

## Judo Club Throws Its Mighty Weight Around

November 18, 2010 2:45 AM Michael Celone  
newwave@tulane.edu

A martial art competitive team at Tulane is quietly kicking butt. Many students may not be aware of it, but the Tulane Judo Club competes successfully in regional tournaments.



Marci McDonald throws Aziz Albassam during a Tulane Judo Club workout. (Photo by Claire Barry)

The Tulane judo team, founded in 1970 by Sensei Nubuo Hayashi, meets three days a week in the Uptown Gym at the Reily Student Recreation Center. The [Tulane Judo Club](#) participates in two or three tournaments each semester and competes against other college- and community-based clubs. In a recent tournament, the Louisiana Open, the Tulane team placed first. Five students competed including Marci McDonald, Nick Cox, Aziz “Z” Albassam, Max Koeck and Matteo Nagelberg. Between the five competitors, eight medals were earned in total, including five gold, two silver and one bronze.

Judo, a Japanese martial art and an Olympic sport, is a competition-focused martial art. Judo emphasizes throwing and grappling techniques that use your opponent's

strength and momentum to your advantage, according to club president Marci McDonald.

“There are two different ways you fight: mat work and standing-up techniques,” says McDonald, a sophomore from Seattle majoring in architecture. “The standing-up techniques are collectively called 'tachi waza.' These are used when you try to unbalance your opponent to throw them.”

If both competitors end up on the ground, then the fight continues with mat work ? “newaza” in judo terminology. This aspect of judo resembles wrestling to the casual observer. However, judo competitors are allowed to use arm bars and chokes that are illegal in wrestling, McDonald says.

McDonald has been told that Jigaro Kano, the founder of judo, was a man of small stature. A jujutsu fighter, Kano decided to streamline the principles of jujutsu so that only the most efficient throws and techniques would be used. As a result “you wouldn't have to be bigger than the other person; you would never have to rely solely on your own strength to be able to win,” she says.

Although inexperienced students may be reluctant to participate in a martial art with which they are unfamiliar, McDonald says that all students are welcome to join the judo club, regardless of prior experience.

*Michael Celone is a sophomore student at Tulane majoring in public health.*