

# Martial arts expert travels to Korea

BY BRAD EMONS  
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## TAE KWON DO

Over the years Tae Kwon Do Grand Master Ron Rose has hosted several Korean instructors, but the Canton Township resident decided it was time to return the favor and make his first trip over to Seoul, South Korea.

Rose has been involved with the martial arts discipline for nearly 30 years and has been an instructor for 21 years.

Pardon the pun, but Rose certainly blossomed and gained a new insight during his 10-day stay.

He recently headed a contingent of 63 Michiganders, including 33 from his Kick's Tae Kwon Do studio in Wayne.

Also making the trip was his wife, Chris, and two of his four sons, Paul, 24, and Eric, 14. (The couple's two other sons, Marc, 12, a second-degree black belt, and Michael, 8, a first-degree, did not make the trip.)

And judging from their week-long stay, the Rose family enhanced their knowledge in a sport which has over one million practitioners in over 160 countries.

"We were able to experience of beauty, heritage and culture of Korea, but the same time receive intense training from some of the top instructors," Ron Rose said. "We learned the roots of Tae Kwon Do. There were over 50 high-ranking Black Belts. It was five days of intense physical training, classroom lectures on theories and techniques, along with Grand Masters covering competition rules."

Tae Kwon Do has received more and more international exposure in the past 10 years.

It has been an Olympic exhibition sport since 1988 when Seoul hosted the Summer Games. But

in the year 2000, it will become a medal sport. The first time with four different men's and women's weight divisions up for grabs in Sydney, Australia.

Rose is currently the president of the Korean Tae Kwon Do Association of America, the country's largest organization in the sport.

"My life is Tae Kwon Do and I've been enriched by the experience," said Rose. "I grew up in Detroit where there were a lot of gangs. I actually got started taking classes in Taylor, and I fell in love with it."

At the university level in South Korea, students can major in the art of Tae Kwon Do. It's like majoring in any other academic subject.

Rose and his group were able to gain insight into unifying the fundamental forms of Tae Kwon Do movement, as well as learn advanced kicking level technique. Testing was done for fifth degree Black Belt status.

"We had students from Hong Kong, Pakistan, Egypt, Lebanon and Norway; it was very interesting," said Rose, who also serves as an international referee. "We had interpreters with us most of the time, but most Koreans speak some English, which also happens to be the official language of Tae Kwon Do."

The tour was more than a sight-seeing view of temples, palaces and countryside.

"Training started at 8 a.m. and we didn't go to bed until 1:30 p.m.," said Chris Rose, a Senior Master. "One morning we trained on the Sea of Japan. It's called land land of the morning calm."

Before breakfast, the group did a grueling morning run up a



Grand master Ron Rose is an expert in Tae Kwon Do.

mountain as part of their training.

They also trained under the 1988 South Korean Olympic team coach, as well as Master Myungnam Chong, an '88 Olympic gold medalist and Head Master of the World Tae Kwon Do Academy, and two-time women's world champion Shin Ja Lim.

"She (Lim) is only about 5 feet, 3 inches, around 118 pounds, but she's so fast, so powerful and so smooth," said Paul Rose, who is classified as a Master instructor. "It was just amazing watching her."

Eating Korean food was another test of character, but Chris Rose said the Michigan students adjusted well.

"We ate on the floor sitting up with our legs crossed, using chopsticks," she said. "It's a lot of rice, vegetables, noodles, soup, with some meat and fish. Some of it is spicy, but you get used to it."

Added Ron: "Actually the students felt healthier. I know I did. Some of our students lost weight."

Although the Kick's group stayed at a nice resort, getting adjusted to sleeping on the floor with roll-up mats was another

challenge. "I have a bit of a bad back, but after a couple of nights on the floor it (the back) actually started feeling a lot better," Paul Rose said.

The group also visited the world headquarters of Tae Kwon Do, the Kukhwan, known as the Madison Square Garden of South Korea.

"You just feel so different when you walk in a place like that, it was a bit overwhelming," said Ron, who teaches self-defense techniques in Tae Kwon Do to law enforcement officers. "We had police escorts when we traveled and we were treated so wonderfully."

"Korea is a beautiful country and we made a lot of friends. They were very warm and friendly. We received close ties with the instructors."

Grand Master Has Man Park, who lives in Seoul, visits Rose and his family two or three times per year.

"Some want to come here and work," Ron said. "Really there is no difference between the black belts here and there."

With a renewed enthusiasm, Rose has two events planned in the fall sponsored by Kick's.

Black belt students and masters will be in action Saturday through Monday, Sept. 4-6, in a Kick-A-Thon for "Jerry's Kids" at the Madison Center Mall.

The Tae Kwon Do Association of America national championships will be Saturday, Oct. 9, at Stevenson Middle School in Westland.

# Livonia triathlete runner-up in Ohio

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Things are looking up for Livonia triathlete Sheila Taormina.

The 1988 Olympic gold medalist in swimming (women's 800-meter freestyle relay) pocketed \$2,000 Sunday with a second-place finish in the 18th National City Triathlon of Champions event in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

Barb Lindquist, 30, of Victor, Wyo., also a former swimmer (from Stanford) and friend of Taormina, covered the Olympic distance course in one hour, 58 minutes and 5.9 seconds.

Lindquist, the top-rated U.S. triathlete, won \$10,000 for her season earnings to \$28,850.

Taormina's time was 2:00:09.9, while Becky Gibbs of Minnetonka, Minn., finished third in 2:00:24.2.

Lindquist and Taormina, roommates over the weekend, came out of the mile swim in Lake Erie neck-and-neck tied for first place, but Lindquist, 30, was stronger in the 23.7-mile non-drafting bike ride despite stopping momentarily a lap short.

Taormina's 10-kilometer run, however, was an impressive 38 minutes.

"That 10K was the best run of my life," said the former University of Georgia Bulldog and Stevenson High Spartan. "I felt strong on the run, but my endurance on the bike right now is weak."

Taormina missed nearly two months of training during the spring with a virus.

Taormina, 30, raced in Austin, Tex. and finished second in early May, but did not compete again until Aug. 8 when she placed eighth in the North American Triathlon Championships in Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

"I'm in pretty good aerobic shape right now, but I'm not really in racing shape just yet," Taormina said.

Ranked 151 in the world in points, Taormina will head next week to Luuconne, Switzerland to compete in an International Triathlon Union (ITU) race.

The 2000 U.S. Olympic Trials will be held in two stages next spring with eight triathletes competing in Sydney, Australia, and another 15 qualifiers vying in Dallas, Tex.

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