

Champions in the Making

By

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As a parent or loved one of a blind or visually impaired child, protecting your child from harm while wanting the best is always on the mind. Protection from bullying, being excluded from certain events, lack of true and long lasting friends, ability to participate in school events and even sports as one goes through the school system and on into adulthood.

Have you ever considered introducing your child to the sport of Judo? Judo is an Olympic Sport. It is a system of self-defense, a physical and mental discipline that was first introduced in the Olympic Games at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964.

In 1988 Judo was introduced as a Paralympic Sport (not to be confused with “Special Olympics”) and is one of the best sports for boys and girls that are blind and visually impaired not only to develop self-confidence but as a sport that teaches skills that are transferable to all other sports. Judo is also about building character, confidence, citizenship, goal-setting, overcoming adversities and independence in life. The Paralympics is the second largest sporting event in the world outside of the regular Olympics. Paralympic Games are held at the same venue of the Olympics and begins two weeks after the close of the Olympic Games.

In 1999 Willy Cahill, a world renown Olympic Judo Coach was asked to coach the US Paralympic Judo Team preparing them for the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia. Under his coaching leadership the US Paralympic Judo Team consisting of blind and visually impaired athletes won 2 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze Medal.



Being introduced to Judo does not necessarily lead to the Olympics or Paralympics but does provide physical activities, confidence building, camaraderie and skills for life and how-to compete. Left is a picture of Scott Moore, a visually impaired individual who won the first Gold Medal for America at the 2000 Games in Sydney. Other medals include Bronze at the 2004 Games in Athens; 2002 Bronze at the World Championships in Rome to name a few of the outstanding record of this world class athlete and role model.

Lori Pierce, right, was born premature, given too much oxygen and became blind. At age 16 she was introduced to the sport of Judo. At 17 she won Gold for America at the World Judo Championships in Rome, Italy. At 19 she won a Silver Medal at the 2004 Games in Athens. Today Lori is preparing for the World Judo Championships again this July '07 in Brazil in preparation for the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing.



As a parent of a blind and visually impaired child, consider introducing Judo into their life's if you are looking to create a level playing field as they journey to adulthood and on into life.

Should you like to learn more on how Judo can change a Childs life, visit The Blind Judo Foundation at www.blindjudofoundation.org or contact Ron C. Peck, Co-Founder at 425-444-8256 or roncpeck@earthlink.net. He would love to speak with you and learn of your Childs needs.