

13-Year-Old 'Combat' Cruz Hooper Makes History, Representing Team USA at UWW World Championships in Greece

Texas youth grappler to represent Team USA in debut of UWW's 15U division, advancing jiu-jitsu's path toward Olympic recognition.

AUSTIN, TX, UNITED STATES, October 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At just 13 years old, "Combat" Cruz Hooper has already built a reputation as one of the most innovative young minds in jiu-jitsu — creating original submissions, leading adult seminars, and now representing the United States at the 2025 UWW Grappling World Championships in Loutraki, Greece.



Combat Cruz Hooper displays his 10th Planet hand sign while sitting lotus style

The international event is hosted by [United World Wrestling \(UWW\)](#), the global governing body for Olympic and non-Olympic wrestling disciplines. Scheduled for November 1–4, it will feature youth athletes from more than 30 countries and marks the debut of the 15 & Under division, where Hooper is among the first competitors in the new category.

Hooper earned his place on the national team at the USA Grappling World Team Trials, submitting a top opponent with his signature creation, the "Hindu-Ninja." Original submissions are rare in jiu-jitsu — and for a teenager to land one on a national stage is unheard of. His selection to Team USA marks the latest milestone in a journey that began seven years ago at [10th Planet Austin](#), where he started training at age six.

By age ten, Cruz was developing his own submissions and experimenting with new techniques. At eleven, he began teaching classes and private lessons. And at thirteen, before ever stepping onto the world stage, he led his first jiu-jitsu seminar — teaching adult practitioners with the confidence and composure of a seasoned instructor. Those experiences, combined with a tireless training schedule, have shaped a competitor known for both creativity and leadership.

Competing under the 10th Planet Jiu-Jitsu banner founded by Eddie Bravo, Hooper trains primarily at 10th Planet Austin under coach Ben Eddy and cross-trains at 10th Planet San Antonio and Georgetown. He has logged more mat time than any athlete in his gym's ten-year history. His aggressive, unorthodox game is built on consistency, innovation, and an approach he sums up simply: "My intention is to submit you without injury." That philosophy, focused on control and respect, has helped Combat Cruz earn a reputation as a goodwill ambassador for the sport as he broadens his jiu-jitsu network across the nation.

Beyond competition, Cruz has come face-to-face with elite names in the sport: receiving on-camera advice from John Danaher, one of the greatest grappling minds in the world; rolling with UFC champion Alex Volkanovski; and meeting Joe Rogan — comedian, podcaster, and 10th Planet black belt with direct ties to his training lineage. His online presence on Instagram, [@combatcruz](#), has amplified his profile with 12,000 followers and reels topping 30,000 views. For a 13-year-old, these experiences underscore how far his path has already carried him, and he has quickly emerged as one of the most visible young grapplers in the country.

The rise of athletes like Hooper reflects USA Grappling's long-term vision to build a youth-to-elite pathway modeled after Olympic wrestling's developmental system. The new 15U division marks an early step toward broader goals for jiu-jitsu, including eventual collegiate and Olympic inclusion. Supported by a network of industry sponsors such as <https://phalanxjfc.com> and <https://www.knoxguards.com/>, along with corporate partners including Slaughter Lane Chiropractic (<https://www.slc-chiro.com/>) and Cook Brooks Johnson PLLC (<https://www.cbjlawfirm.com/>), and a foundation of grassroots crowdfunding donors, Combat Cruz's journey embodies the same community-driven momentum that is pushing jiu-jitsu toward its Olympic future. As he steps onto the world stage in Greece, Combat Cruz carries with him not only the flag of Team USA but the spirit of a new generation shaping the future of submission grappling.

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