

Jimmy Pedro – Coach Director/Board Member

Background:

As the U.S. Olympic Head Coach, Jimmy Pedro led the 2012 and 2016 U.S. Judo Olympic Teams to our country's best-ever Olympic performances, with a historic 2 Gold medals, 1 Silver medal, 1 Bronze medal, 1 5th place finish, and 2 7th place finishes. Our U.S. Olympic Judo Team finished 5th in the world at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio. As an athlete, Jimmy won a World Title in 1999, 2 Olympic Bronze medals in 1996 & 2004, and qualified for 4 U.S. Olympic Judo Teams (1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004). He is on a mission to replicate the success he has had as both an athlete and coach, this time as a leader guiding Judo to new heights ahead of LA 2028.

As a dojo owner with over 225 active members practicing Judo, Jimmy has successfully owned and operated Pedro's Judo Center since 1996, producing many junior and senior national champions and U.S. Olympians. More importantly, he has impacted and changed the lives of thousands of judoka, helping them grow into outstanding citizens and leaders in their communities. Additionally, Jimmy has partnered with Judo Today, which has already launched three successful Judo programs in private high schools in South Florida and one at St. John's Prep in Danvers, MA. The program has been approved in 60 other schools in South Florida as a fully accredited course with a full-time paid Judo instructor earning an annual salary as a PE teacher.

As the CEO of FUJI Mats LLC and Hatashita Enterprises LLC, Jimmy has led both companies to become multi-million-dollar enterprises with global reach. A graduate of Brown University (Class of 1994) with a degree in Business Economics, he maintained a 3.8 GPA while captaining the Brown Wrestling Team, winning the 1993 EIWA Championship, and qualifying for the NCAA Championships. His outstanding contributions to the sport have earned him induction into the IJF Judo Hall of Fame, USA Judo Hall of Fame, NYAC Hall of Fame, Brown University Hall of Fame, and St. John's Prep Hall of Fame.

Statement:

I share the frustration of many USA Judo members who have watched other martial arts grow and flourish in the U.S., while Judo has struggled to gain the same presence. As a community, we have not provided our athletes with the resources and opportunities that other countries offer their competitors, limiting our ability to replicate past successes. We have also fallen short in showcasing the true beauty of our sport to the nation. I hear you, and I understand your concerns. It's time to change this narrative.

In recent years, there has been much said about the leadership of Judo in the U.S.—many of these criticisms I take personally. I believe the most effective way to turn things around is by providing clear and committed leadership, and I hope to help guide this change as Coach Director.

In order for Judo to grow in the U.S., we need more certified coaches, more dojos, and greater accessibility for potential students. I am working closely with Judo Today to expand our reach across the country. By 2028, I aim to help launch 1,000 dojos nationwide, creating a solid foundation for Judo's growth.

These goals will not be easy to accomplish and will require personal sacrifices to my family, my professional career, and my dojo. However, I am willing to make those sacrifices because I know it is necessary for the future of Judo. I believe in you, in our athletes, and in the potential of Judo in the U.S. I know what it takes to win, and I am committed to replicating the success we have achieved on the world stage and in the Olympic Games.

For our athletes to succeed at the highest level, we need full-time staff dedicated to training and supporting Team USA. USA Judo needs to raise funds and generate income from its coaching programs to pay professional staff. Without this, our talent will continue to be wasted. We must also create a clear pathway for coaches to progress from local to national to international levels, with well-defined criteria and technical requirements.

The last two quadrennials (2020 and 2024) were the worst in U.S. Judo history, with no Olympic or World Championship medals. But we can turn things around. The U.S. has always had talented judoka capable of winning on the international stage. Now we need a professional strategy to ensure that talent isn't wasted.

I ask for your support and your vote, so together, we can lead USA Judo toward professionalism, excellence, and a brighter future.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Pedro