

NEWS | Judo for Peace South Africa - Bulletin

Issue #1 - 2025 Edition

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Judo for Peace (J4P) South Africa is a transformative initiative supported by the International Judo Federation (IJF) in collaboration with United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR). Our mission is to harness the power of judo to foster social cohesion, youth and gender empowerment, and child protection for both local and refugee communities.

Operating in Johannesburg, J4P proudly runs six clubs and twelve schools, with additional satellite clubs expanding our reach in Durban and Cape Town. Our work is made possible through the generous support of partners such as Nike, Italtile Foundation, Three2six, Gauteng Department of Education and Judo South Africa.

Guided by the philosophy of Jigoro Kano Shihan, the founder of judo, we strive to build a brighter future through mutual respect and community upliftment. The Judo Moral Code—which emphasizes courtesy, courage, honesty, honour, modesty, respect, self-control, and friendship—serves as the foundation of our work, shaping young judokas into future leaders.



HIGHLIGHT

JUDO FOR PEACE SOUTH AFRICA RECOGNIZED WITH PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

The Judo for Peace Award celebrates initiatives that extend beyond competition, using judo as a tool to promote education, instil positive values, and foster unity. This year, the award was presented to Nicolas Messner, IJF Judo for Peace Director and co-director of the programme, on behalf of Roberto Orlando and Judo for Peace South Africa. The 2025 finalists included: The Olympic Refugee Team, Judo for Peace South Africa, Judo in Kakuma, Kenya. This recognition highlights the impact of Judo for Peace South Africa in using the sport to create meaningful change within communities.

Watch on [YouTube](#) and [read the news](#)



GRAND OPENING 3-DAY TRAINING CAMP FOR 2025

Judo for Peace kicked off the year by successfully hosting a 3-day judo seminar in Gauteng, featuring esteemed French judoka and coach Florent Urani. A former World Junior medalist and European Games gold medallist, Urani transitioned to coaching after a decorated competitive career, leading athletes to international success and currently coaching at Paris

Saint-Germain's elite judo team. The seminar attracted judokas from across South Africa, offering intensive training on techniques, strategy, and the philosophy of judo. Urani's hands-on approach provided invaluable insights, inspiring all participants. J4P is proud to have facilitated this opportunity, strengthening the local judo community. This event marks a significant step in J4P's ongoing commitment to developing judo in South Africa through world-class training experiences.



refining their skills, exchanging techniques, and building lasting connections with local judokas. With full support from J4P, the team was accommodated and immersed in a dynamic exchange that fostered both technical growth and cultural understanding. This initiative highlights J4P's commitment to using judo as a tool for development, inclusivity, and excellence, paving the way for future cross-border collaborations.

JFP COLLABORATING WITH OTHER NATIONS – The Powerful Lesotho Team



Judo for Peace successfully hosted a team of judo players from Lesotho, strengthening international sports collaboration and promoting unity through judo's core values of respect, discipline, and friendship. The visiting athletes participated in the intensive 3-day- training sessions,

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH JUDO

As we step into 2025, Judo for Peace (J4P) continues to grow and make a meaningful impact in communities across South Africa and beyond. This year marks significant milestones in our journey towards promoting peace, inclusion, and empowerment through judo. Categorised under the following: Social Cohesion, Gender Youth Empowerment, Competition and Judo Development, here's what's been happening:

SOCIAL COHESION IN THE MAKING – TRAINING TOGETHER IS THE MOST POWERFUL MEANS



EXCITING START TO THE TERM AT MATLHASEDI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Matlhasedi Primary School, located in Kagiso near Krugersdorp, may have started the term a little later than others, but they certainly made up for it with an incredible kick-off! The energy and enthusiasm among students and staff were truly inspiring, setting the stage for a fantastic season ahead. With a growing number of eager young participants joining the program and a strong sense of team spirit, the school is well on its way to making a meaningful impact within the JFP community. The commitment and passion of both students and coaches promise a bright future for the initiative.

A special thank you goes to the Italtile Foundation for its invaluable support in making this program possible. Thanks to their contribution, not only are young learners benefiting, but young, aspiring coaches are also gaining valuable opportunities to develop their skills and grow within the programme.



NEW DOJO WITH ITALILES FOUNDATION IN KAGISO

A significant achievement for J4P in 2025 is the official launch of our new training sessions at the Kagiso Memorial and Recreational Centre. The community of Kagiso, near Krugersdorp, now has access to judo classes every Wednesday and Friday, expanding our reach and impact. It is a new dojo but it will not take time till champions will show up.



JUDO for Peace has active dojo in SOWETO SHAPA Centre (Below), Berea at Ponte City Tower, Alexandra Township at Judo for Hope Dojo in Atrec, Brixton at Multipurpose Centre, Rosettenville at Southrns Suburbs Centre.



JUDO IN SCHOOLS: Thanks to the great collaboration with NIKE and the Gauteng Department of Education J4P is teaching judo in local schools: Observatory Girls, Metropolitan College, JPI, Batsongile, Welizibuko, Takalani

Notably in Metropolitan College we have a success story to tell: Mr Mthobisi Viki (Geography and Tourism educator in the Further Education Training (FET) Phase) – now an orange belt; he is now active part of the judo teaching and ready to contribute to the diffusion of the judo values among the youth

JUDO FOR PEACE BRINGS COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Judo for Peace had the privilege of welcoming Lycée Jules Verne Academy to its main dojo in Berea for an unforgettable event. This gathering not only showcased the spirit of judo but also fostered meaningful connections by bringing together families from different backgrounds. The event was a true testament to the power of sport in bridging communities and inspiring unity.

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MOTHER TONGUE DAY IN STYLE



The International Mother Tongue Day event, hosted by the Italian Institute in Johannesburg, was a vibrant celebration of language and culture. Judo for Peace participated by delivering an exciting demonstration for attendees, showcasing the art and discipline of judo. Both adults and children enjoyed a fun-filled day, engaging in a variety of activities, including the chance to experience judo firsthand.

JUDO FOR PEACE JOINS JAPAN'S NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

Judo for Peace had the honour of being invited to celebrate Japan's National Day at a special event organized by the Embassy of Japan in Pretoria. This prestigious occasion highlighted the strong cultural connections between judo and Japan, providing an opportunity to share the values of the sport in a meaningful way.



**THE FUTURE IS YOUNG
HOW OUR YOUTH IS CHANGING
THE WORLD...**





EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH JUDO: A GOLDEN CELEBRATION

In a special celebration of International Women's Day, Judo for Peace provided girls and women from its Johannesburg dojos with the opportunity to compete in local tournaments free of charge. Their outstanding performances earned them gold medals, bringing pride and excitement to their teams.

MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION

JFP successfully nominated and enrolled – for the 3rd year in a row- five mentees into the SAYes mentoring program, a life-changing initiative also funded by Nike. Through this program, young judokas receive guidance and support to enhance their personal and professional development.

NIKE GENDER INCLUSION LEARNING COMMUNITY

J4P is an active member of the Gender Inclusive Coaching programme lead by WOMEN

WIN. J4P is constantly developing best practices to better promote the participation of women and girls in the sport. As a fact J4P has reached great targets in this field.

At the Masekane Gauteng Team Event J4P was able to present a full Group 5 & 6 female team (winning Silver) and a Cadet Female team (Winning Gold). It is notable to mention that judo in South Africa shows a deficiency in women participation (and without the J4P female team in Group 5&6 there wouldn't have been any female team competition as in the whole Gauteng presented only 1 female adult team)

CLOSING THE TERM WITH TEAM BUILDING



J4P is closing the term with a wonderful team-building session for the SAYes mentoring alumni on March 21st, in recognition of Human Rights Day. JFP firmly believes that sport is a human right, and this event will celebrate unity, empowerment, and shared values.

IJF OFFICIALS VISIT JFP CLUBS



Following the grand opening, Leandra Freitas and Nicolas Messner both from the International Judo Federation offices, visited Johannesburg to conduct specialized seminars at various JFP clubs.

IJF ACADEMY TAKES JFP BLACK BELTS TO THE NEXT STEP

4 young black belts from Judo for Peace have also been granted the opportunity to do their International Judo Federation Level 1 coaching online course. We wish them the best of luck in this exciting journey!



A STRONG START WITH COACHING FOR COACHES

The year 2025 has kicked off on a high note for Judo for Peace, with an impressive three coaching sessions already successfully hosted within the first three months. This strong start reflects the organization's dedication to continuous development and excellence in judo coaching.

Their visit also included an evaluation of JFP's ongoing programs, ensuring continued growth and sustainability in our initiatives.



MASAKHANE TEAM EVENT: A THRILLING PROVINCIAL SHOWDOWN

The Masakhane Team Event, a highly anticipated provincial competition held twice a year, brings together districts to compete in an exciting display of skill and teamwork. This year, the event took an exciting turn as the Judo for Peace cadet teams—both male and female—emerged victorious, securing first place in the province. Additionally, the JFP Group 5s & 6s took on a formidable team composed of athletes from all districts, showcasing their talent and determination on the tatami. It was a remarkable event that highlighted the strength and unity within the judo community.

JFP OFFICIALS REPRESENTATION IN COMPETITIONS



We are proud to announce that seven JFP members are now actively working as table officials and referees at local, regional, and national competitions.

Their dedication and expertise play a crucial role in upholding the values of fair play and sportsmanship in judo.

COLLABORATIVE HIGH-PERFORMANCE TRAINING UNITES JUDO COMMUNITY

In a remarkable display of teamwork and dedication to athlete development, Kazuno Club, Tatami Club, and Judo for Peace joined forces to organize high-performance training sessions, open to all dojos and their athletes. These sessions provided an invaluable opportunity for judoka from different backgrounds to train together, refine their techniques, and push their limits in a dynamic and supportive environment. By fostering collaboration and skill-sharing among clubs, this initiative not only enhanced individual performance but also strengthened the sense of unity within the broader judo community. The success of these sessions reflects a shared commitment to excellence, growth, and the promotion of judo's core values.



JUDO FOR PEACE SHINES AT THE FIRST NATIONAL RANKING EVENT!

The first National Ranking event was an exciting milestone, open exclusively to South African green ID holders. Judo for Peace proudly entered over 18 athletes, giving them the opportunity to showcase their skills on the national stage. A special congratulations to Joshua, who delivered an outstanding performance and secured a gold medal—an achievement that makes us incredibly proud!

In addition to our athletes, five referees and one table official from the Judo for Peace program stepped up to be part of the official team, playing a key role in ensuring a smooth and successful event. Their dedication and commitment truly embody the spirit of Judo for Peace.

SPECIAL GUEST - JAPANESE SENSEI TSUYOKI KOIKE VISITS JFPSA

Through the partnership with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Sensei Roberto successfully invited Japanese Sensei TSUYOKI Koike to conduct special training sessions with various teams and clubs. This collaboration has provided valuable technical insights and cultural exchange opportunities for our judokas.



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JOIN US IN 2025!

Judo for Peace continues to grow, and we invite you to be part of this incredible journey. Whether as a participant, coach, volunteer, or supporter, your involvement makes a difference.

- Follow us on social media for updates and upcoming events.



- [Contact us](#) for more information on how to get involved.



OTGETHER WE BUILD PEACE – ONE THROW AT A TIME!

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