



Shufu Judo Yudanshakai Shufu Shimbun

(in memory of Malcom Hodges, Shufu's original editor of Shufu Shimbun)



June 2026



Upcoming Events:

June 5-7	USJF Kata Conference	Denver, CO
June 7	Summer Slam	Patterson, NJ
June 13	Arlington Summer shiai	Arlington, VA
June 20	Kodokan Tournament at the Compound	Silver Spring, MD
June 20	Tohkon Classic	Chicago, Ill
June 19-21	USA Judo -Junior Olympics	Spokane, WA
July 4	Pan American Kata Championships	Montrel, Ontario,
July 11-12	USJF Summer Nationals	San Francisco, CA
July 13-17	Judo camp at Wall2Wall MA	Fredericksburg, VA
July 23-29	USA Judo US Open	Ft Lauderdale, FL

Follow Shufu Judo Yudanshakai

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/shufujudo>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ShufuJudoYudanshakai>

Twitter/X: <https://twitter.com/ShufuJudo>



Congratulations to the following judoka who were promoted at the Shufu North Promotion on May 2 at Shodokan Martial Arts in Beverly, MA

Randy Gerrish – Shodokan to Sankyu
 An Nguyen- Toshi Budkoai to Sankyu
 Ryan Thomas- Toshi Budokai to Nikyu
 Shashi Poudel-Shodokan to Nikyu
 Rayaan Hassain-Next Generation to Ikkyu
 AndreyYasnikov-Toshi Budokai to Ikkyu
 Zachary Rivera – Blue Dragon to Shodan
 Kenneth Hamilton – Memento Mori to Nidan



Save The Date.



ARLINGTON JUDO PRESENTS:
SUMMER JUDO
TOURNAMENT

13
JUNE

Junior Shiai followed by Adult Newaza

Dawson Terrace
Community Center
2133 N Taft St,
Arlington, VA

The Arlington Judo Club to host a USJF sanctioned local tournament.

Event: 2026 Arlington Summer Tournament. Location: Dawson Terrace Community Center, 2133 N. Taft St., Arlington, VA

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2026.

Competition: There will be kata, junior shiai and senior newaza only competition. A summer picnic will follow the tournament outside back area weather permitting.

July 25 - 2026 State Games of America BJJ & Judo Championships at Penn State - [2026 State Games of America BJJ & Judo Championships - Smoothcomp](#)

August 1st – Spartan Judo tournament - Virginia Beach

<https://smoothcomp.com/en/event/31456>

NOTE – this is NOT a sanctioned event by any organization



Please check your USJF membership. It has come to our attention that some of you are not registered with USJF. Or you may not have put down Shufu as your yudanshakai so are just an at large member of USJF. Also you may not have listed your club so you are just an at large member of Shufu. Please also verify that your information is correct. USJF is in the process of upgrading the database information.



Shufu Judo Yudanshakai continues to rebound following the COVID pandemic. The judo community suffered a lot during the pandemic since judo is a contact sport which caused overall membership to drop significantly. Many clubs had to shut down completely and were not able to reopen. However, Shufu Judo Yudanshakai remains strong due to many loyal judokas and the commitment to keep judo growing. In 2021 our membership had dropped to 248. As of June 1, 2026, we have 25 registered dojos with 525 members, of which 141 are dan ranked judoka, 151 are junior judoka and 370 are senior judoka. The current top five clubs by membership are Arlington Judo in Arlington VA, Hui-O-Judo in Beltsville MD., College Park Judo in College Park MD, DC Judo in Washington DC and Kuma Judo in Florence MA



Passport DC – Members of Shufu Judo Yudanshakai were invited to the Embassy of Japan “Old residence” to give a one-hour judo performance as part of the Passport DC. The event was on Saturday, May 2 from 10-4pm. It is planned for over 3000 people to pass by the judo demonstration as part of this event. The event also included demonstrations of Koto, karate and taiko. This opportunity was presented by the Embassy of Japan to sensei Diane Tamai Jackson from Hui-O-Judo Beltsville. Other Shufu Judo judoka who helped support the event were Brian Lopez (Hui-O), Gerard Cadet (Compound), R Wayne Brown (Hui-O), Andrew Schwarzkopf (Hui-O), Jen Evans(Hui-O/NIH/WJC) and Alex Jacobson (Compound)

Experience the world in one place by planning a trip to Washington, DC. Passport DC 2026 offers a month-long journey that showcases the city's thriving international community and diverse culture. This event is celebrated annually by the Embassy of Japan.



Awareness month and offers programs by embassies and some of Washington, DC's very best cultural institutions. Thousands of people enjoy the popular embassy open houses, street festivals, performances, exhibitions, workshops and more. Don't miss out on the opportunity to explore the global trace that makes



the nation's capital a unique destination.

Passport DC 2026 is a month-long celebration of international culture in Washington, DC, featuring embassy open houses, street festivals, and cultural showcases throughout May.

Passport DC 2026 will take place throughout May 2026, coinciding with International Cultural Awareness Month in Washington, DC. The festival offers visitors the chance to explore the city's diplomatic community and global culture through embassy tours, performances, exhibitions, workshops, and food experiences. Over 70 embassies and cultural institutions participate, making it one of the most unique cultural events in the United States.

Planning ahead for 2026 events

August 29	Veteran Open Championship	Houston, TX
September 13	North American Judo Championships	Madison NJ
September ??	Liberty Bell	Philadelphia, PA
September 20	Suncoast Warrior	Port St Lucia , FL
October 4-5	San Jose Open	San Jose , CA
October 11	Morris Cup	Scotia, NY
Nov TBD	Shufu Promotions/ BOE/BOD	Beltsville, MD
Nov TBD	Fall meetings	Las Vegas, NV
November 21	Dallas Open	Irving, TX
November 22	Presidents Cup	Irving, TX
December 6	North Eastern Open	Patterson, NJ



SAVE THE DATE! 2026 USJF Summer Nationals is coming to San Francisco! July 11-12, 2026 at City College of San Francisco. Open to members with current membership in either USJF, USA Judo or USJA. This tournament will also be a USA Judo point event. Registration will follow on Smoothcomp.

Early announcement for the 2026 North American Judo Championships being held at FDU in Madison, NJ.

North American Judo Championships

When: Sunday, September 13, 2026

Where: FDU, 285 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940

Register Here: <https://allthingsjudo.smoothcomp.com/en/event/27546>



USJF National Kata Conference

June 5-7, 2026

Denver, Colorado

Register on Smoothcomp: 2026 USJF National Kata Conference - Smoothcomp



Clinicians:			
Dirk De Maerteleire, Rokudan EJU Kata Commissioner from Belgium IJF Class A Judge (All 7 Katas)		Eiko Shepherd, Hachidan USJF & IJF Class A Judge (All 7 Katas)	
Thursday, June 4	Friday, June 5	Saturday, June 6	Sunday, June 7
The Curtis Hotel – 1405 Curtis Street, Denver, CO 80202	Denver Buddhist Temple – 1947 Lawrence Street, Denver, CO 80202	Denver Buddhist Temple – 1947 Lawrence Street, Denver, CO 80202	Northglenn Recreation Center – 1 E. Memorial Pkwy, Northglenn, CO 80233
5-6pm Registration & Check-In	8:30-9am Registration & Check-In 9am-Noon Ju No Kata Noon – 1:30pm Lunch 1:30pm– 4:30pm Koshiki No Kata	8:30-9am Registration & Check-In 9am-Noon Nage No Kata Noon – 1:30pm Lunch 1:30pm– 4:30pm Katame No Kata	8:30-9am Registration & Check-In 9am-Noon Kime No Kata Noon – 1:30pm Lunch 1:30pm– 4:30pm Goshin Jitsu

Host Hotel: The Curtis Hotel (A Doubletree by Hilton) – 1405 Curtis Street, Denver, CO 80202

Negotiated room rate \$149/night. Room block is limited and the special room rates end May 5. USJF/CJL Kata Room Block

Sponsored & Hosted by: Colorado Judo League

Entry Fees: 3-days - \$225; 2-days - \$175; 1-day - \$125

USJF Sanction #: Pending



Questions? Contact Tracy Oldfather | Cell: (314) 960-4228 | Email: tracyjudousa@gmail.com



UNITED STATES JUDO FEDERATION, INC.
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Friday, May 8, 2026, 1:30 pm

Honolulu, Hawaii
MINUTES - DRAFT

NOTE: Each Yudanshakai president is to certify to the USJF Secretary (c/o the National Office) the identity and address of each Yudanshakai Delegate and Alternate to the Board of Directors.

Registration of Delegates

I. CALL TO ORDER SEATING OF DELEGATES (Executive Committee acts as a committee on credentials)

A. Welcome by the Chairperson

II. MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED SINCE OUR LAST MEETING

A. Senator Ben Campbell

B. Neil Simon

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

A. Additions/Corrections to Agenda

- a. Steve Isono (orthopedic to all Team USA) to be Chief Medical
- b. Covid recommendations
- c. 2nd reading – banners for awards areas
- d. Change BOD
- e. Election Promotion committee
- f.
- g.

IV. MINUTES FOR REVIEW & APPROVAL

A. Minutes:

- i. February 2026 - Approved
- ii. November 2025 - Approved

V. REPORTS

A. President

i. Big Island Visit (May 3-6)

- Clinics in Kona and Hilo – great time, good for judoka to see 10th dan sensei
- Entourage: Nishioka, Palacio, Kindelberger, Morinaka, Reid, Acopan Jr. Tamai, Isono, Washburn

ii. April 2026 High Performance Workshop (14 judoka)

- Wayne Tsonoda from Shufu
- Identify and develop USJF Coaches
- Next generation of leaders
- High Performance Coach Workshop
- Self Defense Instructor Certification
- Smoothcomp Event Management Certification – pending (12 to be National Tournament committee spread across country; also regional kata tournaments.)
- Targeting the 40+ group of next generation leaders.

iii. USA Judo Collaboration

- Update
- Partnership progressing well. Verbal agreements
- High performance Director Eddie Liddie
- **Concern: Leadership instability at USA Judo due to bylaw rewrites and USOPC oversight – Ron Tripp retire in fall. Going to 4 regions – popularity contest. Tried to get rid of USJF. No coaches**
- **Judo impact loss of \$75,000 - \$50,000 a year.**

iv. Fall Meeting: 2026 – Location Sunset Station, Las Vegas NV Date: TBD

- Strategic Planning
- Thursday, Strategic Planning
- Friday, Committee Meetings
- Saturday, BoE and BoD meetings.
- General Discussion: meeting dates and locations – possible to tie in with Sr National and President Cup

- v. Committee Appointment
 - Kata Committee Chair – Karen Nagai
 - Coach Committee
 - Joey Nawa: Nanka
 - Wayne Tsunoda: Shufu
 - HoF Committee
 - Karen Nagai: Northwest
 - Pedro Kolychikine: Florida
 - Larry Tsutsui: San Joaquin
 - Dekin Hom – Admin Assistant: HoF/LAA
 - Medical Chairman: Dr Steve Isono
- vi. Congratulations: Hector Estevez
 - USA Judo Referee Commission Chair (Ron Tripp wiped out all Referees)
- vii. USJF Summer National Bids
 - Fall meeting: Bid package approval
 - Revisiting our USJF Summer National Bid package (will be USA Judo point event)
- B. 1st Vice President: Josh Kindelberger
 - i. Development (Kata, adaptive Judo,
 - ii. Internship Program
 - Hannah and Julia Tsutsui (Fresno Judo)
 - Target Middle and High school - contract and requirements
 - Develop leadership skills, help with social media, help tournaments,
 - Projects, fund raisers,
 - Application/contract/ time frame/ build/ start!!!
 - Letter of Recommendation
 - Harvey Takeda started an intern program.
 - iii. Coach Development – International Coaching Opportunity
 - Hannah Tsutsui – Chair
 - Place 2 USJF coaches for international competition – Wayne Tsonda(Shufu) and Harry Morinoka (Northwest) then will present in Las Vegas.
 - iv. Kata –
 - Task forces (Diane evaluate judging criteria)
 - 59 teams at Sr Nationals
 - Western kata, mid-Western kata, eastern kata (Aug/Sept)
 - Kata conference in June in Denver
- C. 2nd Vice President: Chase Morinaka
 - i. Update
 - By Laws revisions from 2021 to present- updates at fall meeting
 - Marketing – membership database, better communication, better succession (some is limited)
 - Mail Chimp is growing fast; burnout, little knowledge, hard to recreate, bad communication (Both vertical and horizontal)
 - ii. Communications and Marketing
 - establish procedures for event directors.
 - Organizational needs – Database, membership, sanctions, calendar.
 - Improve communication
 - Training – onboarding and tech support
 - Next generation is not volunteering – have to be asked specifically
 - Training modules on Smooth Comp, Sanctioning process, COI, Promotion form training
 - More accessible – short, easy,
 - iii. Event experience – photo booths
- D. Secretary: Chris Reid (Ed Yago, Dan Isreal)
 - i. Technology & Operations – Need new server. Website goes down often.
 - ii. Scholarships and Grants – (Alex Campo, Deacon Holmes) find easier and make application process easier.

iii. Online Sanctioning Process – use the templates!! New email (sanction@usjf.com) more efficient, more transparent, automated workflow, tie in with database to make faster. (Goal was for today – have ready for fall meeting)

E. Financial Report

i. Rome Acopan Jr. Treasurer

Have kept us in good financial shape, purchased NO building, kept budget balanced, surplus not deficit.

ii. Update: Fiscal Year 2026 – we are in good financial shape.

iii. Moving toward Calendar year

• 2026 Fiscal Year: September 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026

F. Medical Special report – Dr Steve Isono MD (Head doc for 7 NGB's and Golden State Warriors - Head physician for 2024 Olympics.

Safety always first. Judoka are dedicated to cause

Injuries occur in all sports – some recently in USA Judo (2 neck breaks – looking at 8 figures for life)

Can be sued 2 years after, 6 years for medical

Assumed risk for playing sports – keep safe as possible.

If USJF members goes to another org sanctioned event – NOT covered under USJF

Proactive, Protective and persevere.

World class IJF athletes are very different than local tournaments

Restrictions (Like no drop seoinage or uchimata) are to protect athletes

USJF is much more conservative and safety conscious.

G. Executive Director – Robert Fukuda

i. USA Judo Update – going well. In progress.

ii. Summer Nationals (City College in San Fran)

iii. Photos & recording at events – Meta Rayban glass filming kids into AI. Not covered by filming waiver.

iv. Transgender Policy – will adopt USA Judo policy as currently written – approved by USOPC (policy is in flux and may continue to change) gender at birth (10 and over)

v. Fiscal to calendar Year Change

vi. NO update – turnover of many people. Looking for options.

viii. waivers – are a MUST. Wording is very specific.

ix. Membership remains constant 8500 to 8700 (current 8766 - fluxuate about 200)

H. Board of Examiners

i. Promotion Committee – Kevin Tamai, Chair

ii. Takeda – Chair

Special needs moved.

Josh – self defense – on hold for 6 months during rebuild – need volunteers.

Promo Comm- rework of form 20

Ad hoc comm – by law change – give small YDK a vote add one to each other YDK.

4-year trial period

Bring for to BOD for discussion

Motion to accept jr shodan kata requirements - except in batsugun case

Motion for banners for awards areas 9 Character

Motion – to have yodan and higher be teacher certified. Tabled to be a must or recommendation.

Motion - IJF rank standardization – tabled to discuss further.

I. Hall of Fame and Lifetime Achievement

i. Robert Brink, acting chairperson

Lost Neil Simon and Ben Campbell

We have lost 37 of our HOF members

Every two years for HOF – ask for nominations

LAA every year - ask for nominations

Changes - MUST have good moral character

Change – The Committee can not share information.

** Never rejected a HOF nominee

HOF LAA Dinner last night – presented awards.

Expanded committee – Hector, Chairman of PC (Tamai) , Pedro, Dr Larry , Karen Nagai, (plus past presidents – currently inactive) Dekin Holm (Admin assist)

Meet yesterday – meet again in two weeks

LAA - Dr Cantonese, Mark Smith (Shufu), Lori Pierce (Shufu)

HOF –Cheryl Oshi, Mya kirk good, Corrine Shimamoto, Willie Cayhill, Bruce Toops

VI. BOARD RATIFICATION OF ACTIONS OF THE CORPORATION SINCE PREVIOUS MEETING

A. Accept all reports, actions and appointments. (PASS ALL)

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. 2nd Reading Motion: Create a USJF Education Membership at a discounted rate of 50% off the cost of an annual membership that shall apply only to youth participating in an accredited school program, such as school class, school sport or school club.

i. The range of educational programs may range from elementary, middle school, high school, college and university. The person applying for the USJF Educational Membership must attend the school as a student and be a member of a recognized USJF charter club connected to the school for the membership discount to be available.

ii. A student is defined as a person who is actively enrolled in classes at the participating school.

• (Josh Kindelberger, 1st Vice President) **accepted and approved**

B. Banners for awards areas – **accepted and approved**

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. General Discussion: Review of the potential benefits and concerns associated with allowing Bantam Division 1–2–3 athletes (ages 5–7) to compete in USJF Summer Nationals, for the purpose of evaluating future policy direction. (Medani – developmental challenges for age group not separated winning and losing in their head. Campo – USA Judo already has it)

B. General Discussion: Align our Bi-annual corporate meetings with USA Judo meeting schedule

i. Fall Meeting: Presidents Cup Tournament

ii. Spring Meeting: USA Sr. Nationals

(Hannah – it is harder for young people to take off)

C. Motion: In USJF By-Laws Article VI. Committees. Section 1. E. 4 Composition.: Add the immediate past President as a voting member on the Executive Committee.

i. Rationale: Adding the immediate past president to the executive committee will provide continuity and experience from one administration to the next with on-going issues with Judo in the United States. (Miki Takemori, Shufu - President) **ALL PASS**

C. Motion: Medical director to review Covid guidelines - probably remove **ALL PASS**

D.

E. Motion - Adopt Senior Rank Matrix

F. Motion: Allocation of Certification Program Funds

i. Funds generated from United States Judo Federation (USJF) certification programs be allocated for use within the respective certification program during the current fiscal year.

ii. Rationale: This motion ensures that revenue generated by each certification program is reinvested directly into its development, sustainability, and program quality, thereby supporting continued growth and effectiveness. (Palacio, President)

G. Motion: To suspend the bylaw provisions governing the election process for this cycle and proceed with the election of the current slate of officers, specifically the positions of

President Palacio, 1st Vice President Kindelberger, 2nd Vice President Morinaka, Secretary Reid, and Treasurer Acopan Jr. (Palacio, President) ALL PASS

i. Rationale: Organizational Stability and Continuity

- Retaining the current slate of officers will preserve momentum on several important ongoing initiatives, including collaboration with USA Judo, the transition of our National Office, the continued development of our Strategic Plan, and the successful integration of our emerging leadership group.

H. Election of Board of Director Officers

- President Mitchell Palacio **ALL PASS**
- 1st Vice President Josh Kindelberger **ALL PASS**
- 2nd Vice President Chase Morinaka **ALL PASS**
- Secretary Chris Reid **ALL PASS**
- Treasurer Rome Acopan Jr **ALL PASS**

I. Election of Board of Examiners – Chairperson, Vice Chair and Secretary

- Election of Chair – Mac Takeda
- Election of Vice Chair – Janet Johnson
- Election of Secretary – Larry Tsutusi

J. Election of Endowment Trustees

i. 2026 Endowment Fund Trustee Elections – 2-year term

- 2024-2026 up for election, 2-year term, Spring 2026-2028
- Gaiv Tata
- Edward Hanashiro
- Bryan Matsuoka

ii. FYI: 2024-2028 4-year term, continuing through Spring 2028

- Thomas Sheehan
- D. Eric Spears

K. Promotion

I. Future Spring & Fall Meeting Location

i. Yudanshakais are interested in having the Spring or Fall meetings

- Fall 2026 - Las Vegas, Nevada
- Spring 2027 – Boise

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. USJF Summer Nationals

- City College of San Francisco, Ca. – July 11-12, 2026
- USA Judo Point Event
- Smoothcomp

B. Saturday, Oahu Interscholastic State Championship

X. ADJOURNMENT

XI. REMINDERS

A. All committee members and other interested USJF members are welcome to attend USJF committee and board meetings. USJF meetings are open. Committee Chairpersons and Yudanshakai Presidents should, as a matter of course, routinely communicate all USJF meeting schedules and related National Office information/notices to all dojos.

B. In accordance with the USJF by-laws, the deadline for member agenda item requests is 45 days prior to the meeting.



2026 Takemori Memorial Clinic featuring Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki

The Takemori Clinic was held on May 9th and 10th and hosted by Kogaion Academy in Arlington, VA. Katsuhiko Kashiwazaki was a World Champion and multi-time international competition champion. He is known worldwide as one of the finest judo clinicians. There was a total of 45 individuals in attendance from VT, FL, IL, TX, MD, VA, CT, PA, NY, DC, MA, NJ, OH and Japan. The clinic was ably assisted by **Vasile Victor Cicociu**, Head Instructor of Kogaion Academy as Kashiwazaki Sensei's uke. There were 4 sessions

covering different aspects of Sensei's judo. He specifically said, "these are my way of doing these techniques, but you have to make them your own".

As an attendee at this clinic, I can't say enough about how incredible, enlightening and inspiring it was to watch Kashiwazaki Sensei.



Kashiwazaki Sensei



Sensei demonstrates keylock

I would like to thank:

Grace Talusan (Koshiki Midwest Judo) who made the arrangements for Kashiwazaki Sensei trip, hosted him at her own club and traveled with him from Illinois.

Shinjiro Sasaki (Sasaki Judo) for his assistance with translation and as an uke. He teased out additional insights into Kashiwazaki's judo.

Roy Nanjo & Chuck Medani for their photos, recording this remarkable clinician. There were also many others videoing throughout both days. I am sure there are a lot of clips of the many techniques taught.

Shufu Judo Yudanshakai and USJF – for sponsoring the Jimmy Takemori Memorial Clinic.



Kashiwazaki sensei throwing Victor



Group shot of clinic #1



The 2026 USA Judo Senior National Championships were held May 9-10 in Albuquerque, N.M., at the Albuquerque Convention Center.

Kata at Senior nationals was a big success. There were 55 performances (up from 2025 which had 38 performances). All seven kata were competed. From Shufu, Margie Kettl and Billy Fineran placed third in both Ju no kata and Itsutsu no Kata. Leah Fisher and Billy Fineran competed in Nage no Kata. For judges, Diane Tamai Jackson, Karen Whilden and Theo Schwalm represented Shufu. This year, Kata athlete points are being tracked. Senior National is the qualifier for the USA team for the Pan American Kata Championship and the IJF World Kata Championship. The Kata World championship will be held in Sarajevo in late September this year.



Fourteen national champions, including eight returning gold medalists from 2025, were crowned at the Albuquerque Convention Center at the USA Judo Senior National Championships.

[2026 Senior National Championships Shiai Results](#) [2026 Senior National Championships Kata Results](#)

Five men's competitors repeated as national champions, including 2024 Olympian **Jack Yonezuka** (West Long Branch, N.J. / NYAC / Cranford JKC) in the 73 kg division, **Lenny Sheynfeld** (Staten Island, N.Y. / NYAC / Pedro's Judo Center) in 66 kg, **Daniel Liubimovski** (Staten Island, N.Y. / NYAC / Colton Brown Training Center) in 100 kg, **Alex Semenenko** (Staten Island, N.Y. / NYAC / Generation Judo Club) in +100 kg, and **Oleksandr Nyzhnyk** (Los Gatos, Calif. / USA Judo National Resident Team) in the 90 kg competition.



In the women's competition, **Toni Pepia** (Staten Island, N.Y. / NYAC / Colton Brown Training Center) repeated at 52 kg, 2024 Olympian **Maria Laborde** (Kenosha, Wis. / NYAC / Ki-Itsui-Sai National Training Center) repeated at 48 kg, and **Nancy Nguyen** (San Jose, Calif. / NYAC) won her second consecutive gold in the 70 kg competition. **Hasmik Manaseryan** (Armenia / Valley Judo Institute) won the women's senior open division title and **Daniel Barboza** (Larkspur, Calif. / Griffin Judo) took the gold in the men's senior open division.



The weekend was also highlighted by several generous donations from USA Judo members. **Henry Hummel** and his wife contributed \$20,000 to USA Judo's athlete high performance program, Kata committee member **Barbara Shimizu** donated \$10,000 to support kata and referee efforts, and USA Judo Board of Directors member **Joon Chi** contributed \$500 to USA Judo for general operations. Also in attendance was [Zoltan Bathory](#), founding guitarist of the award-winning metal band *Five Finger Death Punch* and lifelong judoka, who earlier in the year announced his support of USA Judo through the [band's ticket sales from their 2026 U.S. Tour](#).

USA Judo has removed two members of its Board of Directors following the conclusion of a compliance investigation conducted by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC). Nicole Stout-Berliner and Joe Ragan have both been removed from the USA Judo Board of Directors and from all governance roles within the organization for a period of ten years. In

addition, Gerry Navarro received a formal letter of censure, has been removed from all USA Judo committees and is required to complete governance education courses in the direction of the Board.

At a special board meeting held on 10 February 2026 in Colorado Springs, the federation addressed the findings of a recent USOPC report examining whether USA Judo had upheld its obligation as a national governing body to promote a culture free from retaliation. The development is particularly notable given that Stout-Berliner and Ragan were appointed to the Board relatively recently, as part of efforts to strengthen governance structures within the organization. Their removal marks a significant shift at board level within a short period of time. Board Chair Dr Ron Tripp acknowledged the seriousness of the situation and thanked the USOPC for its involvement in the process. “I appreciate the time and effort the USOPC took to interview so many concerned USA Judo members,” Tripp said. “I believe the actions taken by the Board clearly indicate that USA Judo will not stand for anyone getting in the way of good faith reporting of policy violations.” He added that the organization has worked to reinforce its internal processes since the complaints were filed and stressed the importance of collaboration moving forward. “It is the responsibility of all of us to come together professionally and collaboratively to continue this trajectory,” Tripp said. The case highlights the ongoing emphasis placed by the USOPC on governance standards and athlete welfare within national federations.





United States Judo Federation Lifetime Achievement Award Class of 2026

On behalf of Shufu Judo Yudanshakai, a member of the United States Judo Federation, we congratulate Mark Smith from Hui-O-Judo Beltsville and the DCVAMC Adaptive Judo program for being honored with the 2026 USJF Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mark was born on November 29, 1956, in Boston MA, the son of a Navy officer. He spent most of his childhood living in many different parts of the world. Eventually, his journey took him to Towson, MD where he earned a degree in Computer science and where he met his eternal best friend and wife of 34 years, Michele Smith. The couple had two sons, Blake and Tyler.

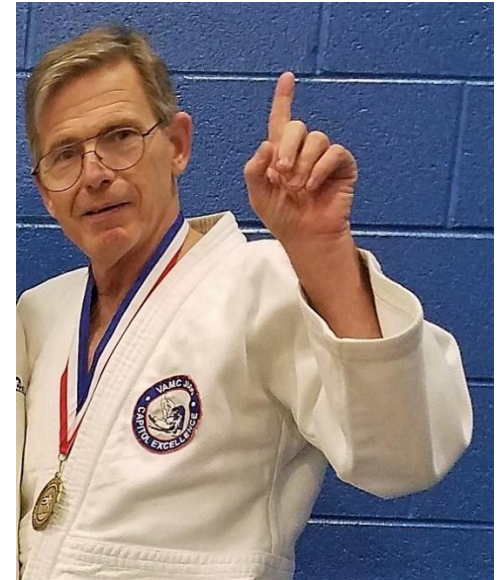


Mark Smith at Faye Allen kata Championships

While raising his sons, he dedicated his life to Judo and helping others. It was his passion. He was a long-time student and teacher at Hui-O-Judo Beltsville, under sensei Ken Tamai. His life characterized and embodied the best of what a judoka should be, sharing his love for judo and his knowledge with others. He touched thousands of lives in a very positive way. He continually worked with others to improve himself and the world around him. As a judoka he competed in both shiai and in kata. He was always willing to be a partner, mentor and a friend.

Mark was honored with his Shodan in 1998, his Nidan in 2001, Sandan in 2007, Yodan in 2012 and promotion to Godan upon his passing in 2018. Mark was an avid kata competitor in all katas. He participated with many different partners at events he attended. He was a nationally certified referee and an internationally certified coach for the blind low vision athletes. He enjoyed working with all types of disabled athletes through judo practice.

He was the founder and head sensei for the Department of Veteran Affairs' adaptive judo program, "Warriors Again" and The Metro Washington Association of the Blind Athletes. He coached blind athletes from the local, regional and national level, to the world championships and a Para Olympic Silver medal. He dedicated his life to helping others without ever expecting anything in return.



Another passion of Mark's was helping the visually impaired and other disabled veterans. He would pick up the veterans and their dogs to take them to judo practice and competitions. He also helped them with a wide variety of events like goalball and other VI activities. He built goals for them, transported them and the equipment to events, helped with setting up and management of events.



Figure 3 Mark with Lori Pierce -2012 Para Olympic Silver medalist

nuances, referee calls from any international match, or any part of any kata or technique. He LOVED judo.



Mark was a national referee. He enjoyed traveling every weekend to provide whatever help he could at local, regional and national judo events. In many cases, he filled multiple roles at an event. He would help wherever the greatest needs were. In some cases, he might compete in kata then referee. Or referee then compete in masters/veterans.

Hui-O-Judo Beltsville honors Mark's life and his love of the sport by awarding the Jigoro Kano Award each year in his memory to someone who inspires us to love the sport of judo for all of its aspects. It represents someone who gives to the community on many different levels.

Sensei Mark Smith, 61 years of age and resident of Bowie, MD, passed away after his short battle with cancer, surrounded by his loved ones September 12, 2018. He is survived by his

Mark was honored with the Presidential Medal for Volunteerism Gold level service for over 500 hours of service a year to our community every year he was submitted, 2002-2022. He was also recognized with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the President's Council on Volunteerism for over 4000 hours of service to our community.

Mark was godan in Shufu Judo Yudanshakai, under the United States Judo Federation. However, Mark never cared about rank. He was simply in love with the study of judo. He could talk to you for hours on end about any one aspect of judo. It could be kumi kata, ukemi



wife, two sons, and siblings Doug Smith, Paula McGee and Kathy Linthicum. Anyone who came in contact with Mark can tell you, he was one of the most caring, intelligent, giving, and unique people to have graced this earth.

His son, Tyler, reminded us that “Mark’s life can be summed up in two words – DREAM and LOVE.” Tyler said “My father always told me to wake up every day with a new dream. Then spend the day making it a reality. Some dreams are short term and can be fulfilled that day. Other dreams will take longer but need to be worked on every day. Always have a dream, always follow your dreams and make them happen. The second word was love. You should love your life. Love the people who are in your life. Be thankful for all of the love you have in your life. If you love your professional career, you will never work a day in your life. Do everything with passion and enjoy what you do every moment. My dad lived that way every day.”

“The Beltsville community lost a great teacher, Sensei Mark Smith. He was judo teacher at the Beltsville Community Center for over 30 years. He helped Mr. Ken Tamai run lots of clinics at tournaments at the Beltsville Academic Center making a positive impact on thousands of kids and adults in the community. As a teacher he led by example. He taught us to always help other people, find the good in everyone we meet and to work every day to improve ourselves so we can contribute to the make the world a better place.”
Director, Beltsville Community Center



“I first met Sensei Mark almost 24 years ago during the MD State Championships. But then life and the Navy happened and next time we got back together was 2015. I remember once I needed to learn Katame No Kata for my next Dan promotion and that he took time to teach me the whole sequence from top to bottom. I don’t believe I have ever met anyone, in my 35 years in the sport of Judo, as dedicated as Sensei Mark. Being a combat veteran, I really appreciated all he did for our injured veterans to revive their warrior spirit. Hundreds, if not thousands, of our Judokas including myself have the honor of calling Sensei Mark their coach. At Nationals, he was always at my corner. He was battling with cancer during our last competition in 2018, but he sat and coached me the whole time. I couldn’t hear his frail voice, but I was confident he was there watching.” Reza Biazaran – USA Judo Competitor

“I met Mark through Hui-O- Judo in Beltsville. He was always the most encouraging and kind teacher. He was also instrumental in introducing us to One Touch Self Defense, a program specifically for disabled persons. I will always remember Mark’s incredible compassion for others. One evening at the dojo, Mark was recounting a story about a disabled man who was being carried on the back of another. As Mark told the story, he began to choke up and could not finish. At that moment, I saw a depth of feeling and passion that Mark had for his fellow man. He always had kind and encouraging words for everyone and he lived to help others.” Dr





One of Mark's kata partners from 2013 to 2015, Sensei Laurel Faust, stated " Mark was one of the kindest people you know. He was always giving of his time to help others. He LOVED judo!! He encouraged everyone to learn more about judo. Mark always had time to help others with anything they needed. I enjoyed all of my time learning katas with Mark and traveling with him. He will always be the true spirit of judo. "



United States Judo Federation
Lifetime Achievement Award – Outstanding Judoka
Nomination for Lori Pierce, Silver medalist - Para Olympian 2004



On behalf of Shufu Judo Yudanshakai, a member of the United States Judo Federation, we would like to congratulate Lori Pierce for the 2026 USJF Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lori Pierce started judo as a sophomore in high school in Denver, where she was living with her parents. There was a sports day for blind children. She heard about judo and thought it would be interesting.

She worked hard to learn judo techniques and to attend competitions. She enjoyed each and every moment that she grew in judo.

In 2004, Lori Pierce (Arvada, Colo. / Denver Judo) became the first female U.S. judo player to win a medal at the Paralympic Games, placing second in the 70kg division in Athens.

Pierce stated “ Kano wanted each one of us to grow to our potential. He wanted us to continually educate ourselves to become a better person.” Pierce retired later that year to attend college at the University of Texas in Austin where she earned degrees in Psychology and physiology. After college, her and her family moved back to Colorado. She returned to competition to compete in the USA Judo Visually Impaired National Championships where she moved up to 78kg for the first time.



Lori attributes much of her success to her outstanding and supportive coaches in judo. Some of her coaches were Raul Tami from Stanford CA , Wilie Cahill, Scott Morre from Denver CO, Warren Agino and Mark Smith from District of Columbia Veteran Administration Medical Center Adaptive Judo Program. In 2014 she was offered a job in Washington DC with the FAA. Her job focuses on civil rights in airports focused mostly on Americans with disabilities. Her

role continues to develop, grow and exponentially expand with each year there. She started training with sensei Mark Smith at the Washington DC Veteran’s Administration Adaptive Judo Program.



She helped to run clinics on judo for the visually impaired and disabled with the cooperation and assistance from College Park Judo and Hui-O-Judo Beltsville. Many of them focused on fall prevention and proper form when falling.

Lori stated “ My coaches and senseis were all encouraging me to improve myself. They all believed in me and the potential I had. I am grateful to everyone who has helped and encouraged me along my journey in life. “

In 2015 she helped found the Metropolitan Washington



Association of Blind Athletes. Two close friends, Carla Gilbride and Justin Chang. Help start the organization. The Metro Washington



Association of Blind Athletes (MWABA) is a 501(c)(3) organization (EIN: 474118946) of blind athletes and their sighted peers who believe that recreational and competitive sports opportunities should be open to everyone, regardless of their ability to see. They hold programs for blind and visually impaired youth and adults from Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia to discover new sports or practice familiar ones in an open and welcoming environment. The MWABA mission also includes teaching blind athletes the physical techniques and body movements that they may not have had a chance to learn through physical education classes. MWABA also shares the best way to teach athletic and kinesthetic skills to the blind and visually impaired population with educators in our area. MWABA events are all about trying new things, meeting new friends, staying or becoming fit, and having fun! They support one another in achieving a fit and active lifestyle.

In 2017, Lori joined the Board of Directors for MWABA and in 2019, Lori took over as President of MWABA.

Lori currently lives in Arlington Va with her fiancée.



USJF Scholarship opportunities

[Scholarships Resources | United States Judo Federation](#)

Academic Honors - The USJF through the Academic Honors Society Committee would like to recognize students at the elementary, grade, middle and high school level who are excelling at their studies and citizenship. Please download a form to learn more about applying for recognition.

- [Elementary-Grade School Application](#)
- [Middle School-Junior High-High School](#)

Athlete Scholar of the Year - On behalf of the USJF Athlete-Scholar of the Year Committee (ASOY), thank you for continuing your educational opportunities and creating options for yourselves. It is a sincere desire of United States Judo Federation that you continue to open doors to opportunities and to be life-long learners and Champions of Character. It is USJF pleasure to award this financial assistance as a token of appreciate for your hard work and dedication.

Academic honors - Academic Honors Society

Recognizing students at the elementary, grade, middle and high school level who are excelling at their studies and citizenship.

George Balch Scholarship- George C. Balch Scholarship Fund

To honor George Balch, donations flowed in to the USJF scholarship account in his name. This program has become one of the largest scholarship funding sources in USJF.

Elizabeth Lee Scholarship - Elizabeth Lee Scholarship

The Elizabeth Lee Scholarship was established by Mrs. Ernie Nishi and Mr. Noboru Saito to encourage female judoka to attend Joshi Judo Camp and/or to further their training and development in Judo.

Hayward Nishioka Scholarship - Hayward Nishioka Scholarship

The Hayward Nishioka College to Career Scholarship was established in 2016 by Nancy Washburn to honor Sensei Nishioka's desire for encouraging judoka college students to promote judo in the future in their chosen career.

John Osako Referee Fund - John Osako Referee Fund

The John Osako Referee Fund was established to provide financial aid to aspiring PJU Regional, IJF Continental, and IJF International level referees.

Keiko Fukuda Scholarship - Fukuda Scholarship

The Keiko Fukuda Judo Scholarship was established by Professor Fukuda to encourage female judoka to continue their formal education and/or to further their training in Judo.

Tamo Kitaura Referee Development grant - [Tamo Kitaura Referee Development Grant](#)

The grant has been established to provide financial assistance in support of the development and growth of USJF referees.

Noboru Saito judo Development Grant - [Noboru Saito Judo Development Grant](#)

The purpose of the grant is to provide funding and support for worthwhile judo developmental projects which may impact a judo participant's personal development onwards to include an indirect activity which may impact judo's growth in North America.

Joseph Fitzsimmons Scholarship Fund - [Joseph J. Fitzsimmons Scholarship Fund](#)

This Scholarship is named after Joseph J. Fitzsimmons, M.D. in honor of the years of service he has provided overseeing USJF events.

How can I support any of the Scholarship Funds?

You can make a donation of any amount with your annual membership registration. See the membership form.

You can contact Executive Director Robert Fukuda at the USJF National Office to make a gift by check at any time.

- U.S. Mail: United State Judo Federation
P.O. Box 338
Ontario, OR 97914
- Telephone: 541-889-8753
- Make checks payable to: United States Judo Federation
- Make a note in the memo field indicating "donation" and "the name of the scholarship"

You can check whether your employer matches charitable gifts, and if so, see whether your gift to USJF can be matched within your company's guidelines. (This may involve sending some paperwork from your company's giving program to the National Office, where the staff will be happy to process it.)

Is my donation tax deductible?

The United States Judo Federation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

How are the funds managed?

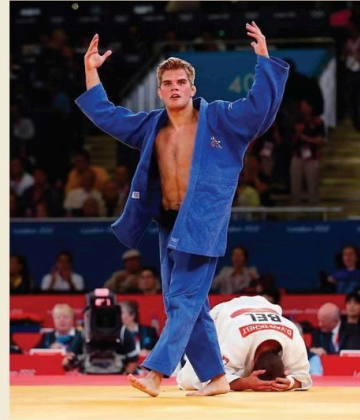
The scholarship funds are held as part of the USJF Endowment Funds, which means that your gift will not be spent out, but will generate interest that will help to fund scholarships year after year – making a lasting contribution to judo.

Contact: [✉ Robert Fukuda](mailto:Robert.Fukuda@usjf.org)

for further information

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JUNIORS **SENIOR BLACK BELT** **NOVICE** **BROWN BELT** **VETERANS** **TEAMS** **COLLEGIATE** **NEWAZA**



The Metro Washington Association of Blind Athletes (MWABA) is a 501(c)(3) organization (EIN: 474118946) of blind athletes and their sighted peers who believe that recreational and competitive sports opportunities should be open to everyone, regardless of their ability to see. We hold programs for blind and visually impaired youth and adults from Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia to discover new sports or practice familiar ones in an open and welcoming environment. Our mission also includes teaching blind athletes the physical techniques and body movements that they may not have had a chance to learn through physical education classes. We also share the best way to teach athletic

and kinesthetic skills to the blind and visually impaired population with educators in our area.

MWABA events are all about trying new things, meeting new friends, staying or becoming fit, and having fun! We support one another in achieving a fit and active lifestyle.

Please consider making a donation to support our community! [Donate here!](#)

Our mission is to connect visually impaired individuals in D.C., Maryland and Virginia to activities that will help them live healthy, active and balanced lifestyles!

[OUR ACTIVITIES](#)
[everyone!](#)

[Metro Washington Association of Blind Athletes – Sports and fun for](#)

Metro Washington Association of Blind Athletes -
For more information on MWABA visit - [Facebook](#)

Thanks and see you out there!

Metro Washington Association of Blind Athletes (MWABA) Sports and fun for everyone! <https://gomwaba.org>



We recommends that any minor athlete of USA Judo to take a **free Youth Athlete or Kids Training** offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport These resources include courses for children of preschool age to high school and are designed as an introduction for minor athletes and their parents or other caregivers to understand the importance of positive, welcoming environments in sports, where misconduct like bullying or abuse is less likely to happen, and to know where to report abuse, should it occur.

Each course is hosted on athletesafety.org and requires parental consent in order to complete registration. Parents are asked to register on behalf of their child by creating an account.

All youth modules can be accessed at no cost.



We also recommend that **any parent of a USA Judo athlete** take the free Parent's Guide to Misconduct in Sport offered by the U.S. Center for SafeSport. This free 30-minute online course is designed for parents of athletes of all ages. The course explains the issues of misconduct in sport and helps parents ensure their children have a positive and safe sport experience.

Please note that this course is an additional resource provided to parents and does not serve as a replacement for the required SafeSport training for those who USA Judo mandates it for.

Let's focus on Continuous Learning and Improvement for a moment. Often referred to as "Kaizen," lies at the



heart of Judo's philosophy. It embodies the idea that growth is a never-ending journey, and there is always room for enhancement and improvement on the side of the athlete, coaches, and referees. In Judo, we understand that mastery is an elusive goal, and the path to improvement is paved with dedication, practice, and a willingness to learn from both successes and failures. This principle extends beyond the dojo, encouraging practitioners to apply the same mindset of perpetual improvement to all aspects of life. Kaizen teaches us that even the smallest positive changes, consistently applied, can lead to remarkable progress over time. It's a reminder that in our pursuit of excellence, the journey itself is as valuable as the destination, and the process of self-improvement is a lifelong endeavor. It's up to us as Coaches in Judo to practice Kaizen and continuously learn for the betterment of our dojos.

<https://amzn.to/3LewOme> AMAZON.COM

Gemba Kaizen: A Commonsense Approach to a Continuous Improvement Strategy, Second Edition

[Contest Rules and Referee Education | USJF Education Portal](#)

CONTEST RULES AND REFEREE EDUCATION

The USJF Contest Rules and Referee Education is presented in five modules. Module 1 is for parents, Modules 1- 2 for coaches and referees, Modules 1-2 3; local referees, in addition to Modules 1-2-3, 4 and 5 increase in detail and complexity for judokas, coaches, and regional referees. At the conclusion of the Modules 4 and 5, you will have formulate a solid foundation of the contest rules.

How can you help Shufu Yudanshakai and the USJF? Each person in judo has something to offer to help judo to grow. Judo is founded on Jita kyoei- mutual welfare and benefit. What talents, skills, resources or time do you have? How can you help judo to grow in your area? Is there an opportunity to start a new club in your community or school?

Koka Kids - For judo coaches, you can find supporting visual teaching material over at the Koka Kids Coaching Library. Here's the link to see everything so far.

<https://kokakids.substack.com>



Each week, they are adding new content, and already there are over 50 judo throws, holds, combinations, drills and fun games to download.

<https://kokakids.substack.com>

How it works, is you will need to sign up. you can choose either the free account or paid account. The paid account is, as these things generally are ... better!

The paid subscription allows you to download everything in the archives, and every week you will receive by email a new technique with visuals you can download and print and use at your dojo.



SHAPE America

The USJF Development committee has aligned its Jr Rank Requirements with SHAPE America. SHAPE America is our national standards framework for K-12 Physical Education that defines what a student should know and be able to do each stage of developing physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.



at

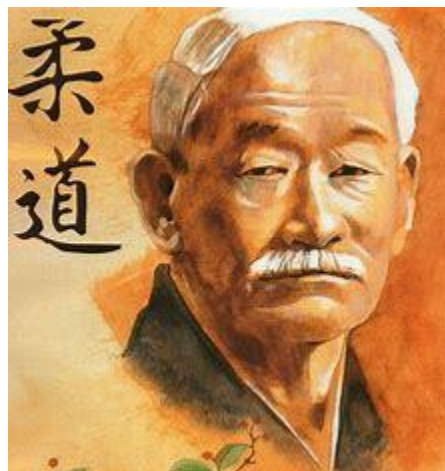
We are the ONLY Judo organization with professional educators comprised of University Professors, Secondary and Elementary Credential Teachers and Academic School Principals with the expertise to develop such a program.

Visit our USJF “Koka Kids” page, <https://www.usjf.com/koka-kids/> and enjoy the interaction.

For decades, judo has been teaching us several of these important life values. These values are present in each judo lesson all around the world, where we learn and teach our judo community about **Courage, Respect, Modesty, Friendship, Honor, Sincerity, Self-control and Politeness**. Let the values of our sport inspire you to stay strong and positive!

- **Courage:** Doing what is right
- **Respect:** Respect the people around you and the community we live in.
- **Sincerity:** To seek the truth and express honestly - Be honest with yourself and with others.
- **Self-control:** To have power over yourself and your greatest challenges- Keep calm and think before you act.
- **Politeness:** Our greatness comes from how we treat others
- **Friendship:** It's the purest human feeling. We are all learning together. We are all different, from different countries, have different cultures and different backgrounds. We are all equal. We help each other as much as we can and treat everybody as you treat yourself and as you would love to be.
- **Modesty:** We are more than ourselves - Each one of us is a champion. Together we are strong. Each person on this planet contributes to a better future for all of us. Stop and think about all these people around you who are contributing to a better world. Take a moment to thank them for all of their hard work and dedication.
- **Honor:** Be true to your word and your principles - Even in adversity, we must stick to our values. We continue our lives with strong and healthy spirits.

Always remember, that the strongest mottos of judo are: ‘Mutual aid and benefit’ and ‘Maximum efficiency’. We need to apply these principles every day. Only then will we find our ‘DO’ (way) in these difficult moments. Let’s work together and bring our values to life. Our Judo values will help keep us strong, while helping us to grow and develop.



Understanding the Philosophy of Judo: Harmony and Mutual Benefit

The Principles of Judo

Jita Kyoei: Mutual Benefit

Jita Kyoei, which translates to "mutual benefit," is one of the fundamental principles that underpin the philosophy of Judo. It emphasizes the importance of cooperation and harmony in all aspects of life. In Judo, practitioners learn not only self-defense techniques but also the value of helping others and working. Mutual benefit in Judo goes beyond the physical realm. It promotes the idea of mutual respect, understanding, and empathy towards others. By practicing Jita Kyoei, individuals learn to develop a strong sense of community, fostering positive relationships and contributing to the greater good. In the context of Judo training, Jita Kyoei is exemplified through the practice of Randori, which involves free-style sparring with a partner. During Randori, both participants aim to improve their skills while also ensuring the safety and well-being of their training partner. This principle encourages practitioners to focus on benefiting themselves while simultaneously helping their partners grow and progress.

Seiryoku Zenyo: Maximum Efficiency

Seiryoku Zenyo, meaning "maximum efficiency," is another crucial principle in Judo. It emphasizes the use of minimal effort and energy to achieve the desired outcome. Judo practitioners learn to exploit their opponent's weaknesses and use their own strengths effectively, rather than relying solely on brute force. By understanding the principle of Seiryoku Zenyo, practitioners develop the ability to analyze situations quickly and make strategic decisions. They learn to conserve energy and use their opponent's force to their advantage. This principle not only applies to physical techniques but also to mental and emotional aspects of life. It teaches practitioners to stay calm and composed, utilizing their resources efficiently to achieve their goals. The principle of Seiryoku Zenyo is particularly relevant in self-defense situations, where individuals may face stronger or larger opponents. By applying this principle, Judo practitioners can defend themselves effectively, even against seemingly insurmountable odds.

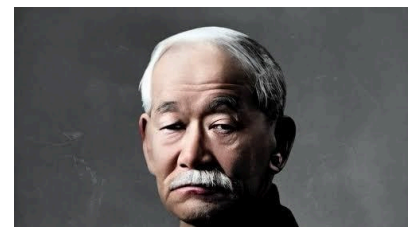
Ju No Ri: The Principle of Gentleness

Ju No Ri, often known as the principle of gentleness, is a core tenet of Judo. It teaches individuals to approach conflicts and challenges with a calm and non-aggressive mindset. Contrary to popular belief, gentleness in Judo does not imply weakness but rather a strategic approach to overcome obstacles. This principle emphasizes the importance of flexibility, adaptability, and resilience. Judo practitioners learn to yield to their opponent's force, redirecting it to gain an advantageous position. By practicing Ju No Ri, individuals develop mental and emotional strength, enabling them to remain composed in difficult situations. In everyday life, the principle of Ju No Ri encourages individuals to seek peaceful resolutions and avoid unnecessary conflicts. It promotes empathy, understanding, and the ability to find common ground with others. By embodying gentleness, Judo practitioners inspire and promote a harmonious and cooperative society.

In conclusion, the principles of Judo, including Jita Kyoei (mutual benefit), Seiryoku Zenyo (maximum efficiency), and Ju No Ri (the principle of gentleness), not only guide the practice of this martial art but also provide valuable insights for personal growth and interactions with others. Understanding and embracing these principles can lead to a more harmonious and fulfilling life both on and off the Judo mat.

The Philosophy of Judo

Judo, a Japanese martial art created by Jigoro Kano, is not just a physical combat sport but also a way of life. It encompasses a profound



philosophy rooted in the principles of harmony and mutual benefit. Understanding the philosophy of Judo is crucial for practitioners to fully grasp the essence of this martial art.

Harmony with Others

Central to the philosophy of Judo is the concept of harmony with others. Judo emphasizes the importance of cooperation and mutual respect both on and off the mat. In Judo, the objective is not to defeat or overpower the opponent but to use their energy and strength against them. This principle of harmony encourages practitioners to seek peaceful resolutions, to understand and empathize with others, and to find common ground even in the face of conflict. By practicing Judo, individuals learn to cultivate harmonious relationships, not only in the context of martial arts but also in their daily interactions. The philosophy of harmony with others extends beyond the physical techniques, teaching practitioners valuable life skills such as effective communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution.

Harmony with Nature

Another core aspect of the philosophy of Judo is the pursuit of harmony with nature. Judo recognizes the interdependence between human beings and the natural world. Practitioners are encouraged to respect and understand the natural laws and cycles that govern life. In Judo, this harmony with nature is reflected in the fluidity and adaptability of techniques. Like water flowing around obstacles, Judo practitioners learn to adapt their movements to the circumstances and take advantage of their opponent's weaknesses. This understanding of nature's principles teaches practitioners to be flexible, patient, and to embrace change rather than resist it. By fostering harmony with nature, Judo practitioners gain a deeper appreciation for the world around them and develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment. They learn to live in harmony with the natural world, promoting sustainability and ecological awareness.

Harmony with Oneself

The philosophy of Judo also emphasizes the importance of harmony with oneself. Judo practitioners strive to develop physical, mental, and emotional balance. Through rigorous training, they learn to understand their own strengths and limitations, and to overcome personal challenges. Judo encourages self-reflection and self-improvement. By cultivating a harmonious relationship with oneself, practitioners develop self-confidence, discipline, and a positive mindset. This inner harmony allows them to face adversity with resilience, to stay focused and composed under pressure, and to maintain a sense of inner peace. Ultimately, the philosophy of Judo teaches individuals to strive for balance in all aspects of life. By harmonizing with others, nature, and oneself, practitioners of Judo not only become skilled martial artists but also develop into well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to their communities and society as a whole.

In conclusion, the philosophy of Judo is rooted in the principles of harmony and mutual benefit. By emphasizing the importance of balance, respect, and cooperation, Judo practitioners strive to achieve not only physical strength but also emotional and mental well-being. Through the practice of Judo, individuals learn valuable life lessons that go beyond the confines of the dojo. They develop a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all things and the power of unity. Ultimately, the philosophy of Judo inspires individuals to seek harmony and mutual benefit in all aspects of their lives, fostering a sense of personal growth and positive impact on the world around them.

Is judo the right sport for kids?? (Article from the path of martial arts.com)

Are you thinking about enrolling your child in martial arts but aren't sure which style to pick? Judo is an excellent choice for kids, offering a perfect balance of physical activity, discipline, and character development.

This article will explore how Judo measures up to the most important qualities parents look for in a martial art. From discipline and life skills to safety and fitness benefits, we'll cover everything you need to know about Judo for kids. Whether you're new to martial arts or comparing different styles, this article will help you make an informed decision about whether Judo is the right fit for your child's development and your family's goals. Judo is a Japanese martial art that excels in standing takedowns and throws. It is famously said that judoka hit their opponents with the planet instead of their fists. Judo is a fantastic choice for kids' martial arts training, excelling in key areas that are highly valued by parents. This style earns an "A" tier rating for its strong focus on discipline, respect, and self-defense, all in a safe and supportive setting. As one of the most widely practiced martial arts in the world, Judo helps children build confidence, improve focus, and develop lifelong values. With its emphasis on balance, control, and mutual respect, Judo is much more than just throws—it's a foundation for personal growth. Judo is a great martial art for kids, giving them a strong base in self-defense that can be built on with grappling, striking, or weapons training later.

Judo provides a strong foundation for children to develop discipline, life skills, and values.

The values of Judo are actively practiced and taught to young students:

- **Courage:** Doing what is right
- **Courtesy:** Showing respect for others
- **Friendship:** Considered the purest human emotion
- **Honor:** Being true to one's word
- **Modesty:** Speaking of oneself without pride
- **Respect:** Essential for building trust
- **Self-control:** Remaining calm, especially when angry
- **Sincerity:** Expressing oneself honestly

These values are upheld by strict etiquette, such as showing respect to instructors, classmates, and bowing when entering class. Judo teaches kids to handle conflict resolution with controlled actions and problem-solving, not aggression. Students learn to set goals as they work towards higher belt ranks. They develop perseverance by putting in consistent effort over time.

Judo is a full-contact martial art, but safety measures, falling techniques, and separating kids' classes from advanced training make it quite safe.

In kids' Judo programs, more intense Judo moves like joint locks and choke holds are restricted and only used at higher levels. Children in Judo learn basic moves under close supervision and practice their throws on impact-absorbing mats. Unlike many martial arts, Judo doesn't use strikes. It focuses on using an opponent's energy against them, which lowers injury risk. Kids will also learn breakfalls, which reduce injury risks from Judo throws and teach valuable safety skills to prevent fall injuries in everyday life. At advanced and competitive levels, Judo is a full-contact grappling sport with powerful throws that can sometimes lead to injuries. Studies show that high-intensity Judo competitions have an overall 3.6% injury rate (excluding scratches), with over 80% affecting the upper body. Even at this level, most Judo injuries are treated on-site, letting athletes keep competing. Overall, Judo is a safe martial art and sport for all skill levels.

Judo classes for kids are usually led by experienced instructors who understand how to communicate effectively with children.

The atmosphere is often supportive and inclusive, with a focus on personal growth and mutual respect. Since instructor and class culture varies between Judo dojos, parents should inspect a dojo and see if the environment is a good fit for their kids.

Tips for Parents Evaluating Dojo Culture:

- **Observe a Class:** Parents should watch how instructors interact with students and handle challenges.
- **Meet the Instructors:** Discuss their teaching philosophy and approach to working with children.
- **Inspect for Safety:** Ensure the Judo program has a 'safety first' policy, enough instructors for supervision, and high-quality mats.
- **Check the Dojo's Policies:** Look for clear rules about discipline, safety, and student progress.

- **Talk to Other Parents:** Getting feedback from those whose children are already enrolled can provide insights into the dojo's culture.

Judo is a very popular martial art for kids, known for teaching good values, being widely available, and offering a competitive sport aspect. Judo grew in popularity after joining the 1964 Olympics, and the International Judo Federation has helped spread national federations across the world. Kids find Judo "cool" because it teaches lots of throws and grappling. As an Olympic sport with a competitive scene, it can also appeal to kids. Judo is widely available, with many dojos worldwide and the IJF's "Judo in Schools" program introducing it to kids aged 7-19 in schools. Most judo instructors know how to train kids and structure their classes to suit young students. They often mix fun with learning to make the classes engaging. Judo is great at takedowns and teaches some grappling, but it has gaps in striking and weapons. Judo excels at controlling fights through opponent manipulation, combining strong standing defense with powerful throws and takedowns. Judo also teaches a few grappling techniques, chokes and joint locks, making judoka versatile fighters in any situation. Judo is a solid choice for kids to build a foundation in fighting and self-defense.

Many studies show Judo has numerous fitness and health benefits for kids. Here are some findings:

- Judo training helps kids keep a healthy weight by maintaining or reducing body fat and building muscle.
- Regular Judo practice improves heart and lung function in children.
- Judo has been shown to boost mental health, helping kids feel more confident, have a better body image, and enjoy a higher quality of life.
- Judo training strengthens bones, which is especially important for children as they grow.

Judo strengthens the whole body, especially the upper body for throwing opponents. It also improves flexibility and increases range of motion. The Department of Health and Human Services recommends 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity per week. Three weekly Judo classes meet that goal. Judo classes are typically affordable and widely available, with flexible schedules that can accommodate busy families.

On average, you can expect to pay between \$150 and \$250 a month for 2-3 Judo classes per week. Judo class prices vary widely, from \$25 to \$500+ a month, depending on factors like location, dojo quality, special programs, and private lessons. Judo uniforms for kids usually cost between \$30 and \$270. Costs can vary depending on the school, but Judo is generally accessible to most families.

WE NEED YOU!



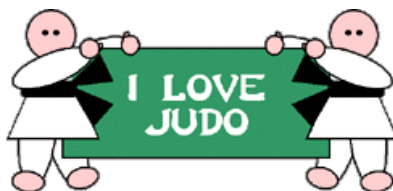
We need you!! –Part of judo is Jita Kyoei – mutual welfare and benefit. Judo is a wonderful community of giving people who share a common interest. Each one of us has unique talents and resources that we can share. In order for judo to grow and develop we need your assistance. How can you help judo? What can you do to make a difference in your dojo or in the judo community? What do you love about judo, your club, the experience? How has judo impacted your life? Please share your thoughts, feelings, and suggestions with us.



Club Updates from Shufu Judo Yudanshakai –

- Has your dojo started back to live in-person practices? Send us a write up about your club.
- **Please Share news about your club with us. Send us news, photos, and events.**

Develop Yourself to Your Fullest Potential So That You and Others May Live Harmoniously



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