

MASTERS & High Noon Athletes Excel on National and International Stages, Advancing Vision for 2028 Olympics and Beyond

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ALEXANDRIA, VA, UNITED STATES, April 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [MASTERS](#) & [High Noon](#) Judo Athletes Excel on National and International Stages, Advancing Vision for 2028 Olympics and Beyond

The nonprofit organization MASTERS (Martial Arts for Social Transformation, Equity, and Rights) is proud to celebrate a landmark weekend of competition that showcased its mission in action: building stronger communities and elite athletes through the power of judo. With results earned across three separate events – from New Hampshire to Panama to Maryland – the results reflect the growth of the MASTERS Fellowship and High Noon Judo programs, which together are preparing athletes for the 2028 Olympic Games while expanding martial arts access in underserved communities.



Dr. Rhadi Ferguson with his kids Rufus and Rhadi Jr

NATIONAL SUCCESS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

In Durham, New Hampshire, two MASTERS athlete fellows led the charge at the National High School and Collegiate Judo Championships. Representing High Noon Judo & Tampa Florida Judo, [Rhadi Ferguson Jr.](#), just 15 years old, captured gold in her high school division and then stunned the judo community by defeating multi-time Continental Open medalist Jessica Alaynick in a special exhibition match. She enters the upcoming Cadet & Junior Pan American & Oceania Championships in Peru as one of the youngest and most exciting contenders.

Her older brother, Rufus Ferguson – a student-athlete at Howard University, member of the football team, and also a MASTERS Fellow – brought home silver in the collegiate division and

was named an All-American by the National Collegiate Judo Association for his performance and leadership.

Both athletes were coached by their father, Dr. Rhadi Ferguson, a 2004 Olympian and MASTERS' High Performance Advisor & and owner of Tampa Florida Judo.

"As both a father and a coach, I was overwhelmed with pride," said Dr. Rhadi Ferguson. "To stand in the corner while my daughter wins gold and my son is recognized as an All-American — that's the heart of what we're doing at MASTERS. We're not just building champions; we're helping families grow stronger through martial arts. This is what development through judo looks like."



The High Noon team at the Ken Tamai Tournament in Maryland

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS IN PANAMA

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The culture we're building with MASTERS and High Noon Judo is one where everyone has a place and everyone is pushed to be their best."

Sensei Heidi Holz

While the Fergusons impressed nationally, MASTERS Fellow Chloe Williams represented the organization on the international stage at the IJF U21 Panama Open. The 17-year-old placed 5th, recording major wins against opponents from Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and nearly upset the eventual gold medalist in a dramatic quarterfinal. It was Williams' first time fighting for a medal at an IJF Continental Open.

She was coached by Dr. Christopher Round, Executive Director of MASTERS and Head Coach of High Noon Judo, who traveled to Panama to support her development.

"Chloe's performance was incredible," said Dr. Round. "She's proof that our model works — we're identifying talent, investing in them, and giving them the coaching and international exposure they need to succeed at the next level. Our athletes aren't just participating — they're competing. This is a big step on the road to L.A. 2028, and Chloe is a big part of that vision."

COMMUNITY DOMINANCE IN MARYLAND

Back home in Hyattsville, Maryland, the MASTERS-supported High Noon Judo team made a

powerful showing at the Ken Tamai Memorial Tournament, collecting medals and valuable experience across all levels and age groups. Led by Sensei Heidi Holz, a MASTERS Instructor Mentor, the team celebrated multiple standout performances:

- Cyrus Na went 9-0 to earn double gold, including two wins over adult competitors.
- Ayodeji Raymond took home gold.
- Calvin Rogers earned two silver medals, losing only to teammates Na and Raymond.
- Anderson Painter, in his competitive debut, won silver.
- Viktoria Evodkimov continued her dominant run with another gold medal.
- Tim Spriggs, world no-gi BJJ champion, took silver in his continued transition to judo.



Chloe Williams waiting to step out to compete in the medal rounds in Panama

“It was amazing to see so many athletes not only competing but thriving,” said Sensei Heidi Holz. “Our community is proving that martial arts can create opportunity at any age. To have a young kid like Anderson medal in his first tournament, and someone like Tim – a world-class BJJ athlete – testing himself in judo, speaks volumes. The culture we’re building with MASTERS and High Noon Judo is one where everyone has a place and everyone is pushed to be their best.”

MASTERS: BUILDING A MOVEMENT THROUGH MARTIAL ARTS

This weekend’s success underscores MASTERS’ commitment to using martial arts as a tool for empowerment, education, and Olympic-level development. Through its Athlete Fellowship, Instructor Mentorship, and the High Noon Judo program, MASTERS is creating pathways for athletes of all ages, backgrounds, and skill levels to thrive.

Whether coaching international competitors, mentoring first-time competitors, or supporting athletes like the Fergusons who balance academics, sports, and elite-level training, MASTERS is delivering on its vision to transform lives through martial arts.

With eyes now set on the Cadet and Junior Pan American Championships in Peru and the USA Judo Senior National Championships in Alabama, MASTERS and High Noon Judo are not only ready — they’re leading the way.

Christopher Round, PhD

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