

AUBURN NEWS

DEDICATION PAYS OFF FOR CHARLTON MARTIAL ARTIST



Rich Hosford photo

Timothy (T.J.) Saucier, 10, of Charlton, poses with his bo staff at the McCoy's Action Karate studio in Auburn where he takes classes. Saucier took four first place finishes in the KRANE tournament circuit this year for his age and rank group for Massachusetts.

SAUCIER

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stration team, the Maximum Edge.

"Mr. Saucier is an amazing student and a fantastic performer with the

Bo, an Okinawan Martial Arts weapon, but he is in love with performance karate." McCoy said. "He performs well in all divisions, but his ability to throw trick kicks and his speed in the open division is astounding."

The way the KRANE tournament circuit works is through the accumulation of points throughout the year, opposed to having one competition with winner takes all. The top point getter in a particular division wins the competition in their age and rank group. There are also regional champions as well as state champions.

McCoy said Saucier is an excellent student, due to both a natural talent and a determination normally reserved for adults. Because of this, McCoy estimates he will soon be moving on to the next stage in his martial arts career.

BY RICHARD HOSFORD
NEWS STAFF WRITER
AUBURN — He swings his bo staff around his body in tight circles, brings it in front of him with a flourish and then spins it over his head almost too fast to see. Then he brings it up in his right hand and crashed one point onto the ground, letting out a fierce yell, his face set in a look of determination.

This is the form that won Timothy (T.J.) Saucier Jr., 10, of Charlton, first place in the KRANE weapons competition for Massachusetts in 2007.

That, however, was not the extent of his accomplishment. Saucier ended the year with four first place finishes

in the state for his age and rank, including forms, open forms and sparring (a type of fighting with protection).

Saucier is an "apprentice black belt" at the McCoy's Action Karate dojo in Auburn. When he accumulated the points to receive the KRANE state honors he was in his fifth year of practice, he is now in his sixth and his looking to get his black belt.

His sensei, or instructor, dojo owner Paul McCoy, said Saucier is also competing in his third year as a member of Team MAK, the school's tournament team, and is also on their professional demon-

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"He takes classes three to four times a week and trains outside the school," he said. "He's about ready to test for black belt in May. T.J. is now an apprentice black belt, what we call the polishing stage. Most people are there for six months to a year, but he'll be invited to the first available test."

McCoy said he is proud of Saucier's achievements and said the student's ability to stay focused and think about only the task ahead led him to win the competition.

"In 15 years we have trained over 250 black belts, and we've had three have success on a national or regional circuit," he said. "Everybody wins from time to time, but very few people have the staying power to win through the fact that some people are better than you and you have to find a way to beat them — to win through the discipline. He has that."

Saucier's father, Tim Saucier, said he is proud of his son, and is happy that he has participated in karate the past six years. He stressed that practicing the martial arts has not

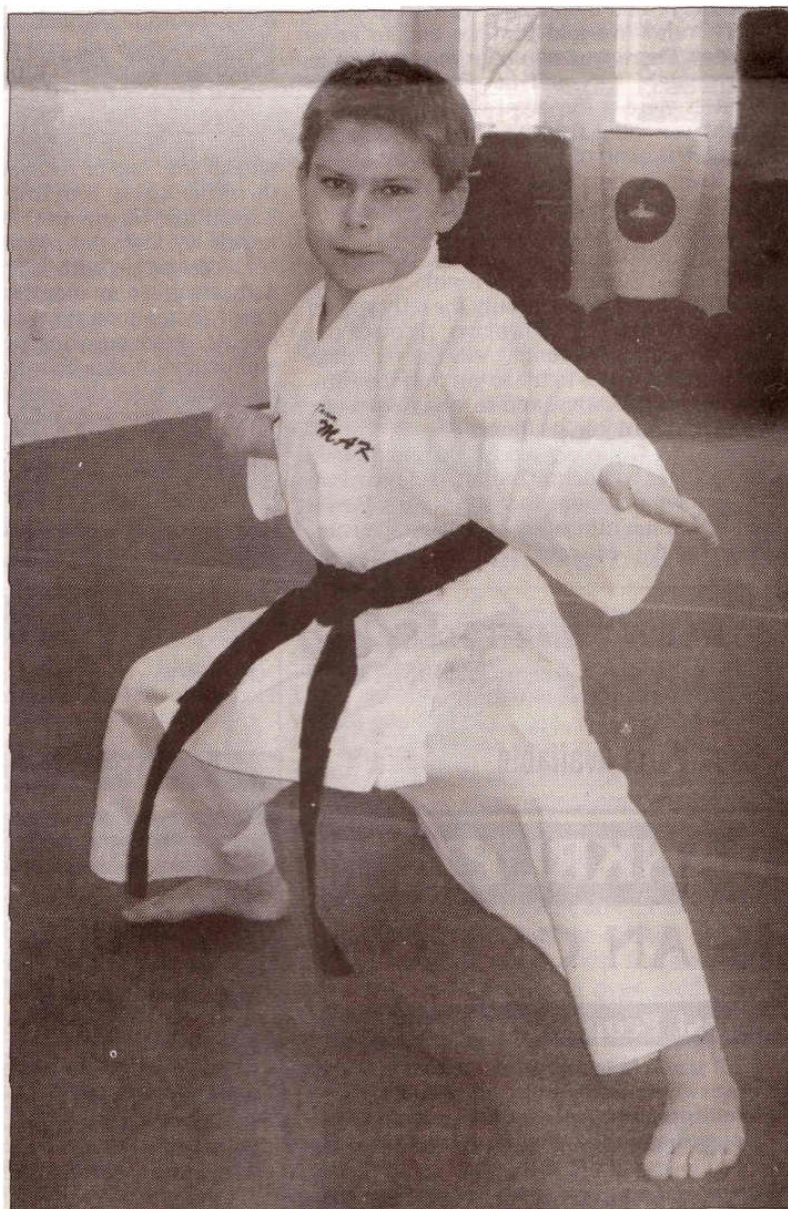
only benefit T.J. in competitions, but in the development of his whole character. He said karate, and the instructors at the dojo, have helped him grow.

"It has helped him immensely," Mr. Saucier said. "He was shy and now it's directly the opposite. He is very confident. Everything he does, right down to his schoolwork, he takes as a challenge, just like he takes karate."

T.J. said he enjoys karate because it is a "challenging sport." This year, the competition is going to get even more challenging because he will move from the intermediate division into the advanced division in his age group. The new challenge doesn't seem to both him, however.

"That means better people and better competition," he said of the new classification. "I'll have to practice more and try more for my goal."

Rich Hosford may be reached by phone at (508) 909-4136 or by e-mail at rhosford@stonebridgepress.com.



Charlton resident T.J. Saucier, 10, holds a deep stance, one arm ready to block a strike and the other pulled in tight against his body to get power from a punch. Saucier trains at the McCoy's Action Karate studio in Auburn, and took four first place finishes in 2007 in the KRANE tournament circuit.