

Report on the South American Championships and Certification of Official Referees

Head Director of KIF
Hideaki Takahashi

On September 20, 2026, the South American Kudo Championships were held in Brazil. The tournament took place at the Military Police Sports Gymnasium in Belo Horizonte, Brazil's third-largest city, and featured a total of 52 competitors from five countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and the U.S.). Of these, eight were female competitors, and nine were in the Masters category (all aged 45 and older). Please note that due to regulations regarding athletes under 18 in Brazil, it is not possible to hold a junior tournament in accordance with KIF competition rules.

In my remarks at the opening ceremony, I said the following:

The rules of Kudo were mostly established by the time of the 1st World Championships held in 2001 in Tokyo, and since then, some minor revisions have been made.

What most characterizes Kudo is its rules.

I believe they are wonderfully beautiful rules created by the founder Takashi Azuma.

There is no other martial art that begins with strikes and kicks, progresses to throws following strikes or kicks from a grappling position, and then moves into ground work - specifically, fast-paced ground work.

The size of the competition area also enables the dynamic movements of the athletes and is a defining feature of Kudo.

I believe the movements that most characterize Kudo are throws following a headbutt or knee strike that unbalances the opponent, submissions following a throw, and the subsequent ground fighting within the time limit.

Many of you are skilled at tackling, but you can only transition from a tackle into ground fighting. Furthermore, it's not easy to enter ground fighting with an advantage. To enjoy Kudo matches more, you need to prioritize throws in your training.

We've posted many videos on the official KIF website. Among them, Shihan Ogawa demonstrates several interesting techniques, so please check them out.

[Performed by Shihan Hideki OGAWA - KUDO International Federation](#)

I think that if you learn more about Kudo, you'll enjoy it even more.

I've included a few photos below.





The tournament results are posted on the KIF official website.
[Pan American Championships - KUDO International Federation](https://www.kudo.org/pt-br/competicoes/pan-american-championships)

As part of the certification process for official referees, we instructed them to study the designated training materials on their own in advance, and then conducted a training session covering the following topics on the day before the tournament:

- (1) Jukucho Osada – also the Deputy Head Director of KIF - explained the basic movements and mindset required of referees
- (2) A question-and-answer session regarding the self-study materials and general rules
- (3) Guidance on other matters provided by the Head Director Takahashi

Furthermore, placing a strong emphasis on hands-on instruction on the day of the tournament, the refereeing team was rotated every three matches. During each rotation, Deputy Head Director Osada provided guidance to the Chief Referees while the Head Director Takahashi provided guidance to both the Chief Referees and the Corner Judges. As a result, the following individuals were approved for promotion or the acquisition of a new referee license:

Rafael Dei Svaldi (Brazil) $D \Rightarrow C$

Rodrigo Vergara (Chile) $\text{None} \Rightarrow D$

There were several other individuals who wished to obtain a referee license, but they chose not to take the exam in order to participate in the Masters tournament.

To revitalize Kyudo activities in each country, it is important to hold regular tournaments within each nation, and for this to happen, it is necessary to develop referees domestically. The KIF has provided you with various referee training materials, and we hope you will utilize these to foster the growth of referees.