

Official Report: Lithuania International KUDO Summer Camp

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A Gathering of Passion and Spirit in Daugai

From August 2nd to August 7th, I had the privilege and honor of traveling to Lithuania as an official instructor, representing the International KUDO Federation (KIF) and Daidojuku following an invitation from the Lithuania KUDO Federation. The venue for this year's International Summer Camp was Daugai, a picturesque town surrounded by lush forests and serene lakes. Utilizing the campus facilities of a local business school during the summer break, 135 participants—both adults and children—from six European nations gathered in this tranquil setting, creating an ideal environment dedicated entirely to training and international camaraderie.

The success and warmth of this camp are a direct result of the incredible dedication and vision of Lithuania Branch Chiefs Vilius and Tomas. Their leadership in organizing and hosting this event was nothing short of remarkable. From logistics to hospitality, their hard work created a seamless, uplifting atmosphere where practitioners of all ages could grow together.

Intense Training and Thoughtful Youth Engagement

Throughout the week, the training schedule was structured into morning and evening sessions, strictly divided between junior and adult divisions to ensure focused and age-appropriate instruction. Over the course of the camp, I conducted eight training sessions in total: two morning sessions, one junior class, and five adult evening classes.

What made this camp truly exceptional was the thoughtful balance between rigorous martial arts practice and engaging social activities, masterfully planned by Vilius and Tomas. Every day after training, children and adults joined together in creative team games, trivia challenges, ball sports, and outdoor activities by the lake. This holistic approach gave the youth an unforgettable summer experience, prompting parents to enthusiastically send their children or even participate alongside them as families.

Furthermore, the organizers implemented a visionary policy regarding smartphone usage among the youth. Children handed in their phones upon arrival and were permitted only one short call home per day. Unplugged from screen distractions, the kids naturally bonded with one another, played freely in nature, and built lifelong friendships—a inspiring model for youth development that left a profound impression on me.

Strengthening KUDO Across Europe

While no formal committee meetings were scheduled, the camp served as a rich forum for informal exchanges with Branch Chiefs from across Europe. The Lithuanian leadership

exemplifies what makes our international movement strong: Branch Chiefs Vilius and Tomas speak Lithuanian, English, and Russian, possess outstanding competitive records, and operate with immense enthusiasm and clear logic. They have built a recognized, highly respected organization backed by the Lithuanian Ministry of Sport.

Vilius, holding an International Instructor status, earns deep trust across both Western and Eastern Europe. With their pragmatic, neutral approach, I firmly believe that Lithuania stands as a vital pillar for the future growth and unity of European KUDO.

During our discussions, instructors also shared valuable insights regarding rules and equipment:

- **Junior Rules:** European instructors expressed a strong consensus that junior regulations should align more closely with general KUDO rules, advocating for controlled facial strikes and unrestricted throws to preserve the true identity of KUDO while maintaining safety through proper protective gear.
- **Masters Division:** There was great enthusiasm for international Masters competitions, with a preference for 5-year age increments and clear weight divisions to accommodate senior practitioners.
- **Safety Equipment:** I tested new prototype hand bandages. The feedback highlighted their potential while providing clear directions for further refining our gear to prevent injuries.

Embracing Modern Technology for Future Events

During the camp, we also received a detailed presentation from Kumite Technologies, a company offering cloud-based tournament management solutions. Having reviewed their system—which features AI-driven category sorting, automated bracket creation, instant online tracking, multi-lingual audio announcements, and live-stream integration—it is clear that such innovations can greatly streamline future international events and lighten the administrative burden on organizers.

A Warm Invitation to All KUDO Family Members

Reflecting on this week in Lithuania, I am deeply moved by the passion, hospitality, and unity of our European members. The Lithuania International Summer Camp has evolved into a premier international event within the KIF community, setting a gold standard for technical growth and international friendship.

I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Branch Chiefs Vilius and Tomas, as well as the entire Lithuania KUDO Federation, for their extraordinary vision and flawless execution. To all KUDO members across Europe and around the globe: I whole-heartedly urge you and your students to join the next edition of this camp. It is an experience that will enrich your technique, strengthen your spirit, and connect you with lifelong friends in the global KUDO family.

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