

Parent's Guide To Judo



Long term athlete development

Long Term Athlete Development is the mission of all good judo programs. Judo Canada, in collaboration with Sport Canada, has produced a document outlining all the desired outcomes that judo programs should offer. Programs are required to consider in which developmental phase each participant is so that the skills that are being taught meet the athletic outcomes for that phase. In judo, the developmental phases are identified by the following age groups:

- Active Start - U8;
- FUNdamentals - U10;
- Learn to Train - U12 & U14;
- Train to Train - U16;
- Train to Compete - U18 & U21;
- Train to Win - U21 & Senior;
- Active for life - Veterans (over 30).

Participants reaching U16 and who choose to not follow the competitive stream of judo, enter Active for Life which outlines different outcomes than Train to Train, Train to Compete and Train to Win. Judo Canada has a very detailed document available on its website: www.judocanada.org.

What is Judo ?

Judo was founded in 1882 in Japan by a young scholar named Jigoro Kano (1860 - 1938). He derived judo from the ancient art of ju-jitsu. The system he developed is based on two key principles: maximum efficiency and mutual welfare.

The Japanese word "Judo" literally means the "gentle way". Balance, timing, strategy and tactics are essential characteristics of this sport as the intent is to use your opponent's strength and momentum to your advantage.

Judo develops athletic qualities and skills from basic physical literacy to complex movement patterns and tactics.

Judo is an excellent form of self-defence; it also develops conflict management skills. It teaches combat without violence.

In 1964, Judo was integrated in the summer Olympic Games program. There are many opportunities to develop as an athlete from your local club up to the Olympic level. Within Canada, there are various club, regional, provincial and national competitions for all ages.

What to expect from a judo coach or instructor

- Your coach/instructor is trained through the National Coaching Certification Program. This program trains and certifies coaches/instructors in various areas such as safety, skill development and teaching techniques.

- Coaches/instructors abide by the Coach's Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics available on Judo Canada's website: www.judocanada.org

The values of Judo

One of the distinguishing aspects of judo is a parallel development of social and movement skills. Unlike most individual sports judo is always practiced with a partner which forces the participant to translate the stated below values and principles into a way of life.

These values include:

- Playing by the rules;
- Co-operating with others;
- Respecting self and others;
- Self-discipline and humility;
- Self-confidence and commitment;
- Perseverance and determination;
- Concentrating and controlling emotions.

What to expect from a judo club

- All participants in judo are registered with the club, the Provincial/Territorial Judo Association and Judo Canada.

- The judo club is registered with Judo Canada through the Provincial/territorial judo association and programs are delivered by a qualified judo coach/instructor following the principles of the Long Term Athlete Development.

- The club offers a safe working environment free from any form of negligence; harassment and abuse. Should you have any concerns, do not hesitate to contact your Provincial/Territorial judo association or Judo Canada. A copy of our policies on this topic can be found at www.judocanada.org.

How is judo different

The equipment

Judo requires participants to wear special clothing and needs to be practiced on a cushioned surface. The judogi is composed of a pair of pants and a jacket made of very thick and resistant fabric. A belt is used to close the jacket. The tatami is a high-density mat designed to absorb the shock of throws and falls. Both the judogi and the tatami are required for a safe and complete practice of the sport.

The bow

Lessons and matches start with the traditional bow; a traditional Japanese symbol of respect and trust. When judokas bow on the mat before an exercise, it signifies that they entrust each other with the responsibility for their safety and well being. After the exercise, they bow in thanks for not violating that trust.

More than just a belt

Although the belt serves to close the judogi jacket, it also serves to identify the level of technical achievement attained by a participant. In a sport practiced with a partner, this is an important way to determine how advanced your partner is. Belts are earned only once the participant has demonstrated to the instructor / coach that he/she has mastered the required elements. Because judo skills and techniques require the participant to not only learn to control his/her body but also the body of his/her partner, earning a belt requires dedication.

The list of techniques and skills that must be acquired in order to attain the next belt can be found on Judo Canada's website under the Kyu Grading Syllabus: www.judocanada.org.

Competition in judo

There are a variety of competition formats in judo so that the objectives of the Long Term Athlete Development are met for the different age groups. Competitions are divided into two main formats: combat and presentation.

Combat is structured around these basic principles: Two opponents face each other within a defined competition space. A match is set to last a predetermined amount of time. A referee oversees the match to call points and breaks. Points are scored by applying different techniques, but to win a competitor must either:

- 1) score Ippon (by performing a perfect throw, by pinning the opponent for a set amount of time or applying a submission) or
- 2) have the highest score when the timer runs out.

Competitions that are presentation-based require the participants to demonstrate a technique or a set of techniques (called Kata). The demonstration is evaluated by a panel of judges who will assign a score to the participants. The participants with the highest score win.

What to expect from a judo parent

Judo parents are expected to support their child's efforts in self-improvement and to always respect their child's partners and opponents. There are also many ways in which they can be actively involved in their child's experience in judo. They are encouraged to speak with the coach/instructor for volunteering opportunities or even joining judo themselves.

Support your child in their efforts to improve. Remember there is a very thin line between supporting and pushing your child.

What to expect from a judo participant

Judo offers opportunities to be competitive as well as opportunities for continued technical learning. Exploring both avenues will guarantee a much more fulfilling and complete experience. Respect is tantamount in developing trust - and trust is absolutely required to work with partners and to learn techniques. Respect of self and others is the driving value of all participants in judo and is expected on and off the mat.

