

# practice MAKES perfect

(below) **PRACTICING RIGHT BEFORE** his next competition, Kim is nervous but prepared. "It's very nervewracking when you get on the mat," Kim said. "so I just calm myself down, stretch, and practice over and over again."



Story & design by Hope Van Riesen  
Photos courtesy of Hope Van Riesen,  
Ellie Kwak, Jeanie Kwak, Hyunhwa Jung

It's more than dedication when you perform the same motions so many times your body knows it better than you. Practicing his poomsae routine, which consists of attack and defense forms, Nathan Kim dedicates himself to 18 hours a week: two hours on weekdays and four on weekends.

"You constantly do the same thing over and over again, leaving you to be exhausted physically and mentally," Kim said. "Although it's difficult, the feeling of improvement always gets my adrenaline up."

Kim started nine years ago when a program for the sport was being offered at his church.

"I never wanted to be a part of a community that revolves around sports, especially martial arts," Kim said. "And now



(top left) **COMPETING IN HIS** most experienced category, Kim takes first place in senior individual poomsae at Pacific Regional Championship on February 25th, 2023. He was both relieved and excited when he learned that he had won within his category. "There were many things that I could've done better," Kim said. "but the way I performed was my peak."



(bottom left) **USUALLY GOING SOLO** Kim experiments with working as a group team at the Amateur Athletic Union Taekwondo National Championships on July 5th, 2022, competing in the team poomsae category. "It was a lot harder and required a lot more patience compared to any other tournament that we had to do," Kim said. "[But] we got second place and it felt really good because it was our first time doing it."

here I am, with almost nine years of experience, still learning to this day."

He often travels to competitions both in state and internationally. Kim has competed in over 60 events and won around 20 of them all over the globe.

One thing Kim has noticed that differentiates taekwondo from other sports is the control necessary for competing and training.

"The discipline...has an edge compared to other sports," Kim said. "Taekwondo requires a lot of patience and discipline."

*"The feeling of improvement always gets my adrenaline up."*  
**NATHAN KIM**

Although the commitment is high and the dedication is intense, Kim still recommends trying the sport. If not for the sport itself, but the people surrounding it, making sure to drive you to be the best that you can be.

"The friends and connections I made, whether it be students or instructors," Kim said. "The ones that pushed me on were my companions."

Allisyn Kwon  
Jules Lafargue  
Connor Lai  
Shuya Lam  
Anthony Landa Mendoza  
Bianca (Nico) Landolfi



Diya Lansberg  
Margarita Larrain  
Ray Law  
Julia Lawrence  
Andrew Lee  
Carlin Lee



Clarissa Lee  
Rachel Lee  
Sophia Lee  
Kyle Lehman  
Erin Li  
Jacqueline Li



Kyle Li  
Lucy Li  
Alice Lifshitz  
Gavin Lin  
Karen Lin  
Emma Lindsay



Olivia Lindstrom  
Lorenzo Lisi  
Matteo Lisi  
Burton Liu  
Henry Liu  
Jonathan Liu



Sin-Chi Liu  
Stanley Liu  
Gabriella Loops  
Andrew Lopez Galvez  
Brandon Lorenson  
Alena Lotterer



Brian Lu  
Beck Lynn  
Beckett Lyons  
Seth Mack  
Jeremiah Madrigal  
Bernard Mandudzo



Samantha Mann  
Tyler Martin  
Julian Martinez  
Christopher Maudsley  
Evan Mazurov  
Aidan McGraw



Tony McKenna  
Maia McQuarrie  
Austin Mei  
Mihir Menon  
Leah Mershon  
Gavriel Messerman



Hasan Minhas  
Kai Mirchandani  
Sirisha Mitra  
Christian-Olivier Moncarz  
Schmidt  
Nicholas Mondragon  
Bianca Montes