Cestone

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Kevin Brady 7/4
 Jeffrey Slater 7/9
 Matthew Gerlitz 7/13
 Liam Carty 7/13
 Joel Ospina Cruz 7/14
 Noah Bouthillette 7/14
 Leonardo Cardillo 7/15
 Siddharth Sonis 7/17
 Shara Moyher 7/18
 Michael Siktberg 7/19
 Chalice Mitchell 7/20
 Zachary Greene 7/20
 Nicholas Gray 7/20
 Nilani Broussard 7/21
 Milan Desai 7/21
 Richard Houghtaling 7/22
 Michael Cahalan 7/22
 Zachary Lecuyer 7/24
 Troy Middleton 7/24
 Lana Darby 7/25
 Keithleen Laboy 7/27
 Seth Gabriel 7/28
 Dennis McCarthy 7/30
 Krish Shah 7/30

RECENT PROMOTIONS**TIGERS:**

6kyu - Jasper Stanton, Easton Tatro, Theo Didio, Becket Lyon, Elliot Dascanio, Everett Gallagher

7kyu - James Polk

8kyu - Andrew Arce, Lincoln Brown, Brody Mehek

DRAGONS:

6kyu - Westley Didio

8kyu - Grey O'Donnell, Smith O'Donnell

PYTHONS:

1 stripe grey - Enzo Dort

Grey - Weston Aube

3 stripe white - Montanna Inesta

JIU-JITSU:

3 stripe white - Hunter Hamilton

2 stripe white - Joe Penna, Michael Siktberg, Robert Inesta, James Losaw

1 stripe white - Steven Panzano, Cristhyan Garcia, Tyler Fogg

MUAY THAI:

White - Sean Callahan

Terminology**Sportsmanship**

Japanese: Supōtsumanshippu

Brazilian: Esportividade

Thai: Namkai Nakilaa

**“Best Martial Arts Academy”
ZenQuest Martial Arts**

Berkshire Eagle's
 Readers Choice Awards
**SIX YEARS
 RUNNING!**



(Continued from page 2) *Miami Jits*
martial arts.

Everybody in the group was super cool at helping me bring my game back up to where it should be. My training partners all did a fantastic job of balancing setting a challenging pace with staying technical and not pushing too far. I have a new level of trust and appreciation for Team Demian, and I will never forget it.

In addition to the amazing training the group was able to get out and enjoy some R&R, visiting some great restaurants, beaches, pools and sights. I was also able to room with the boss and that was a blast, too. We talked a lot about ways to make a gym the best it can be, and shared some ideas and laughs. He insisted on driving everywhere, which provided more opportunities to chat and brush up on my familiarity with Brazilian music, too.

Thanks to all of the guys at the camp, and special thanks to Mestre Demian Maia for an amazing camp!



Tuition Reminders

For the last six years ZenQuest has been recognized as the best martial arts school in the beautiful Berkshires. However, it is important to remember that it is a family run business that has survived many challenges, including two years of the pandemic. With COVID19 winding down ZenQuest is busier than ever with many new and returning students. So, we would like to provide a quick review of our tuition policies here to clear up some confusion and offer some additional options that can make things easier for everyone.

For years now we've offered an autopay or 'subscription' option for membership here at ZenQuest. This the most convenient and low-maintenance choice available to our students. It also provides a discounted rate AND locks the student's tuition so that it cannot increase for as long as they remain enrolled with it. To activate an "EasyPay" enrollment, students simply fill out a form designating an account to make payments from, and that's it! This is best for serious students who want to attend classes on a continuous basis for a longer period of time.

Students and parents who choose to enroll with incremental memberships paid in person must realize that they are ultimately responsible for making payments according to their chosen increments of time (one to twelve months.) This 'old school' system requires them to keep track of their tuition dues dates and make payments on or before those dates. We do our best to provide helpful reminders on the attendance sheets at the front desk, but students need to use these sheets and respond when a reminder is present. In situations where younger students sign themselves in but cannot respond to reminders it is, again, the caregivers' responsibility to keep track of tuition.

Students and parents can now also choose to receive monthly reminders in the form of an invoice sent by email. This will provide an option to simply pay via the invoice on a monthly basis. Although this offers a lot of convenience, it does not provide the other benefits that our EasyPay does. This may work well for students who are somewhat seasonal or just not comfortable with a subscription type of commitment. This is only available on a monthly basis.

Given the fact that space is at a premium at the dojo now, we are going to have to start being a bit more strict with some enrollment policies going forward. For students who seem to struggle with the incremental enrollments we recommend our EasyPay or Invoice payment options. Either of these can easily solve any problems with tuition. For those who want to stick with incremental enrollments in person, we ask that you stay mindful of tuition due dates and make payments accordingly. Students who prove to be unable to do that will ultimately be given a choice between the EasyPay and Invoice options.

Please note that students are not allowed to attend classes without an active membership. Also, for tuition payments made more than five days after a student's due date a \$10 late fee will be charged. These policy items are actually noted in the registration paperwork that each student or parent signs at the student's initial enrolment.

Please contact us if you have any questions on this or would like to go ahead with ZenQuest's Easy Pay or Invoice options.