



For the Times  
 Kristina Centers takes a breath of fresh Iowa air after winning the gold in the sparring competition and the bronze in form competition at the National Tae Kwon Do competition in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

# Centers takes gold in Tae Kwon Do contest

By Kelly Nadeau  
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Just returning from the National Tae Kwon Do Competition in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Kristina Centers is "ecstatic." The 31-year-old Monroe resident took the gold in the sparring competition and the bronze in forms.

"I've had so many people call since I've gotten back," said Centers who has been sharing her joy with all of her friends and family. "I was ecstatic with the bronze in forms, but to get the gold medal in sparring..."

Centers competed against eight other women in form competition, Thursday, July 1. "We had so much fun. Not only do you go and compete, but you meet friends. There were girls from Canada, Texas, Tennessee, just all over," said Centers. "Not one of us did the same form."

After Centers bronze medal capture, she could hardly wait for the sparring competition. "I just enjoy sparring a lot more," she said. Centers competed in sparring, Saturday, July 3, sparring against three other women for the title. Centers won 7-1, 5-3, and 8-1. "I didn't compete until 7 p.m. Saturday night and we were in a rush to get home," said Centers, who received a call from coach Ernie Pendergrass when she arrived back in town.

"He was probably just as excited as I was," said Centers. "This is not only a great thing for me, but also for the

school. I'm hoping this will bring more people to the school, because Ernie really does a great job." Pendergrass spent a lot of time preparing Centers for the tournament. "Every Saturday and Sunday, he worked with me on combinations such as a kick, a kick and a punch."

Pendergrass could not attend the competition because he was busy preparing students for the Junior Olympics Competition in Cleveland, said Centers. "He will go to that competition."

In Pendergrass's place, Center's husband, John, cheered her on from the stands. "You should have seen him juggling the camcorder, digital camera and disposable camera," said Centers. "He looked just like one of the proud parents. A lot of people asked him which kids was his."

Kristina added that her husband is "ready to go get his Class C coaching degree so he can be on the floor with me."

Cameron and Cody also shared in their mom's joy. "As soon as I got home, my oldest, Cody, grabbed the gold medal and Cameron grabbed the bronze. They've been telling their friends all about it," said Kristina.

After this year's turnout, the Centers family looks forward to next year's competition at Virginia Beach. "We're going to make a family vacation out of it," said Kristina. Kristina qualified for the competition by winning the gold in sparring.