



**About Judo:** Judo is one of the most participated sports in the world and is practiced by millions of people spanning over 200 countries and territories worldwide.

The objective of the sport is to subdue your opponent on to their backs. From a standing position this is achieved by breaking the balance of your opponent and applying a throwing technique. From a ground position, grappling skills are used to pin down the opponent for a set period of time or force a submission.

**Adaptions:** At Special Olympics, athletes are divisioned according to their ability levels, not only by weight and gender. The major difference between Special Olympics and mainstream Judo competitions is that rules and techniques are specially adapted to ensure the full safety and enjoyment of the athletes and arm locks and chokes are removed.

Originating in Japan, the word judo translates to “The Gentle Way”

**Established at Special Olympics:** Judo made its debut as a demonstration event at the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Ireland in 2003. At this inaugural event over 80 athletes from 9 countries took part.

#### **Number of Judo Participants in SO Judo:**

- In 2002 there were 1285 judo athletes from 7 countries.
- Up to the end of 2019 this number has risen considerably to 19,093 judo athletes from 45 countries worldwide.

#### **Events for Competition:**

- Individual judo contest
- Unified kata contest

#### **Associations/Federations/Supporters:**

- International Judo Federation (IJF)

#### **Divisioning at Special Olympics:**

Athletes in every sport and event are grouped by age, gender, and ability – giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. At Special Olympics there are no World Records because each athlete, whether in the fastest or the slowest division is valued and recognized equally. In every division, all athletes receive an award, from gold, silver, and bronze medals, to fourth through eighth place ribbons. This idea of equal ability groupings is the foundation for competition in Special Olympics and can be witnessed at all events, whether it’s athletics, aquatics, table tennis, football,

# Special Olympics Judo Fact Sheet

*Special Olympics*



skiing, or gymnastics. All athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform, and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, friends, and fans.”