

KIM ZMESKAL: GYMNASTICS' NEW STAR

GAME

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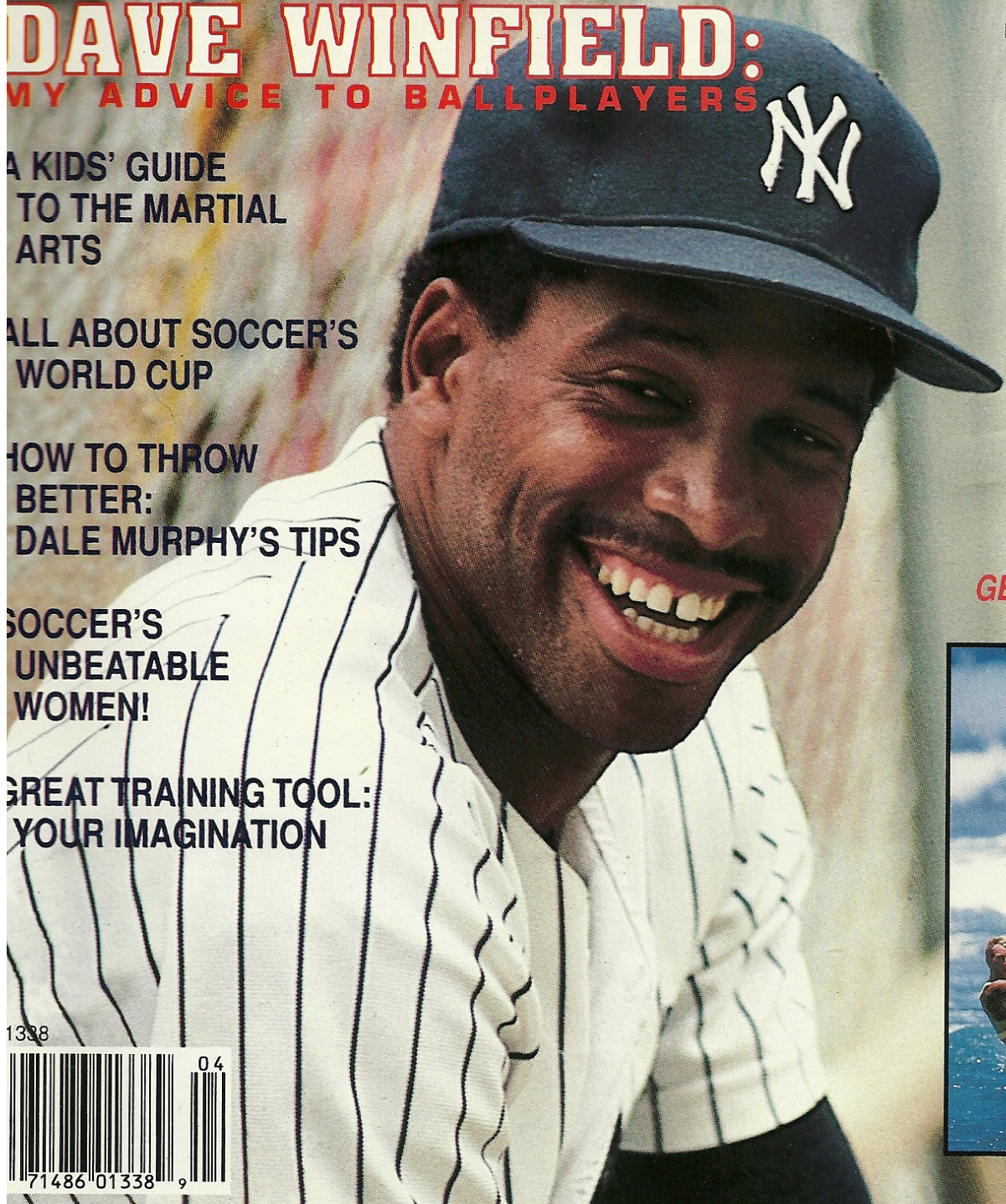
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CHOOSING A MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL

If you've decided to take some lessons in the martial arts, what do you do next?

If you were going to buy a pair of shoes, chances are you would try a few on and walk around the store first. The same rule applies in choosing a martial arts school.

"After you make a list of the schools you want to check out, start visiting them and observe their instructors," advised Bill Grossman, a black belt in kenpo karate and owner of a school in San Francisco. "Take an introductory course and see if you're comfortable with the instructor."

The instructor is important not only because he will be teaching you, but also because a school will often take on the

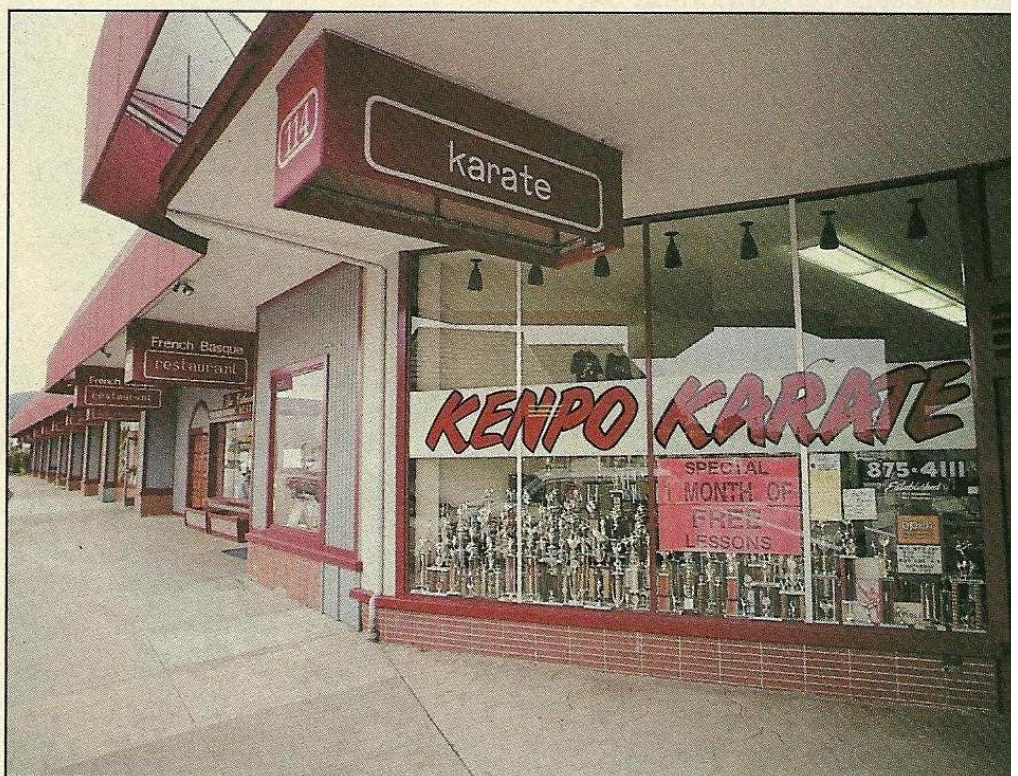
instructor in judo and kendo. "If an instructor is too rough, then that school is not for you," he said. "If anyone gets hurt, get out."

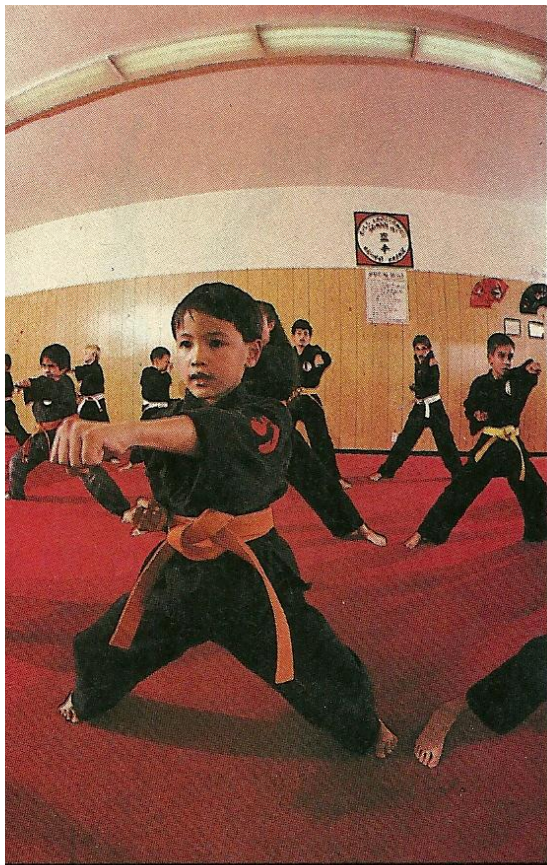
Being comfortable with your instructor is more impor-

tant than his accomplishments. "It's possible to be an excellent instructor and not have won major national titles," said William Durbin, black-belt instructor in kenpo karate. "You don't need a Chuck Norris to teach you the martial arts."

Grossman advises finding out who taught the instructor, how long the instructor has studied his particular style, and how long he has been teaching. You don't want someone who taught himself the art in a year. Look for an experienced, dedicated teacher.

It also matters how long the school has been in operation. If a school has been around for several years, then it should be OK. Also ask how many students there are per instructor. Mike Cobb recommends no more than 20 stu-





dents per instructor. Learning one-on-one is ideal, but usually very expensive.

Money is also a factor in your decision. The average price of lessons throughout the United States is about \$40 per month, although prices vary a great deal.

Also, ask how many classes are offered per week, how long each class runs, and what you

would be learning. Grossman says he gives out brochures explaining what a student would learn to earn each belt.

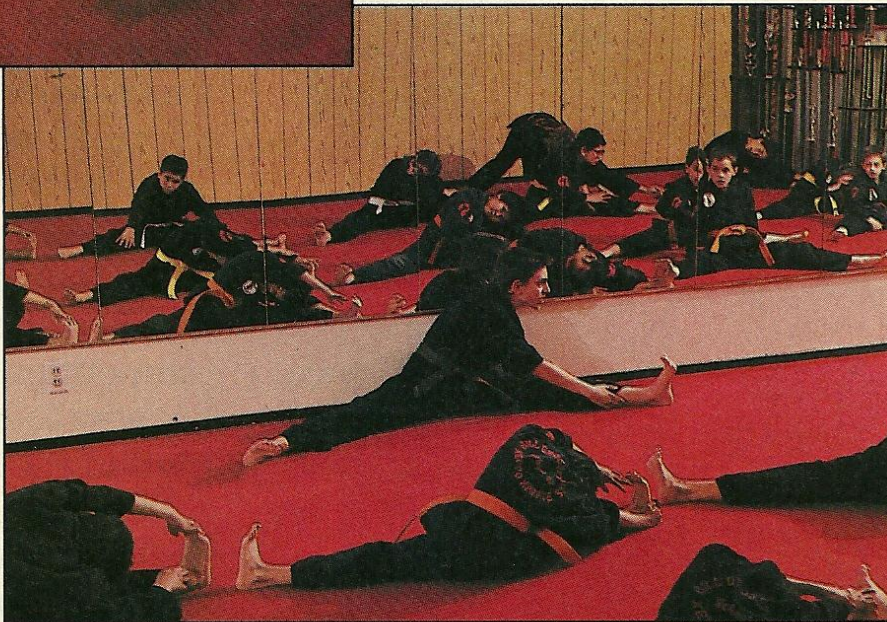
The final question is one you must ask of yourself. What do you expect to get from the experience? Many kids who saw the movie *The Karate Kid* were inspired to get involved in the martial arts. Most have since quit. Martial arts take more effort, time, and commitment than most people realize.

Dominic Antonelli, a 14-year-old black belt in kempo karate, was one of those kids

inspired by the movie. "The 'Karate Kid' became an expert in two hours, and it just doesn't work that way," he said. "You have to really want it."

GP

Learning a martial art takes time, patience, endurance, and ...



... a lot of stretching.

Don't expect to do this your first week!



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