

High Noon Wins Senior National Judo Championship

High Noon Judo, based out of High Noon & BJJ & Fitness, won a senior national title championship despite only being in existence for less than two years.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Shocking the American [judo](#) community, [High Noon](#) won the USA Judo Senior National Championships last month. With a small team, they managed a heroic effort, with many of its entrants competing in two to three divisions. They were coached by Dr. Christopher Round, Dr. Rhadi Ferguson, and Heidi Holz.

“The Senior National Championships is the most prestigious domestic tournament in the United States. We were going up against clubs that had been around for decades” said Round.

High Noon competitors competed in novice, brown belt, veteran, and the prestigious senior divisions with a few truly standout performances. Rhadi Ferguson and Madeline Solis led the way for the team.

Ferguson, daughter of 2004 Olympian

Dr. Rhadi Ferguson, played a pivotal role in securing the championship. At only 14, she walked



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Justin Mata throwing his opponent in the 60kg division. Photo courtesy of Roy Nanjo



Group picture at the medal stand

away from the event with golds from four divisions, including wins over Senior national medalist Juliana Marquez. Ferguson, who trains with her father at Tampa Florida Judo and recently began working with Round out of High Noon.

“This is an outstanding result for someone her age. She is showing a lot of improvement and we will be well prepared for the summer junior season. It’s been truly fantastic to join forces with Dr. Round on this event and we will be continuing to do so going forward” Said her father and coach Dr. Rhadi Ferguson.



The rest of the team

Madeline Solis, who also trains at Eastside dojo in Texas, made the finals in the senior division last weekend. After a first-round match against Rose-Marie Le Corre, she fought a barn burner against US Open bronze medalist Lydia Coleman in the semi-finals.

“She truly had to dig deep in that fight. Overtime matches are never easy and Lydia presents come unique difficulties; that said, after only four years of judo, Maddie is having a fantastic run on the national circuit,” said Dr. Christopher Round. Solis would go on to face 3x world team member Nicole Stout in the finals. Solis would put a scare into Stout, when she became the first American to score on the 3x national champ since 2019 after countering her in the first minute. While Stout would go on to beat her, Solis showed an incredible amount of improvement.

For the women, Kaitlin Akif finished out the day with a silver medal in the novice women’s open weight division. After falling a match short in the 78+ division, Katie in her first judo tournament ever, won three matches to make the finals.

“Katie showed a lot of heart in her first tournament. She was incredibly coachable,” said coach Heidi Holz.

On the men's side, Jhulian Donawa fought over 18 matches on a single day.

“It has to be some kind of record,” responded Round.

“He easily had the most matches of any athlete that day,” Ferguson confirmed.

Donawa competed in the 73kg weight class and went on to take gold in novice, silver in brown, and silver in Veterans.

Alex Painter, multi-time veterans national finalist, went into his division as one of the favorites. "Alex is a tough opponent for anyone who steps on the mat with him" said Holz. Alex would win his first match against Justin Kiyohiro before losing to his rival Jonathon Michaud in the semi-finals. As this was a double-elimination bracket, Painter was given the chance to try to fight all the way back for gold. He defeated Milan Palko from Hollywood Judo and then 2023 veteran silver medalist Igor Duborvyk from Top Judo. Unfortunately he was unable to take the win in his rematch against Michaud and ended at 3rd place. "He's disappointed, but he will come back stronger for next year" said Round.

Ayoedji Raymond took silver in his first national championships in the novice 66kg division. After recovering from a first-round loss, Raymond went on a five-round tear before falling to Theodore Lehman in the final of their double-elimination bracket.

The latest person to join the team, Justin Mata, placed seventh in the stacked men's 60kg division. Mata, 2022 senior national bronze medalist and promising Olympic prospect, defeated friend and rival Kyle Tran in the first round before falling to eventual silver medalist Yang. He would fight back through the repechage before dropping a controversial match to Connor Uyekawa to place 7th.

High Noon (formally known as High Noon BJJ & Fitness) began its judo program in Alexandria, Virginia less than two years ago. It offers Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, wrestling, striking, and judo classes and is led by Tim Dawson. The judo program began in June 2022 after Dawson and Round decided to partner. The program is managed in partnership with the nonprofit [Martial Arts for Social Transformation, Equity, and Rights](#) led by Round. Since then, they have quickly established High Noon as among the best judo programs in the country. Judo and Brazilian Jiu-jitsu are amazing sports for all ages and provides an amazing experience in particular for kids.

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