

# 2018 TKO State Championships

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The 2018 TKO State championships were held on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2018 at the Old Adams Mark hotel now the beautiful Westchase Marriott Hotel located off Westheimer in west Houston. The location was centrally located and had access to the nightlife and many 5 star amenities of the area. This hotel rocks with a 10 story atrium and several of the classiest ball rooms in Houston. Wayne Nguyen, founder and president of the TKO is to be complimented on an excellent choice for the 2018 TKO State Championships.

Having competed in Wayne Nguyen's 1<sup>st</sup> actual TKO State championships 20 years ago and being one of the first TKO Champions I have seen it evolve into the impressive event it is today. The TKO organization is one of the premier martial

arts groups in Texas. Some of the best martial artist in the State of Texas attended. Current NBL, League and NASKA world champions competed. The TKO organization is a signature collaborating organization to “The League” a Lake Tahoe, Nevada based world martial arts championship and gives the TKO a wide reach in Sport Karate.



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Saturday’s event had over 500 of some of the top competitors in the TKO vying their best skills with a great display of breaking skills. The attending world champions and current overall top competitors were on a mission to win or as Wayne likes to say “on a quest to be their best” Also the Irish River Dance nationals was held in another ball room in the east side of the hotel. The Irish dance nationals were an amazing show of scantily clad beautiful girls and women dancing to the tunes of Irish Gaelic music. This event was shaping up to be a grand show in a grand place by grand people with the grands looming... Lol.

The nighttime finals were a showdown of the best black belt adult's and youth champions from earlier in the day vying to win the grands. A breaking competition headed up the event. Then Hill Country Team won the under belt team competition followed up by junior contemporary forms grands where Alex Mancias, a kid I have watched with amazement for some time beat out 6 other champions for the win. The grappling finals were up next with impressive junior and senior matches. Then very tired and overworked looking, Wayne and Jennie Nguyen were given a special award for their hard work in producing this amazing event.

The adult contemporary grands were a showdown between Paige Bantom, Trace Magellen, David Johnson, Kriston Difrancesco, Tracey Armstead and Chad Cannon. All are NBL, The League and NASKA world champions. This was like being at the stage with the best in the world putting on an eye popping contest. After the smoke cleared, Chad Cannon emerged victorious nudging out Trace Magellen's incredible bow for the 2018 adult contemporary championship.



Next up was the junior traditional forms grand championship. The charming Analise Bolen, Cody Manning, Thomas Seinz, Kimberly, Sarah Stallins and Millie Sanchez competed for the grand prize. Again all are world champions and again I was amazed at the sheer dynamics and flexibility of these kids. It seems that all that gymnastics training and dojo time paid off because it was impressive. Thomas Seinz emerged with the top score and took home the 2018 junior grand championship prize.

David Johnson, Chelsie Clark and Rommel Gargoles performed in the adult traditional grand championships to a packed crowd. David ran a Japanese Gojusho kata and Rommel ran the lesser known Japanese kata Papuren. Chelsie was probably the best I've seen her with high kicks and her amazing Korean Hyung/kata GaeBeck.



In the final tabulation Rommel emerged victorious with the best black belt traditional adult performance of the black belt adult TKO state championships.



Last up were the adult sparring grand championships. Tyce Talbortt ran into Chad Cannon with chad defeating Tyce in a great fight. Owen Gunn overcame David Patterson and on his second fight Chad Cannon narrowly fended off the great Chance Turner for his win. The final contest was a battle between Owen Gunn and Chad Cannon. Chad had the youth and dynamics but Owen had the reach. Chad launched blitzes at Owen only to be countered with Owens back fist and long range kicks. After an exhausting exchange and a few well rounded shots Chad was able to overcome Owen and become the 2018 black belt men's sparring grand champion.





The last Item on the list was the awarding of all the beautiful TKO state Championship rings. The stage was so full I thought it was going to come crashing down by such an enormous crowd on it but it managed to stay up. In the end the TKO State Championships managed to emerge as a great event.

Congratulations to Wayne Nguyen and the TKO producers.

