

SPORTS

TAEKWON-DO

Friendly City Taekwon-Do had four students earn black belts in late-October

By [Greg Colgan](#), Sentinel-Review

Thursday, November 6, 2014 5:14:51 EST PM



Four students from Friendly City Taekwon-Do stand in front of broken boards after they passed their testing to receive their black belts in late-October. From left: Friendly City Taekwondo head instructor Don Edmiston, Jeremy Bauman (1st degree), Mike Kowalek (2nd degree), Noah Young (1st degree), Carlina Green (1st degree) and tester Steven Legrow. Submitted photo

In the taekwondo world, there's few achievements more impressive than earning a black belt. For four students from Friendly City Taekwondo, it took years of practice and training, but in the end it was worth every second.

Jeremy Bauman, Carlina Green and Noah Young earned their first degree black belts, while Mike Kowalek received his second degree when they did the testing Oct. 24 and 25.

"We knew it'd be a significant challenge and having been involved in helping with the last black belt test, I got a picture of what it involved," Bauman, 37, who also has his son do taekwondo, said. "I was a bit anxious on how I would handle it. It was pretty exciting to realize this accomplishment after five years of training."

For Green, a 15-year-old student at Huron Park who's been doing taekwondo for nine years, there was a bit of anxiety but a sense of achievement at the end.

"I was terrified. Just hearing about everything we had to do was a bit scary," she said. "It was a huge relief and it felt good."

The test was a two-day process beginning with a written exam of more than 50 questions that were multiple choice and short answer looking at the history of taekwondo and theory behind movements and patterns. They continued at College Avenue Secondary School with two hours of physical testing and then again the next day with four more hours of testing.

The physical and technical aspect consisted of running, squats, skips, pushups, breaking boards, kicks and several other challenges with few if any breaks in between.

Friendly City Taekwon-Do head instructor Don Edmiston, himself a third degree black belt, said all four were pushed to their physical threshold and then some, and still kept going.

“When they came here Saturday at 1 p.m. for the technical part and 20 minutes into the test they were spent and I pushed them for four more hours,” he said. “You can’t train for that, but they gave it all and kept pushing themselves. They deserve their belts.”

The testing was administered by Edmiston and Steve Legrow, a sixth degree black belt, and head instructor of Blackburn Taekwon-Do in Ottawa.

Before the official test, all four did a pretest in August to prepare them for what was to come their way.

“It was a little taste of the real test. It was, ‘here’s what’s coming, but 10 times longer and much tougher’,” Young, a 14-year-old student at Ecole secondaire Catholique Notre-Dame, said. “The real test was definitely hard and I was pretty pumped and happy (to earn the black belt).”

Edmiston said the most gratifying part for him as a head instructor is when his students achieve their new belts. Since 2002, not including when he stepped away from the school from 2008 to 2011, he’s seen 16 students reach black belt status.

While the first degree testing pushed them to the brink of their endurance, when asked if they’d consider the second degree at some point in their future, the three of them emphatically said yes to the idea.

“It was very challenging and certainly a test of your will power. It’s an intense relief,” Bauman said of completing the first degree, “but a sense of pride and accomplishment.”