

The Auckland Demonstration Team

Written By: Amanda Insull
March 1999



The Auckland demonstration team was formed in 1995 by Mr Andrew Niven, then 2nd Dan black belt and instructor of Mt Albert Tae Kwon Do. The purpose of the Demonstration Team is to promote the International TaeKwon-Do Foundation of New Zealand by performing demonstrations at various venues and events. Some of these include movie theaters, 'Have A Go' days and openings of new clubs. Encouraging new members to join ITFNZ clubs in their area.

Members of the demonstration team train on average every second Saturday or Sunday. During this time we brainstorm for new ideas which could be included in future demos, or we practice old ideas perfecting them.

In order to have an outstanding demonstration, members are required to become skilled in all aspects of skits this is to allow for position changing should the need arise. This has become essential as key members are sometimes unavailable for demos due to other commitments.

After every second training session we have what we call a socialising, fun day.

This has two main reasons,

- 1) to create a friendly and happy team environment
- 2) to conceive new ideas for future demos.

Those occasions are spent watching recent martial arts movies, (while brain-storming), watching overseas demonstrations on video (having sessions brain-storming, collecting ideas possibly to use in our demos), having a barbecue at a team members house or just having a good time.

Every now and again our trainings consist with having a guest instructor come along to teach us something unique or special. This could be someone within or outside TaeKwon-Do. So far we've had people come to give some ideas on how to start another skit or a new style of forming up. We have been taught how to do some stunt falling plus break falls along with fancy kicks and we have how to march properly in formation, so looking uniform.

To be accepted into the demonstration team we had to go through vigorous exercise and perform a substantial number of techniques. We were taken through a some what hardish training session in order to see just how fit we were and to see what we needed to improve on. This was followed by a series of patterns and a number of partners for sparring. Along with this we had to have a specialty technique to perform and boards to break to prove we have the stamina, and that something special required to belong to this dedicated team..

In order to keep a great Demonstration Team we have devised a team structure.

Members of the Demonstration Team are on different levels based on three requirements.

- (1) attitude,
- (2) experience, and
- (3) technical ability

When starting out in the Demonstration Team students are classed as a Candidate and after about six months you may be invited to test for a position in the Development Squad. After about a year of training you may then be invited to test for the A team. These categories are used to determine who forms a majority of the demonstrations. Major demonstrations are usually performed by the A team members. Development Squad and Candidates are used as understudies when members are injured or unavailable at any time.

Testings are examined by a panel of about 5 to 7 A Team members and a guest instructor if one is available on the day. These testings are devised to identify the strengths and weaknesses relevant to demonstrations.

My first demonstration was both exciting but terrifying at the same time. It involved most of the team performing a variety of kicks and blocks along Queen Street in town. So many people were watching I just wanted to just go home and leave everyone behind. I was so scared. This demo was for the Red Nose Day and as you would have guessed we all had to wear these great big red noses for the whole demo. I was just so happy none of my friends were there to see me, I don't think I would have lived it down.

This demo was made up of mostly senior belts but unfortunately due to the lack of dedication and interest shown by the black belts throughout the Auckland area, the Demonstration Team recently had to open its doors to coloured belts. Before, the requirement was students had to be either a Black belt or a Black tip.

The numbers were dropping and the only students who seemed to be taking an interest were those of lower grades. This did not mean that anyone could just join. Students interested had to go through the trial training mentioned above in order to get selected or if good enough one of the senior Dans in the team could approach the student to ask if they would like to try out. This turned out as some sort of saviour as new members brought new vibrant ideas which were what the team needed to get back on the road to success. With them came some fascinating gymnastic stunts and fresh new ideas.

To many of us we have come to think of the Demonstration Team as just another family. We all respect each other, considering everybody's feelings and always look out for one another no matter what. You can always depend on a fellow team member to lend you a hand or cheer you up if needed. We have a great time when we are together and are pretty relaxed around each other.

We are so relaxed that most of the time we call each other by nick names. You see when joining the Demonstration Team you are allowing us the opportunity to assign you a nick name. It is policy that everybody on the team has a nick name. Some of the names given to people are unusual like; Brutal, Squeak, Always and 0900 Hard Man, I am lucky as I am only called Mandz.

We do however know when to draw the line, when to have fun and when to take things serious.

During training time we keep everything formal and say the traditional Sirs and Maams.

To help me out and to make a fair statement about how the Demonstration Team was, is and should be, I decided to ask some of the current members different questions.

I did this not only to help me out with some information but also to make sure that what I was stating didn't sound or come across as being biased.

A majority of the new members thought the Demonstration Team was an excellent idea and it was doing extremely well. On a scale of 1 to 10, most rated the team about a 7 or 8

Members who have been there longer thought the Demonstration Team was also a great idea as it gives both the young and up coming practitioners a chance to show their abilities.

However it was stated that there was need for a little improvement. On a scale of 1 to 10, their ratings were around the middle region of about 5 to 6.5.

A little more professionalism and dedication is all that's needed to make the team look like it should be. One good idea mentioned out of all this was that we should ask maybe outside people (spectators) what they look for in a demonstration and what they would like to see in future demos, seeing as they are the people we are trying to encourage to join our organisation of martial art.

Down below are some of the talents you can see being shown by the Auckland Demonstration Team. Some of these shots were taken while the team were performing a demonstration, others are when the team have been having fun and some are when the team were having a photo shoot with Mr Paul McPhail.



This is a photo of me performing a reverse turning kick at one of the school demonstrations this year.



This is Sean Button performing a split kick to Daniel Jackson and Luke Thompson.



This is a photo sequence of Demien Seidel demonstrating how to perform a flying twin foot front snap kick at a great height.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to thank The Auckland Demonstration Team, most of whom are pictured below, for all their support and information for this essay.

In particular Mr Banicevich and Mrs Breen for supplying me with valuable information and photos.

