

JAPANESE SPORTS IN ICELAND



Japanese Embassy in
Iceland

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JUDO 柔道



Judodeild Ármanns

Judodeild Ármanns was established in 1957. It is the oldest judo club in Iceland. The club has a glorious history of its members winning numerous awards at major tournaments overseas as well as producing champions and victors for domestic competitions. There are a total of around 60 people learning Judo in Judodeild Ármanns, around 30 adults and 30 children participate in judo practise every week.

The coaches in Judodeild Ármanns are all passionate people. First, Mr. Björn Sigurðarson, representative of this club, even though he is no longer in charge of teaching, he often comes to the classes to help and motivate students. Then, Mr. Yoshihiko Iura, a Judo trainer who holds 8th dan belt, has been coaching in Judodeild Ármanns and contributing to Icelandic judo society for many years. Mr. Andres Nieto Palma from Spain, who has been training for 17 years, takes very good care of younger children with other teachers, Mr. Craig Douglas Clapcott from Great Britain and Ms. Maya Staub. Mr. Breki Bernhardsson is still a competitor himself and gives practical instructions to elder children. Finally, Mr. Piotr Mateusz Szarek with 24 years of judo experience and 10 years of teaching judo. Since he is from Poland, he has been giving a great help for polish children and their parents in Judodeild Ármanns. He provides opportunities for them to practise judo in their mother tongue through judo training and helps the community to be active in this club.

If you are interested in Judo, you are free to contact Judodeild Ármanns for more information.

Judo (柔道) is generally categorised as a modern martial art, which has since evolved into a combat and Olympic sport. The sport was created in 1882 by Jigoro Kano (嘉納治五郎) as a physical, mental, and moral pedagogy in Japan. With its origins coming from jujutsu, judo's most prominent feature is its competitive element, where the objective is to either throw or take down an opponent to the ground, immobilize or otherwise subdue an opponent with a pin, or force an opponent to submit with a joint lock or a choke. Strikes and thrusts by hands and feet as well as weapons defences are a part of judo, but only in pre-arranged forms (kata, 形) and are not allowed in judo competition or free practice (randori, 乱取り). It was also referred to as Kanō Jiu-Jitsu until the introduction to the Olympic Games.

Judo is a fun sport, an art, a discipline, a recreational or social activity, a fitness program, a means of self-defense or combat, and a way of life. It is all of these and more.

The principles of Judo, such as "Maximum Efficiency" and "Mutual Welfare and Benefit", can also be used in our dealings with others in life. The ultimate goal is to develop oneself to the maximum extent possible, always striving for perfection, so that you can contribute something of value to the world.

(<https://judoinfo.com/>, 2020)



From left Mr. Iura, Mr. Piotr, Mr. Breki, and Mr. Björn

INFORMATION

Website: www.ippon.is

Email: armann.judo@gmail.com

TEL: 825 8245

Judodeild Ármanns:

Engjavegi 7, 104 Reykjavik

Interview with Mr. Sveinbjörn Jun Iura The Icelandic Judo champion

Mr. Sveinbjörn Jun Iura started practising Judo around the age of 17. His father, Mr. Yoshihiko Iura, is a Judo tainer who holds 8th dan belt, however he said that his father has never pushed him to start judo. Mr. Sveinbjörn was the one who wanted to try it when he was in high school.

"Judo gives me opportunists to improve myself both mentally and physically through its hard training and competitions. I like the fighting spirit of Judo, not to harm others, but to fight against yourself. " he said.

If you think your opponent is stronger than you and get the jitters, or if you are in a difficult position and feel that you want to give up, then it will be impossible for you to win. It teaches you that you must not give up the bout until the last second, no matter how strong your opponent may be. You must have a fighting spirit which will urge you to attack and attack again to the very end. Mr. Sveinbjörn told us how this fighting spirit is important in Judo.



JUDO KIDS

In Judodeild Ármanns, a total of around 30 children participate in the children class. The children class is divided into two groups; Younger children (6-9 years old) and elder children (10 years old and older). Younger children class is held every Tuesday and Thursday, and older children class on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.



The children classes start with fun activities such as playing tags, forward/backward rolling, balancing game etc. to help their body to be flexible, stretched and warmed up. It seemed like they love playing with other children from different schools as much as they love practising judo. Mr. Iura said the teachers always have a focus on how to make the children class more fun to keep them motivated. He also told us that children are excited to get a new colour belt once a year after passing an examination for belt rank of kyu.



Photo credits: Judodeild Ármanns Facebook

Interview with EYJA



We interviewed Eyja who has been practising judo for the last few years in Judodeild Ármanns. She told us she started judo by an influence of her uncle who used to practise judo. She started it at the age of 8 and she has been constantly participating in this children class. She enjoys judo very much and would like to visit Japan in the future to participate in a judo session there. Good luck, Eyja!

