

USJA

From the office of:

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Why?

Do you ever think why we teach judo, play judo, support judo? Each of us has a different story. For many, a judo instructor made a difference in their lives when they were young, unsure of themselves and friendless in the world. Now they teach to help other young people grow in to healthy, confident adults. I know coaches who could have been great athletes but never received the opportunity. Just like so many parents want to give their children things they never had, these coaches want to provide the support for young athletes that they missed in their prime. Some people came to judo as teenagers or adults, for a great many reasons – they wanted to develop strength, self-defense, social skills or they simply saw it as a positive way to contribute to their community.

The United States Judo Association tries to support all of those different people living those different stories. June 19-21st we will be holding our 40th Junior National Championships in San Diego, California. A family event, in the beautiful Town & Country Resort, it gives children the opportunity to test their skills and is in a great location for a family vacation at Sea World, Legoland and the world famous San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park. The junior nationals is open to judo players born in 1990 or later. (Download the application form from the USJA website at http://www.usja-judo.org/tournaments/USJA_Jr._Nationals_2009.pdf)

After the tournament, June 22-23, is the USJA Camp, co-sponsored with the Judo Forum, open to ALL ages. There are experts in kata, coaching and competition, as well as private lessons available. You can also certify as coaches here. It's not too late to register. You can find more information on the Judo Forum <http://judoforum.com/index.php?showtopic=36715>

We continue to have volunteer activities aimed at judo players throughout the country. Volunteer John Moe maintains our website, Connie Halporn and Ronald Charles edit American Judo, Charlie Robinson hosts Camp Bushido, Deb Fergus has been organizing Fight Like a Girl events, supported by Roy Hash, Terry Kelly and many others. For profiles of these individuals and more, please check the June issue of Growing Judo magazine.

One question I have gotten lately is about various emails sent out defaming the USJA. I did not want to allow this issue to distract anyone from the great work our people in the USJA are doing. There have been wild allegations thrown around that I can summarize it in three words – “politics as usual”.

There is a USJA board meeting June 19 in San Diego, and a USJA election this summer. You might recall that exactly four years ago at this time, a lot of claims were made about the USJA, none of which were ever substantiated. The facts are this:

ANYONE with a USJA, USJF, USJI card or membership in a foreign judo organization is eligible to compete at all USJA-sanctioned events. USJF has a reciprocal agreement with USJA in coach certification and sanctions. All USJA players can also participate in all USJF events. For many years this was true with USJI (also known as USA Judo) as well but a few years ago they decided that no one could compete in their events without joining their organization. The USJA sanctions events within the United States hosted by USJA member clubs. We do not sanction events outside of the U.S.

Our focus in the USJA continues to be growing judo at all levels. In upcoming months I will be attending the AAU National Judo Championships in Kearney, MO, the World Masters Judo Championships in Atlanta, GA. and Panamerican Masters in Massachusetts. We need to begin reaching out to the many organizations promoting judo. We are also discussing sponsoring a judo tournament within larger fitness/ martial arts expositions. This is just one of the ideas that I think could get more people involved in teaching and learning judo in the U.S. If you think judo can be a positive force in people's lives, which I do, it only makes sense to seek out ways to expand and improve our ability to reach new and current participants.

There is any election coming up (hence all the nasty rumors flying). Change can be frightening for some people. Getting better, though, requires change, in fact that is the very definition – changing for the better. My personal goal is to see the organization of judo in America get better. I loved competition, personally, but development isn't about getting one gifted kid to one tournament (okay, I admit it, I stole that line from Julie Koyama, vice-president of USJF). Gold medals are great, I know, but 99% of our members come to judo for their own goals – to learn technique, to lose weight, to find some good friends, to have a good time. We need to be an organization that focuses on those goals. Whatever we can do, from camps to coach education to on-line communication to scholarships to whatever ideas YOU the members bring to us, that needs to be our goal in the USJA. That is why I am running for the board again. Judo helped me meet a lot of goals and I hope to help others do the same. Please join me and the rest of the USJA in

making judo better!



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