

Karate encourages self-development

Members lose machoism

By JEFF PETERSEN
Of the Emerald

What would you do if, when walking home from school at midnight, three hoodlums suddenly attacked?

George Hauser, a green belt on the Club Sports karate team, says his first impulse would be to try to escape. "I'm afraid of what I could do to them," he says.

Hauser is calm and self-confident, and talks about how karate has helped him raise his self-esteem. "When I was an undergraduate I was just a little guy and felt picked on. After I took up karate, grew a few inches and put on a few pounds, my attitude about myself changed."

Karate helped Hauser learn about himself because the sport is a balance between the physical, mental and spiritual, he says.

"You learn about yourself because you're pushing yourself to the limit," he says. "You have to make clear in your own mind why you're doing karate. Working toward another color of belt is not enough."

One of the reasons why Hauser practices karate eight hours a week is the "cleansed feeling" he has after working out. "Karate wakes me up; it makes me more alert." Not only self-esteem but also conditioning raises in a "spiral upward" after workouts, he says.

Karate develops the body evenly, Hauser claims. Coordination, reflexes and strength are developed in practices where white-robed students punch imaginary opponents and spar with real ones.

Many of the Japanese Dojo (karate school) traditions are continued at the club's practices. The head instructor calls stances and students count movements in Japanese. At the beginning of a workout the students line up in a sitting kneel, bow and say "teach me" to the instructor.

At the end of the workout the students resume the sitting kneel and with eyes closed, repeat the following after the senior student:

"Develop character; train with humility and respect; keep temper under control; exert yourself; never give up; apply training to life." The students then bow and thank the instructor. Bowing again, they thank the other students.

Why go through this ritual? "To remind us that an opponent is not really our opponent, but our friend," Hauser says.

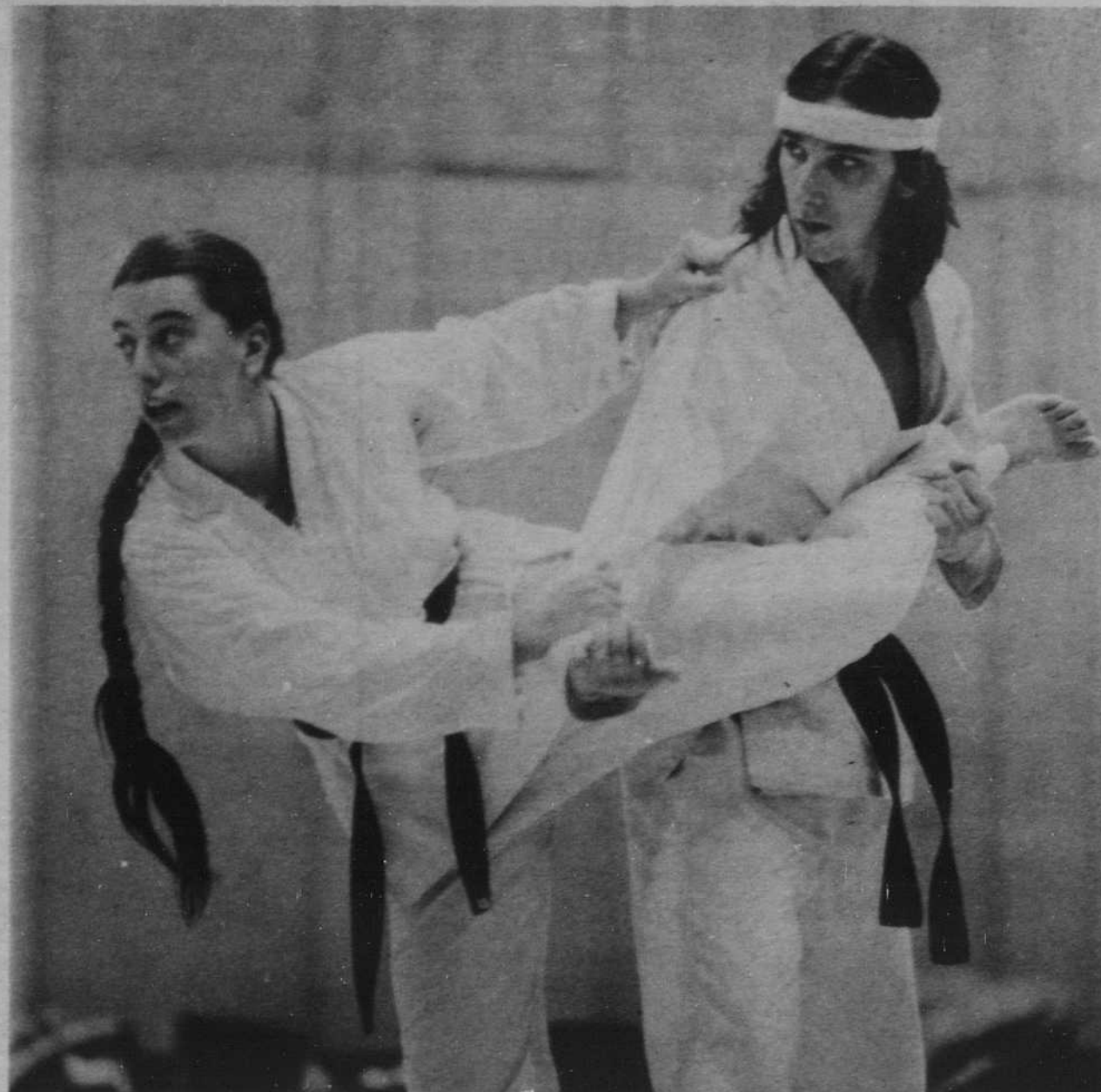
Conditioning is 75 percent of the workout, according to Hauser. "Before you can be fast or graceful, you have to be strong." After attaining strength, students work to develop speed, grace, agility and coordination.

Brute strength is not enough to excel at this martial art. "A change in attitude must come around," Hauser says. "You lose machoism, egotism. You lose the desire to beat your chest and say, 'I am top dog.' You lose the need to constantly prove to yourself that you are better, that you have to beat your opponent."

This does not mean that karate tournaments are not competitive. In a tournament there are two levels of competition — kumite and kata.

In kumite, controlled aggression wins tournaments. Punches and kicks must make surface contact, but no more. Hauser says if an athlete injures an opponent through lack of control, he is disqualified. "Practice is exciting because it's totally unknown what the other person will do, and what my responses will be," Hauser says he would rather attack a black belt than a beginner. A black belt is capable of defending himself, he says, while not hurting the attacker. A beginner might respond with uncontrolled brute force and risk the attacker's safety.

Kata, a form of stylized combat,



Photos by Patrick Sullivan

While karate develops strength, coordination and reflexes, it also helps build character, develop humility and respect, and teaches students to keep tempers under control, according to Hauser. Brute strength is not enough to excel in this art, he says.

is a sequence of moves against an imaginary opponent. "You make the kata as graceful as possible," Hauser says. "Proper timing, coordination and balance take years to develop. You're competing against yourself; always you're working on the little details such as position of your hands and feet."

The form of karate the team practices is different from the sensationalized form shown in Bruce Lee films and in the old "Kung Fu" television shows.

"A surge of students came in to learn to break boards and other iron fist techniques such as the double flying back kick," Hauser says. "When they found out practices emphasized conditioning, and that they were to throw a basic punch 200 to 300 times a night, most got discouraged and left."

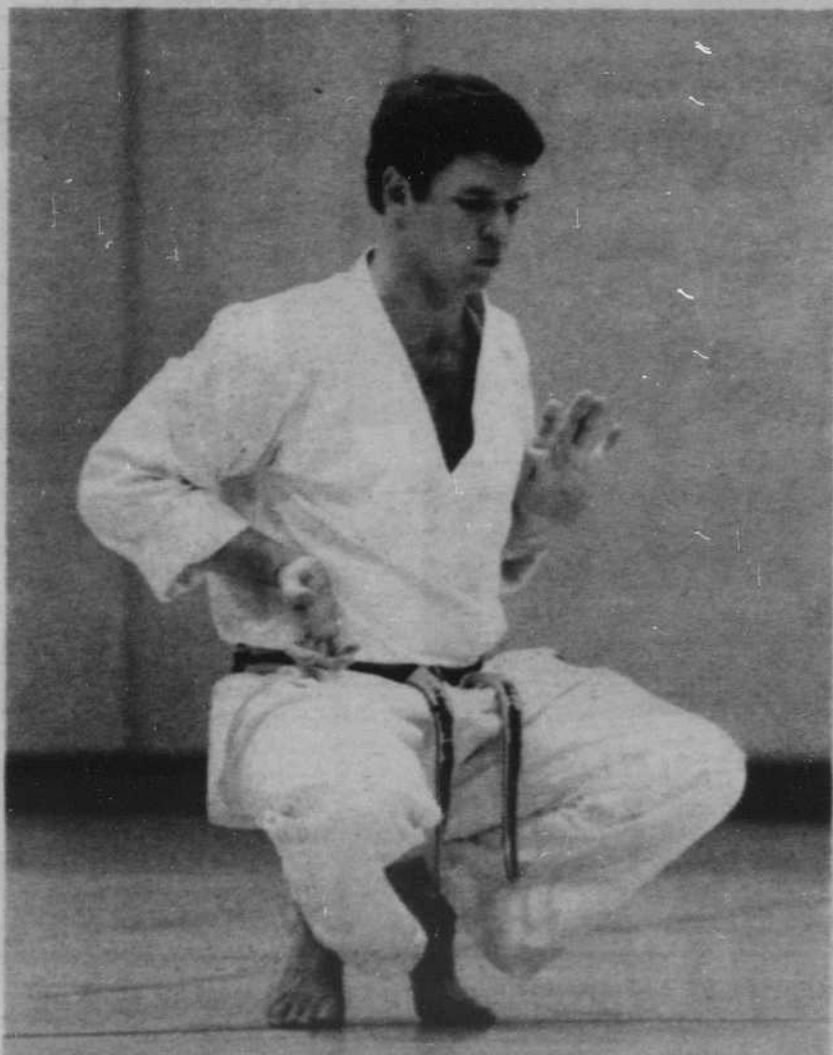
Television's "Wide World of Sports" reinforces the myth that karate is savage, and barbaric, by showing karate experts breaking boards and concrete blocks and slicing apples (lying on people's stomachs) with glistening swords.

But this is not the karate club's approach, says Hauser. Humility is important and showing off is not tolerated. Karate as a recreation and sport plays a significant role in the lives of many students who are willing to dedicate themselves to it.

More and more women are dedicating themselves to learning karate. Among the 10 women who regularly work out with the club is Hauser's wife.

"She's a jogger and is out at all hours," Hauser says. "With all the attacks going on, she and I thought it would be a good idea that she learn how to protect herself."

"Karate is addictive," he says. "The more you learn, the more you want to learn."



Many of the Japanese Dojo karate school traditions are continued by the karate club during practices. The traditional rituals are continued, club member George Hauser says, to remind students that opponents are not really opponents, but friends.

Oregon Daily Emerald

Club Sports roundup



Fencing

Sunday the fencing club travels to Clark College for the Baptism of Steel Tournament. Classes scheduled are beginner's foil standard and beginner's foil electric.



Equestrian

Some team members will be exhibiting in the Holiday Folly Christmas Show Sunday at the Shady Acres Riding Academy. English riding is scheduled for the morning, and western riding for the afternoon. Jumping will also be featured.

For more information or directions to the Academy at 85687 Pine Grove Road, contact the Academy at 344-0612.



Ultimate Frisbee

The University's Frisbee club traveled to Seattle last weekend, and lost matches in cold, rainy weather.

Coach Henry Callahan says the teams 7-5 loss to the Seattle Windjammers "was a pretty wild game."

The second game was a

non-regulation exhibition between teams made up of Eugene and Seattle players. The Eugene team lost 13-10.



Volleyball

The volleyball team travels to Corvallis Saturday to play in the Oregon State Invitational.

Eight teams will compete in the round-robin tourney. It is the season's first United States Volleyball Association sanctioned tournament for the team.



Skiing

This weekend the downhill and cross country teams will workout at Willamette Pass Ski Bowl.

Sunday, a citizens' cross country race is scheduled. The cross country team will race in it as a time trial.



Bowling

The men's and women's bowling teams will travel to Boise, Idaho for a tournament Friday and Saturday.

Boise State will host the invitational.