

## **JUDO4ID INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CAMP JUDO4ID**

Between March 13-16, 2025, [CS Bronx Powerlifting Club Bacău](#), [Special Needs Judo Foundation](#), [The Swedish Judo Federation](#), [Judo Klub Bežigrad](#), and [Judo Club Arteixo](#) gathered in Ljubljana, Slovenia, for a training camp dedicated to athletes with intellectual disabilities. This event was held as part of the Erasmus JUDO4ID project - *Judo: Integrating Children with Intellectual Disabilities in Sports*.

JUDO4ID represents a valuable international cooperation partnership that has developed numerous training tools for coaches and physical education teachers working with individuals with special needs, as well as adapted teaching techniques for various types of disabilities. These resources are available at <https://judo4id.ro>.

The four-day event quickly turned into a vibrant experience, filled with smiles and energy. The gathering of the participants from five different countries - Romania, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Spain - once again demonstrated that judo transcends national and cultural barriers, as well as differences in abilities and disabilities. On the tatami, all judoka find themselves in harmony with both their inner selves and those around them.

### **Inclusive Training and Educational Workshops**

On the first day, the JUDO4ID team participated at the workshop "*The Journey of the Four Dojos*", organized by Lars Kajfež, Maj Pušnik, and Gaston Descamps. The session focused on promoting inclusive teaching methods for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Exploring four different dojos - Undō no Dōjō (Movement), Shōchō no Dōjō (Symbols), Koe no Dōjō (Voice), and Kyōryoku no Dōjō (Cooperation) - coaches learned how to tailor training to the needs and cognitive capacities of athletes with intellectual disabilities and developmental disorders. The methodology presented a balanced combination of verbal instructions, practice, games, and teamwork.

The following days were dedicated to adapted judo training, including warm-up exercises, games, and pre-divisioning sessions. Coaches participating in the project had the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired during the *JUDO4ID – Training of Trainers* program, led by Tycho van der Werff (Special Needs Judo Foundation) and Tomas Rundqvist (Swedish Judo Federation). The judo hall became a space dedicated to inclusion, education, friendship, mutual support, encouragement, and personal development.

Training sessions began with engaging warm-ups designed to spark athletes' interest, linking each exercise to a positive, safe, fun, and familiar experience. Judo techniques and movements were taught through metaphors and interactive games, transforming the training into an immersive story where judoka played the leading roles. These activities aimed to develop and assess reaction speed, technical skills, and teamwork capabilities.

## **Adapted Training Approaches and Coaching Strategies**

For athletes with special needs, it is crucial to explain and demonstrate each step clearly while allowing ample time for execution. Each athlete learns at their own pace; thus, in adapted judo, the emphasis is not on speed but on safety and the joy of practicing. Proper training organization and collaboration among coaches are essential for a successful session.

During the activities, participants were honored by a visit from Olympic champion Andreja Leski, gold medalist at the 2024 Paris Olympics, who encouraged young athletes to pursue their passion for judo and give their best to achieve their dreams.

In the divisioning process - key to ensuring fair and safe matches - coaches reviewed disability classifications, competition levels (1-5), and methods for athlete placement. Clearly defining roles (Head of Divisioning, assistants, Obi, etc.) and maintaining effective communication are fundamental to the process's success.

## **Final Competition**

The last day was dedicated to an adapted judo competition, gathering over 40 athletes from CS Bronx Powerlifting Club Bacău, Judo Klub Bežigrad, and Judo Club Arteixo, all trained under the project. The event provided a valuable opportunity to celebrate progress and connect with the others. What has judo brought into the lives of athletes with special needs? *Politeness, courage, honesty, honor, modesty, respect, self-control, and friendship.*

During the competition, the *PLAY-SN Judo* software program was officially launched. The program, available for download at <https://judo4id.ro>, can be used by any club organizing an adapted judo competition. Following the awards ceremony - where all athletes received diplomas and medals - the animated short movie *JUDO4ID* was screened. The series tells the story of a small mouse who, initially lonely and insecure, discovers not only an incredible inner strength through judo but also valuable friendships, forming an unstoppable team.

## **The Spirit of Adapted Judo**

What makes adapted judo truly special is the joy, emotion, strength, appreciation, and encouragement shared by all participants. It embodies a noble purpose of sports - highlighting judo's potential for psychological, physical, emotional, and social development. Through its therapeutic values, judo fosters community cohesion, mutual support, and encouragement. Adapted judo is about embracing the present, celebrating the self, and finding joy in every movement, every independent step, and every helping hand offered to the others. Each adapted judoka experiences a victory with every smile on the tatami!

Thus, we look forward to the [Special Needs World Judo Games](#) (April 4-6, 2025, Beverwijk, Netherlands) and the *JUDO4ID International Festival* (June 27-29, 2025, Bacău, Romania) with even greater confidence and enthusiasm!

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