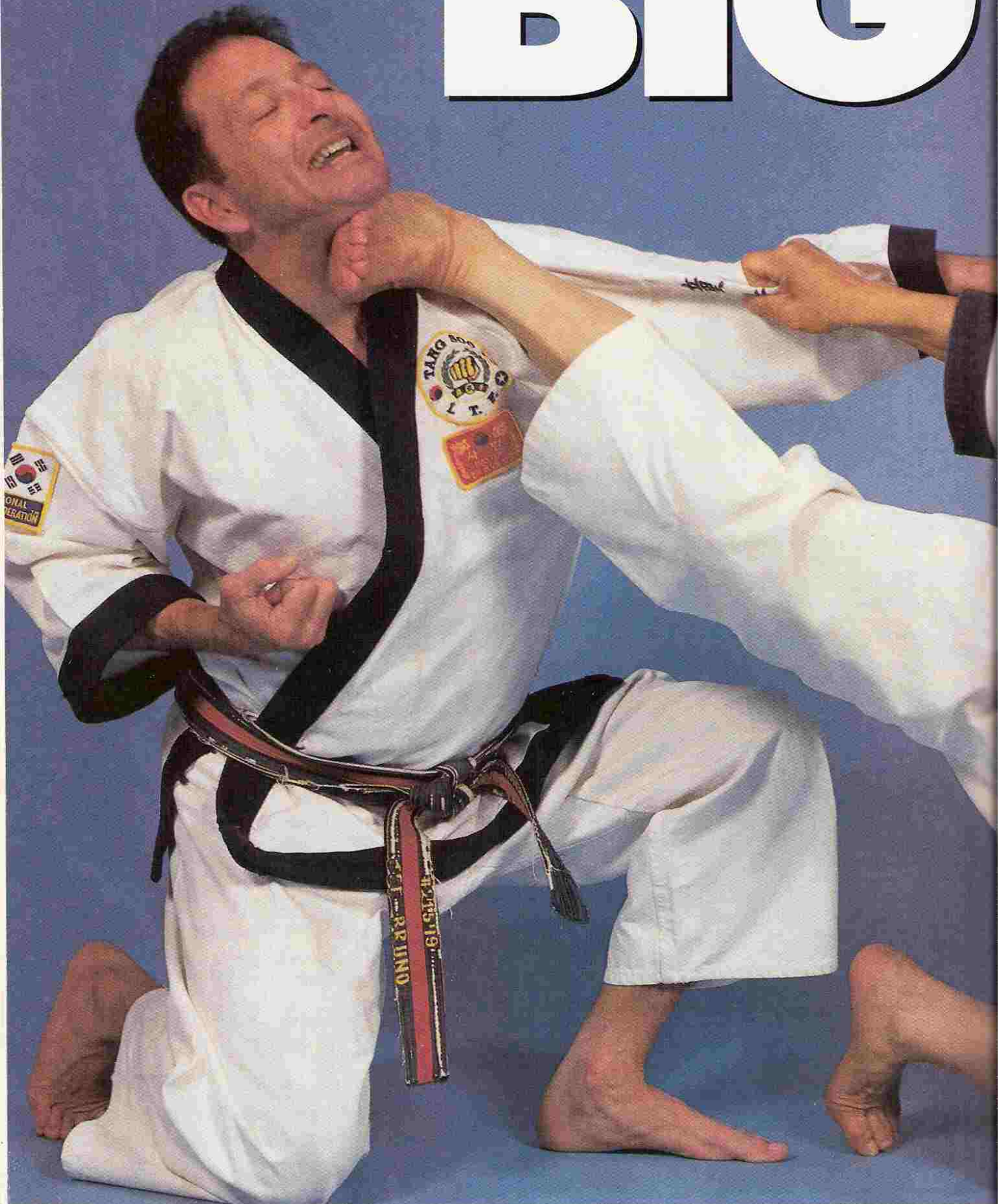


# BIG

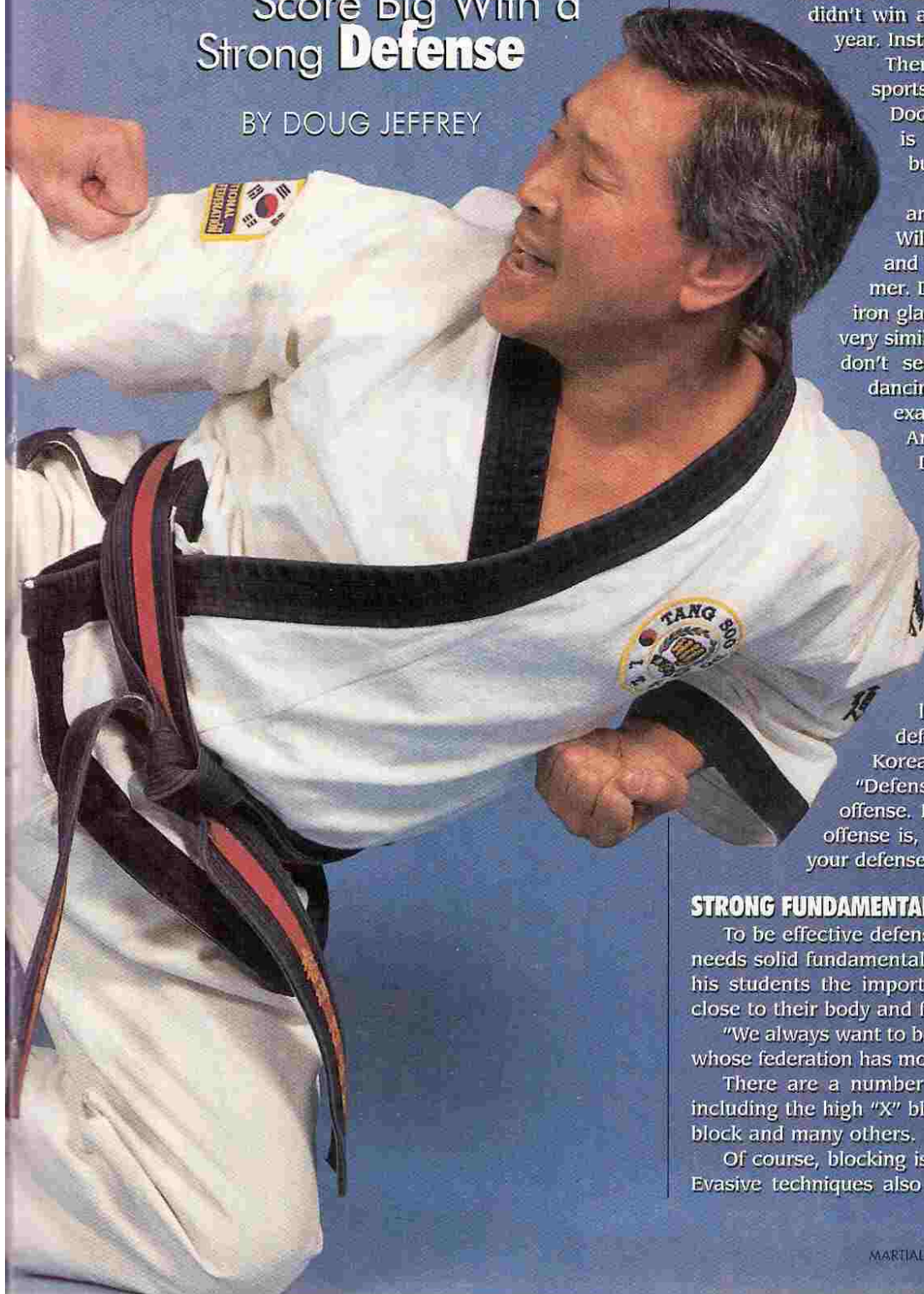




# “D”

## Forget About Offense, Tang Soo Do Fighters Score Big With a Strong Defense

BY DOUG JEFFREY



“Sandy pitched a no-hitter.”  
“Great. How’d he make out?”

For years, baseball fans have chuckled at Don Drysdale’s response to the news that his teammate [Sandy Koufax] had pitched a no-hitter.

The 6-foot 6-inch right-hander asked if Koufax won the game because the 1965 Los Angeles Dodgers weren’t known for their scoring ... or hitting. As crazy as it may sound, it wasn’t inconceivable for Koufax to throw a gem and lose. Baseball fans can remember tons of L.A. victories by the score of 1-0 and 2-1. On most occasions, the Dodgers couldn’t muster more than a few hits.

Needless to say, the anemic Dodger offense didn’t win a World Series for them that year. Instead, it was all defense.

There are some teams in modern sports that are just like that old Dodger team. A perfect example is professional football’s Pittsburgh Steelers.

Offensively, these boys aren’t quite as inept as Maury Wills, Lou Johnson, Jim Lefebvre and the rest of L.A.’s Boys of Summer. Defensively, however, the grid-iron gladiators from Pennsylvania are very similar. These guys are stingy. You don’t see many of their opponents dancing in the end zone. And that’s exactly why the Steelers won the American Conference’s Central Division. Tough defense.

Defense does more than just win baseball’s World Series and the NFL’s Super Bowl. It also wins fights. Just ask Chun Sik Kim, president and founder of the International Tang Soo Do Federation.

“Tang soo do sparring philosophy always focuses on defense,” says Kim, a two-time Korean tang soo do champion. “Defense is more important than offense. Regardless of how good your offense is, you won’t be that effective if your defense isn’t good.”

### STRONG FUNDAMENTALS

To be effective defensively, the tang soo do stylist needs solid fundamentals. Therefore, Kim engrains in his students the importance of holding their hands close to their body and face.

“We always want to be ready for a block,” says Kim, whose federation has more than 20,000 members.

There are a number of blocks at their disposal, including the high “X” block, side block, low-trapping block and many others.

Of course, blocking is not the only line of defense. Evasive techniques also come in quite handy. When



appropriate, the fighter may step to the side or out of range from an opponent's strikes. The type of technique dictates his response. For example, the fighter will move to the side if his opponent throws a front kick.

**COUNTERS AND COMBINATIONS**

Whether the tang soo do fighter has executed a crushing block or evaded the bad guy, he is immediately looking for a chance to counter with a lethal weapon because this is when the opponent is vulnerable.

"In some ways, you might say that our defense is also our offense," says Kim, who was the U.S. Team Coach at the First World Championships. "We might fall back or move to the side 45 degrees. When we do this, we can see if our opponent has exposed a target that we can strike."

Thus, the crafty tang soo do fighter is looking for an opening on his opponent's body, low hands or a certain body position. When he sees the opportunity, he strikes swiftly.

Striking swiftly is worthless, however, if he doesn't hit the right target. Thus, he aims for the solar plexus [because it's a weak, soft area], and he also put a bull's eye on the nose area and throat.

The traditional tang soo do stylist has a variety of counterattacks at his disposal. While he may be known for his kicking expertise, he has more than legs in his bag of tricks.

"I teach traditional tang soo do, which means that we use a 50/50 ratio of hands and feet," says Kim. "After we block

with our hands, we can punch or use our feet. They both work together."

One of the most effective is the back kick. Kim favors this weapon because it's short and fast.

"Let's say that your opponent throws a kick," he says. "You can block the technique and throw a jump back kick."

They also utilize a front kick. One is short and the other is long.

"The short kick, which is like a snake, is quick," he says.

Of course, it's always wise to bolster your arsenal with a variety of combinations, he notes.

"The important thing is that combinations must have good balance, and you get that balance from traditional tang soo do forms," he notes. "If you block and punch and lose your balance, you won't be able to follow up with a third move."

**FIRST MOVE**

When facing an opponent — whether it's in the ring or on the street — the tang soo do practitioner is always conscious of his adversary's first move.

"On the street, if you encounter a troublemaker, he's

**Martial Arts Championships**

C.S. Kim holds his annual tournament, The National All Martial Arts Championships, every year at the University of Pittsburgh Field house. This tournament is much more than just points, winning and losing.

"We also practice etiquette and attitude," says Kim. "That is my philosophy."



Master C.S. Kim and his partner square off (1). Kim throws a front snap kick to the stomach of Joseph V. Bruno, who steps into a back stance and blocks the kick with his right arm (2). Bruno counters with a right hammerfist to the head, which Kim defends with a high right hand (3). Bruno follows with a middle punch, Kim blocks it with a middle knifehand (4) and then grabs Bruno's arm (5) and strikes it with a vicious elbow (6).



going to come first," he says. "More than likely, he's going to have a knife, gun or stick and make the first move. Sparring is the same way. When your opponent makes his move, he usually comes with his favorite technique. Right away, we know what he likes to do. We can then anticipate the move, be ready for it, block it and follow up."

### STAYING READY

Watching an opponent's face is another key line of defense. An opponent's eyes can reveal personality, attitude and intentions. The experienced fighter can read that.

"If you watch your opponent's face, you will know 99 percent of the time what he's going to do," says the 61-year-old martial artist.

### RARE OCCASIONS

While Kim stresses defense, there are occasions when they switch things up ... like a fastball pitcher who throws a curve. When they throw their version of their "breaking pitch," the tang soo do stylist attacks first, creating an element of surprise.

"Usually, we wait for our opponent to make the first move," says Kim. "When we do move first, however, we give a little fake and look for our opponent to open up. If he puts his head down or backs up, then we follow up. In essence, we are trying to make the opening."

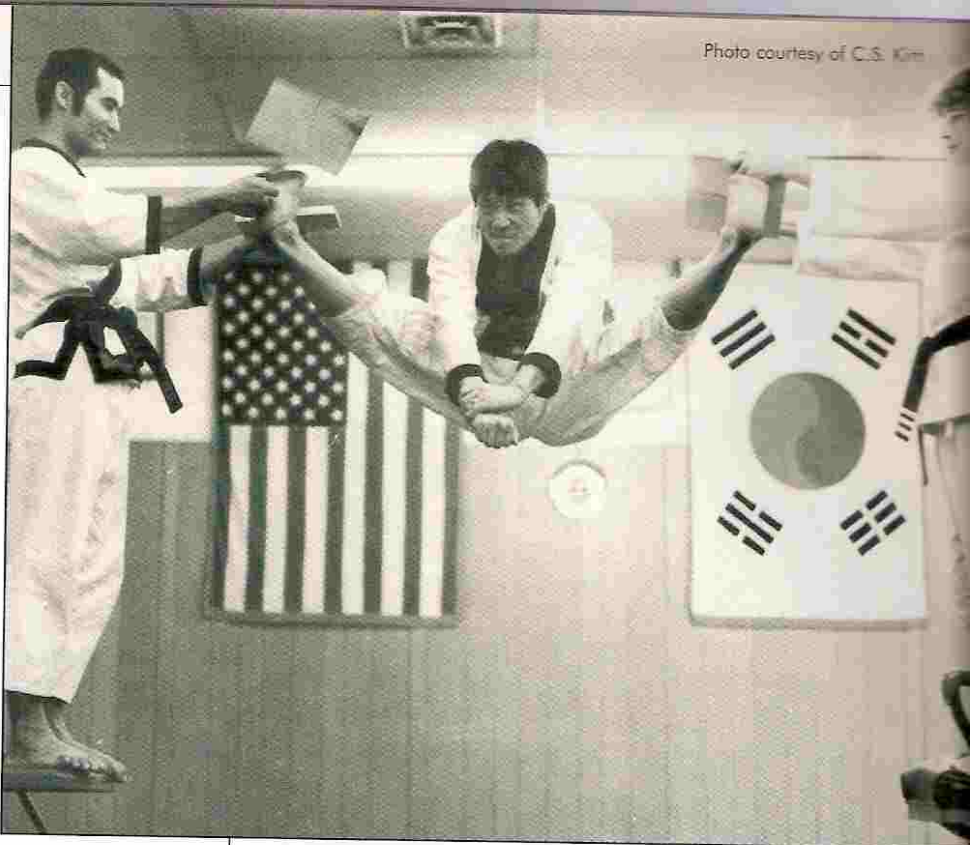
When the fighter sees the opening, he has to close the gap quickly. To facilitate the move, he might fake, *kiai* (yell), switch his feet or turn his body. The yell is a critical element of this process. Yelling not only shows confidence, it can scare the opponent or make him hesitate for a second, says Kim, adding that the *kiai* should come from the abdomen for added power.

### FISH OUT OF WATER

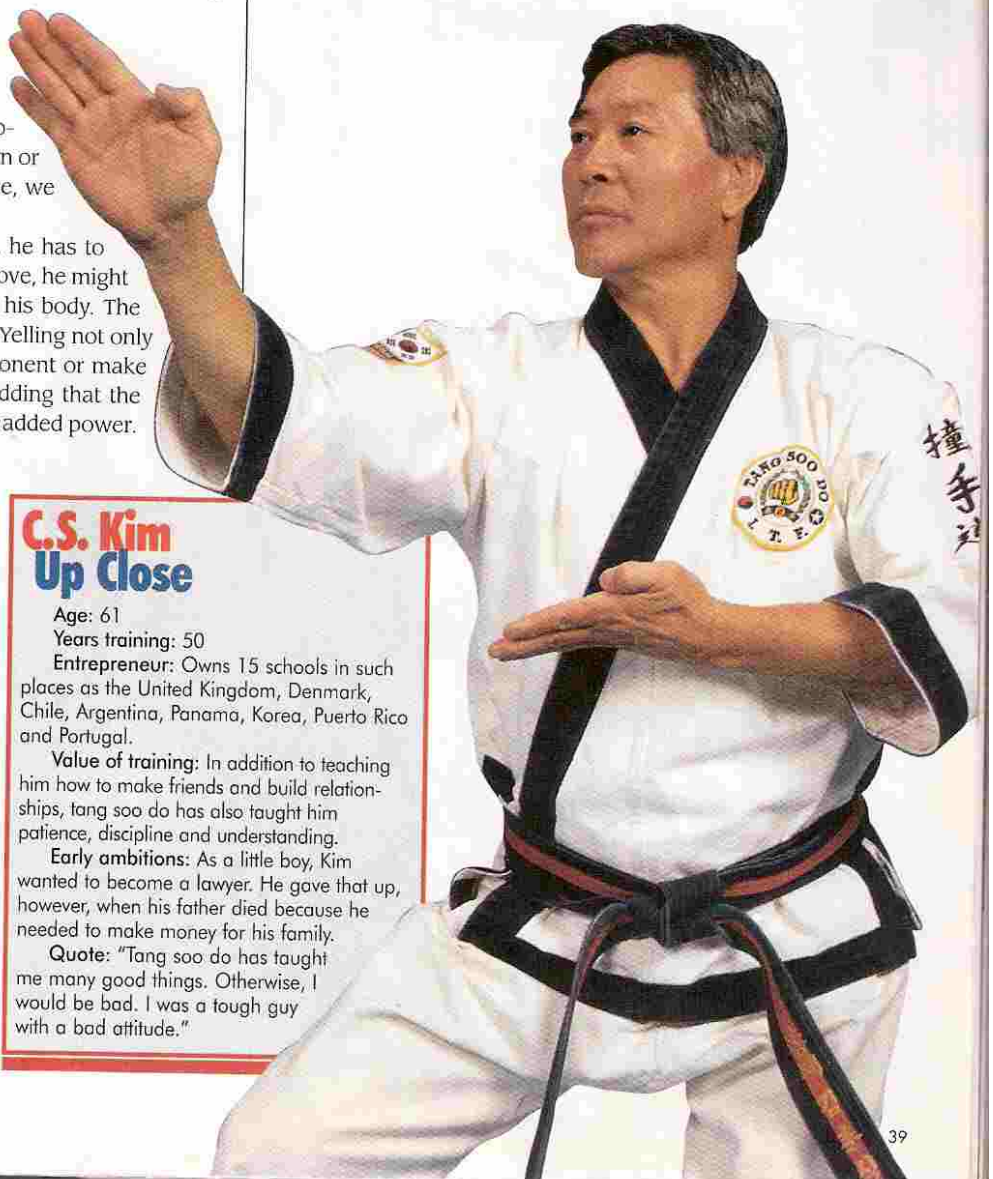
Besides attacking first, there is another way Kim introduces the element of surprise. Believe it or not, even in a traditional art such as tang soo do, his fighters can handle themselves on the ground. These guys are not like fish out of water when they find themselves off their feet. His students not only practice takedowns, they also prepare various techniques for the ground.

"Of course, we learn how to avoid going to the ground," he says. "If, however, we end up there, we have techniques."

To be sure, every situation is different, so what they do depends on the situation and what the opponent is trying to do. To make his students



C.S. Kim breaks two boards with a seven-foot-high split front-kick. The photo was taken in 1974, in New Jersey.



### C.S. Kim Up Close

Age: 61

Years training: 50

**Entrepreneur:** Owns 15 schools in such places as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Chile, Argentina, Panama, Korea, Puerto Rico and Portugal.

**Value of training:** In addition to teaching him how to make friends and build relationships, tang soo do has also taught him patience, discipline and understanding.

**Early ambitions:** As a little boy, Kim wanted to become a lawyer. He gave that up, however, when his father died because he needed to make money for his family.

**Quote:** "Tang soo do has taught me many good things. Otherwise, I would be bad. I was a tough guy with a bad attitude."



## BIG "D"

as prepared as possible, he teaches a variety of techniques, including how to attack and throw kicks from the ground.

"If your opponent mounts you, you can free your legs and kick his face," he says. "If he tries to choke you, you can grab his clothes and push your thumb into his throat."

Before they even get to the techniques, however, they have to adopt a new mindset.

"When most people go to the ground, they are scared and give up easily," he says. "That is why I teach people not to give up. When a person gets you down, you have to be ready to go down, too."

### JUST DO IT

On many occasions during that sweltering summer of '65, the Dodgers found themselves down a run or two. But they never gave up. They continued to play tough defense and chip away with the offense. Eventually, they won the pennant and then the World Series.

So, if you ever doubted the importance of defense, think about that old Dodger team or the 2002 Pittsburgh Steelers or C.S. Kim, who was undefeated in sparring in 1970. ☺

### The Future of Training

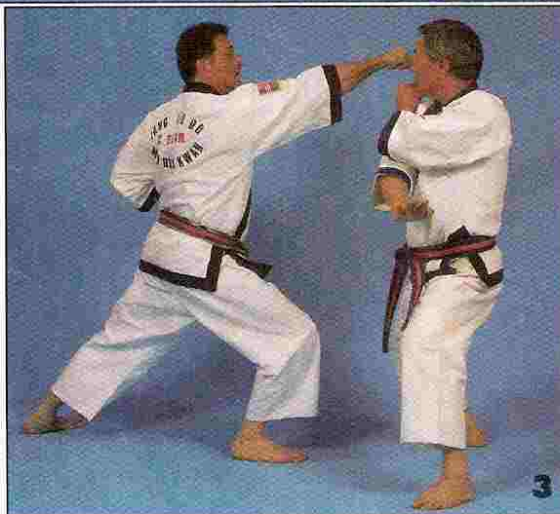
Within a few short years, tang soo do training in Washington, D.C., is going to take on a whole new look. C.S. Kim intends to open a training and meditation center on 300 acres that will encompass 20,000 square feet. The non-profit facility, which will cost about \$5 million, will include a temple, a museum and a training hall. Kim also intends to hold championship tournaments at the site.



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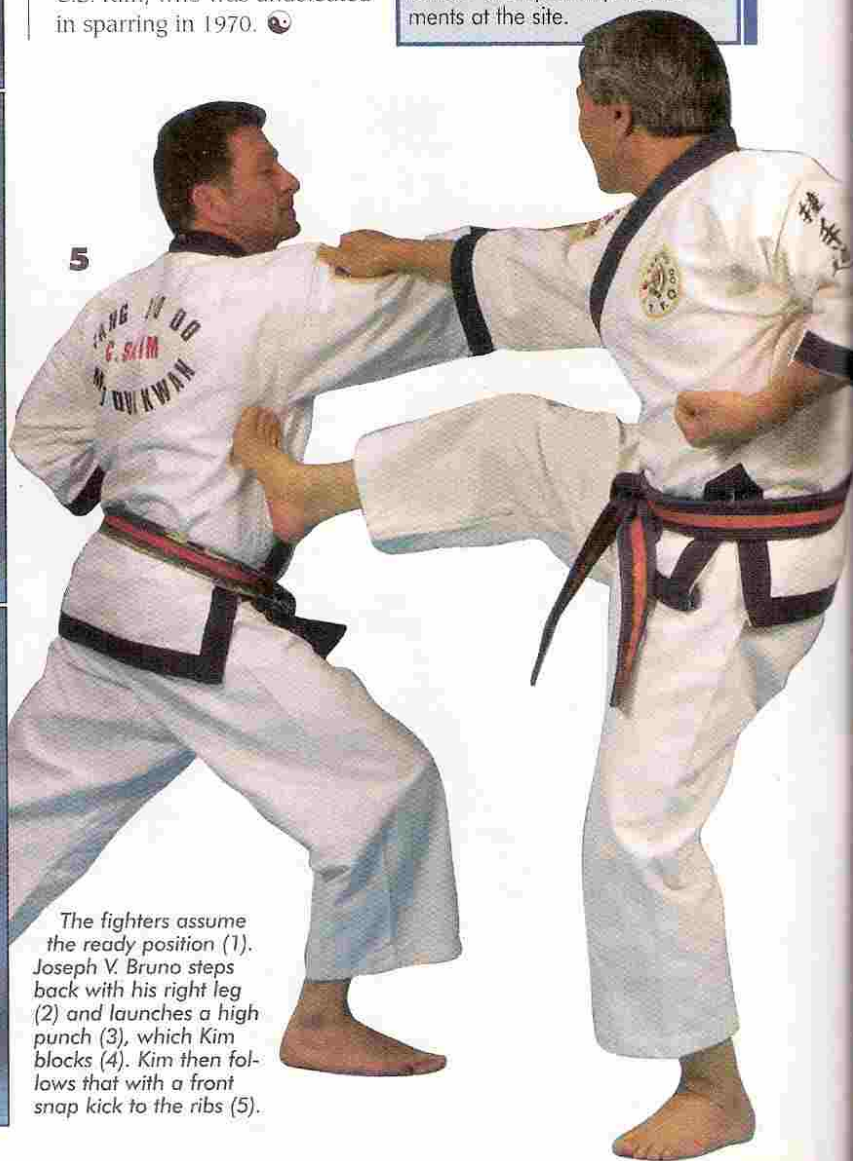
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4



5

The fighters assume the ready position (1). Joseph V. Bruno steps back with his right leg (2) and launches a high punch (3), which Kim blocks (4). Kim then follows that with a front snap kick to the ribs (5).