

# Children's Judo at Venice Dojo

Venice Japanese-American Community Center



## Our children's judo program philosophy:

Here is where it all begins. The purpose of this program is to further develop attention, social skills, coordination and learning. The motto of Venice Dojo is "Where Champions are Made." This is a wonderful motto, but not the motto of our children's program. Trying to make a five-year-old a champion is like trying to teach Calculus to a pig. It wastes your time and bothers the pig. We try to teach young children how to be better young children – to behave a little better, know a little more, be a little healthier. Like everything in life, some days we are a little more successful than others.

We are a **community**, so some days we ask our graduates from the pee-wee class to come help, teach and demonstrate. Research in educational psychology has shown that children who tutor others in a classroom learn as much or more as the child they are tutoring. Our own experience at Venice Dojo has convinced us that we develop far better people if our children learn from the beginning that "it is not all about you", sometimes you receive help, and sometimes you give it. That is why the picture above is of two of

## Children's Judo at Venice Dojo

our players who competed in the tournament to benefit the Casa de Hogar orphanage in Baja California. And to all of you parents – thanks for sharing in your gifts to the orphanage and in bringing your children to us.

### **Vocabulary:**

O goshi – major hip throw  
O soto gari – major outside reap  
O uchi gari – major inside reap  
Kesa gatame - scarf hold  
Sensei - teacher  
Yoko shiho gatame – side four-corner hold  
Ukemi – falling

### COUNTING

1. Ichi
2. Ni
3. San
4. Shi
5. Go
6. Roku
7. Shichi
8. Hachi
9. Ku
10. Ju

Rei – bow

Ki o tsuke – pay attention

## ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(If you don't see it here, please check the Venice Children's Judo Handbook)

### **Why is my child in children's judo after several sessions?**

We are strong advocates of developmentally appropriate teaching. No matter how gifted your child is, he or she needs the same amount of sleep and rest as other children of the same age. Having a great disparity in size is a major risk factor in injury. We do have children at different levels of judo skill in the same group. We try to have enough instructors to provide individualized attention to those who can benefit from extra help either in taking longer to do the technique (for example, most four-year-olds) and to work with those children who are progressing faster, perhaps having them work on two techniques in combination.

### **Isn't this the same session over again?**

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that if you sign your child up for basketball two seasons in a row they are still trying to make baskets. No, we are not teaching the exact same thing. The first session, a child will be learning to do a shoulder throw, for example, and they probably get down the idea of pulling with their arms and turning around. The next session, they will develop a much better idea of where exactly they should place their feet, to pull up with their arms instead of down. By the third session, they will be able to perform the throw while moving in one or two directions, and so on.

### **How old do you have to be to join?**

Four years old. No exceptions. The minimum age used to be five but we had so many parents slipping their children in pretending they were five that we lowered it. Unless one of the Venice instructors actually remembers when your child was born, be prepared to show proof of age.

### **Can my neighbor's/ friend's/ co-worker's child join?**

We will accept new students for the session beginning in March. We are currently full. We maintain a student: teacher ratio of 7:1 and, with one instructor and two assistants, we are at our limit.

### **Opportunities for Extra Judo Events**

Students have several opportunities for participation in judo outside of the dojo. These include judo competition as part of the Venice Dojo Competition team, attendance at clinics sponsored by regional organizations, and participation in the Southern California Judo Demonstration Team. All of these activities are optional and most have a modest additional cost. Students are encouraged to participate in any of these extra activities that benefit them, and that participation will increase their knowledge and skill in judo. However, none of these activities are required and your child will benefit greatly from classes at Venice Dojo alone if that is the best fit for your schedule and/or your child's interests.

**What if my child does not want to do the demonstration, certification test or competition?**

Then don't. Not doing a judo demonstration at age five does not decrease your chances of getting a Ph.D. or winning the world championships. I promise.

**What is the Venice Dojo crying rule?**

Any child can cry for five minutes for any reason. If your child landed hard, is frustrated not being able to do a technique or simply had a bad day, he or she can get off the mat and cry with you for five minutes. Then they need to be back on the mat. This time is cumulative. If they get off once and cry for two minutes, they have three minutes left for the rest of the practice.

**Are there exceptions to the crying rule?**

Yes, if you are bleeding noticeably, have a broken bone or someone in your family died. We will also make an exception if your sensei dies, but only if it occurs during practice.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

1. While some clubs allow students as young as three, this program is one of only two in the United States teaching judo in a class tailored for preschoolers. The other is in northern California, approximately 350 miles from us.
2. This class is almost always full with at least a three-month waiting list. We believe it is essential for young children to have individualized attention, and therefore limit the student:instructor ratio to 7:1. With one instructor and two assistants, there will be no openings until someone moves into the older class. Therefore, feel free to talk about the class to any of your friends, but, I am sorry that we cannot move anyone out of order on the waiting list.
3. When can my child enter the children's advanced class? When he or she is six years old, can tie his or her own belt, and stay on the mat for an hour without leaving.

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### YELLOW BELT TEST

side ukemi

backward ukemi

forward ukemi

### **Throws**

morote seoi nage

o uchi gari

o soto gari

### **Pins**

yoko shiho gatame

kesa gatame

Demonstrate one turnover to a pin

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## Children's Judo at Venice Dojo

### **ORANGE BELT TEST**

Must get 100% on Yellow Belt Test to take orange belt test

#### **Throws**

Ko uchi Gari  
Ippon seoi nage  
Tani otoshi  
Seoi otoshi

Combination of ko uchi to o uchi gari  
Counter seoi nage with tani otoshi

Must demonstrate at least one throw both right and left side

#### **Pins**

Kami shiho gatame  
Kata gatame

Turnover to a pin when opponent is on stomach  
Turnover to a pin when opponent is on your back  
Turnover to a pin when you are on your back

(12 and over must demonstrate one choke)

#### **Vocabulary**

Ko uchi Gari – minor inner reap  
Ippon seoi nage - one arm shoulder throw  
Tani otoshi - valley drop  
Seoi otoshi - shoulder drop  
Obi – belt  
Sensei – teacher

#### **Knowledge questions**

Who founded judo? (Jigoro Kano)  
In what year? (1882)  
In what country? (Japan)  
What is the name of the judo school Kano founded? (The Kodokan)

#### **Conditioning (Must be done correctly to count)**

Do twice your age in push-ups (anyone over 25 can just do 50!)  
Do twice your age in sit-ups (anyone over 25 can just do 50!)

# Judo Competition

- Why should you compete?
- When should you compete?
- Where should you compete?

## A guide for Venice Dojo judoka ages 8 and under

Even though we tease about it, the reason to compete is not to show up Tracy Kiyohiro's brother at his tournament, or be the number one club in the country or win a junior national championship – although we have done all of those things and enjoyed them.

We *strongly* encourage our Venice players to compete after age six. Our Venice Dojo players come from wonderful homes with parents who love and protect them. As much as we want to give them everything, here are a few truths we have discovered over the years.

- Self-esteem does not come from being told you are special. Self-esteem comes from having achieved a difficult task. For any young child, going out on the mat and facing an opponent is a difficult task. **Reinforce and praise your child for competing.** Whether they win or not, they did something brave and amazing. You're not out there competing, are you? Neither am I. They are doing something difficult, and overcoming their fears in the process.
- Sometimes people will be better than you, bigger than you, stronger than you. Sometimes you will really want to win and you will be disappointed. Disappointment hurts, but it does not kill you. In fact, you learn to overcome it and it makes you a stronger person. Your child usually **will** feel bad after a loss, and so will you and so will the coach. Learning to deal with small losses will strengthen him for the larger losses we all have in life. Learning that she doesn't have to be perfect and always win and you will still love her and we will all still try just as hard to teach her is a good lesson for any child.
- It is too easy to fool ourselves. As Thomas Jefferson said, "I am a great believer in luck and I find that the harder I work the more I have of it. Competition will show you just how hard you have been working. If people your child once beat are now beating him or her, it is very likely that practice has a lot to do with it – as in, coming to practice!"

The schedule and dates of recommended tournaments are on the following page. All have novice divisions, but sometimes these are white and yellow and other times white through orange.

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### **TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE – SPRING 2006**

February 19 --- West Covina Tournament, John Glenn H.S., Norwalk

March 5 -- Nanka Novice Tournament

March 19 --- -- Gardena Tournament , Cal State Dominguez Hills

March 25 --- -- Goltz Dojo Tournament, Claremont

April 8 --- San Shi Dojo Novice Tournament, Vista

April 30 -- Barstow Dojo Tournament, Barstow

May 5 --- Parents Federation Tournament

May 20-21 --- STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS, San Jose

June 24 -- Goltz Tournament, Claremont

### **NOTES**

It is recommended that your child compete in the five local tournament listed above (underlined). If your child has placed in at least three of the four tournaments prior to the state championships, that event would be recommended as well. There is a novice division. If your child is below orange belt, it is not recommended that they compete in the open division unless there is no one for them to fight in the novice division.

If your child has never attended a tournament before, it is recommended that they go watch for the first time before they compete.

If possible, I would like to arrange some outing for the kids along with the Vista tournament. It is very close to Legoland and the Wild Animal Park. It is about 25 minutes from Sea World or the San Diego zoo.

I would also like to arrange something after the Goltz tournament as it is the last of the season – something low-key like having lunch together at a pizza place nearby. The kids should all be done by 2 p.m. at the latest.

## Children's Judo at Venice Dojo

### RECOMMENDED JUDO BOOKS and DVDs

All are available at amazon.com

#### For beginners:

Judo techniques & tactics, by Jimmy Pedro

Judo textbook: In practical application, by Hayward Nishioka

Foot Throws, by Hayward Nishioka

#### For more advanced players:

Competitive judo, by Ron Angus (I bought my copy at Barnes & Noble)

Judo on the Mat, by Steve Scott (available from Judo Unlimited)

#### Videos

Basic Judo DVD and Basic Grappling are more for adults or beginning instructors. They will teach you what judo is all about.

[http://swainsportsintl.com/f\\_instruction.htm](http://swainsportsintl.com/f_instruction.htm)

101 Judo ippons – there are three of these and they are pretty much just good matches to watch. It will keep your kids entertained.

Xtreme Judo, by Steve Bell, is more of a training tape. It is good for intermediate players.