

U.S. Open of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu tournament comes to Santa Cruz

Claudio França Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is hosting the 13th U.S. Open Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Tournament October 18-19 at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.

Each year the tournament helps raise money for local charities. The tournament will donate a portion of ticket sales this year to **Good Shepherd Catholic School**, a fully accredited elementary, middle school and pre-school. An exceptional alternative to public education is provided for students of diverse backgrounds by credentialed teachers at an affordable price. Good Shepherd Catholic School is a community of faith dedicated to excellence in education, which nurtures and motivates students to become intellectually curious moral leaders inspired by a love for learning with faith in the future. They are able to offer all of this, in part, through the generous donations of our community. The tournament will also help the **Second Harvest Food Bank** feed the hungry by accepting food donations. Every bag of food receives a free past U.S. Open T-Shirt or DVD.

Past recipients include; Hospice Care of California, Jacobs Heart, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Children's Care Coalition of California, The Bay School for children with autism, and Ride-A-Wave.

The U.S. Open is the longest-running Brazilian Jiu Jitsu tournament in the United States. It has gained its stellar reputation as “America’s Favorite Tournament” on being well-organized, on time and governed by the rules of the International Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Federation (IBJJF). In fact, it is the only tournament, other than the IBJJF’s, that the IBJJF has helped to promote and have fully sanctioned in the U.S. Alvaro Mansor, the Director of Referees for the IBJJF, will be traveling from Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, to once again lead the U.S. Open referees, making certain the tournament runs smoothly.

More than 600 elite fighters will descend upon Santa Cruz from as far away as Mongolia, Brazil and Canada, to name just a few countries. Every year U.S. teams from as far away as Alaska, Hawaii, Florida and New York attend the tournament. Many local well-known BJJ and MMA fighters will be participating as well. Spectators will be able to watch several matches simultaneously on the floor of the Civic. Adult men and women of all belts, ages and weights will compete in their respective divisions all day Saturday and Sunday. More than \$3,000 in prizes will be awarded. Ticket prices are \$10 for adults, \$7 for kids 6 through 17 years and seniors 60 and over. Children 5 and under are free.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) is a martial art that emphasizes grappling and submission techniques. Because it relies on technique, rather than brute strength, it is an excellent form of self-defense for men, women and children of any size. A BJJ artist controls his or her opponent by gaining superior position in order to finish a fight with a submission, or, in the case of self-defense and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) events, with strikes. In sport, BJJ, however, no strikes are permitted: the BJJ artist wins by submitting his opponent via a joint-lock or strangle-hold.

BJJ is the sport that brought the UFC to the United States. It became internationally prominent in 1993, when BJJ black belt, Master Royce Gracie won several single elimination MMA tournaments at the Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC), by utilizing BJJ to defeat larger, stronger opponents. As one of the key foundational skills necessary to compete in MMA events, BJJ is and will continue to be a dominant force in mixed martial arts.

Promoter Claudio França, a 4th degree Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu black belt, holds numerous international championships titles and has been organizing tournaments and teaching for more than 20 years. He pioneered the art of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in the Monterey Bay and San Jose areas when he brought his style here in 1995; he now runs academies in Santa Cruz and San Jose and has four associated schools. He was recently voted the “Best Martial Arts Instructor” for the third year in a row in the Good Times “Best Of Santa Cruz County” and was nominated this year as one of 10 “Most Influential Latinos of Silicon Valley” in the athletic category from MASCA and San Jose Magazine.

For more information on the tournament, log on to www.usopenbjj.com

For more information on Claudio França Brazilian Jiu Jitsu adult co-ed classes, women’s self-defense class and kids’ classes, log on to: www.claudiofrancabjj.com.