



USTF Newsletter

Broomfield, CO

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USTF Referee Seminar - Submitted by Mr. Ragsdale, 6th dan

On August 22, **Grand Master Mason** hosted a USTF Referee Seminar taught by the Head of the USTF Referee Program, **Grand Master Steadman**. The seminar provided instructors and students from across the region with an opportunity to sharpen their officiating skills and deepen their understanding of competition standards.

Grand Master Steadman's expertise in tournament rules and referee protocol offered attendees a comprehensive look at what it takes to officiate USTF competitions at the local and regional levels. Topics covered during the session included proper scoring techniques, rule interpretation, ring management, and the standards of conduct required of certified referees.

In addition to several Black Belts attending as a refresher, one student applied to become a Class A Referee, seven students applied to become a Class B Referee, and sixteen applied to become a Class C Referee. The event drew participation from **Mountain View Taekwon-Do, Bodystrong Taekwon-Do, Valley View Taekwon-Do, and Next Level Taekwon-Do**. Instructors and students from each of these schools came together to train, learn and build the consistency that makes our USTF tournaments second to none. In addition to the knowledge passed on by Grand Master Steadman, he also regaled the students with stories of learning from General Choi, Sr. Grand Master Sereff, and the times he has traveled representing the USTF. He encouraged everyone in attendance to step up and give back to the art that has given him so much.

Calendar Dates 2026

Oct 3: USTF Step Sparring Seminar: Arvada, CO. Instructor: SM Pettijohn. Contact: Maestastkd@maestastkd.com

Oct 3: USTF Referee Seminar: Bellevue, NE. Instructor: GM Todd. Contact axetkd@gmail.com. Flyer information: [Flyer-Register](#)

Nov 7: USTF Referee Seminar: Broomfield, CO. Contact GM Sereff at rsereff@rmi.net. Start time 10:00 am.

Dec 1: Black Belt & Color Belt Testing: Bellevue, NE. GM Todd.



USTF Referee Seminar - *continued*



Mountain View Taekwon-Do



Next Level Taekwon-Do



Valley View Taekwon-Do



Bodystrong Taekwon-Do

USTF Black Belt & Color Belt Testing - Submitted by Grand Master Todd, USTF Director, Region 2, Axe Taekwon-Do

A promotion test was held on September 2, 2026, at Axe Taekwon-Do in Bellevue, Nebraska for students advancing from White Belt to 4th Degree Black Belt. The event was graded by **Grand Master Todd**, and **Master Bowling**. **Mr. Toppi**, 6th Dan served as the Testing Director, Congratulations to all students who advanced in rank.

Promoted

4th Degree Black Belt: Mr. **Anthony Garber** and Ms. **Melanie Ostrander**

1st Degree Black Belt: Mr. **Collin May**, Mr. **Matthew Cordova**, and Mr. **Michael Williams**

1st Gup Red Belt Black Stripe: Mr. **J. Williams**

2nd Gup Red Belt: Ms. **A. Steinberg**, Ms. **A. Taylor**, and Mr. **J. Steinberg**

4th Gup Blue Belt: Mr. **B. Roman**

5th Gup Green Belt Blue Stripe: Mr. **E. Walsh**

6th Gup Green Belt: Mrs. **Jennifer Willams**, and Ms. **L. De La Cerda**

8th Gup Yellow Belt: Ms. **J. Koffman**, Ms. **L. Koffman**, and Ms. **N. Koffman**

9th Gup White Belt Yellow Stripe: Mr. **E. Vasquez Vega**

We welcome any USTF members traveling through our area to stop in, visit, and train. Please ensure you clear this with your instructor before visiting.



USTF Black Belt & Color Belt Testing – Submitted by Grand Master Todd, USTF Director, Region 2, Axe Taekwon-Do *Continued*



Ms. Steinberg
Flying Side Piercing Kick



Mr. Walsh
1 board knife hand



Mr. Garber
4 tile punch



Ms. Ostrander
3 tile knife hand



Mr. May
3 tile punch



Mr. Cordova
1 tile knife hand



Mr. Williams
1 tile knife hand



Mr. Garber
3 board twin foot front snap kick



Mr. Steinberg
self defense

USTF Black Belt Testing – Submitted by Grand Master Sereff, USTF Test Director and USTF Administrator

A Black Belt testing was held on September 12, 2026, at Sereff Taekwon-Do, bringing together students from both Sereff Taekwon-Do and Maestas Taekwon-Do. The testing celebrated not only advancement in rank, but also the dedication and perseverance it takes to return to Taekwon-Do to achieve long term goals.

One of the candidates, **Daniel Pass** was graded to 1st Dan on August 5, prior to moving out of state. During the September 12 testing, **Christopher Muniz** and **Brianna Bettis** successfully graded to 4th Dan, while **Ried Hill** and **Grason Hill** achieved 2nd Dan.

What made this test particularly special was the stories behind several of the candidates. Mr. Muniz, a student of **Master Ron Maestas**, took a 16 year break from Taekwon-Do after grading to 3rd Dan. He eventually returned to training with Maestas Taekwon-Do and worked his way back to the 4th Dan level, demonstrating that a long absence does not have to mean the end of a Taekwon-Do journey. Mr. Hill, also returned to Taekwon-Do after taking a break of more than 16 years, this time beginning again at the blue belt level. Mr. Hill eventually tested for 1st Dan alongside his son Grason. Father and son continued training together for 2nd Dan, successfully achieving their goal during the test.

These accomplishments are a great reminder that progress in Taekwon-Do is not always a straight line. Life may create interruptions, but dedication and the desire to return can lead students back to the goals they once set for themselves. Congratulations to all candidates on their accomplishments and continued commitment to Taekwon-Do.

A special thank you also goes to all of the friends and family members who support these students. It truly takes a team effort to succeed, and the encouragement of family, friends, instructors, and training partners play an important part in every student's journey. ***Pictures on the next page***

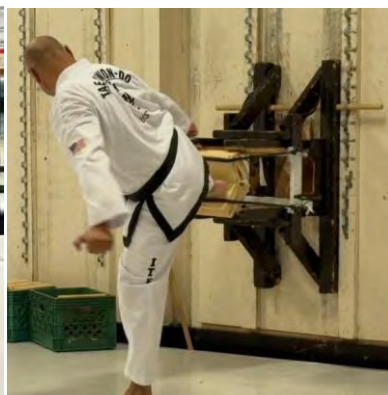
USTF Black Belt Testing – Submitted by Grand Master Sereff, USTF Test Director and USTF Administrator – continued



Testing Board with candidates



Maestas students with Testing Board



Mr. Muniz



Previous testing with Mr. Pass



USTF Testing — Submitted by Ms. Emily Ross, III, Maestas Taekwon-Do

On September 3, 2026, Maestas Taekwon-Do held another successful color belt test, with twelve students earning promotions to their next ranks. Four students were promoted to Blue Belt: **Nicholas Biber, Joe Stivrins, Adeline Bettis, and Theo Biber**. One student was promoted to Green Belt: **Squire Ross**. Three students were promoted to Yellow Belt Green Stripe: **Roland Makuh, Thea Ahn, and Rae Garrett**. Finally, four students were promoted to Yellow Belt: **Taran Han, Cora Pettijohn, Frank Makuh, and Evan Adler**. The high test scores were awarded to Joe Stivrins and Roland Makuh for demonstrating outstanding technique during the test.



Maestas Taekwon-Do Testing Board and candidates



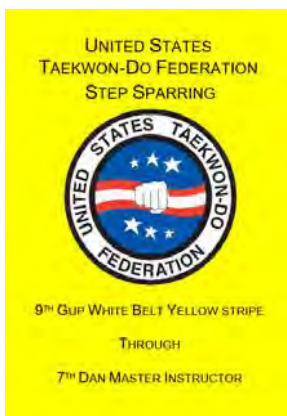
Mr. Stivrins, SM Pettijohn, and Mr. Makuh High Test Score

USTF Seminars - Looking for a seminar?

Oct 3: USTF Step Sparring Seminar: Arvada, CO. The USTF Step Sparring Seminar will be held Oct 3, at the Apex Center in Arvada, Colorado. The seminar will be taught by **Sr. Master Pettijohn**. This course will provide training for all ranks. Please refer to the flyer for more details and registration. You can contact the host/seminar instructor at: Maestastkd@maestastkd.com The registration flyer is available at: [Step Sparring Flyer](#)

Oct 3: USTF Referee Seminar: Bellevue, NE. The USTF Referee Seminar will be held Oct 3, at the Offutt Youth Center, in Bellevue, Nebraska. The seminar will be taught by **Grand Master Todd**. This qualification course will provide initial or upgrade training that is required by all black belts in the USTF. You can contact the host/seminar instructor at axetkd@gmail.com. The registration flyer is available at: [Flyer-Register](#)

Nov 7: USTF Referee Seminar: Broomfield, CO. The USTF Referee Seminar will be held Nov 7, at Sereff Taekwon-Do, in Broomfield, CO. This qualification course will provide initial or upgrade training that is required by all black belts in the USTF. You can contact the host at rsereff@rmi.net for further information.



Reflections on Loyalty –by Sr. Grand Master Sereff, Founder USTF (2013)

Seeing so many pros and cons on loyalty has caused me to reflect on that subject. I am now in my 49th year as a black belt. In May 2014, I hope to celebrate my 50th anniversary. That sounds like a good excuse for a big party.

Personally, I have been both praised and condemned for my unwavering loyalty to General Choi. Some say that I had a blind loyalty to the man and his art. This they say is a dangerous path for anyone to follow. Let me say this, my loyalty was never blind. The General was a man, and men are prone to make mistakes and be a victim of bad decisions. The General had his share of these faults. Because he was so world-famous they could be used against him as detractions. Because of my closeness to him I was exposed to almost all of his shortcomings. I had the option of leaving him at any time. I chose to stay and give him my support and loyalty unconditionally. Even now I see where some of the largest ITF organizations are bitterly opposed to each other.

All of them claim to be doing exactly as the General wanted done to promote the Taekwon-Do technique and legacy he left to the world. I understand that they are changing some techniques and adding new sections of competition. To me this is an insult to my instructor General Choi. It seems to me that in this day of computers, smart phones and Facebook it has become far too easy to be detractors and character assassins.

The next time you sit down with your computer why not try refrain from criticism. I followed closely in the General's footsteps for 25 years. Because of his charisma and the art that he developed, I was able to see a lot of this big wonderful world we live in. I can never really repay my debt to him. Every time I sign a USTF black belt certificate I consider that a token payment.

This week I signed first dan certificate number 11,073. The General knew in his heart that me and many of my fellow master instructors could not remain members of the ITF when he willed it to the North Koreans. At that moment he had to choose what he thought would be best for the future of his art. Was that a good decision? Only time will be the judge. Let me leave you with this thought too many of us want our leaders and heroes to be perfect. There was only one perfect man in history and they crucified him.

Sr. Grand Master Sereff, A-9-1



Black Belt test or Black Belt Demonstration? *Submitted by Grand Master Sereff, USTF Test Director and USTF Administrator*

Senior Grand Master Sereff established our guidelines for Black Belt testing through the USTF Black Belt Syllabus. For senior ranks, testing followed those guidelines throughout the USTF, and that principle continues today.

Keep in mind that when Senior Grand Master Sereff established the system, he was a V Dan. At that time, the most senior ranks were generally III or IV Dan. Today, the USTF has grown significantly, with 27 Grand Masters, 59 Senior Masters, and 132 Masters. Each school has the flexibility to conduct its own Black Belt test, provided the required USTF standards are met.

At a recent Black Belt test, I posed a question to the Grand Masters, Senior Masters, and Masters in attendance: **“How many of you had an agenda to follow prior to testing?”**

The answer was **no one**.

The USTF Black Belt test is a **test**, not a demonstration of technique. Each school can decide whether to post an agenda ahead of time. The original purpose of an agenda was simply to help manage time when a large group of students was testing by providing some organization to the process. Even when using an agenda, however, make sure you leave room for the unexpected. Add a few things that make it a true test!

When I tested in front of my instructor, Senior Grand Master Charles Sereff, along with General Choi Hong Hi, there was never an agenda. Whatever they called for, you did.

Yes, sometimes they asked for something we did not know. For example, one time I was asked, **“Can you count to 20?”** I thought it was a trick, so I counted to 20, in English. Needless to say, that was not the correct answer!

As instructors, it is our responsibility to be prepared to answer questions regarding **any phase of Taekwon-Do**. We are the ones responsible for preparing our students for their Black Belt tests. That preparation goes beyond simply teaching the techniques that appear on a syllabus.

Let's make sure we are instilling the knowledge, understanding, adaptability, and confidence necessary for our students to succeed, not just in a demonstration, but in a true Black Belt test.

