OSU Ju-Jitsu students to compete in Worlds

By Stephanie Still  
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Two Ohio State students will represent the United States in the Ju-Jitsu International Federation World Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Nov. 29-30.

Sophomore Hector Kelly and senior Ryan Leszcynski both won titles at the U.S. Ju-Jitsu National Championships and the Ju-Jitsu North American Union Continental Championships, both held in Canton last July.

Kelly and Leszcynski, by winning their respective weight classes, automatically qualified to be members of the USA Ju-Jitsu Team. This will be the first time the United States will compete in the World Championships.

OSU Ju-Jitsu Club head coach Be Kimly was appointed to coach the USA team for the world championships. Kimly, a six-degree black belt, started the OSU club six years ago. He calls the sport one of ultimate self-defense.

Leszcynski, an Air Force ROTC cadet, joined the co-recreational club his freshman year. He said that Ju-Jitsu competition is like a combination of these sports.

"It's like a boxing match where you're wearing gloves and you also get to kick, but nothing below the waist," he said. "Then, it's like a Judo match in the fact where you have throws whereas you can throw your opponent on the ground. Then, it's also like a wrestling match in the sense that after you get your opponent on the ground you can continue to fight."

Ju-Jitsu has two, two-minute rounds, and a point system. The competitor with the most points at the end of the two rounds is declared the winner.

Kelly, Leszcynski and senior Chris Biehl, who placed third at the U.S. National Championships, hope to be contenders when Ju-Jitsu makes its debut in the 2001 World Games. Kimly said that he hopes the World Games will grant the sport more exposure.

As a renowned instructor, Kimly also owns a martial arts facility in Hilliard, the Martial Arts Alliance, where he coaches students of all levels. Two students from the Martial Arts Alliance, Fred Parrish, a former OSU student, and Nick Mitchell of Columbus will join Kelly and Leszcynski on the USA team.

The four competitors have big plans for their trip to Denmark.

"This is a big deal for us," Leszcynski said. "We just want to give the United States some respect as far as Ju-Jitsu is concerned, because it's real big over there. They have competitions where thousands of spectators come to watch these guys perform at these tournaments. Here, we are lucky to get 10 people to watch us."

Kimly encourages students, faculty and staff to join the OSU Ju-Jitsu club. The club practices three times per week, and has a $50 membership fee per quarter. The club meets in the Larhens Hall Gymnastics Gym on Monday and Wednesday from 8-9:45 p.m. and on Friday from 7-8:45 p.m.

"Club members can expect that they are going to learn really good self defense," Kimly said. "They can expect to get into good shape because the exercises we have are very rigid. They will learn body control and balance."